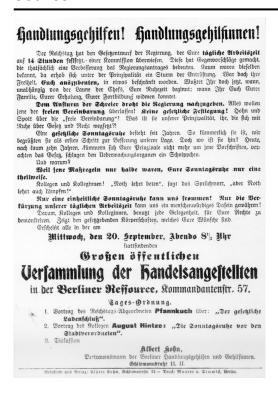


Broadsheet for a Clerks' Association (1890)

Abstract

In Wilhelmine Germany, the organization of labor included employees as well as industrial workers. This broadsheet calls for a meeting of the clerks' association in Berlin. Among other demands, it calls for the government to put a legal limit on working hours and to introduce a day of rest on Sunday. These demands were eventually successful, although change was gradual and only realized during the Weimar era.

Source



Fellow Clerks!

The Reichstag forwarded the legislative bill that sets the length of your work day at 14 hours to a commission. This commission responded with recommendations that actually represent an improvement of the bill drafted by the government. These recommendations had hardly been made public when the employers' syndicates responded with a storm of protest. Their freedom to exploit you had been slightly curtailed. These recommendations would allow you, irrespective of the mood of your bosses, to know when your work day is over, [to know] when you can devote yourselves to your families, to your own well-being, and to your education. The government is threatening to give way to this outcry, this storm of protest.

The protesting employers want to leave everything open to a freely negotiated agreement! No legal boundaries! We have only scorn and contempt for this "freely negotiated agreement"! What does it mean to our employers, they, who calmly ignore both laws and rights!

A law prohibiting work on Sundays has existed for years. As feeble as it is, we welcomed this law as a first step towards improving our situation. But what has happened to it? Today, after scarcely ten years, your employers no longer pay attention to this injunction; they scorn the law and deceive labor inspectors.

And why?

Because those rulings were only half measures, and your work-free Sundays were only partially protected.

Fellow colleagues! There is the saying, "necessity teaches us to pray," but "necessity also teaches us to fight!"

Only a uniform prohibition of work on Sundays can serve us! Only a shortening of our work day can provide us with a humane existence!

For this reason, fellow colleagues, take advantage of every opportunity to demonstrate for your rights. Show your legislators your wishes.

Everyone come and attend:

The mass public meeting of clerks on Wednesday, September 20, at 8:30 in the evening at the Berlin Ressource, Kommandentenstrasse 57 Agenda

- 1) Lecture by the Reichstag delegate Pfannkuch on "The Law Governing Closing Time."
- 2) Lecture by our colleague August Hintze: "The Law Prohibiting Work on Sundays under Consideration by the City Council"
- 3) Discussion

Albert Kohn

Ombudsman of the Berlin Clerks Association

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