The German Labour Movement

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Published by the German Federation of Trade Unions DGB,
Executive Committee, in cooperation with the Friedrich-
Ebert-Stiftung
Printed by Druckhaus Deutz
März 1973

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Introduction

Up to the present, no generally accepted definition of what trade unions are and what their duties may be exists. Moreover, it is not the purpose of this presentation to develop a further concept in this direction. Generally speaking, trade unions are understood to be organizations which represent the economic, social and cultural interests of their members in particular, but also the employees as a whole with regard to the employers and before the public. The trade unions endeavour to improve constantly on a democratic basis the economic and social position of their members and other employed persons, and to achieve their full social and economic emancipation.

Thus far, there has been no comprehensive outline of the history of the German trade union movement. Furthermore, this brochure cannot be regarded as a replacement for such a necessary work.

The purpose of this publication simply is to give those interested a first concise review of trade union history.

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