



# The Social, Economic, and Legal Conditions of Domestic Servants : II<sup>1</sup>

by

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## CONDITIONS OF EMPLOYMENT

Until quite recent times very little attempt was made to define the duties of domestic servants, since the peculiarities of the conditions of employment in this occupation appeared to render any form of control more difficult than in others. Must it therefore be concluded that the prevailing vagueness of conditions of domestic employment is inherent in the nature of domestic work itself ? For the present study this question is one of primary importance ; for in view of the unanimous evidence of the enquiries conducted in Switzerland, Great Britain, and the United States there can be no doubt that the present state of law and practice, as described in the following pages, is one of the principal factors in the unpopularity of the occupation.

### *Hours of Work, Rest Periods, Holidays*

In countries where domestic employment is covered by general labour law, domestic servants are nearly always excluded from the scope of the provisions concerning hours of work and rest periods, as may be seen from the study of the regulation of women's work published by the International Labour Office.<sup>2</sup>

It is only in Switzerland that the Hours of Work Act of 1920 provides for a 9-hour rest period for domestic servants as for other workers<sup>3</sup> ; moreover, in several cantons the rest periods due to domestic servants are also regulated by special laws. In

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<sup>1</sup> For the first part of this article, cf. *International Labour Review*, Vol. XXX No. 2, Aug. 1934, pp. 190-207.

<sup>2</sup> INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE : *Women's Work under Labour Law. A Survey of Protective Legislation*. Studies and Reports, Series I, No. 2. Geneva, 1932.

<sup>3</sup> *Der Hausdienst in der Schweiz*, p. 20.

Czechoslovakia an Act of 1918 contains detailed protective provisions relating to daily hours of work and the weekly rest.

Certain countries—Austria, Denmark, Iceland, and Russia—have however recently adopted special laws concerning domestic servants, while special provisions for this group are contained in the recently promulgated labour codes in Mexico and Chile.

The Austrian Act regulates the daily rest period, weekly free time, and holidays, and also provides for extra rest and free time for juveniles under sixteen years. It prescribes a night rest period of 9 hours for adults and 11 hours for juveniles, falling in the intervals 9 p.m. to 6 a.m. and 8 p.m. to 7 a.m. respectively, and 2 or 3 hours' free time during the day, including meal times; while as regards weekly days off, apart from Sundays, 4 hours must be allowed once a week and 8 hours on two Sundays in the month.

Under the Danish and Icelandic laws, which apply primarily to juveniles under eighteen and twenty-one years respectively, and to adult workers only in the absence of other agreements, free time must be granted at hours allowing of attendance at evening classes. The Danish Act also prohibits night work for domestic servants, except where valid reason exists and subject to the granting of an equivalent period of free time on the following day, while juveniles under sixteen years may not be employed for longer hours than are customary in the locality nor during school hours. The length of the holiday granted depends on the length of employment, this applying to the Austrian law as well.

Under the Russian Domestic Workers Order<sup>1</sup>, which regulates the conditions of employment of domestic servants within the general framework of the Labour Code, the working day may be divided into several periods provided that the worker is allowed the prescribed amount of free time. The ordinary timetable of 192 hours a month is prescribed, with the proviso that for domestic workers it may be extended in accordance with agreements made on the conclusion of the contract, wages being fixed to conform with the agreed hours. The domestic worker must be allowed one day out in the week, and where evening work is required one free evening in the week to attend school or engage in public activities. Night work is prohibited for juveniles and for expectant mothers after the seventh month of pregnancy; for other workers it is only allowed in cases of

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<sup>1</sup> *Legislative Series*, 1926—Russ. 10.

urgency and subject to extra pay. As regards annual holidays, the worker must be granted general public holidays fixed in agreement with the trade unions ; where this is impossible, compensatory leave must be given some other time.

The Chilean and Mexican<sup>1</sup> Labour Codes provide for a similar holiday, varying with the length of employment between one and two weeks. In Chile, the daily rest period is 9 hours, while the Mexican law merely prescribes a 6-hour day for juveniles under sixteen years and specifies that the working hours of all other domestic servants shall be such as to enable them to attend evening classes.

The standard contracts for Zurich, Winterthur, and the Canton of Ticino in Switzerland<sup>2</sup> prescribe a 14-hour day which includes 2 hours' rest, five free afternoons of 4 hours each, and one day out of eight hours, every month. Hours of work must be so arranged as to enable the servant to attend continuation classes ; overtime in excess of the prescribed hours may be worked when necessary, but carries with it the right to compensation. After one year's employment, a holiday is due with payment of board wages at the rate of three francs a day in addition to the ordinary money wage.

### Wages

Generally speaking, wages may be said to play a smaller part in causing the prevailing scarcity of domestic labour than conditions as to hours of work and free time.<sup>3</sup> Nevertheless, here again domestic servants are in many respects in a less favourable position than other workers.

In the first place, their wage rates are extremely uneven<sup>4</sup>, varying not only with the age and experience of the worker and with local conditions, but even from one house to another. In Switzerland it was found that in 1932 the average monthly wage varied from 25 to 120 francs, while in Great Britain in 1931 the weekly wage varied between 10 and 15 shillings. In Chicago the workers covered by the enquiry were receiving from 15 to 20 dol-

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<sup>1</sup> *Idem*, 1931—Mex. 1. Cf. also M. P. TRONCOSO : " The Mexican Federal Labour Code ", in *International Labour Review*, Vol. XXVII, No. 5, May 1933.

<sup>2</sup> *Der Hausdienst in der Schweiz*, p. 21.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. the reports for Switzerland and Chicago.

<sup>4</sup> In Finland, wage rates of 200 to 300 marks a month were reported, and in Sweden 50 to 60 kronor for experienced servants and 20 to 35 kronor for untrained girls.

lars a week in 1933. In Germany<sup>1</sup> the monthly money wage paid in 1927-1928 varied between 20 and 60 marks, but the average level has since fallen considerably owing to the great increase in unemployment. At the end of 1933 the wages for a general servant in large cities such as Hamburg and Berlin were from 35 to 40 marks, but much less than this was paid in many cases.<sup>2</sup> In Denmark, monthly wages varied between 40 and 90 kroner at the beginning of 1934.

A comparison of these wage rates with those paid to women workers in commerce and industry shows that in general the former are very favourable, since in addition to the cash wage the servant receives payment in kind in the form of board, lodging, lighting, heating, and laundry. In making this comparison, however, two factors must be taken into account in estimating the money value of the wage. In the first place, the servant's own appreciation of her wages bears little relation to their objective value; if she were paid entirely in cash she would spend less on board, lodging, and laundry than the actual value of the part of her wages she receives in kind, since her own expenditure would conform to working-class standards. The fact that daily servants often receive the same cash wages as resident ones also shows that on the employer's side, too, wages in kind, and particularly lodging, are not rated at their full value. This psychological element partly explains the fact that the comparatively high total wages paid to domestic servants do not in themselves act as a sufficient inducement to enter the occupation, particularly in the case of girls who have just left school, and who attach more importance to the amount of the wages they receive in cash than to the total wage because they often have to help to support their family out of their earnings.<sup>3</sup>

Secondly, it must also be remembered that in contrast to wages in commerce and industry, the wages of domestic servants are not subject to regulation by law or collective agreement. In

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, 1928, Nos. 30 and 31: "Die Arbeitsverhältnisse der Hausgehilfinnen".

<sup>2</sup> Evidence of the great difficulty experienced in establishing the practice of paying any cash wages at all to domestic servants is afforded by a decision taken by the State Government of Baden to encourage the employment of domestic servants by the contribution of a monthly sum of 5 marks from the State and 5 marks from the local authorities. This measure was expected to lead to the re-employment of a substantial proportion of the 4,000 unemployed domestic servants in Baden (*Frankfurter Zeitung*, 6 Jan. 1934). A similar system has also been introduced in Stuttgart.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. *Der Hausdienst in der Schweiz*, pp. 39 and 43.

the absence of appropriate employers' and workers' organisations, the conclusion of collective agreements, as has already been seen, is impossible; while as regards statutory minimum wage-fixing machinery, most of the existing laws for this purpose exclude domestic servants from their scope. Hence the wages of this group of workers are usually fixed by the employer in each individual case. Figures are given above for some comparatively favourable rates recorded in the course of the enquiries; but in the absence of any compulsion on the employer, it is possible for much lower wages, and sometimes merely pocket money, to be paid, particularly when the labour market is overcrowded or in the case of juveniles.

Where the wage is not fixed by agreement between the parties, the wage current in the locality for similar work is considered as the standard wage in virtue of the law or, in the absence of any relevant legislation, of usage.

An attempt to regulate the wages of domestic servants was introduced in several German towns in the form of a scale of wages issued from time to time for domestic servants of varying ages and efficiency, and adopted as standards by the public employment exchanges.

In Switzerland the standard contracts of employment contain provisions concerning minimum wages; that for the Canton of Ticino provides for a scale of wages rising according to the work demanded of the servant and her efficiency, and subject to a minimum of 45 francs.<sup>1</sup>

Similar rules exist in Mexico under the Labour Code, which stipulates that the wages agreed upon in individual contracts may not be lower than a minimum fixed for each commune by a special board.

Another important aspect of the problem of wages is the question of the right to wages in the event of incapacity for work and the protection of this right. In the event of sickness for which the servant herself is not to blame, the employer is as a rule legally bound to continue payment of her wages for two or four weeks, or even until the termination of the contract (Denmark). Where there are no statutory provisions concerning the right to wages in case of temporary incapacity for work, this right is generally recognised by custom within similar limits (France, Sweden).

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Der Hausdienst in der Schweiz*, pp. 37-38.

In general, the law also prescribes the payment of compensation or of the full wage up to the end of the period of notice in the event of dismissal without notice for a reason not recognised by law (Germany, Hungary, the Netherlands, Sweden, etc.). Deduction from wages to pay for damage caused by the servant is explicitly sanctioned by the Portuguese law<sup>1</sup> and explicitly forbidden in Yugoslavia.<sup>2</sup>

In the event of the employer's bankruptcy or if he is sold up, claims for domestic servants' wages are usually treated as preferential claims. As a rule, the claim extends to the wages due for the past year (Austria, Belgium, Denmark, France, Germany, etc.), or less frequently to those due for a shorter period (six months in Bulgaria and Italy).

The intervals at which wages are due vary between one month in the majority of cases (Denmark, Germany, the Netherlands, Rumania, etc.) and three to six months (Denmark, Switzerland), according to whether town or country servants are concerned. Where there is no appropriate statute law, or where the legislation in force does not apply to domestic servants (Belgium<sup>3</sup>, Great Britain<sup>4</sup>), wages are usually paid monthly (Italy<sup>5</sup>). Payment is always made in arrears.

Nearly all the special laws, both old and new, relating to domestic servants, and most of the general provisions contained in civil codes, make the employer responsible for providing his servants with board and lodging. These provisions explicitly recognise payment in kind as part of the total wage, and provide special protection for this form of payment. Under Danish law, the provisions on this subject are included among the compulsory clauses of contracts of employment which apply even to adult workers; while Russian law prohibits the payment of wages wholly in kind, and specifies that the value of the wages paid in kind must be stated.

The above survey of current law and practice as regards domestic servants' wages points to the tentative conclusion that, judging by the evidence furnished by the enquiries, the wages

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<sup>1</sup> *Molitor*, Vol. I, pp. 127 *et seq.*

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, Vol. II, pp. 147 *et seq.*; Order of 1904, section 36.

<sup>3</sup> The Act of 1887 concerning the payment of workers' wages does not apply to domestic servants (section 12). Cf. *Molitor*, Vol. I, p. 21.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. *Molitor*, Vol. III, pp. 1 and 10. The law on the payment of wages does not apply to domestic servants, but the monthly payment of wages is nevertheless customary for this group of workers.

<sup>5</sup> *Idem*, Vol. I, p. 90.

of domestic servants compare not only reasonably but in many cases favourably with those paid to industrial workers. The fact that these comparatively favourable conditions as to wages are unable, in the opinion of the writers of the reports, to overcome the general reluctance to enter the occupation shows, however, how great is the importance which the workers attach to the other conditions of employment in respect of which domestic servants are at a disadvantage, and how urgent is the need for measures to regulate these conditions, in particular by the introduction of a guaranteed minimum wage.

It has often been argued against the fixing of minimum wages that they expose the older workers to the risk of dismissal. It would therefore be interesting to have particulars of the real effects of the system in places where it is applied under minimum wage-fixing laws or regulations.

#### SOCIAL AND UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE

The employer's liability to provide care for the servants employed in his household and living under his roof in the event of their incapacity for work is explicitly recognised by most of the old laws of master and servant and by some civil codes (Germany, Switzerland), and sanctioned by custom in countries which have no statute law in this domain. This liability, which counterbalances the employer's right to make practically unrestricted demands on his servants' labour, persisted after compulsory insurance had gradually begun to supersede it for most other workers, and was subsequently replaced by measures of legal protection when the relations between master and servant in the household also took on the character of a true contract of employment. But this change was at first confined to certain countries and to certain branches of insurance, and even to-day domestic servants do not enjoy the same social protection as other workers.

This inequality of rights, whatever the causes to which it is due, is a matter of importance from the standpoint both of the individual worker and of the economic community as a whole. As the personal savings of individual workers, particularly those whose money wages are low, are generally insufficient to support them during a long spell of unemployment, the workers in occupations which lack the safeguard of social insurance are relegated to a lower economic status. Workers from other occu-

pations are naturally reluctant to enter a non-insurable occupation, especially one in which the other conditions of employment are not particularly attractive. Thus in times of depression barriers are set up to the mobility of labour and to the automatic balancing of the shortage and surplus of labour over the various branches of the labour market.<sup>1</sup>

In times of general prosperity, when there is more real freedom in the choice of an occupation, the inequality so created may have the effect of bringing the less efficient workers into domestic service and thus counteracting the attempts to improve conditions in the occupation. We shall return to this question in the section dealing with vocational education.

### *Sickness Insurance*

The schemes which most often include domestic servants within their scope are those providing for compulsory sickness and maternity insurance. The employer's duty to provide assistance is thus generally met by the payment of part of the contribution. Certain laws, however (Norway), still prescribe a special additional liability for assistance to the sick servant based on the special conditions in the country.

At present, compulsory sickness insurance for domestic servants is in force in Austria, Bulgaria, Chile, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Hungary, the Irish Free State, Latvia, Lithuania, Norway, Poland<sup>2</sup>, Rumania<sup>3</sup>, Russia, Yugoslavia, and a few Swiss cantons.<sup>4</sup>

Some laws exclude farm servants from their scope, while others explicitly include them (Bulgaria, Germany, Norway, Poland, Yugoslavia).

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<sup>1</sup> In the course of the unemployment debates in the British House of Commons in 1931, it was stated that one of the reasons for which women refuse to accept employment in domestic service was that the change of occupation would mean renouncing their rights in respect of unemployment insurance. (*Parliamentary Debates, House of Commons*, 14 May 1931, Col. 1337, and 15 May 1931, Col. 329.)

The Swiss Committee of Enquiry examined the question how far domestic service was regarded as "suitable" employment by the employment exchanges in the sense of the law, which claimants for benefit were bound to accept, and noted that except in the Cantons of Geneva and Fribourg women claiming benefit were not obliged to accept this kind of employment (cf. *Der Hausdienst in der Schweiz*, pp. 5 and 6).

<sup>2</sup> Social Insurance Act of 28 March 1933, published in Polish Laws and Orders, No. 25, 20 Nov. 1933. Cf. also *Industrial and Labour Information*, Vol. XLIX, No. 12, p. 399.

<sup>3</sup> Social Insurance Act of 8 April 1933. Cf. *Industrial and Labour Information*, Vol. XLVII, No. 1, p. 42.

<sup>4</sup> *Der Hausdienst in der Schweiz*, p. 60.

A question of some importance is whether servants who are paid entirely in kind are also liable to insurance. These workers are specifically covered by the law in Czechoslovakia, Norway, and Yugoslavia. In countries where compulsory sickness insurance does not apply to domestic servants (Luxemburg, the Netherlands, Spain), the employer often insures them with a private company. The Danish Master and Servants Act specifically states that the advantages of membership of a recognised sickness fund must be pointed out to domestic servants by the employer.<sup>1</sup>

In some countries where insurance is not generally compulsory, an exception is made in respect of domestic servants employed in the employer's trade or business (Luxemburg).

Insurance benefits for domestic servants are usually the same as those for other workers. Special provisions are, however, laid down by the German Federal Insurance Code<sup>2</sup>, which specifies that even when not prescribed by its rules the local sickness fund must provide domestic servants with "extended medical attendance", that is to say, removal to a hospital or similar institution instead of sickness benefit and medical attendance, thus making allowance for the special conditions of employment of this group of workers.

### *Old-Age and Invalidity Insurance.*

There is much less uniformity in the treatment of domestic servants under old-age and invalidity insurance schemes. As the proportion of the remuneration that these workers receive in cash is often smaller than their allowances in kind, and as domestic workers generally look upon their employment as a temporary expedient ceasing on marriage, it has sometimes been doubted "whether it would be fair and reasonable to render such workers, who usually cease to be wage earners at a comparatively early age, liable to pension insurance, since they would very probably not remain insured long enough to have a claim to benefits".<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> *Legislative Series*, 1921—Den. 4. The new social insurance legislation in Denmark provides for a scheme which is partly voluntary and partly compulsory. Cf. *Industrial and Labour Information*, Vol. XLVI, No. 12, p. 403.

<sup>2</sup> *Idem*, 1924—Ger. 10, section 435.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE : *Compulsory Pension Insurance*, p. 34, Studies and Reports, Series M, No. 10. Geneva, 1933.

This view of the question nevertheless leaves out of account three important points. In the first place, it is open to question whether a larger proportion of domestic servants than of other workers ultimately marry. Secondly, the reason for which older women leave this occupation is often precisely because it lacks adequate security. And, finally, many of the domestic servants who give up their work for reasons other than marriage are in urgent need of assistance, having been entirely cut off by their occupation from intercourse with their relations and friends. Wherever the question of the position of domestic servants is discussed by interested organisations, special attention is always drawn to the particular need of the older workers for assistance. This need can hardly be adequately met by private charity nor even by voluntary insurance, since the younger servants hope to marry and give up their occupation and are thus unwilling to sacrifice part of their wages to insurance. Hence the Swiss report strongly recommends the introduction of compulsory old-age and invalidity insurance for domestic servants, pointing out the particularly difficult circumstances of the workers over 30 or 35 years of age; while the report of the Committee of Enquiry set up in Great Britain in 1923 also recommended the adoption of a scheme of pensions for domestic servants over 50 years of age who are unable to find employment, on the ground that occupations which offer security for the worker's old age enjoy a higher status than others.

Generally speaking, therefore, the tendency to extend this kind of compulsory insurance to domestic servants seems to be gaining ground in this branch of insurance also.<sup>1</sup> At the present time it applies to domestic servants in Bulgaria, Chile, Czechoslovakia, France, Germany, Great Britain, the Irish Free State, Italy, Netherlands, Poland, Rumania, and the U.S.S.R. In Austria, domestic servants over 60 years of age are entitled to an old-age pension, provided that they were employed in domestic service for three out of the six preceding years and are in need.<sup>2</sup> In Switzerland, insurance is compulsory only in the Cantons of Basle Town and Glarus. The Luxemburg Act

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<sup>1</sup> In Hungary, an Act including domestic servants in its scope has been passed but not yet put into force. In Denmark, insurance is compulsory for all persons belonging to a sickness fund, while in Sweden there is a special compulsory old-age and invalidity insurance scheme covering the whole population.

<sup>2</sup> Federal Act of 17 December 1927 respecting old-age pensions for aged domestic servants who are out of employment. *Legislative Series*, 1927—Aus. 5.

admits domestic servants to voluntary insurance, but they are explicitly excluded from the scheme in Spain.

### *Accident Insurance and Employers' Liability*<sup>1</sup>

If the principle of liability for occupational risk, which makes the employer responsible for compensation to the worker in the event of industrial accident, were applied without restriction, all workers in paid employment would be covered by the legislation governing compensation irrespective of the nature of their employment and the amount of their remuneration.

In practice, however, two kinds of laws may be distinguished. Laws of the first group cover only persons employed under a contract of employment in specified classes of establishments and undertakings, while those of the second apply to all persons bound by a contract of employment.

Domestic servants are insured against occupational accidents under laws of the second type in Bulgaria, Denmark, Finland, France, Great Britain, the Netherlands, Portugal, Rumania, Sweden, and Russia. In a great many other countries, however, domestic servants are excluded either explicitly or tacitly from the scope of accident insurance schemes; for instance, among European countries, in Austria, Belgium<sup>2</sup>, Czechoslovakia, Italy, Latvia, Lithuania, Luxemburg, Norway, Poland, Spain, and Switzerland, and also in Canada, India, Japan, and some of the Central and South American States. In a few countries where domestic servants in general are excluded from this branch of insurance, an exception is made in the case of workers who are employed mainly on industrial, agricultural, or other work in their employer's undertaking (Finland, Germany, Luxemburg).

As the importance of the results of an industrial accident or occupational disease to the individual victim is quite independent of the general degree of risk in the occupation, and as domestic service includes a number of dangerous tasks, it is to be hoped, in the interests of domestic servants, that the principle of making employment relationship the sole criterion for insurance liability will come in time to be universally applied.

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE : *Compensation for Industrial Accidents*, pp. 21 *et seq.* and 24 *et seq.* *Studies and Reports*, Series M, No. 2. Geneva, 1925.

<sup>2</sup> A Bill to include domestic servants within the scope of accident compensation legislation was submitted to the Belgian Chamber of Deputies in 1933.

*Unemployment Insurance*<sup>1</sup>

Where compulsory unemployment insurance schemes are in force, domestic servants are explicitly or tacitly excluded from their scope. This is the case in Austria, Bulgaria, Great Britain, Italy, Poland, Switzerland (in those cantons in which unemployment insurance is compulsory), and also since 1933 in Germany. In countries such as Belgium, Czechoslovakia, Denmark, Finland, France, the Netherlands, and Norway, which have voluntary unemployment schemes with funds subsidised by the State, domestic servants are not excluded by law (except in Spain). In practice, however, they are often prevented from insuring by the fact that this requires membership of a fund; most of these being trade union organisations, and domestic servants being still very largely unorganised, suitable funds are very often lacking. In Switzerland, apart from the trade union funds, there are also joint funds which have the right to restrict the scope of their membership.<sup>2</sup>

One of the chief arguments put forward to support the exclusion of domestic servants from unemployment insurance is that owing to the isolation in which they work supervision of the unemployed is practically impossible and abuses are consequently a great deal easier than in other branches. This difficulty is not unconnected with the system of placing by private employment agencies, which is still very widely prevalent for domestic servants, and could probably be overcome fairly simply by bringing together the placing and the supervision of unemployed domestic workers within the framework of the public employment exchange system, as has been done for other groups.

Among the other reasons given to justify the exclusion of domestic servants from public unemployment insurance or relief schemes are the following: (1) for workers who receive only a comparatively small proportion of their wages in the form of cash, social insurance contributions represent a much heavier burden than for others; this was one of the main reasons given for the exclusion of domestic servants from the scope of the German unemployment insurance scheme; (2) it is argued that cash relief does not correspond to the form in which remunera-

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. INTERNATIONAL LABOUR OFFICE: *Unemployment Insurance*; Studies and Reports, Series C, No. 10; 1925; *International Labour Review*, Vol. XXIII, No. 1, January 1931, pp. 48-66; "*Unemployment Insurance*"; and "*Unemployment Insurance and Various Forms of Relief for the Unemployed*" (International Labour Conference, Seventeenth Session, 1933).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Der Hausdienst in der Schweiz*, p. 70.

tion was previously paid, and may therefore make the worker reluctant to re-enter his former occupation if granted for a long period ; (3) the state of the labour market for domestic servants is manifestly more favourable than for other workers.<sup>1</sup>

As regards the third point, however, it should be observed that the wider employment possibilities open to domestic servants are in fact partly due to the absence of standardised conditions ; and that, on the other hand, the demand for domestic labour does not affect the older workers, for whom the risk of unemployment is no less serious than in other occupations.

It is significant that the British Committee of Enquiry, as early as 1923, reported in favour of the inclusion of persons engaged in domestic service in the unemployment insurance scheme, on the ground that the distinction between workers in hotels and in private households was an artificial one.

### JUVENILE EMPLOYMENT IN DOMESTIC SERVICE<sup>2</sup>

The causes leading to the employment of juveniles in domestic service are the same as those operating in factory work. Poverty leads the family to seek an extra source of earnings, while the employer often sees in the employment of juveniles an opportunity of obtaining cheap labour ; both these motives being strengthened by the commonly accepted view of domestic service as light and unskilled work.

Nevertheless, since this view is true only of a few household tasks, supervision of this form of work is difficult, and the dangers of employing children who are still attending or have just left school are as great in this as in other occupations. The regulation of the conditions of employment of this group of workers is a matter of vital importance both for individual and for social reasons.

As regards juveniles, i.e. workers between 14 and 16 years of age, the special laws for domestic servants contain protective provisions prescribing shorter hours of work (Austria, Chile, Denmark, Mexico, Russia), prohibiting night work (Denmark, Russia), specifying longer rest periods (Austria), requiring allowance to be made for the physical strength of the workers,

<sup>1</sup> Cf. ZUSCHKE : " Die Hausgehilfen in der Arbeitslosenversicherung ", in *Deutsches Arbeitsrecht*, No. 4, Nov. 1933.

<sup>2</sup> There appears to be only one study furnishing precise information as to the actual conditions of employment of juveniles in domestic service ; this is an article entitled " Jugendliche Hausangestellte ", in *Die Frau*, Nov. 1929, No. 11.

and stipulating that working hours shall be so distributed as to allow of attendance at evening school.

As regards children, the International Labour Conference adopted at its Sixteenth Session in 1932 a Convention concerning the minimum age for the admission to employment of children in non-industrial occupations, which gave rise to protracted discussion. In spite of the efforts made in committee to exclude domestic service from the scope of the Convention or to allow the competent national authorities the power of excluding it in the individual States, the draft Convention was finally adopted in a form covering the employment of children in domestic service as well.

This Convention provides that children 12 to 14 years of age (for India the minimum age is fixed at 10 years, and other special conditions are provided) may be employed only on light work which is : (a) not harmful to their health or normal development, (b) not prejudicial to their education, and (c) limited to two hours a day both on school-days and on holidays. Work on Sunday and public holidays and at night—i.e. for 12 consecutive hours comprising the interval between 8 p.m. and 8 a.m.—is prohibited even where light work is concerned. National authorities may grant exemption from the provisions of the Convention only in respect of children working in family undertakings.

In view of the fact that only in a very few countries is the employment of children in domestic service prohibited or restricted at present<sup>1</sup>, it is of the greatest social importance that this Convention should be as widely ratified as possible. Indirectly, it would also benefit adult workers, by increasing their opportunities of employment.

So far as the difficulty of supervision is concerned, this would probably be less serious for children and young persons than

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<sup>1</sup> In Argentina the employment of children under 14 years of age in domestic service is prohibited under an Act of 1924 concerning the employment of women and children. In Ecuador an Act of 1928 forbids parents, guardians, and any other persons responsible for the education and maintenance of children under 12 years to employ them as domestic servants with a view to making profit out of their work. In Austria and Czechoslovakia the employment of children under 10 and 14 years respectively in domestic service and agriculture is prohibited only during a period of two hours before and one hour after school, while on holidays they may not be employed for more than six hours. The nightly rest period for children is fixed at nine hours in summer and ten in winter. In Johore, the Straits Settlements, Hong Kong, etc., the protective measures at present in force are embodied in Domestic Servants Ordinances, which prohibit the employment of children under 10 years in domestic service.

for adults, since in addition to school authorities, existing or contemplated public organisations for juvenile welfare work might also be called upon for assistance.

### PLACING

So far as placing in domestic service is concerned, the public employment exchanges have hitherto merely acted as auxiliaries to other methods. The placing of domestic servants still constitutes the principal activity of private employment agencies run for profit ; according to the report on the abolition of fee-charging employment agencies submitted to the Sixteenth Session of the International Labour Conference by the International Labour Office, domestic servants represented more than half and in some cases as much as two-thirds of the workers placed in employment by these bodies.<sup>1</sup>

The long-standing efforts to abolish or restrict the activities of fee-charging employment agencies with a view to permitting a more efficient organisation of the labour market and abolishing the abuses attendant on this system have led in a number of countries to the introduction of statutory provisions prohibiting commercial employment agencies (Bulgaria, Finland, Germany, Russia), providing for their abolition within a specified time-limit (Chile, Danzig, Italy, Poland), or ensuring their gradual disappearance by prohibiting the setting-up of new agencies (the Netherlands). In 1933 the Seventeenth Session of the International Labour Conference adopted a Convention for the abolition

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<sup>1</sup> *Abolition of Fee-charging Employment Agencies.* International Labour Conference, Sixteenth Session, Geneva, 1932. The following particulars are taken from this report :

*Germany, 1930.* Out of 1,487 commercial employment agencies, 715 were agencies for domestic servants ; these filled 188,000 posts (41 per cent. of the total) between 1 October 1927 and 30 September 1928.

*France, 1930.* Out of 176,922 women placed in employment by fee-charging agencies, 87,485 were domestic servants.

*Great Britain, 1930.* In London 45,000 out of 99,017 persons placed in employment by private agencies were domestic servants. The report states that "the placing of domestic servants in private houses and establishments is generally effected at present through private agencies and newspaper advertisements. . . . Experienced domestic servants do not often use the employment exchanges under present conditions" (pp. 71-72).

*Netherlands, 1931.* Out of 165 commercial fee-charging employment agencies, 80 were for domestic servants.

*Poland, 1927.* A total of 15,699 persons placed in employment by private agencies included 12,790 domestic servants.

*Sweden.* This is the only country in which the activity of the public employment exchanges was considerably greater than that of private agencies, the number of servants placed by each type of body being 25,092 and 7,681 respectively.

of fee-charging employment agencies by a sweeping majority. The ratification of this Convention by countries in which commercial employment agencies now operate alone or side by side with the public exchanges would facilitate the organisation of an efficient system of public exchanges.

The substitution of public employment exchanges for private agencies is important for two main reasons. In the first place, only the public employment exchanges are in a position to lay down specified conditions of employment for the engagement of workers and to a certain extent to see that they are observed. If the placing of domestic servants were organised in the same way as for workers subject to collective agreements, i.e. if they were placed in employment subject to the observance of specified conditions, a decisive advance would have been made towards the standardisation of conditions in the occupation and the raising of its status. Secondly, wherever it is desired to transfer workers from other occupations in order to meet an increased demand for domestic servants, the existence of two kinds of placing bodies is a very serious handicap, since there is a definite danger that only the untrained workers without previous domestic experience will apply to the public exchanges, while the experienced servants will adhere to the traditional method of private placing. Further, where different kinds of placing bodies exist side by side, it is extremely difficult if not actually impossible to obtain a general view of the actual situation of the labour market and to balance supply and demand by transfers from different districts.

The reluctance which still exists on the part of mistresses and servants alike to have recourse to the public employment exchanges is partly due to the latter's failure to take into account the special requirements of this occupation.<sup>1</sup> The adoption of measures to adapt the public placing services to the requirements of domestic service, to supply the exchanges with a trained staff capable of understanding the needs both of mistresses and of maids, and the collaboration of representatives of the most important workers' and employers' organisations in the organisation of placing would enable these difficulties to be overcome.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Mabel CRAFTS: "Placement Follow-Up of Women", in *The Personnel Journal*, Vol. XI, No. 5, Feb. 1932.

<sup>2</sup> In this connection, cf. the Recommendation concerning the abolition of fee-charging employment agencies adopted at the International Labour Conference in 1933.

## SETTLEMENT OF DISPUTES

For a long time disputes concerning domestic servants were brought before the ordinary police courts, a system which still persists in certain countries.<sup>1</sup> There is now, however, a growing tendency to place domestic servants under the jurisdiction of the special labour courts, trade boards or arbitration boards as regards disputes arising out of their contracts of employment. At present these tribunals are competent to hear such disputes in Austria<sup>2</sup>, Czechoslovakia<sup>3</sup>, Germany<sup>4</sup>, and certain Swiss Cantons.<sup>5</sup> The Danish Master and Servants Act provides for the setting up in every commune of a conciliation board consisting of employers and workers to which all disputes must be referred before being brought before an ordinary court.<sup>6</sup> In Russia these disputes are dealt with by special conciliation boards or people's courts.<sup>7</sup> In Belgium<sup>8</sup> and Greece<sup>9</sup>, however, domestic servants are excluded from the jurisdiction of the labour courts, and in Spain the joint boards which act as arbitration boards in the event of claims against dismissal are not applicable to domestic servants.<sup>10</sup>

The advantages which domestic servants derive from being placed under the jurisdiction of special courts are due to the procedure and constitution of these bodies. The simplified form of their procedure makes it possible for the case to be dealt with more or less promptly, while the presence on the tribunal of assessors belonging to the category of workers affected ensures that due weight shall be given to practical considerations.

<sup>1</sup> Iceland (Act of 1928), and Yugoslavia; cf. *Mokitor*.

<sup>2</sup> Act of 18 July 1929 to amend the Act of 1922 concerning industrial courts.

<sup>3</sup> Act of 4 July 1931.

<sup>4</sup> Act of 23 December 1926.

<sup>5</sup> *Der Hausdienst in der Schweiz*, p. 17. Special courts for domestic servants exist in the Cantons of St. Gall, Neuchâtel, Ticino and Geneva.

<sup>6</sup> Act of 1921, sections 34 *et seq.*, Title III (*Legislative Series*, 1921—Den. 4).

<sup>7</sup> Decree of 25 March 1929 concerning procedure for the settlement of labour disputes arising in connection with workers employed in the personal service of their employer and his dependants (*Legislative Series*, 1929—Russ. 5).

<sup>8</sup> The Act of 9 July respecting probiviral courts specifies that the terms "employers" and "employees" do not include domestic servants (section 5) (*Legislative Series*, 1926—Bel. 10).

<sup>9</sup> Act of 21 April 1926, section 2.

<sup>10</sup> Act of 27 November 1931 concerning the setting up of joint boards (section 104), and Acts of 1926 and 1929 concerning the constitution of corporative organisations (section 93).

## VOCATIONAL TRAINING

All the recent enquiries referred to at the beginning of this article reach the conclusion that the development of domestic training is one of the most urgent measures necessary to solve the problem of domestic work. The urgent nature of this problem is the result of various circumstances, some arising out of changes in general economic conditions and others out of new developments in the type of worker available and the quality of the labour demanded.

As regards general economic conditions, these were dealt with in the introduction to this article, where it was pointed out in particular that the permanent unemployment which threatens women workers in industry and commerce has led to attempts to provide them with new outlets in domestic work, thus at the same time raising the problem of training them for their new occupation. The object of the present pages is to show the connection between this problem of domestic training and certain recent changes, which have occurred independently of these general conditions, affecting workers and employers in domestic service.

As regards the workers, these changes relate to the conditions and environment in which domestic servants are recruited. Most of them come from two sources : either from the country districts, or from working-class homes in the towns. Generally speaking, therefore, these girls come from homes which have little to prepare them for employment in domestic service. But whereas girls from the country take service in towns partly with the avowed purpose of gaining experience of domestic work in a town household and then returning to their homes if they do not find a husband in town, the position as regards working-class girls from the towns is somewhat different. Owing to the present low status of the occupation it is not always the most intelligent and adaptable girls who seek employment as domestic servants. Moreover, coming as they do from overcrowded homes, frequently lacking the guidance of the mother, who also goes out to work, and having had to keep house for their family for years, most of these girls are not only quite untrained but are entirely incapable of realising the standard of work required of them and the need for methodical training. Recent changes in agricultural conditions and a greater tendency among the agricultural population to

turn the labour of members of the family to account have in several countries had the result of restricting the supply of country girls for domestic service during the past few years. Recruits from the second group, on the other hand, have tended to become more numerous<sup>1</sup>, and it is precisely for these girls that some form of domestic training outside the home is most essential.

This tendency towards a lower level among applicants for jobs in domestic service has coincided on the mistresses' side with a demand for a better type of servant. With the increase in women's employment among all classes during recent years<sup>2</sup>, a practical and theoretical knowledge of household work has ceased to form a natural part of the education of girls who begin to train for or engage in paid employment immediately after leaving school. Many of them continue to work after marriage and even when they have children; and it is, in fact, often merely because they go out to work that they are able to employ a servant at all.<sup>3</sup> As these women usually lack the time to direct and supervise the work of their servants, however, they demand a particularly high standard of experience and initiative.

These changes in the nature of the demand for and available supply of domestic servants account for the attempts made in practically all European countries during the last few decades to develop the teaching of domestic economy and housewifery, and also explain the form which such teaching has taken.

As early as 1906 the first international Congress on the teaching of housewifery was held at Fribourg in Switzerland, and attended by representatives from a number of countries, including Austria, Belgium, France, Great Britain, Italy, Prussia, Russia, and the United States.<sup>4</sup> To continue the collaboration thus established, an International Office for the teaching of housewifery was set up in 1908, to act as a link between the various countries, as an information bureau, and as a centre for

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Noll. Weiss : *op. cit.*, p. 55. As regards France, however, the Ministry of Labour report for 1931 noted that country girls had again begun to seek jobs in town households as "beginners".

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *International Labour Review*, Vol. XXVII, No. 4, April 1933 : "The Economic Depression and the Employment of Women", by M. THIBERT, pp. 443-470.

<sup>3</sup> This is a factor which should not be lost sight of in campaigns to restrict the employment of married women.

<sup>4</sup> *Mémoire relatif à l'office international de l'enseignement ménager établi à Fribourg en Suisse*. Cf. the rules of the International Federation for the Promotion of the Teaching of Housewifery.

the publications of the different countries on questions of domestic training. This Office is now one of the organs of the International Federation for the Promotion of the Teaching of Housewifery, and issues a publication which appears six times a year and serves indirectly to influence national measures for the teaching of housewifery.<sup>1</sup> International congresses are held from time to time to promote these measures, the fifth of the series being convened to meet at Berlin in 1923.<sup>2</sup>

In discussing the measures adopted to promote domestic training, a distinction may usefully be drawn between (1) the teaching of housewifery, and (2) vocational training.

(1) The attempts to develop the general teaching of housewifery outside the home are represented by classes in elementary and secondary schools, continuation classes, and domestic training schools (Germany, Switzerland).<sup>3</sup> The importance of these experiments so far as the conditions of employment of domestic workers are concerned lies in the higher status that the occupation of domestic service tends to acquire as soon as it becomes the subject of methodical preliminary training; they also ensure a better grounding for candidates for vocational training proper.

In a great many countries recent years have seen the setting up of training centres, due originally to private initiative, but later encouraged by State grants and made available to wider sections of the population.<sup>4</sup> In Germany, the teaching of housewifery is a main feature of the Women's Labour Service, and in fact one of the principle objects for which it was set up.<sup>5</sup>

(2) The actual vocational training of domestic workers must be differentiated from the general teaching of housewifery

<sup>1</sup> *L'enseignement ménager* (Bulletin of the International Office at Fribourg).

<sup>2</sup> The agenda of this Congress includes the following questions: the development and progress of domestic education, and its scientific bases; the need for a scientific organisation of domestic economy; the rationalisation of domestic work; the practical training of domestic servants, and the training of teachers.

<sup>3</sup> *Der Hausdienst in der Schweiz*, p. 79.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. ROBIEN: *Les centres sociaux: L'enseignement ménager* (Les Cahiers de Redressement de France, pp. 71 *et seq.*).

<sup>5</sup> "The Women's Labour Service must help to prepare the girls of Germany for their future duties as wives and mothers." It is also required "to further the objects of demographic and economic policy" (Cf. *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, 15 Feb. 1934: "Richtlinien für die Anerkennung der Arbeitsvorhaben im deutschen Frauenarbeitsdienst"); while the redistribution of female labour is included in its activities. The girls admitted to the German Labour Service are for the most part girls who have lost their employment owing to developments on the labour market, or who have been unable to find posts in paid employment or as apprentices within two years of leaving school. Cf. *Reichsarbeitsblatt*, Feb. 1934.

if domestic service is to be raised to the status of a skilled occupation. This training should consist in the methodical learning of household management. Moreover, if domestic service is to be dignified by the title of a "profession", account must be taken of the aptitude and inclination of the candidate, as in other occupations. Apart from these considerations, vocational training for domestic service has three main branches : (a) vocational training for young girls ; (b) additional training, and (c) vocational retraining.

(a) Vocational training may be given in two forms ; apprenticeship in a household, or training in a domestic school.

For the apprenticeship of untrained girls in individual households, which usually varies in length from one to two years, proper contracts of apprenticeship have been introduced in certain countries to regulate conditions of employment and training (Germany<sup>1</sup>, Switzerland<sup>2</sup>). The value of this form of domestic training depends on effective supervision of the household in which it is given, since there is a real danger that untrained girls taken into service as learners may be exploited as a form of cheap labour. It is therefore important that the contract of apprenticeship should also regulate the question of remuneration.

Apart from that given in private households, domestic training may also be provided by domestic schools in the form of systematic teaching lasting from six months to a year. These courses are sometimes organised by the schools already mentioned in connection with general education in domestic subjects, and sometimes by genuine technical schools (Denmark<sup>3</sup>, France<sup>4</sup>, Germany, Norway).

It is difficult to say at present which of these two forms of domestic training will ultimately prevail. Evidence as to

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<sup>1</sup> A new standard contract of apprenticeship was concluded in November 1933 between the Federation of German Housewives and the Federation of German Home Workers and Domestic Servants under the auspices of the Labour Trustee. Cf. *Deutsche Zeitschrift für Wohlfahrtspflege*, Nov. 1933, No. 8, p. 350. The year of voluntary service in household work organised for girls leaving school by the Federal Institution for Unemployment Insurance and Employment Exchanges, in collaboration with other bodies, is also subject to a contract of apprenticeship. Cf. *Frankfurter Zeitung*, 4 May 1934, Nos. 223 and 224.

<sup>2</sup> *Der Hausdienst in der Schweiz*, p. 87.

<sup>3</sup> A special kind of domestic training school has been in existence in Copenhagen since 1907 which combines teaching facilities with welfare institutions and undertakings run for profit.

<sup>4</sup> A domestic training school set up at Lyons in 1932 is described in detail in *La Chronique Sociale de France*, Feb. 1933, pp. 144-147.

their respective merits, which is not at present available, would afford useful guidance for the future organisation of the movement.

(b) The purpose of additional training is to provide some of the older domestic workers already in service with an opportunity of improving their position. Particulars on this point are available for Germany.<sup>1</sup> In Prussia, where arrangements have been made for the training of certificated domestic servants, courses have also been organised since 1923 to train servants with long experience as housekeepers and stewards.

All forms of supplementary training, however, entail substantial expenses, including not only the cost of the training itself, but the loss of current wages. The practical importance of facilities for supplementary training for the majority of domestic workers must therefore remain extremely limited until the development of organisation among domestic servants has enabled better provision to be made for it. This, however, implies the existence of strong organisations.

(c) The question of vocational re-training, or the training for domestic service of workers from other occupations, is one of particular moment at the present time. The measures adopted in this field are inspired by two main considerations; first, the fact that the employment situation among domestic servants appears to be less unfavourable than it is for other workers; and secondly, the assumption that every girl or woman is naturally qualified to perform domestic work.

The latter assumption, as already noted, cannot be accepted without substantial reservations, since while many women and girls from other occupations are capable of performing domestic work, it does not necessarily follow that they are suitable to enter domestic service professionally. To ignore the limits set by the personal qualifications of the candidates would be to compromise the success of the policy that vocational training is intended to promote.

On the other hand, although it is true that in general the labour market is more favourable for domestic servants than for other workers—a fact which, as already stated, is due in part to the absence of regulation of their conditions of employment—attempts to transfer workers from other occupations to

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *Die Hausangestelltenzeitung*, No. 5, 1932 (Organ of the Central Federation of Domestic Servants and the German Hall-Porters' Federation).

domestic service can be justified only where there is a shortage of domestic labour. Where there is already extensive unemployment among domestic servants also, measures for vocational re-training may be of doubtful value and may even tend to lower the conditions of employment in the occupation. Where, however, workers are transferred from other occupations to meet a genuine need for domestic labour, this policy is of value to the whole occupation as a means of protecting wages against undercutting by unskilled labour, and to the new recruits who are able as a result of their training to earn a higher wage.

Generally speaking, the re-training courses for unemployed workers from other occupations are organised by the public employment exchanges (Germany, Great Britain, Switzerland). These courses usually last three to four months, at the end of which certificates are sometimes issued to the women attending them. In Great Britain<sup>1</sup> training in domestic work has been provided for many years past, in particular for girls from certain industrial areas, by the Central Committee on Women's Training and Employment. The training is given in unemployment centres, some of which are resident.

#### THE ORGANISATION OF DOMESTIC SERVANTS

It has been noted more than once in the course of this study that besides statutory regulations and suitable training, organised trade union action might play a very important part in improving the conditions of employment and raising the standard of the qualifications of domestic servants. So far, however, any such action has been on a very limited scale.

The question of the organisation of women workers<sup>2</sup> in general is a thorny one, owing to the fact that women so often look upon their occupation as merely temporary. It meets with the same difficulties among domestic servants as among home-workers. Owing to their isolated position these workers take little interest in economic questions. They look upon the difficulties of their occupation and of their individual job as personal ones, not as common to the whole occupation, and

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. *International Labour Review*, Vol. XXVII, No. 5, May 1933, pp. 595-619 : "Unemployment Benefits and Measures for Occupying the Unemployed in Great Britain", by Henry FUSSELL and D. Christie TAIT ; and also *Women in Council* (N.C.W. News), No. 1, Jan. 1933.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. RAGAZ : "Berufliche Organisation der Hausangestellten in der Schweiz", in *Zeitschrift für Schweizer Statistik*, 1932, p. 31.

usually consider a change of job as the most effective remedy. When, as sometimes occurs, an organisation is formed to prosecute specific claims, the members often lose interest in it after a time once these claims have been established.

These general difficulties, encountered in the organisation of many women workers, are further aggravated in the case of domestic servants by the special conditions obtaining in the occupation.

In the first place, domestic servants have little free time. Exceptional keenness is necessary to induce them to devote their one free evening a week, even once or twice a month, to their organisations for purposes other than amusement. This in itself is a source of considerable difficulty, and explains the fact that most of the members of domestic servants' associations are older women. Secondly, membership of an organisation is often opposed by the mistresses, especially in the case of organisations with purely occupational aims. And lastly, there is the great instability among domestic workers, of which existing organisations very frequently complain. This is due to the mobility of the workers in the occupation itself, as they naturally attach less value to membership of a union when they intend sooner or later to change their occupation.

All these reasons, arising from the peculiar living conditions of domestic servants, explain why organisations pursuing social rather than purely economic aims tend to recruit a larger membership.

It is practically impossible to obtain even a rough idea of the nature and size of existing organisations for domestic servants. Trade union publications, which usually afford an insight into the activities of such organisations, are almost non-existent in this domain.<sup>1</sup> The following particulars are therefore merely of interest as examples, and cannot be taken as giving any adequate idea of the real position as regards the organisation of domestic servants. It is certain, however, that the present degree of organisation among domestic servants

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<sup>1</sup> The following publications existed in Germany until recently : (1) *Die Hausangestellte*, organ of the German Federation of Women Domestic Servants ; (2) *Die Hausgehilfin*, organ of the German Federation of Christian Domestic Servants ; (3) *Die Hausangestelltenzeitung*, organ of the German Central Association of Domestic Servants and the German Hall-Porters' Association. The first and third of these no longer appear. In Denmark there is one publication : *Husassistenten*, organ of the Association of Domestic Assistants.

does not in any way correspond to the real importance of this group of workers.

In Finland domestic servants' associations, which were set up in 1900 and formed a federation in 1905, have displayed great activity.<sup>1</sup> The demands put forward by this federation, which has only about 550 members at present, comprise equal civil and political rights for its members, the extension to domestic servants of hours of work legislation, free public employment exchanges, inclusion in sickness and accident insurance schemes, development of vocational training, and the improvement of conditions as regards wages, accommodation, and food. It has succeeded in particular in securing that domestic servants shall be placed on the same footing as other workers as regards their contracts of employment. Persons in domestic employment, who have meanwhile been granted equality of civil and political rights, are now, as already noted in another part of this article, liable to compulsory accident insurance, and can have recourse to the public employment exchanges since the abolition of fee-charging employment agencies in 1926.<sup>2</sup> The organisation has set up an employment office in Helsingfors, a hostel for temporarily unemployed domestic servants, and a summer holiday home.

In Lithuania a trade union for women domestic servants has existed since November 1932. Similar organisations also exist in Denmark and Sweden.

In Germany the former trade unions of all tendencies had sections for women domestic servants. These organisations pursued a vigorous campaign in favour of the regulation of conditions of employment by collective agreement, which met with a certain degree of success in various places and localities. Some of them also demanded the inclusion of domestic servants within the scope of accident insurance. To-day the trade organisation for domestic servants is the Federation of Home Workers and Women Domestic Servants.

In the Netherlands, too, there is a domestic servants' organisation which has tried to improve the conditions of employment of its members and to secure for them the same treatment as other workers, particularly as regards liability to compulsory

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Minna SILAMPAA : *Life and Labour Bulletin*, No. 10, 1931.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. *Pour les Femmes*, Feb. 1932.

sickness insurance and the statutory regulation of hours of work with due regard to the special requirements of the occupation.<sup>1</sup>

In Switzerland women domestic servants can belong to the Federation of Women Domestic, Hotel, and Restaurant Employees (formerly the Catholic Domestic Servants' Federation). There is no section for domestic servants in the Swiss Trade Union Federation.<sup>2</sup>

In Austria the free trade unions used to have a section for women domestic servants, which in 1932 comprised nine local branches with over 4,000 members.

In Czechoslovakia the Federation of Czechoslovak Trade Unions includes an organisation for women domestic servants, which at the beginning of 1934 had a membership of only 404. Similar organisations with a correspondingly small membership have also been set up by other parties. The Federation complains of the extreme mobility of this membership.

### CONCLUSION

The questions taken as the starting point of the present study of servants were why domestic service is a less popular occupation among women than many others involving less varied and less responsible duties, and why, even when conditions on the labour market are normal, there is no automatic balancing of supply and demand in this occupation by recruiting from other branches.

In considering these questions, it was taken as a guiding consideration that a thorough knowledge of present conditions in the occupation is an essential preliminary to their reform, leading perhaps to the opening up of a new field of employment for women workers squeezed out of other branches of economic life. A redistribution of labour along these lines might be of the greatest economic and social significance, but to offer any guarantee of permanence it must be spontaneous.

What conclusion may now be drawn from our enquiries? In the first place, it is clear that the actual hours of work and free time of domestic workers differentiate them from all other workers, whereas the equalisation of these conditions is the more

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<sup>1</sup> In November 1933 this organisation submitted a petition to the Ministry of Social Affairs demanding that persons employed in domestic service be included within the scope of the sickness insurance scheme and of labour legislation in general.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. RAGAZ : *op. cit.*

necessary in their case because the difficulty of getting used to household work is often increased by the isolation in which it is performed. Only a few countries have special legal provisions in this field. Some of these have tried to improve in some measure the conditions which appear to play the largest part in discouraging entry into the occupation. Although provisions to regulate free time and rest periods cannot remove the essential difference between the conditions of employment of domestic servants and those of all other kinds of workers, the introduction of compulsory rest periods during the day and time off during the week nevertheless represents an improvement which becomes a substantial one where, as in certain cases, the law also provides that the hours prescribed may not be exceeded without compensation.

As regards juveniles, there are again only a few laws that make provision for a restriction of working hours and an extension of rest periods and free time.

The absence of uniformity which prevails in respect of hours of work is also evident in the sphere of wages. Although sometimes fairly high, or higher than in other occupations, they depend on wholly arbitrary agreements. With few exceptions, the laws provide no adequate protection against the danger of wage cutting, a danger which exists more or less in all unorganised occupations.

Domestic service as an occupation is often looked down upon in relation to other forms of employment, owing in particular to the disparaging opinion held of domestic work, which usually ranks as unskilled work offering little opportunity for advancement, and also to the unsatisfactory legal status of domestic servants under social legislation and the laws governing contracts of employment. The various enquiries are unanimous in pointing to these various factors as the chief grounds of aversion to entering domestic service.

Is it to be concluded that these drawbacks are an inevitable accompaniment of domestic work as such? This article has, indeed, dealt with the obstacles to the regulation of conditions of employment arising out of the difficulty of effective control, and recommended in the same connection that the public employment exchanges should be made responsible for the placing of domestic workers also. The considerations given below tend to show, however, that the essential objections to the occupation do not lie in the nature of domestic work.

It may be noted in the first place that since it has ceased to be a matter of State concern for the purpose of protecting public health, the gradual extension of restrictions on working hours to the majority of the working class is primarily due to the collective action of the organised workers in defence of their common interests. For a long time such collective action was entirely absent among domestic workers, and even to-day their organisations are undeveloped. This is also one of the factors which account for the special legal status of domestic servants in other domains as well—e.g. under social insurance schemes. In countries where in the course of time organisations have developed and pursued an active policy, the conditions of employment of domestic servants tend to approximate more closely to those of other workers.

Secondly, the absence of any regulation of hours in domestic service also appears to be largely due to a lack of organisation and planning in household management. In industrial undertakings, rationalisation has always gone hand in hand with a reduction in the working hours of labour, while in unrationalised undertakings—for instance, among artisans—the regulation of hours is also less effective. Indirect recognition that faulty organisation is one of the causes of present difficulties is afforded by the attempts that have been made to introduce rationalisation and planning into domestic work. In Germany, for instance, there has for many years been a special branch of the *Reichskuratorium für Wirtschaftlichkeit* to deal with this question of detail.<sup>1</sup>

In order to secure for the occupation of domestic service a status and popularity equal to that enjoyed by the other branches of women's employment, the tendencies which at present appear only sporadically must be developed and a definite occupational policy pursued.

As regards general measures, the aim should be to extend the improvements made during the last few decades in the living and working conditions of all workers as far as possible to domestic servants, and thus to do away with the present social difference between them. As the number of mistresses who themselves are or have been engaged in paid employment

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. various publications of the *Reichskuratorium für Wirtschaftlichkeit* — e.g. *Mitteilungen über Hauswirtschaft*; *Hauswirtschaftlicher Lehrdienst*, and also the agenda of the Fifth International Congress on the teaching of housewifery, Berlin, 1934, referred to in an earlier part of this article.

increases, they will tend more easily to understand the spoken or unspoken demands and desires of their servants, thus facilitating the reform of accepted conditions of employment.

More specifically, the following reforms appear to be necessary : (1) The conditions of employment and economic conditions of domestic servants should be regulated by special legislation and by the inclusion of domestic servants in existing social insurance schemes. (2) Vocational training must be extended and improved with a view to the transformation of domestic service into a skilled occupation, ensuring its recognition as such, and raising the social status of domestic workers. (3) Seeing that the drawbacks to the occupation, and in particular the unrestricted hours of work, are closely bound up with the fact that the servant lives in her employer's household, steps should be taken to mitigate the rigidity of conditions of employment in this respect by encouraging the employment of daily servants, a measure which would conform to the natural economic trends which are leading among other things to a restriction of housing accommodation among wide sections of the population. (4) To remedy the isolated position of domestic workers, steps should be taken to promote their organisation, since the further organisation spreads among domestic workers also, the more capable they will become of collaborating in the regulation of their own living and working conditions.