

I. The Family in Australia in the War Emergency

Muriel Heagney, Delegate, International Labor Office Conference, New York, 1941

In the last century, emphasis rested on the obligation of the parents to provide for their offspring, whereas there is now a steadily increasing recognition of the community's responsibility. The doctrine of the "living wage" was an attempt to translate this ideal into reality, for nearly fifty years directed towards achieving a "basic" or "living" wage which would ensure a man, wife, and two or three children, a minimum standard of decency and comfort. Yet the problem has not been solved in this way, and there is now a tendency to increase specific services and monetary allowances for children. Most of our State Industrial Arbitration Laws embody definitions of the legal minimum wage-for a man, wife and two or three children. The Federal Arbitration Act, could not, owing to constitutional limitations, direct the Commonwealth Arbitration Court as to the standards to be observed, nevertheless, that Court was guided by this prevailing interpretation. In 1907, Mr. Justice Higgins, of the Commonwealth Court gave his historic "Harvester" judgment of 7 shillings per day or 42 shillings per week for the unskilled worker to provide for a family of about five persons. Gradually this was applied to all workers who through their Unions voluntarily came under the Commonwealth Court. Likewise this became the recognized standards of State Industrial Tribunals. Then when living costs rose during the last war, Industrial Courts adopted automatic adjustments of wage rates, in terms of the cost of living, Price Index. Thus, all man's wages have been fixed theoretically as a family wage. At the same time women's wages were based on the needs of a single woman without dependents. Recently the Commonwealth Court abandoned the five unit family standard by declaring that the male basic wage was only sufficient for a man, wife and one child. This declaration facilitated the introduction of a Child Endowment Scheme through the Commonwealth Parliament providing a payment of 5 shillings per week in respect to every child in a family except the first child without discrimination as to the income of the parents. This principle of child endowment has the support of the Australian Labor Movement which twenty years ago, by resolution affirmed that the service rendered to the community by the mother in the care and nurture of the child must be recognized as a community service and compensated and that payment for such services must be regarded as a right and should be charged against the total resources of the nation.

The endowment of motherhood and childhood has, therefore, entered the realm of practical politics and Labor people anticipate that all children will be endowed to self-supporting age and that the services of the mother will be recognized in special allowances. The changed attitude of the Court on the "needs" basic wage will also open the way to a better appraisal of the value of the workers' contribution to wealth production and facilitate the fixation of a rate for the job irrespective of the conjugal condition, race or sex of the worker.

The Maternity Allowance Act of 1911 provided an allowance of 5 pounds for every mother on the birth of a child; and although slightly reduced, this continues a boon to mothers in the lower income range. Pre-natal and post-natal as well as baby clinics available to all improve the chances of our children; and educational facilities of all types including nursery schools are expanding.

The wives and children of enlisted soldiers are provided for by special allowances. Widows' pensions operate in some states, while Federal old-age and invalid pensions relieve the pressure on the incomes of relatives. In taxation and all legislation an attempt has been made to ease the burden of war economy upon taxpayers with dependents. Price-fixing Commissions and Fair Rents Courts have been appointed.

The Australian family is still mainly dependent on the economic status of the breadwinner and real comfort and security require the income of the average group. At the same time lower-income families enjoy a higher standard of life by the extension of free medical, educational and social services in which there is no reduction yet on account of war conditions, but on the contrary, a tendency for the Government to augment funds of social organizations to preserve essential social services.

## II. The Municipal Day Nurseries in Havana, Cuba

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Cuba has two types of pre-school institutions: the Day Nurseries and the Kindergartens, dating from the military occupation of the Island by the United States Army. The Havana Day Nurseries instituted in 1904, by sanction of the Mayor, Doctor Ramon O'Farrill, and now nine in number are supported respectively by the Municipality, by the Office of the Secretary of Public Health and Social Welfare, or by semi-official institutions. The Kindergartens are supported by the Government, and some by private institutions.

The Municipal Day Nurseries are Day Schools, devoted to the shelter of children from one to six years, from families of factory or domestic workers. The administration of each Day Nursery is carried out by a director with one assistant and a social worker. The Board of Inspectors make a rigorous inspection sending weekly reports to the Central Board. The domestic service is performed by six employees who prepare healthy foods and care for the hygiene of the Nursery. Each Day Nursery is in a suitable building with a capacity for fifty children, including: a director's office, a reading room, a kindergarten classroom, other rooms and ample yard where children spend most of the day. Admission takes place through an application, submitted to a social worker and approved or refused at the discretion of the Director of Municipal Welfare. Admission requires a thorough dental and general medical examination, with the following tests: Urine, Faecal, Kahn, Mantoux, Meinicke's and Homograms.

Children remain at the Nursery according to the following schedule: The Nursery is open from 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.: from 7:30 to 8:00, breakfast; from 8:00 to 11:00, out-of-doors, games, exercises; from 11:30 to 12, luncheon; from 12:00 noon to 2:00 p.m., out-of-doors bed rest; from 2:30 to 3:00, a light meal; from 3:00 to 5:30, out-of-doors, and from 5:30 to 6:00, dinner. From 6:00 p.m. on, parents call for their children. The children are provided with meals, uniforms, shoes, sweaters, bathing suits, etc., and also are given Christmas and New Year presents.

From the social point of view, the Day Nurseries exert a very beneficial influence on lower income families, by assuring proper nourishment for their children's physical development; and by facilitating employment.

In their scientific aspect, the Day Nurseries pay particular attention to Nutrition, with special regard to vitamins and caloric requirements; supplemented with sun baths, and during the summer the benefits of the Municipal Beach. The Municipal Infants' Hospital administers medicines, keeps a record of each child and cares for emergency cases. A dental cabinet is installed in some of these Day Nurseries. The improvement in health is remarkable considering that most of these children enter the institution with rickets.

Between 1936 and 1940, when I was General Inspector of Municipal Day Nurseries, I instituted in them a scientific organization for psychological pre-school studies. (Up to that time not known in Cuba.) In collaboration with the eminent Professor J. A. Encinas, and following the methods of Doctor Arnold Gesell, Director of the Psychological Clinic of Yale University, nine sets of pedagogical material were used to determine by experimental methods the degree of progress of the child's mentality and muscular coordination according to the four aspects of behavior: the motor, the verbal, the adaptive and the social; this was accompanied by a physical examination of the child, thus completing its record.

There is also in each Municipal Day Nursery a Froebel Kindergarten program, given to children between four and six years old, during the morning hours.

The important point to solve in the pre-school institutions of Cuba is the establishment of improved systems and ideas, especially from the sociological and pedagogical standpoint. With this object in view, my studies at the Yale Institute of Human Relations, and my contacts with its Clinic of Child Development are enabling me to acquire invaluable knowledge in the field of Child Psychology. These studies, I hope to pursue in spite of the difficult times, through which we are passing. Ideals are achieved only at the cost of personal sacrifice. And if at this time a great struggle is going on for the democratic unity of our continent, I am of the opinion, that the same struggle will subsequently exercise a favourable influence upon this democratic unity, and the Cuban child will also derive a benefit. Thus, Cuba and the United States will work in unison in war, in peace and in the field of education.

### III. The Rural Family in Argentina

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The essential aspect of Argentine Economic development is its agrarian character. The problem of land division and increase of small family farms is an unsolved problem for family and social welfare. Except for great industrial centers of Buenos Aires, La Plata and Rosario, and agricultural industrial processing areas like Mendoza, Tucamen Cordoba depending on the farm products of adjacent districts, the country is essentially agrarian, and vast areas are absolutely so.

The rural population includes, besides the few thousand great land owners, some 300,000 peasant families; and also the "puesteros" or overseers of herds and of the workers on farms and with stock. The wage farm-workers, or "peon de camps", are migratory and fluctuating in numbers. The authentic peasant land owner, the "chazarero", has 200 to 300 acres which his family cultivates, supplemented by peon labor. There are also tenant farmers, the "colonos", and among them the "medieros" or share croppers, whose position is often precarious, and who are subject to dispossession. The settled farmer, whether owner or the better-equipped tenant lives in a small frame or cement house on the farm which is equipped for a moderately comfortable living; and provides vegetables, milk, poultry, and farm meat for the family table. If the rural school program, were enriched with agriculture, food and nutrition, child care and housekeeping teaching, and if rural extension farm and home teaching of adults were developed, these settled farm families would be steadily improving their living, and the tenant farmers and share croppers would become more secure.

Rural education is a great national problem. The difficulty is primarily due to the vast expanses, the poor density of rural population and the absence of community living for most families. The National government years ago established national elementary schools many of them in rural districts. It has also employed itinerant teachers to reach isolated families and has developed rural libraries. A government official has just reported on centralized schools and pupil transportation in the United States looking to developing this method in Argentina. The National Board of Education has just been voted 7 millions pesos annually to develop boarding schools for rural young people.

One central problem is the rural school curriculum which has provided the traditional general education without reference to rural affairs and farm living. Our rural elementary schools must concern themselves with the vocations, health, homes and leisure activities of rural people and lead to better farming and better farm living.

The rural woman bears the responsibility of guiding the family, of using its resources, of saving. Yet she also works next to the man in the fields, in addition to carrying all the duties of housekeeping. Home Economics for boys in America suggests some teaching regarding family life and the home for our rural boys.

The Argentina woman has no vote or political rights. She is not profoundly religious, but she is Catholic. Her domestic relations are determined by the liberal civil rights of the country but practically she subordinates her rights to those of her husband. There is no divorce and the family is based on strong tradition.

In Periodic agrarian crises there is no law to check the tenant farmer being dispossessed. The Federal government does provide homestead lands at a low rent, but usually in more remote districts. A new homestead law aims to encourage home-owning and will increase the security of some families.

The families and the children of migratory farm laborers are in the worst plight - poverty, improvised homes, no comforts, small earnings, practically no schooling. New programs for them are called for. Perhaps the permanent and semi-permanent migrant camps which America has developed may be adapted to our needs. The placing of migrant children in boarding homes near schools or in boarding schools may help in individual cases, but the family unit needs to be kept together and rural education must educate on the land.

Because the Argentine economy is agrarian, her future depends on her rural population. But any public policy, rural or urban, in Argentine and in every nation, gets its most searching test by asking what will be its effect on the welfare of the individual family and its children.

#### IV. Program for Rural Chile

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Home economics in Chile has not yet been fully developed in our schools. Vitamines, with us, are vitamines in the abstract, while you have translated them into human happiness and happy homes. The parallel field of the trained nurse was opened

Summarized from an address by Miss Mandujano, reported in Journal of Home Economics, October, 1941, p. 533-536. (Due to war conditions, Miss Mandujano's special article did not reach New York in time for the December 30 program; and this is substituted.)

some years ago in Chile and now five schools with high standards have been organized and in these the teaching of scientific dietetics is being introduced as fast as Chilean teachers can be trained.

My own work, in purpose like rural home economics in the United States, deals with improving the living of rural people by furnishing an information service and center under our Minister of Agriculture.

Home conditions among different classes in all our countries differ greatly with us ranging from beautiful haciendas and farm homes and city mansions down to those living in poverty. Some of our standards parallel those of certain American standards but our lower levels are generally worse than yours. At first, our people like other peoples, assumed that it was necessary that these things should be. Now we know that they do not have to be and my government like your government is considering how to change these conditions. Our problem is double because we have had a lack of education to meet these problems, and a lack of ample means. But our Minister of Agriculture proposed a few years ago a program for bettering rural social conditions and set aside \$5000 for the initial program. We started by writing a little book for rural people - with a bit of history, some suggestions regarding farming, something on health practices and housekeeping, and including some amusing stories, and songs, to catch the interest and stimulate more learning. And the book carried our invitation:- "If you want any help, if you want any advice; we are here to serve you; so please write to us." 16,000 copies went to 16,000 families whose names were secured through the rural police. Enquiries began coming in, 20, 50 up to 300 a day. I answered each letter personally and in a friendly way - and soon had to have help. Various departments of the government assist us informally with facts. Our motto was "news to raise false hopes" - and we have now answered 40,000 friendly S.O.S. letters in the most helpful way we could.

It was very beautiful, really so beautiful, that when our money was spent and we were going home, the Minister of Agriculture said, "No you are going to have money for another book", and he secured \$30000! Then we soon had two more books, and a primer printed and have sent out 200,000 copies on request. And then the Minister said: "This is not enough. Here you are lazy people, sitting at your desks! Why don't you go out? Why don't you meet your friend?"

So in specially fitted trucks we went 40 days into the corn country, and camped on farm after farm, cooking our own meals. People came and sat around us and we talked to them helping them on their problems. We shared our meals and fire; and our candy with the children. We found that people living in little huts are just people like us; as soon as they use a cake of soap and a little water there is no difference between us and them.

When our program of visits was announced, only one landowner opposed us, and when he saw our work in his neighborhood he invited us to his hacienda and he has been our greatest friend ever since and has told everybody about our work.

This rural information service by letters, by bulletins, by field trips, could be developed in any country. And as education in home economics and nutrition and child care becomes available in schools, this service to extend practical knowledge to rural families who need it most would find ways to develop other educational features as have been done in the home economics extension work of the United States.

V. The Woman in the Brazilian Family

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Because source material is not at hand, this paper is not a research and cannot be supported by authorities. It is only a personal point of view based on the observation of the present and a certain knowledge of the past. Only the sincere desire to cooperate induced me to take part in the conference without having at hand the means of producing a sound statement on the subject.

In the first century of Brazil's life, that is, in the XVIIth century, the family as a social unity was not yet organized. We can explain this situation easily as a result of the kind of colonization we had which differs profoundly from yours. The first groups which came to North America as colonizers were families that came here to establish themselves and make of the colony a new country. In Brazil the situation was very different, the first colonizers were men who went there seeking the discovery of gold with the intention of returning to Europe to enjoy life. As a consequence of this, white women were very scarce at the time in Brazil and we can read in a letter of P. Manoel da Nobrega, one of the Jesuits that first organized schools in Brazil, written to his superior in Portugal: "I think it would be very good if Your Highness could send here some women who have no chance of getting a husband up there for they would all make very fine marriages in the colony even if they are bad."

But with time the colonization took a firm character and the family developed and organized itself on a solid basis deriving its force from rural property, economic independence and the influence of the Catholic religion which spread vigorously its rules and practices among the new social nuclei. The family then large and patriarchal had a sort of clan organization. Everything and everybody was ruled by the rural senior, the pater familias; the interests of the kin were all common. The woman of course under such a regime had no freedom at all, she was ruled by the father until her marriage and when she married a husband chosen by the father, she only changed her master, her condition remained the same. She lived confined in her home surrounded by slave women, sewing, embroidering and praying, and to learn these was almost all the education she ever got. While the Portuguese took good care of the education of their sons, the upper class having the habit of sending the boys over to European Universities to achieve their training, they did not provide at all for the education of their daughters except that of the household arts. The percentage of illiteracy among women of the upper class in the beginning of the XVIIIth century was enormous. The pater familias had the impression that knowing how to read and to write would wrong the morals of their women folks: "They will be able to send secretly letters to their sweethearts and Good Gracious! not even the smartest of the fathers could then handle them!" used to say, one moralist of the epoch.

Thanks to the Good Heavens, how different is the picture of today. Little by little Brazilian women have won their road to freedom. Statistics show almost an equal number of boys and girls attending secondary schools. In the Universities although the number of male attendants is far superior, the enrollment of women is increasing amazingly these last years. As a consequence of being educated, Brazilian women acquired social and political freedom. In 1932 for the first time in the history of Brazil was granted to the women the privilege of vote. They showed immediately that they were prepared to use it. The enlistment of women as voters astonished those who believed that the majority would remain indifferent. Three women were elected among the deputies who had charge of elaborating a new Constitution for Brazil. Another fact then illustrated how Brazilian women had developed an opinion of their own. We have not yet divorce in Brazil due to the persisting influence of the Catholic Church. In 1932 a man who made a violent campaign, through

the newspapers, in favor of divorce, presented himself as a candidate. His only titles were his opinions, he was not related to any political party and had no chance to be elected, in the opinion of the experts. But he was, through the women. We have not obtained divorce laws, it is true, but the discussions about the subject in the House, attended by thousands of women did their work in clearing a bit the road towards it.

Brazilian women today have reached posts in all professions and we can say that the boundary lines which separated the feminine sector from various activities have been obliterated. Our National Museum has at its head a woman and her administration is one of the most successful. She has sent scientists here to the United States in research work and I just heard that she has been invited by the State Department to come here on a visit. Our secondary education system is a centralized one, and it is ruled by a Federal Department which is also headed by a woman. In the 21 states of the Union, women have important places in the administration and the picture of our women doctors, lawyers, engineers, educators, etc., spreading their efficient activity throughout the nation, is certainly a sign of the progress of liberal ideas in a country that showed such a dark frame a little more than a century ago.

Our women share with the men the responsibility of raising and educating the children, a great part of them contribute financially to keep the home and some are the only breadwinners for the family when they are widows or when the husbands are sick or out of a job. In any case, they have won their place as a partner of the man thus achieving a position of dignity and self respect. Their new rights are recognized by the Government. We have maternity laws compulsory throughout the country: Each woman has three months of absence with full pay in case of childbirth and the guarantee of her job when she comes back. Several firms, banks and industry have a special time schedule for nursing mothers. You can see then that the Brazilian woman enjoys the same rights and privileges achieved by American woman, although the difference of temperament between the two mark typically the expression of these rights and privileges.