



Facts on Women Workers

WOMEN'S BUREAU
U.S. DEPARTMENT
OF LABOR

OCTOBER 31, 1948

EMPLOYMENT OF WOMEN IN SEPTEMBER

The larger number of adult women employed in agriculture in September 1948 than in August more than offset the decrease in numbers of women employed in nonagricultural work, according to the Census Bureau, resulting in a net increase in women's employment. The very large increase in September's agricultural employment — chiefly in cotton picking and harvesting of tobacco — was accounted for almost entirely by women. Women workers are also used extensively in harvesting many fruits and vegetables.

Women in nonagricultural work numbered 15,630,000 in September, a decrease of 335,000 since August (most of those leaving jobs having taken them for the summer only). However, the September 1948 employment figure represents 687,000 more women in nonagricultural work than that of September 1947.

	September 1948			
	Number of women	Change since August 1948	Total persons	
			Number	Percent women
Population (14 years and over)	55,252,000	+ 53,000	108,753,000	50.8
Civilian labor force	18,111,000	+ 140,000	62,212,000	29.1
Employed	17,462,000	+ 106,000	60,312,000	29.0
Unemployed	648,000	+ 33,000	1,899,000	34.1
Armed forces	14,000	- 1,000	1,366,000	1.0
Nonworkers	37,128,000	- 85,000	45,176,000	82.2

(U. S. Bureau of the Census)

Nonwhite women workers. Well known is the fact that a greater proportion of nonwhite than of white persons are in the labor force, but not so well understood is the fact that this is almost entirely attributable to the greater degree of labor force participation of nonwhite women as compared with white women. There is relatively little difference between the extent to which white and nonwhite men are in the labor force. Since V-J day, the proportion of nonwhite women who work has declined in comparison with what has happened to white women workers. At present, allowing for seasonal differences, the proportion of nonwhite women at work is almost back to the level of April 1940, but for white women the proportion who are in the labor force is still definitely above the 1940 level. In September 1948, 47.9 percent of nonwhite women were working, compared to only 31.2 percent of white women.

MINIMUM WAGE

The District of Columbia revised its wage order for "Manufacturing and Wholesaling Occupations," effective November 17, 1948 (superseding the order of June 5, 1939). It establishes for office and plant employees (women and minors) a minimum wage rate of \$30 for each workweek of 32 to 40 hours inclusive, a part time minimum rate of 85 cents per hour applicable to work of less than 32 hours per week, and an overtime minimum rate of \$1.12½ per hour for work in excess of 40 hours per week.

Washington State has begun to hold a series of public hearings in connection with revision of wage orders for the Office Workers' Occupation, the Mercantile Industry, and the Amusement Industries. The first public hearing for the Office Workers' Occupation was held on September 20, and for the Amusement Industries on October 18. A public hearing for the Mercantile Industry is scheduled for November 8. These hearings are among the final steps in a long-range program for revision of wage rates established early in the war period or in prewar years. Prior to the hearings, the Washington State Department of Labor and Industries completed a comprehensive survey of wages, hours, and working conditions for women and minor workers in various industries; it also made a survey of the cost of living for a single self-supporting woman.

WOMEN IN UNIONS - Maternity leave

An analysis of provisions of 300 union contracts covering office workers has been made by the American Management Association. In most contracts prolonged absence because of pregnancy is covered by general leave of absence provisions, since pregnancy "would be considered 'good reason' for a leave." A separate maternity leave clause is contained in quite a few contracts which "often specifies the maximum period before expected confinement that an employee will be permitted to work, and the earliest date on which she may return." Early notice of pregnancy, doctor's statements periodically concerning fitness to continue at work, and a medical certificate before reinstatement may be required.

The National Industrial Conference Board has made an analysis of 373 union agreements negotiated since the Taft-Hartley Act was passed to ascertain the extent that health and welfare provisions are incorporated in union contracts. Details are given for 25 agreements: "Disability benefits are paid for pregnancy of women employees under 12 plans, but in these cases maximum payments are limited to 6 weeks." Of the 17 plans which finance hospital benefits through insurance, "only 5 ... provide maternity hospitalization benefits for women employees. In these cases, benefits are paid for varying periods ranging from 10 to 14 days."

NEW INDUSTRIES IN PUERTO RICO

In Puerto Rico where unemployment continues to be a serious problem new industries are being recruited by the Puerto Rico Industrial Development Company with a reported investment of around \$15,000,000. More than 4,000 persons including many women will be employed when the construction of plants located in different parts of the Island is completed, in the manufacture of print goods out of cotton brought from the States, leather goods, popular-priced candies from native materials, machine-made fabric gloves, in the decoration of chinaware, and on other processes requiring fine needleworkers.

ACTION ON STATUS OF WOMEN - UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL COUNCIL

Seven resolutions on the status of women were passed at the seventh session of the United Nations Economic and Social Council. Recommendations or requests to Member States dealt with granting to women the same political rights as men; giving women equal access to public service at all levels including national delegations to United Nations and related bodies; granting women equal educational opportunities. Member States were invited to take measures "so that ... women shall benefit by the same rights as men in regard to employment and remuneration therefor ... leisure, social insurance, and professional training." Requests were made to the Secretary-General (1) to obtain information and prepare a report on "discrimination against women arising from conflicts in national laws relating to nationality, domicile, marriage, and divorce," and (2) to obtain assistance of world information agencies in removing prejudices against equality between men and women. Another resolution deplored legislative measures which forbid mixed marriages and other legislative or administrative restrictions on freedom to choose a spouse. (A brief summary of the resolutions is contained in the United Nations Bulletin, September 15, 1948.)

COOPERATION WITH OTHER AMERICAN REPUBLICS

Sra. Beatriz J. de Rubiano of Colombia, and Srta. Dora Teresa Pazos of Peru have just completed a four months' training program in this country, conducted by the Women's Bureau under the U. S. Government's program of cooperation with the other American Republics. Sra. de Rubiano is Administrative Assistant to the Minister of Labor of Colombia, and Srta. Pazos is an Inspector in the Division of Women and Children of the National Department of Labor of Peru.

The Women's Bureau has developed its training course, in which women labor department officials from other countries learn enforcement methods, minimum wage board procedures, and conditions in factories employing women, through the cooperation of State agencies administering women's labor laws. This year State officials in Rhode Island, California, New York, and Wisconsin gave valuable assistance and cooperation in this program.

WOMEN IN GOVERNMENT - Cuba

Srta. Mariblanca Sabas Aloma of Cuba, journalist and author, has been appointed Minister without portfolio to the Cabinet of the recently elected President of Cuba. Active in politics, Srta. Sabas Aloma was at one time Governor of one of the Provinces of Cuba.

WOMAN SCIENTIST AWARDED CERTIFICATE OF MERIT

Among the women who have been officially recognized for outstanding wartime service is Miss Gladys A. Anslow, Professor of Physics and director of graduate study at Smith College. Miss Anslow received the "President's certificate of Merit," second highest award granted to civilians by the President of the United States. In her wartime work with the Office of Scientific Research and Development she sent information to civilian scientists accompanying the armed forces, to keep them informed of technical developments on medical problems and on such devices as radar, rockets, flame throwers, optical instruments, landing devices, directed missiles, silent weapons, and mine detectors.

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Outlook for Women in Science. Five pamphlets in this Women's Bureau survey are now available: Chemistry, Biological Sciences, Physics and Astronomy, Mathematics and Statistics, Occupations Related to Science. The other 3 bulletins will be available within the next 3 months.

Report on Trends in Night Work for Women in New York State Factories (1941-1947). Women Who Work at Night. Both reports were issued by the New York Department of Labor.

Women in Government. State Government, June 1948. Council of State Governments, 1313 East 60th Street, Chicago 37, Illinois.

How to be a Successful Advertising Woman. Ed. Mary Margaret McBride, McGraw-Hill, New York. 1948. (A career guide for women in advertising, public relations, and related fields.)

Alabama Girls After High School. Alabama College Bulletin, Montevallo, Ala. July 1948. (A report by Rochelle Rodd Gachet on a second follow-up of former girl students of six Alabama high schools, who were graduated in 1940 and 1941.)

What the TUC [Trades Union Congress] Is Doing (last section is on women workers). Trades Union Congress. London, England. 48 pp. Spring 1948.

United Nations Action on Human Rights, issued by Office of Public Affairs, U. S. Dept. of State, Washington 25, D.C. (A statement of current progress at the General Assembly in Paris on the International Declaration of Human Rights and other human rights proposals now before the United Nations.)

Correction - In the September issue, under the heading "Women in ILO Delegations," the name of Miss Raffalovich (France) was included. Although appointed a substitute delegate as well as government adviser for her country, Miss Raffalovich was unable to come to the San Francisco conference and her name should not have been among those present.