



UNION WOMAN

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OWW members meeting Sept. 16 — see page 4 —

Postal workers win a victory for all labor

By JOAN OSBORNE

Although the wage increase of 70 cents per hour in each year of a two-year contract was minimal, many important contractual gains were made in CUPW's latest struggle. Especially important were gains in the areas of health and safety. This article deals only with the maternity-pay issue and its social context.

This summer the Canadian Union of Postal Workers went all out for employer-paid maternity leave. The Treasury Board said 'no way', but CUPW meant business.

Most of its members will never cash in but, as Jean-Claude Parrot said: "This union was willing to fight for the rights of its minorities and to make a breakthrough which will benefit other workers." When a brother in a Toronto meeting complained that postal workers could have waited for some other union to make the breakthrough, a sister shouted "Why?". The reaction of the crowd of posties made it clear that they understand that there is more to trade unionism than grabbing raises and benefits for ourselves.

Twenty years ago the maternity-pay question would have been a joke in this country. Canadian women quit their jobs to give birth. If they had to return to work they found new jobs and suffered hardship. Even sole-support mothers couldn't deduct child-care expenses from taxable income. Women weren't yet into pressure-group tactics and unions were for men.

Fortunately, times changed.

As far back as 1952 the International Labour Organization called for compulsory maternity leave, accompanied by cash benefits out of public funds. Canada did not comply then but accepted these principles after the United Nations Declaration on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women of 1967.

By this time women were mak-

ing public scenes in the U.S. and Canada, protesting inequality.

In 1970 the Royal Commission on the Status of Women insisted that both society and employers had a responsibility to the pregnant worker. It urged job protection and income protection through the unemployment insurance scheme.

The Unemployment Insurance Act of 1971 provided benefits for women off work for maternity. The employers had to pay part of the cost because they paid 1.4 times their employees' contributions into the fund.

Federal and some provincial governments legislated job-protection during time off for maternity.

Meanwhile a number of European countries with both free-enterprise and socialist economies had legislated maternity leave with full, or almost-full, pay. Canada lagged behind.

In 1976 the Advisory Council on the Status of Women recommended the Unemployment Insurance Act be amended to allow employers to make up the difference between regular salary and UIC benefits and that employers be required to continue paying their share of fringe-benefit plans.

Canadian unions began negotiating fringe-benefit payments during maternity leave.

The first real breakthrough came when Quebec government employees won 20 weeks fully-paid maternity leave.

On July 6, 1980 the *Toronto Globe and Mail* quoted a speech by Lloyd Axworthy at the World Conference of the United Nations Decade for Women held in Copenhagen. Axworthy advocated significant advancement for women during the eighties. However, when Federal Government Translators struck for maternity pay three months later, they were turned down. All they got was the

• Continued Page 2



— M. Phillips

OWW Supports Postal Workers

Members of Organized Working Women were part of a solidarity picket for the Canadian Union of Postal Workers during their six week strike this summer (l. to r.) Cathi Carr, Lois Bedard, Joyce Rosenthal. A major issue in the strike was 17 weeks paid maternity leave.

Health cuts hurt everyone

By CATHI CARR

"Underfunding by deliberate government policy is pernicious. Staff morale suffers if insufficient funds are made available to maintain services. Pride in looking after patients turns to fear that jobs will be eliminated if cutbacks continue."

So said Mr. Alan Hay, the recently deceased Executive Director of the Ontario Hospital Association on December 1, 1980.

The number of patients admitted to hospital corridors has increased dramatically. The *Globe and Mail* has documented that in one particular hospital in Toronto, some acutely ill patients sleep on hard narrow stretchers in the Emergency department for two or three days waiting for an empty bed.

Bed closures is one of the serious side effects of the government's underfunding policy. Most hospitals have been forced to cut their beds to conform with the arbitrary guideline of 3.5 beds per thousand population in southern Ontario, and 4.0 in northern Ontario. This province now has the lowest number of beds per capita in the country, and a very inequitable functional distribution of those beds. There is a severe shortage of beds for chronic, re-

habilitation, and nursing home care.

The Ministry of Health in pursuing this cutbacks policy is seriously underfunding the hospitals of this province. The 1979-80 budgets were to increase by only 4.5%, despite the fact that the inflation rate was around 9%. The 1980-81 allowable increases were in the range of 7.8% despite the current inflation rate which exceeds 12%.

Government cutbacks in health services initiated in 1975 are being as keenly felt today as ever before. Tory restraint policies have led to a marked deterioration in hospital services.

The *Toronto Star* Special Report also noted that financial cutbacks have resulted in reductions in nursing staff in most hospitals.

CUPE reports that there have been numerous layoffs of their members, but even more cuts via attrition. Workers who quit or who retire are often not replaced, or are replaced with only a part-time employee. The impact of staff reductions includes increased workload, declining staff morale and deterioration in patient care.

In an attempt to try and remedy some of these horrendous problems hospitals have greatly in-

creased their use of volunteers. In its brief to the Weiler arbitration board, CUPE exposed this alarming increase.

"Volunteers are no longer providing 'extras' or the 'added touches' to the hospitals — they are working for the hospital as unpaid labour. Volunteers are admitting patients, portering them, cleaning the hospital — you name it, they're doing it." Some hospital administrators see volunteers as essential to the survival of their institutions.

In the midst of this chaos, the Government has encouraged the proliferation of the popular myth that health care spending is out of control. Ontario, in fact, spends the second lowest proportion of its Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on health care. Ontario spent 4.8% of its GDP on health care in 1978/79 compared to, for example, 9.4% for Prince Edward Island. Statistics also show that Ontario's per capita health expenditure is significantly below the national average. Hospital expenditures, like total health spending in Ontario, have not increased any faster than the growth of the economy.

Cathi Carr is the Health and Safety Representative in the Ontario Nurses' Association Staff Union.

MATERNITY LEAVE IN EUROPE

Country	Length of paid maternity leave	Maternity benefits
Sweden	9 months. Leave after birth may be taken by either parent.	90% of salary of parent taking leave. Paid by employer.
Czechoslovakia	26 weeks	99% of wages
Denmark	14 weeks	90% of salary or wages
France	16 weeks (26 weeks for third child)	90% of salary or wages
West Germany	14 weeks	100% of salary or wages
East Germany	26 weeks	100% of salary or wages
Hungary	20 weeks	Full pay if employed 270 days prior to confinement.
Italy	20 weeks	80% of salary or wages
Netherlands	12 weeks	100% of earnings
Poland	16 weeks for 1st child. 18 weeks for 2nd child. 26 weeks in case of multiple birth*	100% of earnings
U.S.S.R.	16 weeks	100% of earnings. No minimum length of service requirements.

*Has been improved recently, no details presently available.

NEWS ITEM: Secretaries object to serving coffee



Joan Osborne

You think you've got troubles? B.S. Lecher got charged with sexual harassment and our damned word-processing girls joined a union.

ONE FOR OUR SIDE: A complaint by a Toronto secretary before the Ontario Labour Relations Board has been upheld. The ruling states that the sister would no longer be required to serve coffee to her boss since that function is not outlined in her job description nor was she told she would be required to double as a waitress when she was hired.

Daycare workers organize

By AGI LUKACS

Have you heard the news? The women and men who are caring for your kids are often working for peanuts. Or perhaps, you too are a daycare worker, coping with lousy salary, broken equipment and staff shortages: doubling as a cook or janitor, as well as, caring for kids.

Daycare workers in Ottawa, with the full support of many daycare parents, have waged a successful fight to change this situation — by unionizing. Other daycare workers are now following in their footsteps as several Toronto daycare centres have now been organized into Local 2484 of CUPE and as workers in Sault Ste. Marie and Windsor have also begun organizing.

In Ottawa, the drive began five years ago with workers at commercial and co-op centres. The first year of the contract provided salaries that ranged from \$11,510. to \$15,310. The wage spread by the end of 1981 is \$12,990. to \$17,064., with the average wage being \$14,500. Now the newly-unionized workers are within one year of completely catching up to municipal workers' wages and benefits.

In contrast to the Ottawa experience, non-unionized workers in Toronto who have similar education, experience, responsibilities and economic needs

make, on average, less than \$9,000. a year with few benefits, save those required by law.

Why is the Ottawa drive so promising? In June, Larry Katz, a CUPE researcher told a unionizing support meeting in Toronto that the drive linked the demand for more quality daycare to the demand for a catchup wage increase. The Ottawa workers now negotiate hours of work and vacations that recognize the pressure of their work situations; as well as, improved child-staff ratios. This cuts down on the high turnover of burnt-out (but once enthusiastic) workers.

Katz also told the Toronto meeting which was organized by Action Daycare, a group of daycare parents, workers and supporters that daycare jobs are too often seen as women's jobs, under-valued at work, as in the home. Only when daycare is the right of every child, will daycare work be recognized as really valuable.

Workers have sometimes hesitated to organize in the past, knowing that most parents' fees (from \$2,000. to \$6,000. a year) were already a real burden. They knew that increased fees could lead to reduced staff, or even to the closing of centres; but, parents also realized that they couldn't allow daycare workers to subsidize their children's qual-

ity daycare. The Ottawa group therefore, made the provincial government their target and achieved the necessary funding.

By having goals that made sense to both parents and daycare workers, the union drive was able to stay unified and strong; even the municipal government finally helped to lobby.

What is the future of daycare unionization in Ontario? The Ottawa CUPE drive is a hopeful sign; OPSEU is organizing "Mini-Schools", the largest daycare corporation in Canada with eight centres in Ontario as of 1980, some featuring gross violations of the child-staff ratio, working conditions and food; and CUPE is also organizing in three other cities.

Unionization is the key not only to improving daycare workers' salaries and benefits, but by improving such things as child-staff ratios and workers' hours of work, the quality of care also goes up. As daycare workers' jobs and job security improve they can provide a stable basis for the much-needed fight to expand daycare.

If you want more information about the Toronto unionizing support committee call Action Daycare (416-362-1033).

Agi Lukacs is a member of the Faculty Association at the University of Toronto.

UPDATE

Wardair locks out workers

In a vindictive response to a series of rotating strikes launched Aug. 6 by the Canadian Airline Flight Attendants Association, (CALFA), backing demands for a new contract, Wardair management took steps to lock out the union members from their jobs.

For months during contract talks and prior to the CALFA protests, Wardair has been training some 500 office staff and volunteers off the street to scab on the unionized flight attendants if a strike were called.

Shortly after the first rotating strike a total of 725 flight attendants were barred from Wardair flights in Europe, North America and Hawaii. The union members found themselves stranded at various hotels around the world with the company informing them there would be no buses to take them to the airports and they would be refused passage back to Canada on all Wardair flights.

At issue is the union's demand for parity with colleagues doing the same work at Air Canada. The starting wage at Air Canada for flight attendants is \$13,025 a year while Wardair pays \$12,365, making them the lowest paid in Canada. The company also wants to reduce rest periods between flights from 24 to 12 hours and scrap the existing sick leave plan.

CALFA is considering suing Wardair for damages incurred by the stranded workers, who were brought home at the union's expense. It is also considering charging the company with unfair labour practices.



Tel-Air strike continues

Members of the Communications Workers of Canada staged a protest outside Tel-Air in Oshawa to back up contract demands. These telephone operators were certified in March 1980 and have been on strike since November but Tel-Air has refused to meet with the union. The company is trying to break the local through the use of scab labour. Present wages range from \$3.00 to \$4.25 an hour. The company has said no to a COLA clause, no to 50% OHIP; and says only one striker is to return on signing an agreement. The rest will be laid off.

Postal workers win

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equivalent to two weeks' UIC benefits.

In November the Ontario Federation of Labour endorsed a policy on daycare which included substantial paid maternity leave recommendations.

Lloyd Axworthy was again in the news throughout January, February and March when Doris Anderson gave up a lucrative job and led an exodus from the Advisory Council on the Status of Women.

In this context, CUPW took up the cause. Recommendations for a demand for paid maternity leave had come from locals across the country. The all-male National Executive Board was technically empowered under the union constitution to ignore or assign a minor role to the demand. It got a major role.

A demand for 20 weeks fully-paid maternity leave appeared at the head of demands listed on bulletins to the members. Background material was prepared and sent to women's groups with a request for support.

The conciliators took an enlightened view and recommended 17 weeks at full pay because of the

Canadian government's international commitment.

Treasury Board again said no. The union struck — its militant leaders and members battle-scarred from previous strikes.

Organized business directly opposed maternity pay. Women's groups supported it and joined the union's rallies. Federal Conservatives called for back-to-work legislation but did not condemn the union or the issue.

Media coverage was generally anti-union.

The Public Service Alliance gave some support in centers where labour is strong. Office clerks in London, Ontario had a 90% honour rate for a few days. Support in Toronto was virtually nonexistent with clerical workers crossing picket lines. Postal workers who had supported the office clerks last September expressed disappointment.

The strike held firm for six weeks. With the help of Mediator Judge Gold the union succeeded. Postal workers will have 17 weeks off with 93% of salary with very little loss of benefits during the leave.

Joan Osborne is a member of CUPW Toronto local.

LABOUR STUDIES FALL PROGRAM

The Centre for Labour Studies, Humber College is offering 14 courses this autumn.

COURSE TITLE	START DATE
Work, Labour and Canadian Society	Thurs., Sept. 10
Your Health & Safety	Mon., Oct. 5
Labour History (II)	Wed., Oct. 7
Labour Economics	Thurs., Oct. 8
Working Class Literature I	Tues., Oct. 13
Labour Leadership	Tues., Oct. 13
Work Processes & their Consequences	Wed., Oct. 14
Research Techniques	Wed., Oct. 14
Collective Bargaining	Wed., Oct. 14
Trade Union Organizing	Mon., Oct. 19
Workmen's Compensation	Mon., Oct. 19
Workplace Democracy	Mon., Oct. 19
Instructional Techniques	Sat., Oct. 24
Arbitration Program	Sat., Oct. 31

For further information, contact the Centre for Labour Studies at 857-3111 ext 467, 544 or 414.

Voice for women in Steel

By JOAN OSBORNE

Dave Patterson takes over this September as District 6 Director of the United Steelworkers of America. His election is of particular interest to trade-union women.

Patterson, an underground miner and veteran of the marathon 1978-79 Inco strike, included in his campaign platform:

- Fuller participation of women Steelworkers in the union's affairs, through women's committees; and
- A concerted drive to organize office and technical personnel in the industry.

Many office workers are women.

Patterson also favours a louder voice for office and technical workers already in the union who shouldn't have to play little sister to production-line members.

Office clerks at Westeel-Rosco Limited's Vancouver plant have been Steelworkers since 1969, and now participate in Local 3229 with production workers. Plant employees sometimes transfer into the office.



DAVE PATTERSON

At the company's suburban Toronto plant, office workers remain non-union. A management person politely expressed a doubt that women would work out well on production lines here but in Vancouver Steelworker Edith Puttonen did regular work

in the plant from 1942 to 1972 when she moved into the receiving office. Edith was one of the few women whose wartime jobs didn't wash up in the back-to-the-home tidal wave after World War II. She retired last year.

A comparison of contracts covering the two plants showed that Vancouver workers get better pay and vacations. Same union; same company; same jobs.

Patterson's aims include:

- Elimination of inequalities in pay between Steelworker locals;
- Greater Canadian control of the union;
- Quality union education for rank-and-filers;
- Stronger commitment to health and safety in the workplace.

When I talked to Brother Patterson he admitted to playing some part in the program for active strike support by Sudbury miners' wives during Local 6500's incredible 8 and a half month battle. As local president, he says, he was around when anyone needed somebody to yell at.

TECHNOLOGICAL CHANGE

Begin bargaining now!

The following is an excerpt from *Technology and Working Women*, prepared by Jane Stinson of the CUPE Research Department for the OWW Conference on Women and Employment in February 1981.

The importance of protective clauses regarding technological change can not be over-emphasized. The cost-effectiveness and versatility of microelectronic-based technology means that it will be introduced to a number of work places where previous technology may not have been considered. Therefore it is vitally important that workers in every sector of the economy be prepared with strong protective clauses on technological change. There should be a push to improve technological change clauses now. It is often much easier to insert well worded contract clauses on an issue that management doesn't consider important than to wait until it is vital and requires a tremendous fight.

A good technological change article should first provide a comprehensive definition of what technological change means. The following clause taken from the CUPW collective agreement, is one of the best in existence.

"Technological change means the introduction by the employer of equipment different in nature, type or quantity from that previously utilized, a change, related to the introduction of this equipment, in the manner in which the employer carried out the work of the public utility commission and

any change in work methods and operation affecting one or more employees."

The collective agreement should also require that the employer give the union advance notice of the technological change before it is introduced into the workplace. This clause should specify not only the amount of time in which the employer should give the advance notice, (i.e., 9 months before the changes begin), but also require the employer to notify the union of all foreseeable effects and repercussions of the technological change.

The collective agreement should also specify a time by which the union must receive from the employer, data on the nature of the changes, dates of the changes, the number and location of employees to be affected, and all other pertinent information.

Consultation

Since many questions and potential problems arise with the introduction of technological change, provisions for consultation on the introduction of the changes should be in the collective agreement. When these differences cannot be resolved there are two approaches: (1) All issues still in dispute are submitted to arbitration before the changes take place or, (2) Provide the right

to strike over technological change.

In other words, the employer must be prevented from unilaterally introducing technological change without the union's approval in order to protect employees from any adverse effects.

Currently, the Ontario Labour Relations Act prohibits strike action during the life of a collective agreement. Thus, unionized employees who are under the jurisdiction of the Ontario Labour Relations Act are prevented from striking over technological change unless their collective agreement has expired.

In most situations, a strike is still the most effective power workers have to force their employers to accept their demands. Limiting the right to strike over technological change limits the union's power to negotiate on this issue.

As early as 1967, in a Royal Commission on technological change in the railways, Mr. Justice Freeman recommended that unions be given the right to strike, during the life of a collective agreement, over technological change. To this day this recommendation has never been fully implemented.

At the 1980 Convention of the Ontario Federation of Labour, a policy resolution was passed also in support of the right to strike during the life of a collective agreement over technological change. The next step is to translate this policy into action.

For workers to have sufficient power to prevent the introduction of technological change when issues are still in dispute, they must have the right to strike. Only then will there be an effective mechanism to ensure that technological change will benefit workers, and not be the cause of numerous adverse effects.

A campaign to mobilize the union movement on this issue, and change existing labour legislation, is greatly needed.

After five years OWW going strong

At the Fifth Annual Meeting of Organized Working Women in May 1981, the membership progressed into a new stage in its development. The first five years of sure, strong growth since 1976 has given us the call and the confidence to reach out more actively to our members outside of Toronto. In the fall of 1981 in our 6th year of activity, OWW will present one-day Skills Workshops not only in Toronto (Saturday, November 7), but also in Sudbury (Saturday, October 17) and Ottawa (Saturday, October 24).

Of course our unique newspaper, *Union Woman* will continue to reach out to members and friends across Canada and into the United States with news and views by and about women in union activity. Our subscription list continues to grow. Perhaps your local union would like a bundle for distribution to the membership. Contact the OWW office with your address and the number of copies desired.

Our two-day conferences on "Women's Work, Women's Health" (1978); "Daycare and the Union Movement" (1980); and "Women and Employment" (1981), were exciting, productive events. In 1982 on February 20 and 21, OWW will present, in Toronto, a conference on "Technology and the Working Woman". Set aside these dates on your calendar now.

Last season (1980-81) members in the Toronto area attended Wednesday night educational meetings on the following topics: "Women in the Trades"; "How to Prepare Resolutions"; "The Rising Militancy of Public Sector Women"; and "Women and the Constitution". In our sixth year (1981-82) Toronto membership meetings will take place on Wednesday evenings at OPSEU on November 18, January 20, March 17 and April 21. If you would like to help choose the topics to be discussed on these nights, join the Educational Committee at our pot-luck supper meeting on Wednesday, September 16.

Or you may prefer to join one of the following standing committees: Membership; Child Care; Newspaper; Women in Non-Traditional Work; Financial/Fund Raising; Policy Development, and Contract Clauses.

In May 1981, OWW updated its 1979 "Daycare and the Union Movement" paper to publish it as a policy paper, "Unions and the Fight for Daycare". In February OWW presented highlights of that policy paper, in the form of a brief, to the Toronto Forum of the OFL "Sharing the Caring".

In 1981-82, our Policy Development Committee will discuss and prepare policy papers on technological change, health and safety and affirmative action. The Fund-Raising (Financial) Committee in 1981 had a three pronged approach. To increase the membership and widen our support we instituted two new categories of members, the OWW Sustaining Member and the OWW Sustaining Friend. Sustaining friends are men or women who are not eligible for membership in OWW and yet they wish to endorse OWW's actions by contributing \$30 or more annually to its financial drive. Sustaining members are those members who wish to support OWW financially by renewing their membership with a donation of \$30 or more annually. Each month we are enlarging our membership from active unionists not only in Ontario but in diverse locations like Montreal and Edmonton. We now have members in nearly every union or bona fide bargaining unit in Canada.

The second prong in our financial campaign in 1981 was an appeal for donations from unions. Many prominent trade unionists responded positively to our request for their individual support as financial endorsers of OWW. Brother Wally Majesky, President of the Labour Council of Metro Toronto honoured us by accepting the chairpersonship of this Committee.

On request, OWW responded in 1980-81 to strike actions at Fotomat with USWA; at the federal offices in Toronto with PSAC-CR's; at Maple Farms with UFAW; at Toronto hospitals with CUPE Hospital Workers; at the Oshawa Tel-Air with CWC workers and in Toronto with the Canadian Union of Postal Workers.

At the November 1980 OFL Convention, delegates overwhelmingly passed a resolution calling on the OFL to endorse the aims and objectives of Organized Working Women. At the May 1981 OWW Annual Meeting, the membership reaffirmed its position of working in full cooperation with the OFL Women's Committee in the interest of continued advancement of women in the union movement.

Of major importance to OWW was the revision of the constitution at the 1981 Annual Meeting which now reads: "OWW shall be considered the provincial and parent body of the organization". The Constitution then outlines the format for setting up OWW chapters in centres in Ontario.

The rising of women in the union movement calls on OWW to continue to enlarge its work with and for women at support rallies, at conventions, by initiating and supporting conferences and workshops, by preparing briefs and by publishing our newspaper *Union Woman*.

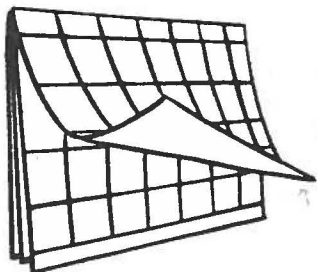
The 1981-82 Executive elected to serve you in these actions is as follows: President — Joyce Rosenthal, OPEIU 343; Vice President — Barbara Linds, OPSEU Staff; Treasurer — Lois Bedard, OSSTF, 10; Secretary — Holly Kirkconnell, OPSEU 512; Nancy Bayly, UBC & J 1963; Barbara Cameron CUEW, 2; Catherine Carr, ONA Staff; Carol Kowk, BRAC Staff; Irene Kuusela, CUPE 79; Dorothy MacKinnon, CUPE 79; Janice McClelland, CWC Staff; and Phyllis Woolley, OPSEU 525.

Send us your contracts

An ad hoc OWW committee has been struck to research existing collective agreements in terms of clauses pertaining to women. Maternity leave, paternity leave, affirmative action, sexual harassment, sick leave and other clauses will be under study.

The aim is to compile the best of these clauses to be used as a reference for union negotiations.

Please send a copy of your current collective agreement to:
Janice McClelland,
Chairperson, OWW ad hoc Committee,
c/o Communications Workers of Canada,
33 Cecil Street, Toronto, Ontario.



CLEAR YOUR CALENDAR

Sept. 7	Labour Day OWW MEMBERS MARCH WITH THEIR UNIONS
Sept. 12	OWW Garage Sale 203 Madison Ave. Starts 9 a.m.
Sept. 16	OWW Membership Meeting and Pot Luck Supper 1901 Yonge St. 8th floor, 6:00 p.m.
Oct. 17	OWW Skills Building Workshop Sudbury
Oct. 24	OWW Skills Building Workshop Ottawa
Nov. 7	OWW Skills Building Workshop Toronto — grievances and stewards training 1901 Yonge St. 8th floor, 9:00 a.m.
Nov. 18	OWW Membership Meeting 1901 Yonge St. 8th floor, 7:30 p.m.

Women must lead battle to win their own rights

ORGANIZING FOR WOMEN, Issues, Strategies and Services, by Dale A. Masi. Lexington Books, \$28.75.

In 1975 Masi was teaching a course on community organizing and was confronted by a group of women students who "poured out all their concerns: how had I managed raising children, did they have to be supermoms; would it affect their careers; how did the men treat me?" She realized that she had a responsibility to reach out to her students as a woman, and as a result of this revelation a support group was formed. The group became conscious that community organizing needed to be looked at from a woman's perspective; that the solutions used to solve problems faced by women in the workplace, the home, and in the bureaucratic institutions were based on male falacies of the nature of woman. This book was written in response to that need.

The clear message in Organizing for Women is that women must identify the oppression they suffer, point their fingers at its source, expose the falacies used to support it, and form their own strategies for change.

Masi states that most men hold the traditional pessimistic view of women's role in our society and, since men are in charge of that society, women's issues and the solutions to those issues are seen from that perspective. She backs up her theory with an organizational analysis of the history of the women's movement, woman as worker, woman as victim and woman as bureaucratic object. A chapter on woman as Eve traces the original source of women's oppression back to Eve's historical inferior position.

Masi postulates that this historical perception of women's inferiority is the reason why women work in job ghettos, why 97% of nurses, the nurturers, are women,

95% of sewers and stitchers are women, 99% of secretaries are women, and why these jobs earn women 43% less than men's earnings. She states that our culture understands the language of economics but does not understand the language of equality.

Most of the examples of misguided attitudes given in the book relate to attitudes to rape, battering, women's drug and alcohol addiction, women in the prison, welfare and medical bureaucracies. She states that women become problem drinkers, abuse drugs, get involved in prison systems, etc., for different reasons than do men and that there should be different solutions. Masi feels that women are still making the same organizational mistakes as they have done in the past and that the myths surrounding the mistakes are so ingrained that women themselves do not recognize them.

I don't recommend that our sisters purchase the book; the price is prohibitive, \$28.95; the references made are to United States organizations; and the first chapter is weighty with professional, social workers' jargon. However, the concept of the book is excellent and the message is valuable to union women. Help from our brothers is welcome but we must be strong in our unions and take the lead in identifying the issues affecting us as unionists and in finding our own solutions.

Phyllis Woolley, Shop Steward, Metro Tenants Legal Services, and Secretary of OPSEU 525.

Join OWW!



Membership in OWW is open to all women who are members of a bona fide collective bargaining unit or a bona fide organizing committee of a union. Membership is \$15.00 per year.

To join OWW, send in this application form with proof of union membership to the OWW office, address below.

Name

Address

..... Telephone

Union Local

Organized Working Women,
15 Gervais Drive, Suite 301,
Don Mills Ont. M3C 1Y8.

If you are not eligible to join OWW, you are invited to subscribe to UNION WOMAN at \$10.00 per year.

Hospital workers need strike right

By GRACE HARTMAN

When governments take away the right to strike from public sector workers they usually do so under the guise of protecting the public interest. These workers and the services they provide are so essential, goes the official government line, that a work stoppage would be disastrous for our society. Put in these terms, governments generally have an easy time selling this policy. After all, who wants to do without so-called "essential" services? But anyone who takes a closer look at this issue will see that a government defending the prohibition on strikes in this way is guilty of one of the most galling hypocrisies of our time.

Far from having the public interest at heart, a government's motivation for taking away workers' right to strike is normally quite simple: to maintain the status quo. By stripping away any countervailing power a union might have during negotiations, governments can ensure that the haves in our society continue to get and the have nots — no matter how "essential" — keep doing without.

A good illustration of the way this policy works is last winter's illegal strike of Canadian Union of Public Employees Ontario hospital workers and its aftermath.

The hospital workers — more than 70% of whom are women — were stripped of the right to strike in 1965 when the Hospital Labour Disputes Arbitration Act was passed. The act provides that contract disputes must be settled by compulsory arbitration. Only one other province — Prince Edward Island — prohibits strikes by hospital workers.

That the system of compulsory arbitration, which CUPE opposed from the outset, has totally failed the hospital workers has been noted repeatedly by academics, a royal commission and other experts in labour relations.

"... There is almost no recognition of one compelling truth," wrote Stephen Lewis while sitting on an arbitration board in another Ontario hospital case. "When you consider a group of workers so essential as to take away their right to strike, the arbitration process must somehow compensate for the inevitable emasculation of bargaining power. That simply has not happened."

During the decade prior to compulsory arbitration hospital workers were making some gains. But once the legislation was in place things took a downward turn, reaching such a low that from September 1976 to September 1980 alone hospital workers lost about 20% in purchasing power. During that period they also lost ground to workers in the industrial and manufacturing sectors.

In addition, hospital cutbacks had taken their toll. Workers reported suffering extra stress as well as more sickness and injury due to increased workloads. But since the provincial government had made a mockery out of the collective bargaining process, the workers were powerless to correct any of these situations. And their frustration and anger were mounting.

In effect, CUPE hospital workers were pushed into walking off the job by an uncaring government and a ruthless employer. It is cruelly ironic that 14,000 law-abiding, decent citizens, most of whom had never participated in any strike, let alone an illegal one, were forced to break the law in an attempt to secure social justice.

This massive protest should have brought home to the government a forceful message about the validity of the hospital workers' cause. But it was a message the government, and the employer agency, the Ontario Hospital Association, chose to ignore.

When the workers ended the strike after eight days of government, employer and police harrassment, they were subjected to massive reprisals. To date, there have been 35 firings, about 3,500 suspensions and about 5,600 disciplinary letters. In addition, two CUPE leaders and one staff member were sent to jail, nine union members and one staff member were fined and five members received suspended sentences.

And the supreme insult: the arbitration award. Brought down shortly after Ontario's doctors, not prohibited from striking, were handed an average \$12,000 increase each, the award gave hospital workers an average \$1,560 increase for this year. It barely compensates for the inflation rate for many and is far off for others.

What the government fails to understand is that this kind of unjust treatment will not prevent illegal strikes. In the long run it only serves to strengthen workers' resolve. The hospital workers who struck knew the risks they were taking. They knew they could be subjected to possible fines, job loss, imprisonment or other disciplinary action. They had seen the jailing of two other public service union leaders who defied the law during strikes — the postal workers' Jean-Claude Parrot and the Ontario Public Service Employees Union's Sean O'Flynn. Yet they were undeterred. Most of the workers I've spoken with since the strike say they have no regrets. And the jail term I served has convinced me even more that any law that takes away the right to strike from public sector workers must be fought with every means at our disposal.

To make it illegal for workers to strike will not prevent strikes. Putting union leaders in jail for participating in illegal strikes will not prevent walkouts. Only one thing can — and that's a free collective bargaining process, where management and unions sit down at the bargaining table as equals to negotiate in good faith.

Grace Hartman is national president of the Canadian Union of Public Employees.

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