



### As women workers . . . .

- We are hired for the lowest paying jobs.
- We are paid for the same or similar work, disguised by management under different job classifications.
- We are refused pay raises on the basis of sex.
- We are not given enough daycare facilities to meet our needs.
- An overwhelming majority of us are not unionized and as a result have no job security, benefits, etc.

**JOIN SORWUC NOW**

**FOR MORE  
INFORMATION CONTACT:**

### **SORWUC**

Service Office & Retail Workers Union  
of Canada  
#1003-207 West Hastings, Vancouver  
Phone 684-2834

Your name .....

Home Address .....

Phone Number .....

Place of Work .....

**[all communications in strictest confidence]**

# **JOIN SORWUC**

**service,  
office & retail workers  
union of canada**

**an independent union  
dedicated to organizing  
working women**

## ABOUT SORWUC

- **We are a democratic rank 'n' file union.** Each local elects all its own officers. The membership determines its own needs and interests.

- **We stand for unit independence.** We don't need professional negotiators or business agents. As workers on the job and in the union we can talk for ourselves.

- **No bureaucracy.** There is no fulltime paid staff in the union at this time. By the SORWUC constitution anyone who takes a paid position in the union must be elected to that office. Any paid position can only be held for one year at which point the member must return to work. We don't want trade union bureaucrats who haven't been on the job for ten years to be telling us what our needs are!

- **We are an independent union.** All dues stay in Canada.

## The existing trade unions

Unions are almost completely male dominated. Even in unions where the majority of workers are women the executive of the union is still dominated by men.

The specific needs of women have too often and for far too long been ignored. We cannot rely on the existing trade unions to organize us. They have failed to take on the struggle against our employers in department stores, restaurants, banks, and offices.

The argument they give about the "impossibility" of organizing women workers are the same arguments that were given against early organizers who started trade unions on this continent. The unions which came from a tradition of militancy have all too often become bureaucratic and dominated from the United States.

For these reasons several working women in Vancouver decided to form their own union, the Service, Office and Retail Workers Union of Canada (SORWUC).

There are 418,000 working women in B.C. But only one out of every four is a union member. The Service Office and Retail Workers Union of Canada was formed by working women who believe that as working women we can and must organize ourselves into trade unions that will begin to meet our needs.



## Benefits of organizing

SORWUC is a small union, and relatively new, but already we have broken new ground. Our members have negotiated contracts providing for full pay for maternity leave, two weeks paternity leave with pay, and contribution by the employer towards an employee's day care costs. "Personal rights" clauses provide that the employer cannot regulate employees' dress, and cannot ask employees to perform personal services for him, such as bringing him coffee and running other personal errands.

Seniority provisions and the grievance procedures provide that no one can be fired without just cause; and all employees have a chance for promotion on the basis of seniority. There are also clauses providing for job training and recognition of secretarial and clerical skills in terms of promotion (i.e. to paralegal positions in legal offices).

One of the most important clauses because it is essential to maintaining union democracy, is the provision for a two-hour lunch period once a month for a union meeting. This makes it possible for all members to attend and participate in the union.

Union organization is the only means we have of achieving a voice in our working conditions and wages. The union allows us to work collectively with the people we work with, rather than as powerless individuals.

## Women in the economy

This economic system cannot survive without the work of millions of women. We operate the telephone system, we punch the computer cards that control companies and governments, we type the letters, file the orders, and serve customers in restaurants, department stores, and supermarkets.

The employer can say he doesn't need us because there are lots of women out there looking for work. But he does need women workers as a pool of cheap labour.

The corporations have always seen us a group, but they do everything to prevent us from seeing ourselves as a group. By forbidding us to talk about our paycheque or raises, the bosses try to build competition and mistrust amongst the workers. They try to convince us that our problems are our own individual problems, results of our own individual failure. Often women are ashamed of what they got for a raise — ashamed rather than angry! Blaming themselves rather than the boss. But the problems we face are common problems, that can only be solved by working together!

## How to do it

If a majority of people in your workplace agree you need a union, the employer is legally required to negotiate with you. There are laws which protect your right to organize, and prohibit firing or intimidation.

Other members of SORWUC who have experience with the Labour Law and with organizing are available to help out. But you and the people you work with retain complete control of your own organizing strategy and your own negotiations.

Join us now! If you think a union is a good idea, but you're not sure how your fellow workers feel, join us and talk to other SORWUC members who are trying to organize their workplaces. (You also have more protection if you have joined the union.)

For more information, or to join, call us at 684-2834 or write #1003-207 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, B.C.

## A UNION FOR WORKING WOMEN