

INTRODUCTION

This is a bibliography of sources for research into the history of women in the B.C. trade union movement. It covers a fifteen year period: 1935 - 1950. These years were chosen because they represent a time of dramatic changes both in the position of women within production and of the ideology and strength of the organized labour movement in the province.

Some of the themes which emerged during these years include : the development of a permanent sector of female labour; the evolution of industrial organizing, that is, the organization of both skilled and unskilled workers within a particular plant or industry; the political struggle between the Communists and the CCF for the leadership of central unions in the province; the integration of women into trade unions in both industrial and service sectors.

During the Depression, women as well as men suffered the extreme shortage of jobs. Trade union attitudes in part reflect an antipathy to women working, whether they were married or single. As the War began and men were conscripted, women's labour became of central importance to sustain the War Effort and fill vacant industrial jobs. . Women moved into industry at a time when there was massive organizing, and soon became members of unions in the shipyards, forest industry, ^{and} manufacturing sector, as well as in traditional female job ghettos. Unions encouraged women to join, often to insure that female labour was not used to undercut previously gained wage levels. In the post-War period women were again pushed out of the labour market, as returning veterans were given their jobs in industry. Despite this many women continued to work: again in more traditional female job areas where they were often non- unionized. Some important struggles did occur in which women tried to keep jobs or conditions won during the war. As well, unionization began in the public sector and in some private industries in which women were predominate. Women organized auxiliaries in order to support the unions in which their husbands were active.