

9 to 5:

Women Office Workers

Interpret a Social Movement

by

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## ABSTRACT OF THESIS

9 to 5: Women Office Workers Interpret a Social Movement

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This thesis is a study of an organization of women office workers. The 9 to 5 organization of women office workers in Boston is used as a case study. In the research, a framework is provided for understanding the differences between the theories and actions of the various women involved in the organization.

The thesis explores the links between these theories and a particular kind of action, the action that attempts to deal with work-related problems. In the study, "ideal types" of women within the organization are defined, on the basis of three elements: 1) their view of themselves; 2) their definition of their problems at work, which underlie their theories of action for dealing with these problems; 3) their view of the role of the organization as a means to resolve these problems.

These three elements, when combined, form what are here called individual "pictures." Five different pictures that represent five different "types" of women have been described. In each of these pictures, the links between the theories and actions are examined to determine on what basis they are formed and how they change over time. In this regard, women's background, work experiences, and work settings have been found to influence the women's distribution among pictures. Women's readiness to accept themselves, both as women and as workers, appears to be crucial in understanding changes in their pictures over time. Consistency between their views concerning self, others, work, and modes of action has also been found to be important in explaining stability or change in their pictures.

The implications of the existence of these various patterns on the organization to which the women belong are then examined. The choices and dilemmas faced by the organization are analyzed and found to be dependent on the interaction between the various groups of women that co-exist within the organization.

The organization's activities are then seen as being shaped by, on one side, the social conditions that called for its existence, and on the other, by the different groups of women that are part of the organization. The growth and development of the organization is found to be based on a balance between these interactions.

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CHAPTER I  
INTRODUCTION

The themes of human thought and human action, and the links between them have been recurrent in the writings of scholars of all philosophical backgrounds. One tradition of social scientists has attributed to conceptions, thoughts, and ideas an independent existence and has predicted changes in human action to be dependent on the possibility of modifying the products of the mind.

The strategy for social change advocated, then, by these social scientists is a strategy of "enlightenment" based upon the dialogue of the enlightened and recipient. The success of this process, it goes without saying, depends on the possibility of establishing the dialogue, on the basic thrust of the two parts, on their commonality of interests, etc. Historically, the conditions under which this dialogue has been possible have been extremely rare, and social change has seldom occurred as a product of it.

Another tradition of social scientists has stressed the importance of conflict and pressure as a means to achieve social change. In this tradition, human thoughts are only important insofar as they lead to "enlightened" human action. Human actions are the result of concrete life experiences. Although they assume negative experiences to lead human beings to actions geared to changing the social system, negative experiences have not always led to enlightened human action.

This research is also interested in looking at the links between thoughts and actions. To some extent, it relates to both of the above-mentioned but is also distinct from each of them. The perspective from which the analysis will be undertaken is similar to the one developed

by Argyris and Schon.<sup>1</sup> As these authors, this research poses that theories of actions depend on a set of stated or unstated assumptions, which are shaped by people's everyday life. Theories and actions will be seen as influencing each other. "Action not only applies and tests the theory, but also shapes the behavioral world the theory is about."<sup>2</sup>

Actions of individuals will be posed as being dependent upon the theories of actions of these individuals. These theories will be considered to include assumptions about self, others and the environment. These assumptions can be modified over time by the actions, themselves.

This research is concerned with understanding the various patterns of theories and actions of women clerical workers within an organization that attempts to bring about change in the structure and organization of office work. As a response to a similar work experience, women develop alternative patterns of dealing with this reality. All the women to be studied have joined an organization in order to bring about certain changes in their work life, but both the theories about the changes required and the actions undertaken to bring about these changes, vary from woman to woman.

This research is to provide a framework for understanding the difference between these patterns and the various links between the theories and actions, on what basis they are formed and how they come to change over time.

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1. Argyris, C. and D. Schon. *Theory in Practice: Increasing Professional Effectiveness*. Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1975.

2. Ibid., p. 17.

The relationship between the members of the organization and the organization itself is also going to be studied from a similar perspective. The organization that nucleates the different women is seen as the expression of a social movement. Its structure, its goals, its activities are seen as the outcome of the interaction of the conditions which created its emergence and the individual members that are part of the organization. The organization is considered to influence and modify the specific instances in society that called for its appearance. It is also considered to have an impact on the theories and actions of the various members of the organization.

Specifically, this research is the study of an organization of women office workers in the Boston area: 9 to 5. It is a study of the members of the organization, of their theories, of their work experiences, and their actions to change their work conditions and work environment.

Chapter II presents a general overview on the emergence of a movement of office workers. The organization that is studied can then be seen as part of a broader social movement. The emergence of this movement will be attributed to the organization of work, to changes in the consciousness and responsibilities of women, and to overall economic conditions.

In Chapter III, the literature that has some bearing on the research will be analyzed. In particular, two broad literature topics will be surveyed. First, the one dealing with the needs, motivations, and modes of operations of individuals. Second, the one looking at organizations and social movements.

In Chapter IV, the methodology of the research is presented. It includes a justification of the selection of this organization for study here, a discussion of the research hypotheses, and a description of the interviewing procedures.

Chapter V is the central part of the research. An understanding of the involvement of individual women within the organization is attempted. As mentioned above, the focus of this chapter is on the relationship between people's theories and people's actions, and on the understanding of the differences in the patterns of theories and actions of the women involved in the organization. The concern is to understand these patterns interpretively, in terms of their implications for action from the individual's point of view, as well as in its implications for the existence and development of the organization itself.

This research is not testing hypotheses, it is describing patterns. The description of the patterns of action cannot, however, be limited to what women indeed do. Women also talk of what they would do if. . . . As such, women often refer to their potential modes of action, as these actions cannot be accomplished by the individual at the present time. For example, forming a union on your own in a small office cannot be done; overthrowing the actual social order is not feasible, either. These "potential" actions will also be considered, as they reflect not only the theories-in-use, but also a set of interrelated theories of action that specify for various situations what alternative actions are considered to yield desired results. These desirable consequences are of as great a relevance to the research as are the concrete and possible

actions undertaken by the various individuals.

In Chapter VI, the 9 to 5 organization itself is analyzed. Attempts are made to understand the organizational choices, as well as the organizational dilemmas, and to link them to the organization's interaction with its social environment and with the various groups of women that are part of the organization.

Chapter VII summarizes the research.

In the Appendix, a summary of each interview is presented.

CHAPTER II

THE OFFICE WORKERS' MOVEMENT



In this chapter, the emergence of a movement of office workers will be discussed. This emergence will be related to the organization of work in offices, to changes in the consciousness and responsibilities of women, and to the overall economic crisis. In Chapter VI, the 9 to 5 organization will be studied and seen as a concrete expression of this broader movement of office workers which has started all over the country. In this section, the link between this movement and the organizing efforts of other segments of the labor force will be discussed, as well as the relationship between this movement and the women's movement.

#### 1. The Organization of Work in Offices

##### a) The work conditions<sup>1</sup>

First, two excerpts:

One from Ladies Home Journal (February, 1916, p. 33):

"I should describe the equipment of the ideal stenographer as follows: twenty percent represents technical ability -- to write and read shorthand and to typewrite rapidly and accurately; thirty percent equals general information -- that is, education other than that in shorthand and typewriting; and the last and most important fifty percent I should ascribe to personality. . .

"That other kind of personality -- the abstract

1. This section relies heavily on:

Benet, M.K. The Secretarial Ghetto. McGraw-Hill Book Company, New York, 1972.

Braverman, H. Labor and Monopoly Capital. Monthly Review Press, New York and London, 1974, Chapter 15.

Davies, M. "A Woman's Place Is at the Typewriter: the Feminization of the Clerical Labor Force," in Radical America, July-August, 1974.

kind -- is the more important element in the stenographer's equipment, for it involves her temperament. Thousands of stenographers stay in mediocre positions because they lack the ability to adapt their conduct to those fixed principles of harmony and optimism which must prevail in all big undertakings. . .

"It is the spirit in which the stenographer lives and works, as well as the volume of her work, that makes her profitable. She must be adaptable, agreeable, courteous. Perhaps no single word so underwrites her success as 'courtesy'."

The second excerpt, from Fortune Magazine (August, 1935), goes even further and compares secretaries to wives:

"What he [the boss] wanted in the office was something as much like the vanished wife of his father's generation as could be arranged -- someone to balance his checkbook, buy his railroad tickets, check his baggage, get him seats in the fourth row, take his daughter to the dentist, listen to his side of the story, give him a courageous look when things were blackest, and generally know all, understand all. . . ."

With the development of the corporate-bureaucratic order, the number of clerical workers increased considerably in the last three decades (1.62 million persons in 1950; 2.75 million in 1970). They were often divided into groups of five or six stenographers, typists, file clerks, from which any executive could draw. Personal characteristics of courtesy and sympathy were not crucial any longer, but there was a need for tolerance of routine, carefulness and manual dexterity.<sup>2</sup>

Be it sympathy, courtesy, dexterity, tolerance, or carefulness

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2. See E. Baker, Technology of Women's Work, Columbia University Press, New York, 1964, p. 57.

that was needed, the fact is that women became the natural secretarial employee. Indeed, in 1960, 96 percent of stenographers, typists, and secretaries were women.<sup>3</sup> Furthermore, not only were stenographers, typists, and secretaries primarily women, but also, according to a special labor force report,<sup>4</sup> their wages were lower than that in every type of so-called blue-collar work.

A simple description of secretarial jobs -- to which, of course, there are some exceptions -- is their double characteristic of being a low-paid and a woman's job.

Before analyzing the implications of this characteristic for a movement of office workers, let us briefly summarize the major trends in the office in the past decades and derive from this analysis why secretarial work has become primarily a woman's low-paid job.

In analyzing the writings of C. Babbage<sup>5</sup> on the division between manual and mental labor, H. Braverman summarizes the major principles of rational work organization as follows:

"The first [conclusion] is that the labor of educated or better-paid persons should never be 'wasted' on matters that can be accomplished for them by others of lesser training. The second is that those of little or no special training are superior for the performance of routine work, in the first place because they can always be purchased at an easy rate, and in the second place because, undistracted by

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3. Bureau of the Census, Census of Population, 1960, Table 201.

4. Appeared in Monthly Labor Review, March, 1972, Table 4, p. 33.

5. Babbage, C. On the Economy of Machinery and Manufactures, New York, 1963.

too much in their brains, they will perform routine work more correctly and faithfully."<sup>6</sup>

From a functional standpoint, secretarial work came into existence as a device to extend the administrative scope of the entrepreneur and employer.

In the nineteenth century, offices in the United States were relatively small and almost exclusively staffed by men. The duties of the "clerk" were multiple and defined by each employer. Clerks would work under the personal supervision of the employer and most often work in the same office for their whole life. At the end of the nineteenth century, when U.S. corporations underwent a period of rapid growth, business operations became more and more complex. Also, a whole series of "supportive industries" (banks, insurance companies, etc.) developed, thus creating a mutual dependency between different types of firms and rendering activities within firms more and more complex.

Both the increase in tasks within the office and what Braverman calls the Babbage's principle of delegation of simpler tasks to lower qualified people, are at the basis of a process of further and further division of labor within the office and an increased organization of tasks along hierarchical lines.

This hierarchical division of labor created a clear differentiation of tasks: typing and administrative routine began to be recognized

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6. Braverman, H. Op.cit., p. 318.

as the primary work of secretaries; tasks clearly differentiated from the 'creative' activities of managers, supervisors, and administrators. This division of labor thus generated the need for a pool of low-level clerical workers in dead-end jobs, with little or no possibilities of promotion and personal development. However, this hierarchical division of labor did not only produce a differentiation of tasks, but also a differentiation of tasks along sex lines. Indeed, men hold the majority of managerial positions, women remain with the majority of low-level clerical jobs.

Given the ever-increasing simplicity of tasks required, management is able to recruit workers with lower skills, thus creating an array of low-paid jobs. This trend is strongly reinforced by the availability of a large pool of women who are willing/or have to work at this low rate.

As M. Davies points out:

"In the last decades of the nineteenth century, the situation was then the following. There were more women than men graduating from high school every year. These women constituted a pool of educated female labor which was being drawn upon only by elementary and secondary schools. Consequently, there were literally thousands of women with training that qualified them for jobs that demanded literacy, but who could not find such jobs. Excluded from most professions, these women were readily available for the clerical jobs that started to proliferate at the end of the nineteenth century. The expansion and consolidation of enterprises in the 1880s and 1890s created a large demand for clerical labor. The large pool of educated female labor constituted the supply."<sup>7</sup>

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7. Davies, M. Op.cit., p. 6.

The following fact needs some emphasis: it is not that office work was simplified and fragmented because there was not a pool of labor for more sophisticated tasks, but hierarchical division of labor implies and allows for control over the working process and rationalization of activities within the office. The result was office management's decision to destroy what they call the "social office,"<sup>8</sup> a system of secretarial assistance which developed in the past decades, basically a one-to-one relationship in which each "executive" wanted to have his own secretary to attend both his work and non-work matters. This system was not only unproductive for the firm in terms of absorbing the time and ability of secretaries, but also the practice of a secretary per supervisor was quite expensive and personal matters were overlapping with work processes.

So, in the name of productivity, the practitioners of "scientific management" decided to depersonalize the office as much as it had been done with the factory. This rationalization of the work process was reinforced even further by technological development: electric typewriters, telephone devices, tape recorders, etc.

The result is that the "secretarial function is replaced by an integrated system which aims at centralized management, the breakdown of secretarial jobs into detailed operations, subdivided among production workers to one-half, one-quarter, or even smaller fractions of their former number."<sup>9</sup> This allows for the creation of low-paid,

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8. Administrative Management, May, 1972.

9. Braverman, H. Op.cit., p. 346.

limited skills type jobs. However, even if this rationalization is only feasible in big industries and one-to-one relationships are still frequent in small firms or less product-oriented firms like the service industries, given market competition, both the desirability of these more personal jobs, their limited supply and the ongoing wage rate in other sectors of the economy account for the fact that secretarial jobs outside the corporative sector also became low-paid.

Hence, clerical employees who were earning, at the end of last century, double the wage of a production and transportation worker, are now earning only 75 to 90 percent of their income. This made clerical jobs less desirable to men; and women whose "natural" docility and dexterity has long been proven outside the workplace, became the ideal workers for these jobs on the bottom of the office hierarchy.

When discussing the organizing efforts of office workers, Tepperman mentions that the trend toward the office-as-factory contributes to the likelihood of clerical organizing. Increased division of labor also tends to make relationships with other workers more collective.<sup>10</sup>

Organizing efforts from office workers can easily be understood when their jobs are seen as not having the benefits of blue-collar jobs (unions, job descriptions, system of insurance, benefits, etc.), nor the benefits of white-collar jobs (freedom, authority, status, etc.).

b) The clerical labor pool

As early as 1930, Priestley wrote:

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10. Tepperman, J. (to be published in the fall, 1976) Not Servants, Not Machines: Office Workers Speak Up, Beacon Press, Boston, 1976.

"The girls who earn their keep by going to offices and working typewriters may be divided into three classes. There are those who, like Miss Matfield, are the daughters of professional gentlemen and so condescend to the office and the typewriter, who work beneath them just as girls once married beneath them. There are those who take it all simply and calmly, because they are in the office tradition, as Mr. Smeeth's (the chief clerk's) daughter would have been. Then there are those who rise to the office and the typewriter, who may not make any more money than their sisters and cousins who work in factories and cheap shops -- they may easily make considerably less money -- but nevertheless are able to cut superior and ladylike figures in their respective family circles because they have succeeded in becoming typists."<sup>11</sup>

This "class" difference among office workers still exists today. In terms of working conditions and wages, clerical jobs are clearly "working-class jobs." This is not to say that all clerical jobs are alike, and that the working conditions of the private secretary to the president of a large corporation are the same as those of a woman in a typing pool. However, the current differentiation between blue-collar workers and white-collar workers in relation to pay, working conditions, "creativity", promotion possibilities, etc. seems, in general, to be artificial when applying to clerical workers.

Mainly because of sex discrimination in the educational system and in the labor market, women have been restricted to employment in a few occupations. Indeed, independent of their educational achievement and level of skills, women are crowded mainly into four occupations: sales

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11. Priestley, J.B. Angel Paveman, Heinemann Ltd., cited in Benet, M.K., op.cit., p. 47.



workers, clerical workers, services workers, and operatives. And even within these occupations, distinctions are made between men and women.<sup>12</sup> As mentioned earlier, one of the most significant trends of monopoly capitalism has been the creation of a small proportion of middle and principal positions and a large number of subordinate positions in which people perform duties that only require a limited training. As H. Spier already noted in 1934: "One social result of this development is the rise of the unskilled and semi-skilled salaried workers, whose designation already indicates the assimilation of the processes of work in the office to that in the factory."<sup>13</sup>

Indeed, characteristics of clerical and production workers have been merging, and the pool of semi-skilled workers with high inter-job horizontal mobility" has been increasing. The result has been a loss in the social level of secretarial/clerical work and a decreasing social esteem towards this type of job. Concretely, secretarial work has become less and less a job limited to middle-class women, and has increasingly appealed to women of working-class origin. The large pool of women available to fulfill secretarial jobs has allowed working conditions to remain poor and the wages low. Secretarial jobs are thus filled mainly by two constituencies.

First, a pool of middle-class women who are either young college graduates who were unable to find a "better" job, or non-professional

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12. Stevenson, M. "Relative Wages and Sex Segregation by Occupation" in Lloyd, C. (ed) Sex, Discrimination and the Division of Labor, Columbia University Press, New York, 1975.

13. In L. Corey, The Crisis of the Middle Class, New York, 1935, pp. 253-254.

women who are either permanently or intermittently in the labor force and who are eager to maintain the social status of secretarial work. Especially college graduates, but also women married to professionals, etc., compare themselves with men in managerial or professional jobs and are indignant about having to work in clerical positions. They see their restriction of employment as a form of sexism, and are determined to fight for affirmative action, promotion for women, and possibilities for advancement in different work areas.

The second constituency is formed by a pool of women from families of working-class background. Indeed, the existence of two major occupational classifications in our society, operatives and clerical workers makes the combination in which the husband is an operative and the wife a clerk a very common one.<sup>14</sup> These women of working class background are more likely to see their work in terms similar to those in which their husbands see their own work, mainly in relation to the extrinsic rewards of the job. This is, of course, not to say that women of working-class background do not care about the career ladders nor that middle-class secretaries do not care about wages and benefits. It is not our intention to overemphasize here the difference between middle-class and working-class values, as has so often been done by social scientists. Still, different life experiences can modify the emphasis placed by members of the two groups on different work conditions.

However, there is a long tradition in this country of revindica-

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14. Braverman, H. Op.cit., pp. 353-354.

tions specific to each stratum of the working class, of which blue-collar unionism and white-collar individualism are an expression. Although it is difficult to alter the felt needs of workers, social traditions and values can certainly shape these needs.

Furthermore, if we understand that for women of working-class background, holding a secretarial position is generally seen as upward mobility, while for middle-class women depersonalization of the office and low wages implies a lowering of social status, then we can put a movement of women office workers into perspective as well as understand its specific interests and its possible constituency.

## 2. Changes in Women's Consciousness and Responsibilities

The trend towards office workers' activism was strongly stimulated by the women's movement, which brought about an important transformation of the consciousness of women of themselves and of the society in which they live. This transformation has had a definite impact on women's image of themselves at work.

Tepperman writes on this subject:

"Although they don't identify with "women's libbers" or "bra burning," many women clericals have begun to see more clearly their importance and value to the companies they work for, and to resent more sharply their lack of pay, respect, and promotional opportunities. Women are taking a new pride in themselves as clerical workers, in two ways. One is a kind of craft pride, talking about how difficult and skilled many clerical jobs are. The other is a more collective sense that clerical work is crucial to the whole company: "If we stopped working, nothing really would happen."<sup>15</sup>

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15. Tepperman, J. "Organizing Office Workers," Radical America, January-February, 1976, p. 7.

The change in women's consciousness has been produced partly by a change in women's economic lives. More and more women have been incorporated into the labor force, more and more women have been educated, many more women work all their lives independently of their marital status.

From 1948 to 1970, the number of women in the American work force grew from 17.3 million to 31.1 million, so that women now constitute about 40 percent of those gainfully employed.<sup>16</sup> Roughly 60 percent of the women who work must work: they are widowed, divorced, single, or their husbands do not earn enough to support the family. Finally, one out of ten American families is headed by a woman.<sup>17</sup> The overall economic crisis has only exacerbated the economic pressures on women, either as the only wage earner or as second wage earners. High unemployment rates have also affected the role of women in the labor force as well as their ability to find or change employment. This trend has transformed in the last decade women's image of themselves. Friedan wrote ten years ago that there has grown up a whole generation of American women "who adjust to the feminine mystique, who expect to live through their husbands and children, who want only to be loved and secure, to be accepted by others, who never make a commitment of their own to society."<sup>18</sup> This is not so true anymore for the millions of women actually working.

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16. U.S. Department of Labor, Wage and Labor Standards Administration, 1970, Background Facts on Women Workers in the United States, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C.

17. Pollock, M.J. "Changing the Role of Women," in Wortis, H. and C. Rabinowitz, The Women's Movement: Social and Psychological Perspectives, A Halsted Press Book, John Wiley and Sons, Inc., N.Y., 1972, p. 12.

18. Friedan, B. The Feminine Mystique, Dell, New York, 1964.

For the woman who is actually working, to be seen as docile, fragile, smiling is not very helpful. The divergence between the objective condition of her as a working person (her desire for fulfillment, advancement, recognition, equal pay for equal work, work benefits, etc.) and the cultural image of her as a subordinate, a marginal person, creates a conflict that women feel the need to resolve. The working woman is out there to make a living, to be able to advance in her job when possible, to be treated with the same respect and dignity as her fellow workers, and all she encounters is a pre-social image of what she can do and what she is good for.<sup>19</sup>

With the women's liberation movement, many of the issues surrounding sex -- stereotyping and job discrimination -- have been brought to the attention of the public at large and to employers on one side, to politicians on the other, but though spoken of, in practice these issues have not yet been resolved and certainly call for women to join efforts to resolve them.

Women have reacted to problems of sex discrimination in the labor market in two different ways. Although these two patterns of reactions will be explained in greater depth when the 9 to 5 organization is discussed, it should be mentioned here that the existence of sex discrimination in the workplace has induced one group of women to want to "share" men's positions and privileges. Moving into management is seen by these women as the end of their oppression, both in terms of wages and working

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19. Sex roles have been studied at length from various perspectives. Research has centered, however, mainly on the existence of clearly defined sex-role stereotypes for men and women.

conditions. The other group of women equate management to their oppression and have started to question management, itself.

This split in the women's struggle is just one form of division within the women's movement, divisions that have been observed and discussed at length.<sup>20</sup> Independently, however, of the form that the various struggles take, women are now more self-confident and conscious of their oppression and have decided to fight against it.

The office workers' movement may have an important effect on the overall women's movement by its attempt to address both the issues of sex and work structure. In order for the office workers' movement to grow and develop, it must not only attract white middle-class women but must include the needs of the various constituencies it represents. Thus, it must also respond to the concerns of black women and working-class women. Through a broadened class base and a re-orientation of programs, the office workers' movement may create a new form for the feminist social movement. The rapid development of the movement and its considerable strength may just be the expression of this new form.

### 3. Problems in Organizing

The above discussion can give, however, an erroneous impression to the reader. Indeed, although the organizing potential of office workers is big and the office workers' movement has grown considerably over the last three years, less than 20 percent of clerical workers are unionized,<sup>21</sup> and many more are only passive supporters of change in

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20. Lockwood, Carden M. The New Feminist Movement, Russell Sage Foundation, New York, 1974.

21. Monthly Labor Review, August, 1975.

their work environments. Among the principal obstacles to organizing is fear. Fear of losing the job, fear of annoying the boss, fear of losing the few benefits accumulated over the years. And these fears are real and justifiable, especially if we understand that employers will attempt to stop the organizing drives of their employees, that the labor market is getting tighter and that employers prefer to have "charming young women" as secretaries. Unfortunately, employers can still find some women who are willing to play that role.

Surprisingly enough, the organization of work in offices that can cause people to organize, can also hinder their organizing. The division of tasks within the office also creates a division of the labor force and a hierarchy within the clerical pool. All the women who are working under one "boss" consider themselves to be privileged, see themselves as assistants, and identify themselves very easily with lower management. A present, a smile, etc. often also change the attitudes of women who have been socialized for too long into a specific role and value structure.

But probably more important than anything, women often see few options available. Women are extremely skeptical of unions and many of their negative feelings about unions do reflect reality. As will be seen later in our analysis, it is only through collective involvement and action that women change their perceptions of their possibilities and modify their theories and actions in the light of these changes. As many of the obstacles get weaker and the organizing needs of women get stronger, organizing activities are increasing.

Although only 20 percent of clerical workers are unionized, as mentioned above, this figure should be put into perspective, to understand the growth and apparent strength of the women's office workers movement.

Oppenheimer, when comparing white-collar and blue-collar unionization, wrote:

"While the proportion of the U.S. labor force that is unionized actually declined about one percent (from 23.6 to 22.6 percent) between 1960 and 1970, the proportion of white-collar workers among all American unionists increased from 12 percent in 1960 to 16 percent by 1970." 22

When the unionization of workers is divided along sex lines, the unionization of women has been found to grow at a faster rate than that of men. Berquist, in her article on women's participation in labor organizations, mentioned that from 1968 to 1972 a 500,000 increase in women union members in the United States equalled the overall gain in union enrollment and considered this gain to be especially significant since women only make up one-fifth of union membership.<sup>23</sup> These ends should be kept in mind when discussing the office workers' movement. To a brief description of the concrete organizing efforts of women office workers, we now turn.

#### 4. The Office Workers' Movement

Several newsletters about working women, which includes office workers, are put out in Chicago, Los Angeles, Hartford, and New York. Univer-

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22. Oppenheimer, M. "Unionization of the Professional," Social Policy, January/February, 1975, p. 39.

23. Monthly Labor Review, October, 1974.



sity employers in New York, Boston, and Chicago, as well as editorial and clerical workers at twelve publishing houses in New York have been turning to unionization.

In Boston, as in New York, women working in university offices have chosen to affiliate with District 65 of the Distributive Workers of America; the Metropolitan Life Insurance Company was unionized after a long struggle into Union WAGE, which stands for Women Act to Gain Equality. Many of the major industrial unions (electrical workers, steelworkers, autoworkers, teamsters) are now involved in organizing office workers. The AFL-CIO's office and the Professional Employees' International Union (OPEIU) have started some efforts in this direction. Public employee unions are rapidly growing all over the country, organizing government clerical workers into unions such as the American Federation of State, County and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) and the Service Employees' International Union (SEIU). "9 to 5" in Boston is referring women who are willing to organize their offices to local 925 of the SEIU.

Besides "9 to 5", in Chicago, Women Employed, an organization of several hundred women, confront employees on issues of promotion opportunities, cost-of-living increases and equal pay for equal work, and are thinking of launching a union drive.

Many of these groups pose different questions, but all of them represent a movement in the same direction: women office workers have started to change certain office practices and have decided to join efforts to bring about even further changes.

The outcome of this movement is still to be seen.

CHAPTER III

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This research attempts to understand the various modes of involvement of individual women clerical workers within an organization that questions the actual structure of their work. Modes of involvement will be compared and possible changes in these modes will be discussed.

This study will also attempt to understand how these various modes of involvement influence the development and growth of the organization. The organizational structure is not the focus of the research, the organization's activities and dilemmas are.

Several parts of the Western sociological literature have some bearing on these themes. Many studies have a direct relationship with some part of this study, a few have attempted to build similar overall links. Broadly speaking, organizations of working people have been studied from two major perspectives. On one side, the needs and motivations of people have been analyzed in the sphere of work and outside of it. On the other side, unions and other organizations have been studied qua organizations.

Both perspectives have rarely been integrated and, specifically, little attention has been given to the understanding of the theories and actions of workers within organizations that are not part of the institutionalized system of industrial relations.

In the first section, a review of the literature on individuals' attitudes, actions and theories of actions as a response to the environment, and specifically to work environments, is undertaken; in the second section, the literature on organizations and social movements is briefly reviewed.

## I. INDIVIDUALS' ATTITUDES AND ACTIVITIES

1. Perspectives on Previous Studies of the Sociology of Work and Work-related Politicsa) Work and Leisure

In the literature on the relationship between work and leisure, a prevalent position holds that non-work activities compensate for the alienating aspects of work. Dubin, in a study of the central life interests of industrial workers, found that for almost three out of every four industrial workers, work and work place are not central life interests and that the industrial worker "has a well-developed sense of attachment to his work and work place without a corresponding sense of total commitment to it."<sup>1</sup> Based on this evidence, many scholars have argued that work activities and leisure activities pertain to two different spheres and do not influence each other.

Blauner has taken contention with this position when writing:

"The subtle ways in which the quality of one's work life affects the quality of one's leisure, family life, and self feelings are not well understood."<sup>2</sup>

Several scholars have pointed to the relationship between work and non-work activities. A study by Kornhauser on the mental health of industrial workers indicates that the working hours affect greatly the rest of people's life<sup>3</sup> and Friedman, when relating job dissatisfaction to the

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1. Dubin, R. "Industrial Workers' Worlds: A Study of the 'Central Life Interests' of Industrial Workers," in Work and Leisure, ed. E. Smigel (New Haven, Connecticut University Press, 1963), p. 68.

2. Blauner, R. Alienation and Freedom: The Factory Worker and His Industry, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1964, p. 330.

3. Kornhauser, A. "Mental Health of Factory Workers: A Detroit Study," Human Organization, Vol. 21, No. 1, Spring, 1962.

life lived away from work found job dissatisfaction to strongly influence non-work activities.<sup>4</sup>

Argyris provides empirical evidence for the contention that activities off-the-job replicate, rather than reverse job conditions.

"The employees' descriptions of their "off-the-job" activities suggest a similarly impoverished interpersonal world. Seventy-two percent of the high-skill and low-skill employees spend the majority of their time looking at "T.V.," "reading a paper," "drinking beer," "doing jobs around the house," and once in awhile "going to a movie with the wife" (never more than once a week). Another twenty percent, who are mostly highly skilled employees, spend time working in their shop on hobbies (for example, cabinet making, carpentry, radios)." 5

In the area of work, work satisfaction and work activities, the study of Goldthorpe and Lockwood, based on data collected in industries of Luton, England, was among the most relevant to this research.<sup>6</sup> The authors wished to examine the effect on workers' industrial attitudes and behaviour of different types of production systems (all located in Luton). The interest of these studies lies in the attention given to the social activities and behaviour of the workers. The authors are primarily concerned with behaviour and seek to understand the workers' actions from their point of view, as well as in terms of social structural and cul-

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4. Friedman, G. The Anatomy of Work. Glencoe, Illinois: The Free Press, 1961.

5. Argyris, C. Integrating the Individual and the Organization. New York: John Wiley and Sons, 1965, p. 301.

6. Goldthorpe, J.H., D. Lockwood, F. Bechhofer, and J. Platt. The Affluent Worker: Industrial Attitudes and Behaviour; The Affluent Worker: Political Attitudes and Behaviour; The Affluent Worker in the Class Structure, Cambridge Studies in Sociology 1, 2 and 3, Cambridge University Press, 1968, 1968 and 1969.

tural influences, of which the workers are not necessarily aware. These studies are among the few studies that attempt to include sociological and psychological viewpoints. The authors do not see the individual as being completely determined by social structure. In a critique of this study, Argyris writes:

"How can one study the meanings work has for individuals and how these subjective states arise without understanding psychological processes such as cognition and perception? . . . .Our position will be that in looking for causality only 'outside' the individual, the resulting theory will not be concerned with individuals as central causal variables. Goldthorpe's and Lockwood's view of pinpointing causality 'outside the individual' goes beyond making the individual a part of the system. It tends to create man as a reactive being with few proactive tendencies." 7

Although our research is not concerned with the subjective meanings of work, which makes psychological processes such as cognition and perception less important, both Goldthorpe's and Lockwood's stated approach and Argyris' critique were instrumental in shaping the research designs.

All of the above studies touch upon the relation of work and leisure.<sup>8</sup>

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7. Argyris, C. The Applicability of Organizational Sociology. Cambridge University Press, New York, 1972, p. 47.

8. Other studies in this area include: (a) studies that analyze whether work or leisure produces more satisfaction to the worker (Dumazedier, Goodman); (b) studies that question the fusion or polarity between work and leisure activities (Wilensky, DeGrazia, Riesman).

DeGrazia, S. Of Time, Work and Leisure. Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1962.

Dumazedier, J. Toward a Society of Leisure. London: Collier-MacMillan, 1967.

Goodman, P. "Work and Leisure," in Automaton. ed. Philipson, New York: Random House, Vintage Books, 1962.

Riesman, D. and W. Blomberg. "Work and Leisure: Fusion or Polarity?" in Research in Industrial Relations, C.M. Arensberg et al., eds. New York: Harper and Row, 1957.

Wilensky, H. "Mass Society and Mass Culture: Interdependence and Independence," American Sociological Review, Vol. 23, April, 1964.

In this research, we are concerned with a particular activity of this leisure: the worker's politics. The concern is even more specific, it refers to work-related politics. Given the research design, we are not interested in the literature on voting, traditional politics, etc., but in people's involvement in activities that question the existing organization of work.

b) Political Involvement

In relation to people's politics, numerous political scientists indicate that in modern society, people spend little of their time in politics and the time they spend is on activities concerning either the "individual good" or the "factional good."

Kornhauser describes people as "individuals concerned for their own individual good" which creates a "social atomization [that] engenders strong feelings of alienation and anxiety, and therefore the disposition to engage in extreme behavior to escape from these tensions."<sup>9</sup> Other social scientists like Lipset<sup>10</sup> and Dahl<sup>11</sup> sustain that identification by individuals with a given group or faction can lead to intolerance and violence, just as social atomization can.

c) Work-related Politics

Specifically, this study is concerned with work-related "politics."

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9. Kornhauser, W. The Politics of Mass Society. New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, 1959, p. 39. A similar position is taken by Bakke, E. in a case study entitled Citizens Without Work. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1940.

10. Lipset, S. Political Man. Garden City, New York: Doubleday and Co., Inc., Anchor Books, 1963.

11. Dahl, R. Modern Political Analysis. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, Inc., 1964.

It will first analyze the literature on workers' involvement in trade unions and then the literature on their involvement in informal groups. In studying the importance of trade unions in the American social and economic scene, Schneider writes:

"By and large, the American working-man has shown far more continuous interest in trade unionism as a solution to the strains in his role than to any other of the solutions which have been proposed. Thus, at an early time, he showed a decisive lack of interest in consumers' co-operatives. Radicalism, although at times with a following among some American working-men, has by and large never attracted their loyalties or interest on a large scale. Even "third parties" or "labor parties" have never been able to wean the American working-man from his allegiance to American traditions." 12

Considering the complexities of the labor movement and the situation in which it arises and develops, it is not surprising to find numerous theoretical interpretations and empirical studies of the various aspects of the labor movement. Most of these studies have no direct bearing on this research. Only the studies that address themselves to the question: why do workers join and support unions are directly relevant. Few of these studies are recent.

Perlman seeks to discover the elements in workers' collective psychology that lead them to form unions.<sup>13</sup> He examines working rules and union practices which unionized working-men have created in their jobs and deduces that they reflect a "consciousness of scarcity on the part of the working-man." A consciousness of scarcity leads, according to Perlman, to the development of trade-unionism and not to political action. In his desire

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12. Schneider, E. Industrial Sociology: The Social Relations of Industry and the Community. McGraw Hill Book Company, New York, 1969, edition, p. 282.

13. Perlman, S. A Theory of the Labor Movement. Augustus M. Kelley, New York, 1949.



for control of the job, the individual worker wants to join efforts with fellow workers to achieve an "ownership of the total of job opportunities" available to workers.<sup>14</sup> Perlman considers the trade union movement to be basically job conscious, by emphasizing the need of workers' control over jobs and the bettering of economic and working conditions. In a similar vein, but eliminating psychological drives, the Webbs consider workers to turn to collective action to be able to relate to the employer on equal terms and to reduce the competition for jobs among workers.<sup>15</sup> They consider trade unions to further democracy by equalizing the power between workers and management and limit the trade-union interest to economic conditions. Unions are seen as a necessary part of the present social system.

From a different perspective, Tannenbaum poses the worker to form unions in a need to create a 'collectivity' in which he can relate to his employer, his fellow workers and his job.<sup>16</sup> The trade union "reflects the moral identity and psychological unity men always discover when working together."<sup>17</sup> Tannenbaum, like Perlman, considers the underlying psychological drives as important as the economic conditions but also claims that, in the course of achieving its immediate goals, labor unions cannot but fundamentally change the nature of our society. But Tannenbaum does not believe that labor will ever displace management and says that the trade-union movement is counterrevolutionary.<sup>18</sup>

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14. Ibid., p. 242.

15. Webb, S. and B. Webb. Industrial Democracy, Longmans, Green and Company, London, 1926.

16. Tannenbaum, F. A Philosophy of Labor, Alfred A. Knopf, Inc., New York, 1951.

17. Ibid., p. 60.

18. Ibid., p. 11.

Attention has also been given, in the sociological literature, to the functions of informal groups in industry as a reaction to industrial technology and industrial bureaucracy. These informal groups are considered to fulfill various functions. The best known study of the informal group is the one undertaken by Roethlisberger and Dickson at the Hawthorne, Illinois plant of the Western Electric Company.<sup>19</sup> Various authors stress alternative causes for the existence of informal groups and assess differently their importance. Among functions of informal groups are mentioned the need of workers to escape boredom and fatigue, opportunities for independence, increased security, opportunities for status, etc. In assessing the importance of informal groups, Schneider writes:

"The informal group provides opportunities for the workingman to achieve certain aims and interests which he cannot achieve within the formal social structure of the plant. Without consciousness of rebellion, without consciousness of the social means which he is using, he strives, by social means, to overcome those aspects of the situation which threaten or deprive him. In none of the cases described in this chapter could it be said that leaders consciously formed these groups as devices for circumventing or combating management; rather, it is the situation which created the leader, or found the leader, who could give the workingman what he wanted. It may be concluded, therefore, that the informal group represents a basic reaction of the workingman to the social and physical environment of production; it is not a transitory phenomenon which can be abolished by an order of management.

But, on the other hand, the limitations of the informal group should also be stressed. Lacking formal organization, lacking a program or a policy, incapable of uniting with more than a few other groups of like kind, such

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19. Roethlisberger, F.J. and W. Dickson. Management and the Worker. Harvard University Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1939.

a group is doomed to puny actions, or to providing illusory benefits to its members. Furthermore, it is relatively susceptible to domination by managerially-oriented or self-oriented workers." 20

The above-mentioned literature is only useful as background material to our study. It does not look at the involvement of workers within organizations and at their particular modes of involvement. The studies in the literature show, though, that workers are usually only involved in politics which affect their individual good and/or the factional good. Their involvement in work-related organizations is the best expression of this desire to better their own work conditions and to secure their jobs. We should also note that workers in the United States have had the tendency to look at unions as best representing the interests of working people. However, union membership has not increased over the years. Workers have often had to take recourse to informal groups to resolve their work-related problems.

## 2. Perspectives on Previous Studies on Human Behavior

### a) Socio-political Behavior

In order to understand which people would join an organization, why people would join organizations, and what their involvement in these organizations is expected to be, social and political scientists have tried to build typologies of people who would have similar responses to socio-political situations, and have described at length the common attitudes and traits of these different types. We are only concerned in our study with the different modes of involvement of women in an organization that question their work conditions.

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20. Schneider, E. op.cit., p. 242.

The most complete summary in the literature of the different types of people that join organizations was probably given by R. Lane:

automaton. A person who "escapes from freedom" by adopting culturally popular personality patterns, losing his sense of personal identity and responding to political stimuli without any individual or distinctive orientation.

pseudo-conservative. A person who adopts the conservative's ideology at the verbal level, but because of underlying personality disorders, subconsciously seeks radical solutions -- for example, the lynching of agitators in the name of law and order.

authoritarian personality. A person who (among other things) perceives the world as made up of a small, glorified in-group and despised out-groups, hierarchically arranged by power relationships, peopled by types rather than individuals. He cannot establish warm human relationships, judges people by exterior qualities, adopts a moralistic condemnatory tone toward deviant behavior, and so forth.

political agitator. A political leader whose satisfactions are derived from arousing emotions in others and whose skills are greatest in this area of inter-personal contact.

political administrator. A person whose skill lies in the manipulation of things and situations whose displacement of affect upon less remote objects is associated with a better adjustment to society.

political theorist. A person whose skill lies in the manipulation of ideas and who has displaced his private motives and emotions upon a system of abstract concepts.

bureaucratic personality. A person whose inter-personal relations have been habitually formalized by the demands of his work life and whose responses to new situations are governed by overvaluation of rules.

indifferent. A person either who has no emotional or mental relationship to politics or whose mobility or lack of orientation leads him to shun all political involvements.

moralizer (indignant or enthusiast). A person whose responses to political situations are characterized by high affect and low competence.

inside-dopester. A person with controlled (and low) affect and great desire to know and/or use political phenomena for his amusement and advantage.

anomic. A person whose political style is inappropriate to the situations he faces and who shows other symptoms of disorientation.

Autonomous. A person who is neither dominated by parentally instilled conscientious views of politics nor by concern for the opinions of peer groups; a person, therefore, free to choose his own political opinions. 21

However, even as R. Lane states:

"The typology is limited in its serviceability. . . . It fails to illuminate much of the significance of group membership: for example, it is not useful for distinguishing among, say, those veterans who join the American Legion in search for solidarity or because of a "need to avoid aloneness," to use Fromm's terminology; those who join in order to recapture status formerly accorded them by military rank, and those who join because of sympathetic responsiveness to hierarchical society." (Adorno) 22

This research is not concerned with the personal reasons for individuals to join organizations. It is concerned with the individual modes or patterns of involvement and action of the various members of the organization. The moralizer, who is purely goal-oriented, and the inside-opester, who is gyroscopic, certainly differ in their theories and modes of action. But, as mentioned earlier in the methodology, this research

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21. In R. Lane. Political Man. The Free Press, New York, 1972. The first type corresponds to E. Fromm, the second and third to T.W. Adorno. The fifth, sixth, and seventh to H. Lasswell, the eighth to R. Merton, and the ninth to twelfth to D. Riesman.

Adorno, T.W. and Associates. The Authoritarian Personality. New York: Harper and Row, 1950, pp. 181 ff.

Fromm, E. Escape from Freedom. New York: Rinehart, 1941, pp. 185-206.

Lasswell, H. Psychopathology and Politics. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930, pp. 78-126; pp. 137-152; and pp. 53-56.

Merton, R. "Bureaucratic Structure and Personality," Social Forces 17, 1940, pp. 560-568.

Riesman, D. The Lonely Crowd. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1950, pp. 189-190; pp. 190-199; pp. 199-210; pp. 287-288; pp. 295-299.

22. Ibid., p. 25.

takes into consideration the personal attitudes and traits of individual interviewees without centering, though on the study of these traits. The intention is to understand alternative patterns of action, and part of the literature on development psychology and human behavior is relevant to this understanding.

b) Human Needs and Human Behavior

In this literature, adults are described as minimizing dependence, gaining control over their immediate world and developing many creative abilities.<sup>23</sup> Work in post-industrial society does not seem to demand these characteristics creating frustration, psychological failure and alienation.<sup>24</sup> How do people adapt to this situation, is the question that many social scientists have asked, and in which we are also interested. The answer to this question included behavior patterns that were described under "informal activities" plus absenteeism, turnover, and unionization. A position taken by social scientists is that if people decide to accept their work situation it is because it fulfills some need. The need for money and benefits was posed as helping to guarantee the fulfillment of the basic psychological needs of subsistence and security.<sup>25</sup> In order to make this "psychological withdrawal" from work and yet perform appropriately in the workplace, workers have to underestimate the importance of human factors and value material factors. This corresponds to Goldthorpe's and Lockwood's

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23. See Erickson, E. "Identity and the Life Cycle," Psychological Issues, 1953, I(1) and Kohlberg, L. and E. Turiel (eds). Moralization, the Cognitive Developmental Approach. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973.

24. Blauner, R. Alienation and Freedom: the Factory Worker and His Industry. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964.

25. Maslow, A. Motivation and Personality. New York: Harper, 1954.

findings on "instrumental attitudes" of workers as well as to Fromm's notion of "market-orientation."<sup>26</sup> This frame of reference attempts to understand and explain the actor's actions through basic "needs."

The difference between social scientists lies in their definition and perception of the needs and in their selection of the level of "need" that is most appropriate to explain a certain type of behavior.

Maslow's research differentiates between people who are "deficiency-motivated" and those who are "growth-motivated" and writes:

"When one is deficiency-motivated the needs for safety, belongingness, love relations and for respect can be satisfied only by other people, i.e., only from outside the person. . . .In contrast, the self-actualizing individual, by definition gratified in his basic needs, is far less dependent, far less beholden, far more autonomous and self-directed." 27

Maslow sees man as committed to a process of self-actualization and poses humanhood to attempt to be self-actualizing in all situations. In this framework it is hard to conceive of workers as capable of "depotentizing" their need for self-actualization and therefore Maslow, as a result of his long experience as a clinician, included in every human being a "deficiency orientation," which included many needs that had little to do with growth and self-actualization.

Scientists of personality have seen man as "complex man," who can manifest inner, central, and peripheral needs. Scholars, such as Maslow, Rogers and Fromm (to mention but a few) have focused on such needs as self-esteem, competence, essentiality, and self-actualization because they find these needs helpful in explaining human behavior. Argyris writes on this

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26. Fromm, E. The Sane Society. New York: Rinehart, 1955.

27. Maslow, A. Toward a Psychology of Being. Princeton: Van Nostrand Company, 1962, pp. 32-33, 36-37.

subject:

"Such needs help them to explain more peripheral, more transitory, more situationally-based needs. But in doing so, they do not deny the relevance of these more peripheral needs. It is possible to make perfectly good explanations (to predict and control behavior) by focussing on such peripheral needs. What makes some needs more basic (less situation-based) is that they seem to be valued by individuals and they seem to maintain their potency even if their expression, in a given situation, is not possible." 28

From these studies, it was important to recall certain points for the research. First, individual differences do exist. Second, human beings respond to needs, some of which are peripheral, some inner, and some more central. Third, in order to understand human behavior, it is important to understand all the different levels of needs.

Kluckhohn's and Murray's statement that every man is in certain respects: (a) like all other men; (b) like some other men; (c) like no other man, seems, in some respect at least, to summarize this literature.<sup>29</sup> Indeed, given that men are alike, we can construct ideal types, which group individuals according to certain characteristics. All needs and meanings are given to people by their society, but through their actions people can also modify, change and transform these needs, as well as society. In each individual, many needs may be potent and not actually pursued. These needs can be understandably suppressed. This leads us to briefly mention a part of the literature on personality that is a special interest to this research. This is the literature on methods of adjusting to the world.

One process has been referred to as a process of self-acceptance and

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28. Argyris, C. The Applicability of Organizational Sociology. op.cit., p. 66.

29. Kluckhohn, C. and H. Murray. Personality in Nature, Society, and Culture. New York: Knopf, 1943, p. 35.



self-development. Rogers writes on this subject:

"We cannot change, we cannot move away from what we are, until we thoroughly accept what we are. Then, change seems to come about almost unnoticed." 30

This process of self-acceptance is different from the accommodation to, or assimilation of, conflict. These processes have been described by Lazarus as follows:

"In accommodation, a person can subordinate one of the conflicting pressures and choose to express and gratify the other. . . . Assimilation, the other solution to conflict, requires mastering, or eliminating, or rejecting, the social demand rather than giving up the personal need. In this process a person assimilates the world to his own requirements, using people and social situations about him most advantageously for attaining his own ends. 31

And in his analysis of how students develop a series of stratagems, of ploys and adaptive techniques to deal with the choices that confront them, Snyder talks of adaptive mechanisms, defensive mechanisms and coping patterns. He writes:

"Adaptive mechanisms refers to those mental processes which alter the inner state of the individual so as to significantly affect the subsequent interaction with the environment. Adaptation is used, then, as a descriptive term referring to those intrapsychic processes which have a demonstrable effect on the quality of the individual's interaction with the environment. The changes occur primarily in the individual in response to outside stimuli.

Defense mechanisms refer to those mental processes with which the individual responds to the emergence into consciousness of instinctual strivings. A defense mechanism's primary function is to keep the emotional or the ideational representatives of these strivings out of consciousness. The changes occur within the individual in response to

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30. Rogers, C. On Becoming a Person. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, Company, 1961, p. 88.

31. Lazarus, R. Personality and Adjustment. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1963, pp. 10-11.

internal stimuli. . . .

Coping patterns I take to refer to some behavior, some action which alters the individual's relationship to his environment. A coping pattern, in order to be so named, must have some influence on the individual's adaptation to the environment by altering his behavior in relation to that environment. Clearly, there is always some secondary shift in the individual's internal state as a result. The changes here occur primarily in the environment in response to internal stimuli."<sup>32</sup>

In our analysis, the concepts of self-acceptance, suppression, adaptation, and coping are going to be used to refer to the various patterns that women in the organization can adopt in response to their working environments.

c) Theories-of-Action

Argyris and Schon start their book as follows: "Integrating thought with action effectively has plagued philosophers, frustrated social scientists, and eluded professional practitioners for years."<sup>33</sup> Indeed, theories have been built to explain, predict or control human behavior. Our concern is to describe, rather than explain or predict, the various patterns of involvement of women office workers within the organization we are studying. In doing so, a theoretical framework is needed to link the theories and the actions of these different women. This study does not explore how the theories of actions are formed or in what sense they are adequate or inadequate. It attempts to understand how various theories of action determine alternative modes of action and how these theories may come to change over time. The study that comes closest to ours is Argyris' and Schon's.

Argyris and Schon attempt to analyze the theories of action that determine all deliberate human behavior and develop a model of the theories

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32. Snyder, B. The Hidden Curriculum. New York: Knopf, 1971, pp. 10-11.

33. Argyris, C. and D. Schon. Theory in Practice, Increasing Professional Effectiveness. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Publishers, 1975, p. 3.

of action that determine all deliberate human behavior and develop a model of the theories of action that determine the actual behavior of professional practitioners. They then analyze this model from two points of view: the effectiveness of those who hold it and its influence on their ability to learn about their own behavior. They propose an alternative model which they pose to be more conducive to both effectiveness and learning.

Their research is relevant to ours as both studies attempt to understand the interaction of theories-in-use and actions and the possible changes in people's theories-in-use. Our study also considers that "theories-in-use create the behavioral world because people act according to the requirements of the governing variables of their theories-in-use,"<sup>34</sup> but it attempts to focus on an in-depth comparative analysis of alternative theories of action and their relation to alternative modes of actions. The research is concerned with a particular kind of action and theories of action, those that deal with work-related problems.

Argyris and Schon unify theories of action prevailing in society in one global model; we are going to focus on differences between theories of action and understand the implications of these differences for action. They describe the theories-in-use so "that they can be criticized and changed." We focus more on change that occurs from within the individual, and on the implications of these changes in the individual for the growth and development of an organization.

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34. Ibid., p. 35.

## II. ORGANIZATIONAL ACTIVITIES AND DEVELOPMENT

### 1. Perspectives on Studies of Organizational Types

Most organizational research has fallen into one of two groups: One group which looks at specific organizations and bases its analysis mainly on case studies, and the other group which attempts to describe general characteristics of organizations.

Generalizations on organizations are often based on the goals, the functions, or the structure of organizations. In a broad sense, the main differentiation made is between formal and informal organizations. The formal organization is the organization that is "planned and intended by its designers." It is an organization that implies a definite structure to provide a good or service efficiently. The informal organization refers to a "set of groups, friendships, and attachments that inevitably develop when people are placed in regular proximity to one another."<sup>35</sup>

Most studies have generally focused on formal organizations and organization theorists have discussed the various forms that such organizations may assume. Among the best known theories of formal organizations are Weber's classical theories of authority and bureaucratic organization;<sup>36</sup> March and Simon's administrative approaches, which view organizations mainly as decision-making structures;<sup>37</sup> and Parsons' sociological approach to the theory of organizations, which applies his general theoretical framework

35. Tannenbaum, A. Social Psychology of the Work Organization. Belmont, California: Wadsworth Publishing Company, Inc., 1966, p. 1.

36. Weber, M. The Theory of Social and Economic Organization. Talcott Parsons (ed), Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press and Falcon's Wing Press, 1947.

37. March, J. and H. Simon. Organizations. New York: Wiley, 1958.

for the study of social systems to formal organizations.<sup>38</sup>

Since formal organizations are often very large and complex, some authors refer to them as "large-scale" or as "complex" organizations and attempt to differentiate between various types of formal organizations. Various typologies are attempted, in which the scientists emphasize one or various of the organizations' characteristics. Among the best known is Etzioni's classification, based on compliance relationships between certain kinds of power, as exerted by one actor(s) and certain kinds of involvement, as adopted by the subordinated actor(s).<sup>39</sup> Another typology often discussed and used in the organizational literature is Blau's classification of organizations on the basis of whose interests the organizations are designed to serve.<sup>40</sup>

To the extent that the "9 to 5" organization is considered in this study the expression of a broader social movement of women, working as office workers, the above-mentioned literature is only marginally relevant to this study. This is not to say, however, that the organizational core is not an important component of the movement, but as Etzioni writes:

"Social movements are not organizations. They are not oriented to specific goals, their dominant subsystems are expressive and not instrumental, there is little segregation between the various institutional spheres, and there is no systematic division of labor, power and communication. Nevertheless, most movements have an organizational core which does have all these characteristics of a typical organizational structure. . . .

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38. Parsons, T. Structure and Process in Modern Societies. Glencoe, Illinois: Free Press, 1960, pp. 16-96.

39. Etzioni, A. A Comparative Analysis of Complex Organizations, On Power, Involvement, and Their Correlates. New York: The Free Press of Glencoe, Inc., 1961.

40. Blau, P. and W.R. Scott. Formal Organizations, A Comparative Approach. Chandler Publishing Company, 1962.

"For the National Socialist movement in Germany, the core organization was the National Socialist party; for the labor movement in Western European countries it is often a web of organizations which include one or more parties and one or more labor unions. However, the organizational core need not be a party or union. Many movements have organizations specifically their own. . . .

"To the degree that core organizations of social movements consist of one of the better-known types of organization, such as political parties or labor unions, their compliance structure is highly normative. Little is known about the nature of compliance of other core organizations, especially with respect to the relative weight of remunerative and normative powers. Even a tentative placement of these organizations according to the relative importance of normative controls must be delayed until more information is available." 41

As noted by Etzioni, formal organizations have been studied in greater detail than the core organizations of social movements, which do not function on the basis of authority and hierarchy. We are interested, however, in this study in a non-authoritarian core organization of a social movement and in the influence that members of this organization have on its development and growth.

## 2. Perspectives on Studies of Individuals and Organizations

Few studies attempt to link individual behavior with organizational development, and when they do it is generally in terms of power sharing and group decision-making. This emphasis is not surprising, given the focus on formal organizations, on their hierarchical structure and on their decision processes. In the literature we are going to discuss, therefore, attempts have been made to evaluate the impact of power sharing and group decision-making on the development of organizations.

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41. Etzioni, A. op.cit., p. 53.

Early writings on organizations emphasized the need for formal, hierarchical organization structures a la Weber. Many organization theorists have abandoned these classical assumptions and imply or suggest that group decision-making can enhance organizational effectiveness through the fulfillment of basic human needs.

Maslow's "need hierarchy" concept, which poses that satisfied needs do not motivate behavior and that when a lower level need is satisfied, the immediately higher level of needs becomes the prime motivating force, has been tested empirically by Hall and Nougaim.<sup>42</sup> Their field studies have supported a two-step hierarchy of motives, with the social, ego, and self-actualization motives comprising the higher level. From a similar perspective, Argyris also poses that group decision-making may be instrumental in allowing people to move toward self-actualization, which he views as a complex motive comprised of psychological success, self-awareness and control, independence, activity, personality growth, high aspiration levels, deep interests, and long-time perspectives.<sup>43</sup>

Group decision-making theorists have found that the utility of interpersonal interaction depends on its application to different phases of the decision process. Vroom, Grant, and Cotton have found interactions to be functional in evaluating decision alternatives, but not in generating them,<sup>44</sup> and Argyris has defined some organizational conditions requiring

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42. Hall, D.T. and K.E. Nougaim. Organizational Behavior and Human Performance, 1968, #3, pp. 12-35.

43. Argyris, C. Integrating the Individual and the Organization. New York: Wiley, 1964.

44. Vroom, V.H., L.D. Grant, and T.S. Cotton. Organizational Behavior and Human Performance. 1963, 4, pp. 77-96.

different decision-making structures and processes.<sup>45</sup>

Besides benefiting the individuals, group decision-making has also been found to satisfy social motives. "Affiliation can accrue from group decision-making, particularly when members interact over time and under conditions which facilitate agreement and joint goal-seeking activities."<sup>46</sup>

This literature shows that group decision-making creates a balance between individuals' satisfactions and needs, and group "efficiency." The importance of group decision-making depends on the goals of the organization. In the literature, the quality of group decisions, however, has not been clearly documented.

### 3. Individuals, Organizations and Social Movements

Despite the development of various social movements in the U.S. in the last decade -- the student movement, the civil rights movement, the women's movement -- the study of social movements has been relatively neglected.<sup>47</sup> Among the existing studies, those that analyze social movements from a social psychological perspective are especially meaningful to this research, as they attempt to emphasize the variety of motives causing individuals to ally themselves to social movements. These studies usually underplay the evolution of the organizational structure. As mentioned before, the analysis of social movements and the study of their

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45. Argyris, C. Management and Organizational Development: The Path from XA to YB. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1971.

46. Wood, M.T. "Power Relationships and Group Decision-making in Organizations," Psychological Bulletin, 1973, Vol. 79, p. 289.

47. McLaughlin, B. (ed) Studies in Social Movements: A social psychological perspective. New York: The Free Press, 1969.



organizational structure has often been confused. Indeed, much of the literature on organizations is relevant to the understanding of social movements. In this section, only the elements particular to social movements are going to be analyzed.

Social movements have been defined in various ways.<sup>48</sup> The most classic definition is Blumer's view of social movements as "collective enterprises to establish a new order of life." As when attempting to define organizations, definitional precision remains problematic because of the diversity of social movements. Killian's contribution to this definition is, however, meaningful. Indeed, independently of its nature, a social movement usually includes among its salient characteristics a shared value system, a sense of community, norms for action, and an organizational structure. In addition, the movement usually seeks to influence the social order and is oriented toward definite goals.

As with organizations, social scientists usually attempt to build a typology of social movements. Blumer's typology is still the most frequently discussed. His main distinction is between general and specific social movements, which differ according to the degree of their forms and organization. He describes, also, some kinds of movements which are dis-

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48. Blumer, H. "Collective Behavior," in Lee, A.M. (ed) New Outline of the Principles of Sociology, 2nd ed. rev., New York: Barnes and Noble, 1951.

Cameron, W.B. Modern Social Movements. New York: Random House, 1967.

Killian, L. "Social Movements," in Faris, R.E.L. (ed) Handbook of Modern Sociology, Chicago: Rand McNally, 1964, pp. 426-455.

Toch, H. The Social Psychology of Social Movements. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965.

tinguished mainly by their quality or style: expressive movements, nationalistic or revival movements. In this research, we are specifically interested in his description of particular social movements, which he divides into two main types: revolutionary movements and reform movements. While both seek to influence the social order, a revolutionary movement attacks existing norms and values and attempts to substitute new ones, whereas a reform movement accepts existing norms and values and uses them to criticize the social effects it opposes. A similar distinction will be made in this study.

As mentioned earlier, there is much literature on the personal and psychological reasons behind decisions to affiliate with movements, but there is little consensus among behavioral scientists about these motivations. Leadership in movements is also discussed and so are mobilization strategies and tactics.<sup>49</sup>

Emphasis is also given to understanding the evolution of social movements. The most common analysis is based on a natural history model in which the development of a social movement is seen as a series of steps or a progression of phases: the stage of social unrest, the stage of popular excitement, the stage of formalization, and the stage of institutionalization.<sup>50</sup> To this model of development, Smelser opposes his "value-added" model in which a set of necessary conditions are specified as sufficient in combination for a particular form of collective behavior. He poses any or all of the determinants of a given form of collective behavior to have pre-existed for a long period of time before acti-

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49. Smelser, N. Theory of Collective Behavior. New York: The Free Press, 1963.

50. Blumer, op.cit., p. 203.

vation.<sup>51</sup>

From a different perspective still, Turner poses social movements to evolve as a result of the resolution of tensions concerning values, member participation, and power.<sup>52</sup> This research will be based on a similar approach. Finally, the literature on the interaction of social movements with the host society should be mentioned. The most frequent position held on this subject has been summarized by Killian, as follows:

"[A movement is always of an emergent nature, and what happens to it and its members] as a consequence of their interaction within the movement is vastly more important<sup>53</sup> than the reasons why they first came into the movement."

Both society and the movement are seen as changing by their mutual interaction and the above-mentioned "stages of development" of movements are related to society's reaction to the movement.

Mauss writes:

"While the movement is struggling to expand its own resource and membership base, without unduly compromising its critical goals, the host society is responding with a "double death-squeeze," made up of the twin pressures of co-optation and repression. . . .The fortunes of a movement are thus determined in large part by the particular mixture of co-optation and repression applied by society, and by its own manipulation of, and responses to that mixture." 54

The development of each movement depends, then, on the specific movement and on the particular historical circumstances which originated it and the concrete conditions it responds to. This case study will attempt to

51. Smelser, op.cit.

52. Turner, R. and L. Killian. Collective Behavior. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1957.

53. Killian, op.cit., p. 445.

54. Mauss, A. Social Problems as Social Movements. New York: J.B. Lippincott Company, 1975, pp. 60-61.

illustrate this view. This literature on social movements is, as the literature on the involvement of individuals in politics, interesting as background material to this research.

Our study differs, though, from the rest of the literature, in its focus on the links between individuals' theories and actions, and the activities and dilemmas open to an organization that groups individuals with various theories and modes of action. The study is also different in its attempt to pose the organization as the expression of a broader social movement, and in its understanding of the organization as a response to the existing conditions in society. As such, this study can be considered to focus on the links between individuals, the organizations to which they belong, and the society to which they respond.

CHAPTER IV

METHODOLOGY OF THE RESEARCH

This study started in the Fall of 1974. It has long roots in the two strong interests which I have developed during my graduate work at M.I.T.: the sociology of work and the sociology of action. Specifically, I have been concerned, over the years, with the alternative channels open to working people to regain basic control over their environment, be it at work or in their community.

In thinking through a research topic, I felt the need to devote my energy and enthusiasm to a task which I felt related directly, not only to my intellectual interests, but also to my concrete life experience as a working woman. Although I have been lucky enough to be among the fifteen percent of white females working as professionals in the U.S. economy, I have always sympathized, and in a very genuine way, with all the women who have been less fortunate and who are caught in more alienating jobs.

This general concern induced me to spend some time exploring organizations of working women and concretely to look for organizations that would attempt to restructure the conditions of work.

#### I. On Choosing an Organization for Analysis

As stated before, I was not concerned with studying organizations which attempted to influence work environments from within the institutionalized system of industrial relations, nor with organizations which cluster workers around a common interest.

I was not considering for my analysis underground movements nor anarchist organizations, but only organizations that are operating "within" the actual system and attempting to change it.

In searching for an organization that questions the existing struc-

ture of work environments, a wide spectrum of organizations could have been considered. In making a decision on what organization to choose, a series of criteria were used. These criteria were mainly the size of the organization, the purpose of the organization, and the internal structure of the organization.

a) Size

In searching for an organization, it became clear to me that I was not looking for a nucleus of people that attempted to create an alternative organization of work by cutting ties with society. As such, counter-culture organizations "a la Roszak" were not considered. Distinction was indeed made between organizations that posed a different work environment and closed themselves to the external world, and organizations that strove for a different way to structure work and wanted to bring about this new structure in society-at-large. The distinctions between these two types of organizations were found to be related with the size of the organization. "Counter-culture" organizations were usually small and appeared as a small-group solution to a social problem. For organizations to be able to implement any change on a societal level, its influence has to go beyond that of a small group of individuals.

Williams writes on this issue:

"A meaning or a practice may be tolerated as a deviation, and yet still be seen only as another particular way to live it. But as the necessary area of effective dominance extends, the same meanings and practices can be seen by the dominant culture, not merely as disregarding or despising it, but as challenging it." 1

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1. R.Williams. "Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory," New Left Review, November - December, 1973, #83, p. 10.

b) The Purpose of The Organization

In choosing an organization for analysis, I was interested in organizations that challenged the existing organization of work. I was searching for an organization that, in being unhappy with the existing social order, proposes concrete modifications to it, directed towards elimination of the fragmentation of the work force; that is, fighting against racism, sexism, hierarchical division of labor, etc.

However, in looking at organizations, I was aware that I should regard actions, proposals, and manifestations of the organizations as trends. Short-range objectives might be more conservative than long-range ones and vice versa, and as such, the critical/challenging nature of an organization might shift over time.

c) The Internal Structure of the Organization

Given the difficulty in selecting an organization on the basis of its current actions, I considered that the choice needed to be made, not only on the basis of the exterior manifestations, but also in relation to the internal structure of the organization. Indeed, organizations that present an already crystallized hierarchical structure are likely to become, over time, more and more conventional. If an organization is to challenge the existing structure of work, it cannot be structured, itself, in a way which involves the same division of work and power as the one which it is actually questioning. The organization to be studied may involve a division of labor among different functions, it may, in certain circumstances, require enforcing unity of action, but it should not involve the direction and control of the activity of one group by another group.



d) 9 to 5

The organization I decided to study was 9 to 5, an organization of women office workers that nucleates several hundred employees in the Boston area. Its newsletter goes to more than 3,000 members. As will be described in the study of the organization, 9 to 5 calls for an end to sex discrimination in promotion, training, wages and benefits, paid overtime, precise job descriptions, and regular salary reviews. Its internal structure is simply a chairperson, several staff members and "committees which are formed and dissolved as needed to plan current activities."

This choice was reinforced by my own interest in the existing division of work along sex lines and in the problems that women encounter in their workplace. Also, office workers appear to be an ever-increasing sector of the working population. In the U.S. in 1970, there were 14 million clerical workers and organizing even a small percentage of these workers to change their existing working conditions can be a real threat to the "bureaucratic phenomenon" and the world of work.

2. The Research: Questions and Hypotheses

The research centered on the study of the 9 to 5 organization as an organization that attempts to achieve social change through the questioning of the actual organization of work, and, more specifically, the conditions of work of women clerical workers.

The intention of the research is to understand the involvement of individual workers within the organization. The focus is on the relationship between people's theories and people's actions, and on the understanding of the differences in the patterns of theories and views of action of

the women involved in the organization. Action will be defined here broadly, to include both the participation in activities within the organization and in the workplace, as well as the desired patterns of action which represent the views of women on where the organization is going or should go.

The analysis of the relationship between people's theories and actions concerning work is based on the belief that men and women develop their interests, ideologies, personalities, and cultures through the concrete and particular way they experience their productive activities. Given the interest to understand the involvement of women office workers in an organization that attempts to change the conditions of work, I posed that involvement to depend on the particular relationship between the objective conditions of work and the views of each woman of what these conditions should be. Concretely, I was relating women's theories and actions to their life experiences as women working as office workers in our society.

I implicitly assumed in my research that women differ from one another in their patterns of relating their experiences, their theories and their view of actions. I was interested in describing these alternative patterns, not in the causality between experiences, theories, and actions. In understanding these patterns, I am not to focus on personal differences. In each pattern different individuals, according to their personality, will have different modes of integration and action, and some types of personality are more likely to lead to some types of action than others. There is, therefore, a need to take into consideration the personal attitudes

and traits of individual interviewees without centering, though, on the study of these traits.

As Habermas wrote:

"For, under the pressure of reality, not all interpreted needs find gratification, and socially transcendent motives of action cannot all be defended against with consciousness, but only with the aid of affective forces." 2

Also, social and cultural forces can influence the various patterns.

My concern is to understand these patterns interpretively, in terms of their implications for action from the individual's point of view and their implication for the existence and development of the organization, itself.

a) Individual Patterns and Ideal Types

The research was intended to provide an understanding of the patterns of theories and actions of the various women within the organization. Although within each pattern the personal differences of the interviewees will be made explicit, a systematization or generalization of these patterns will also be attempted.

This attempt relates to the traditional sociological methodology of building "ideal types." Indeed, in his effort to escape from the individualizing and particularizing approach of German Geisteswissenschaft, Max Weber developed a key conceptual tool, the notion of the "ideal type."

An ideal type is an analytical construct that serves the researcher as a tool to unify certain generalized patterns, as well as to ascertain deviations and dissimilarities.

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2. J. Habermas. "Psychoanalysis and Social Theory," in Knowledge and Human Interests, Beacon Press, 1972, p. 276.

"An ideal type is formed by the one-sided accentuation of one or more points of view and by the synthesis of a great many diffuse, discrete, more or less present and occasionally absent concrete individual phenomena which are arranged according to those one-sidedly emphasized viewpoints into a unified analytical construct." 3

The ideal type involves an accentuation of typical courses of conduct.

"An ideal type never corresponds to concrete reality, but always moves at least one step away from it. It is constructed out of certain elements of reality and forms a logically precise and coherent whole which can never be found as such in that reality." 4

A description of the different "types" was going to be attempted. The intention of this typology is not to explain causality, but to construct certain hypotheses that link these types with possible work experiences that brought them into being. More importantly, the typology should compare the different types and allow for considerations on the possibility of certain types to change and develop in other types over time.

b) Individual Patterns and Organizational Change

These variations between "types" was posed to have a definite impact on the existence and development of the organization. The intention was to capture at least part of that impact. The organization's activities are posed as a consequence of certain basic discrepancies among its individual members with respect to their views of what the organization should be and do. As such, to understand these discrepancies, the functioning of the organization and its members had to be understood and described.

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3. E. Shils and H. Finch, eds. Max Weber on the Methodology of the Social Sciences, New York, The Free Press, 1949, p. 90.

4. Ibid., p. 90.

### 3. The Research: The Methodology

The study is based on a detailed analysis of twenty-three members of the organization. Twenty-five women were interviewed, but two of the interviews were not included for the final analysis. One of these two interviews was excluded because the woman was not a "formal member" of the organization, and although she was interested in it, knew little about it. Her name was given to me by one of her friends, and when contacted, she did not mention being part of the organization. From her own description of her work and her concerns, I was unclear whether she would ever join the organization. Her work patterns were very unstable.

The second woman, who was interviewed but not included in the analysis, was a very active member of the organization whose personality traits were such that many other members found her thoughts to be extremely disjointed. These opinions were reinforced after the transcription of the interview, as her ideas did not follow each other in any "logical order."

#### a) Sample Selection

In selecting the sample, two different techniques were used. First, to include a wide variety of women, a random sample of 9 to 5 members was attempted. When women join the organization they are required to fill out a card and one out of each ten cards was selected from the file available at the 9 to 5 central office. Fifteen of the interviewees were contacted through this procedure.\* Three of these fifteen members were very active

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\* 9 to 5 staff were at first reluctant to show this file to me, as the cards are confidential. When I discussed with them the content of the research and the purpose of the list of names, they agreed to my going through their cards with the understanding that only the women who would agree to it spontaneously were going to be interviewed.

9 to 5 members. The rest were less active but still involved in the organization and well-informed about its activities. We wanted the other ten women who were to be interviewed to also be active members, to achieve a balance in the sample between active and non-active members. We were referred to them by the three active members who were interviewed through the first sample selection procedure. The intention was to cover a variety of women who are active on the various committees.

The aim of selecting strategic cases for investigation has much in common with Glaser and Strauss' strategy of "theoretical sampling." The aim is not to represent the population-at-large, but rather to choose a sample on the basis of learning something about certain theoretical categories. Glaser and Strauss differentiate theoretical sampling from statistical sampling.

"Statistical sampling is done to obtain accurate evidence on distributions of people among categories to be used in description or verification."<sup>5</sup>

Given that our intention is not to test a theory, but to describe the patterns of women and their mode of action, the idea is not to have an extensive sample but a sample that would allow us to create a description of the "ideal types."

Glaser and Strauss write on the adequacy of the theoretical sample:

"The adequate theoretical sample is judged on the basis of how widely and diversely the analyst chose his groups for saturating categories according to the type of theory he wished to develop. The adequate statistical sample, on the other hand, is judged on the basis of techniques of random and stratified sampling used in relation to the social structure of a group or groups sampled. The inadequate theoretical sample is easily spotted, since the

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5. B. Glaser and A. Strauss, The Discovery of Grounded Theory Strategies for Qualitative Research, Aldine Publishing Co., Chicago, 1967, p. 62.

theory associated with it is usually thin and not well integrated, and has too many obvious unexplained exceptions. The inadequate statistical sample is often more difficult to spot; usually, it must be pointed out by specialists in methodology, since other researchers tend to accept technical sophistication uncritically." 6

Glaser and Strauss also point out that "the researcher who generates theory need not combine random sampling with theoretical sampling when setting forth relationships among categories and properties. These relationships are suggested as hypotheses pertinent to direction of relationship, not tested as descriptions of both direction and magnitude." 7

#### b) Sample Size

For study, as stated above, we did not intend to do any quantitative work nor to test any precise hypotheses. We did not mean to draw conclusions concerning the correlation between events, but to describe patterns of work experience and modes of action. We attempted to construct overall patterns or types, but did not pretend to include all the "variables" that explained the differences in patterns among women within the "9 to 5" organization.

Perhaps because we try to understand rather than test, this type of research has often been labeled exploratory hypothesis. It is a type of research that tries to generate rather than to test hypotheses, and it is this type of research which can be undertaken with a small sample study.

In his concern to find alternative ways of studying complex organizations, Weiss has differentiated between the analytic and the holistic approach.<sup>8</sup>

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6. Ibid., p. 63.

7. Ibid., p. 63.

8. R.S. Weiss, "Alternative Approaches in the Study of Complex Situations," Human Organization, 25, Fall, 1966, p. 199.

In doing holistic research, the aim is not to test a set of hypotheses, but rather to discover organization and patterning in that which is being studied.

Weiss tried to respond to the question as to how generalizable the findings are then, by using two arguments:

"One argument for generalizing from a single case is that the system discovered is a necessary consequence of the environmental pressures under which the case functions. . .

Another, somewhat different, argument for generalizing is that the essential characteristics of the situation, itself, require a particular system. Here it is not the surround of the unit under study, but the unit itself, its aims and character, which establishes a certain system."<sup>9</sup>

Following Weiss' first argument, we can say that women's patterns are a response to common environmental pressures and experiences, which are specific to women working as office workers in our society. Small-sampling is further justified by the common trait among women: their having joined the 9 to 5 organization. By attempting to link individual patterns to organizational development, this small-sample approach is further justified. How generalizable the 9 to 5 experience is to other social movements depends on the characteristics of the movement and the specific historical instances that give birth to these movements and allow for their development.

#### c) The Interviews

All the women interviewed were approached by telephone. In the first round, seventeen women were telephoned and all but two agreed to the inter-

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9. R. Weiss. "Issues in Holistic Research," Institutions and the Person: Papers Presented to Everett Hughes, eds. H.S. Becket, et al., Chicago, Aldine Publishing Co., 1968, p. 345.



view. All of the fifteen women were extremely accommodating in arranging for an appointment. In the two cases where the women declined to participate, the stated reason for refusal was going out of town on vacation, as the interviews were conducted in the middle of the summer.

All interviews were conducted after work and despite the "long working day," all women were disposed to spend a couple of hours talking. They seemed interested in the research and willing to cooperate.

The interviews were conducted in the home of the interviewees to allow for a more casual interaction. Interviews were tape recorded and none of the women found it surprising or embarrassing.

#### d) Data Collection

Data was gathered primarily by means of "free-style" interviews. An interview guide of general areas was used instead of a questionnaire. The interviews were "standardized" only to the extent that there was a list of topics to be discussed with each interviewee. The wording of questions and the sequence of topics varied from person to person. Often, the women, themselves, started a given topic and whenever this occurred, topics were followed up as "naturally" as possible. In general, the interviewing consisted of a simple question to allow the interviewee to freely associate the question with whatever comment, story, or detail was of importance to her.

The flexible interviewing approach was chosen to get people to talk more freely and to observe the links that people spontaneously made between various topics. Only after a person had covered a topic in her own way was she asked to expand on certain aspects of her description for

purposes of clarification.

Given the nature of the research, special attention was put on looking during the course of the interviews for internal inconsistencies, and trying to point them out to the interviewee to see whether, indeed, the two statements reflected two inconsistent views and/or modes of action, whether the interviewee had noticed this inconsistency, or whether, for her, both views and/or modes of action were compatible. This type of interview has been referred to in the literature as a "nonschedule-standardized" interview.

Richardson, Dohrenwend, and Klein note that in the nonschedule-standardized interviews, the interviewer works with a list of the information required from each respondent and there is no "fixed sequence which will be satisfactory to all respondents; the most effective sequence is one determined by the respondent's readiness and willingness to take up topics."<sup>10</sup> Any information that seemed relevant to the particular interview was also gathered.

At the end of the interviews, some "schedule-standardized" demographic data were obtained on a two-page questionnaire, which was returned to me by mail. All but four questionnaires were returned.

e) Interviews' Guide

Three general areas were explored in each interview. The first one relates to the problems of clerical work and the interviewees' perception of themselves at work. Interviewees were asked questions on:

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10. S. Richardson, B.S. Dohrenwend, and D. Klein. Interviewing: Its Forms and Functions, Basic Books, New York, 1965, p. 51.

- The major grievances and nature of problems in the work place.
- The concrete demands. Short-range versus long-range.
- The possibilities of clerical work to become a good job  
(organization of work, social relations, etc.)
- The plans for themselves at work.

Secondly, given the interest of knowing how much, if at all, interviewees relate their own work problems to general societal processes, the interviewees were asked questions in relation to:

- The causes of work problems
- The changes in social organization, effect on clerical work.
- The links with other segments of the labor force.
- The alternatives, if any.

Finally, interviewees were asked to clarify their views on the problems of the workplaces and the modes of resolving them. Questions related to:

- The potentials of individual versus group actions.
- The views of unions and alternative group actions.
- The effects of different forms of action.
- Their own involvement in various forms of action.

As mentioned before, interviews were at first fully transcribed. They were then summarized, and these summaries have been included in the Appendix of this research. For the analysis of the interviews, the complete interviews had often to be used.

The analysis of the interviews has been included in Chapter V.

The material on the organization's structure, activities, and procedures has been collected from articles in journals and newspapers, as well as from the organization's newsletter.

This material has been included in Chapter VI.

CHAPTER V

WOMEN CLERICAL WORKERS; THEIR THEORIES AND ACTION:

A CASE STUDY OF THE 9 TO 5 ORGANIZATION

In the introduction of the thesis, we have mentioned a concern that the research should not confer to human thoughts an existence of their own; that is, not to speak of abstract or theoretical human thoughts, but to stress the relationship between people's theories and people's actions. I mentioned the intent to focus on the understanding of the differences in the patterns of theories and views of action of the women involved in the social movement of women clerical workers that is being studied. Given the design of the research, all the women interviewed took at least one action: joining the organization; but besides this one step, women also perform within the organization and in their work places alternative actions like organizing the offices, leafletting, lobbying, etc. These concrete actions are undertaken by different women for different purposes and their actions are certainly dependent on their view of where the organization is going or where it should go. These concrete actions are often limited by what is feasible and realistic to do in our society in order to achieve certain stated goals, without "overthrowing" the existing system as proposed by any anarchist or extremist group. Within the realm of desirable and possible lines of action, different women chose to follow certain patterns of action as opposed to others. If a static analysis of the women in the organization is undertaken, they can be seen as pertaining to just one group of women: those that have achieved a certain level of awareness of their problems, awareness that has led them to undertake the concrete action of joining an organization oriented towards change. But given our concern to understand the dynamic relationship between theory and action, our interest is to move beyond this simple observation and understand how women within the same organization are capable of

perceiving the same organization in different ways and, therefore, undertake alternative actions and expect different results. A dynamic analysis is also concerned with what leads women to move from a certain pattern of theory and action to another one, and although the study is not a longitudinal one and therefore does not allow a follow-up on the evolution of women within the organization, the likelihood of the different women to change their patterns of theory and action will be considered. The elements of their present theories and actions that suggest possible future changes will be discussed.

To study the differences between the theories and modes of action of the women in the organization, their descriptions will be divided in three basic elements: their self-image, their theory of action, and their view of the organization (as representing the direction in which they would like the "9 to 5" organization to go). But before analyzing the interviews, we must describe the three elements mentioned above, justify their use, and show how different arrays can be constructed from various combinations of elements. Each combination of elements we will call a picture.

## I. The Elements of the "Picture"

To understand the relationship between theory and action, the analysis of three elements seems to be important. These elements are: the self-image, the theory-of-action, and the view of the organization. The analysis of these elements for each interview is undertaken to look at a particular kind of theory, the theory-of-action for dealing with problems in the context of work, and to understand its relationship to the kinds of action women undertake. To describe this particular theory-of-action, it is important to see how each interviewee views herself, others, and the problems that she faces at work. Although all of these views are interrelated, two distinct elements can be separated. These are the views that center around the self and the views that center around the relationship between self and others. Given the impossibility of women to undertake, at the present time, any action beyond the joining of the "9 to 5" organization, the study will look at "potential" actions by relating them to the individual's view of what the organization should do and/or become.

The self-image relates to the definition the individual gives of herself. Indeed, in order to justify her demands and rights, the individual refers to the nature of her work, to her social position: that is, to her image of self.

The theory-of-action relates to the view of the nature of the problem or conflict involved, and as such, relates directly to the relation of self to others. The image of this relationship is expressed through the main conflict/problems the individual sees and stresses;



hence, what people (managers, bosses, etc.) or forces (capitalism, government, etc.) are in the way for her and other working people to achieve maximum well-being both inside and outside the work place.

The view of the organization relates to the function that the members of the organization perceive it to accomplish or would like it to accomplish (and both are not necessarily exclusive), and as such, is linked to the system of values and/or the image of society that legitimizes the action taken or to be taken. The image of society, that is, the individual's view of desirable social change in relation to her own life and work experience, is what is going to model the individual's action within the organization and what is going to determine what the interviewees perceive as an appropriate role for the organization.<sup>1</sup>

These three elements are only constituents of the picture that describes the relationship between theory and action of each individual and as such, should be understood as "analytical tools" of analysis. As stated before, the concrete actions and the potential actions depend on the combination of these elements and the particular characteristics that they take in each picture.

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1. These three elements are comparable to Touraine's view of self, view of opponent, and view of society, in A. Touraine, Sociologie de l'Action, Paris, Seuil, 1965, p. 160.

## II. The "Pictures"

Like any other organization, the "9 to 5" organization is seen differently by its members, both in terms of its usefulness for themselves and its role and format to bring about change in office workers' social and economic conditions. These differences, I have posed to be related to the array, or "picture", that combines the different elements described above. In this particular concern of understanding an organization of women clerical workers, the format that these elements take can be described as follows:

a) The self-image: women clerical workers can stress in their description of the problems they encounter at work as relating primarily to their condition as women or their conditions as workers, or as a mixture of both.

b) The theory-of-action depends on the perception of women of the existence or not of a "conflict" of interests as the basis for their problems at work. It also depends on the nature of the conflict (that is, whether the opponents are seen as men and/or employers) and the perceived gravity of the conflicts (that is, whether the interests can be reconciled or not).

In Western economies and particularly the United States, the working class movement has taken the form of collective bargaining with unions representing the interests of the workers against the power of management. Unions, because of their strength as representative of the "mass" of workers were perceived as the only organization cap-

able of putting pressure on management, in any legal way. Men, especially blue-collar workers who had to face poor working conditions, always looked at unions as the appropriate vehicle to negotiate with management for higher pay and better benefits, as well as for more stable work environments. Rarely have men perceived unions as vehicles to question the nature and organization of work, but it is also true that it is only in the past decade that the whole issue of job dissatisfaction has been addressed at all in this country.

Women have previously either been involved in home-related activities or else followed the patterns that men have adopted in their attempt to improve their working conditions, that is, that they have either joined unions when they worked in a blue-collar occupation, or else internalized their perception of their working position as being privileged, when in a white-collar occupation, and only considered improving it through personal effort and merit.

The women's movement has questioned both the role of women at home and at work, but it has directed its main efforts at making women aware of their problems through a deliberate concern in raising their consciousness. The thrust of this strategy being that if

women would be aware of their oppression and discrimination, they would also be able to devise appropriate strategies to overcome them. In its origin, the women's movement has been a white middle-class movement, with only indirect concern with the "working woman", and strongly permeated with the individualistic philosophy of devising "individual" solutions to social problems\* and as such, limiting its proposal for action mainly to the process of consciousness-raising.

- c) The view of the organization is certainly dependent on the women's theory-of-action, but is primarily shaped by the women's view of what change is desired or necessary in society in order to achieve alternative working conditions and what organizations/institutions could be instrumental in bringing about this change.

The organizations that women can consider are likely to follow existing "models" and as such, take either the form of support groups as women's "rap" groups or support groups in terms of legal assistance and advice, lobbying groups, etc., or else unions, as representing the interests of workers.

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\* Even today, when the movement is concentrating more on the "working woman", the central concern of many segments of the movement is to achieve "equal pay for equal work" without questioning the fact that women are "crowded" in certain occupations and paid disproportionately low wages in relation to their educational level and are unable to find any other job that would reflect better their skills.

### 1. The "pure pictures"

The two "pure" formats that the compound array of these elements can take respond to the traditional distinction between women and men in their perceptions of themselves, their roles, their actions and the organizations that best represent their interests. These "pure" types which respond to the picture of working men in search of better working conditions and women in search of ways to modify their traditional role in society can best be synthesized as follows:

	Type a	Type b
Self-image	woman	worker
Theory-of-action	consciousness-raising	pressure
View of organization	support group	union

The fact that the organization that is being studied, is an organization of women clerical workers implies that the women who have been interviewed are both women and workers, whether this joint perception of their "selves" is externalized or not. In some women, this joint perception of their selves as women and as workers is clearly articulated and a mixture of both elements appears in their pictures, while in other instances, either their womanhood or their conditions as workers is underplayed or ignored in relation to their other characteristic.

#### a) The woman

Women in this picture underplay their being workers and dissociate themselves from it. If this dissociation

is total, women would probably not have joined an organization of working women , but the fact that these women did join "9 to 5" implies that they feel a need for reshaping their image of their selves at work . They see, though, "9 to 5" not as a movement of social liberation , but as one of personal liberation which would allow them to understand their self better in relation to society through consciousness-raising and group interaction.

b) The worker

Given their natural physical condition of being women, all of the interviewees refer, in one form or another, to their womanhood. As such, none of the women have pictures that do take the pure format of worker-pressure-union. This is not to say, however, that in the different pictures their reference to womanhood does not take on various forms, which also have alternative implications for action. Women can just acknowledge the fact that they are women and consider it as only modifying their possibilities for advancement. They can see themselves as women oppressed by men; or else they can perceive that women are discriminated against in the labor market and used by management to best fit their needs.

## 2. The Dynamics: Combining Pictures

The different combinations of both elements of the self - woman and worker - strongly influence the perceptions of women of themselves at work and shapes their relationship with others, as well as their perceptions of their work-related problems and the ways to resolve them. In each woman both elements of the self are present. Women can evolve over time in their perception of their "selves" and each element of the self can acquire at various points in time, dominance over the other element.

In the literature review on the topic of human development we have seen that authors like Maslow and Rogers have agreed that people's "maturity" is reached not by cutting out a piece of the world for oneself, but by coming to accept oneself.

This self-acceptant behavior they have posed, to allow for an interaction with the environment different from dependence upon or reaction to the environment. This self-acceptant behavior should, however, be seen as an ideal that people approach, but almost never reach. In order for people to function in the various spheres of their life, they have to develop a series of mechanisms and create a system of beliefs that allow them to mediate between their perception of their self and that of the environment. In response to their environment, people develop adaptive mechanisms or coping patterns. As mentioned in the literature review, Snyder refers to adaptive mechanisms as mental processes which alter the inner state of the individual, so as to significantly affect the subsequent interaction with the environment. Piaget has referred to these mechanisms in terms of "theory responses."

Coping patterns refer to some behavior, some action which alters the individual's relationship to the environment and have, therefore, been seen as "action responses".

In order to adapt to their working environment, women can feel the urge to "suppress" or underplay part of their self, thus emphasizing only one component of their self -- the woman or the worker component. For example, Elsa underplays her being a woman and Barbara seldom talks of herself as a worker. Other women compartmentalize their existence and feel that their two spheres of life, work and nonwork, are independent. Alice never talks about her work outside of work after five, as she is not a worker anymore. In most women, however, both elements of the self are present. The degree of dominance of one element over the other varies, though, from woman to woman.

Theories-of-action can be seen as part of the processes of adaptation and coping of people to their environment. People create theories to allow them to deal with their environment and their action not only applies, but also tests the theory it is based upon. By acting, people often alter their relationship to their environment. In their pattern of coping, they have altered their behavior in relation to the environment and in doing so there is a shift in their internal state. Changes occur in the environment in response to people's action, but changes also occur in people's theories-of-action as a response to these changes in the environment. At some points in time, people might modify their theories-of-action to allow them to "fit" better the existing conditions of the environment, or desired ones. At other points in time, people might want



to modify parts of their environment and therefore act upon the environment. This need for people to act or modify their current theories can have various causes:<sup>2</sup>

a) Internal inconsistency of their picture

Although it is difficult to detect inconsistencies in one-shot interviews, given the fact that human beings tend to avoid revealing inconsistent theories-of-action, certain inconsistencies can show up inadvertently in an interview. Lyn, for example, wants to maintain her individual freedom and believes in individual action. She also believes in unions, as they give power to the people, and considers that people (not herself) should join unions to change their working conditions. A particular form of this internal inconsistency in the picture is the incongruity between theory and action. A lack of integration between people's theories and actions may induce them to modify either their theories or their actions. Fran, for example, believes that men oppose women's advancement. Women are not likely "to make it" in certain industries, especially if no pressure is put on men for these practices to change, yet she acts on her own and expects to obtain a man's job in one of these exclusive industries.

b) Incongruity between theory and environment

People's theories sometimes do not fit reality, and when confronted with this "incongruity" they have to change their theories and eventually act upon the environment. For example, when Lilian

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2. For a similar discussion, see C. Argyris and D. Schon, Theory in Practice, Increasing Professional Effectiveness, Jossey-Bass Publishers, San Francisco, 1975, pp. 20-29.

was sure she would get a raise and did not get it, she joined "9 to 5".

The description of the pictures of the women in the organization allows us to perceive and comprehend the consistencies and incongruities behind these pictures and undertake a dynamic analysis of their involvement in the organization, as well as to pose the basis for an understanding of the evolution of the organization and its relation to other social movements. It is the internal inconsistency of each picture, as well as their incongruity in relation to the environment which we pose as being at the root of the evolution of both the theories and the action of the women within the organization. Women's involvement in the organization, and women's views of the organization can be considered as being part and parcel of their actual mode of "adapting" and "coping". For example, most women are extremely satisfied with their involvement in the "9 to 5" organization, as they perceive that they are "finally doing something to change their working conditions." Belonging to the "9 to 5" organization has also increased the self-confidence of many women and has allowed them to become more active in their work place.

What might appear as marginal changes in the pictures of women, or in the reality of their work place can affect their pattern of action and their involvement in the organization. Anne and Beth became less involved in the organization when they achieved their goals at work; Claire and Christine have been "radicalized" through their involvement in the organization.

Our interest in the dynamics of the various women within the organization requires a differentiation between "transitional pictures" and

"stable pictures". We are going to pose that pictures incongruent with reality are likely to prove unstable over time, for they will be disconfirmed by confrontation with the reality with which they are incongruent. Internally inconsistent and incongruent pictures will also be disregarded when other parts of pictures are found to take better account of reality, or when other modes of action are found to be more effective and/or better related to the theory. The analysis of the various pictures should show which of the pictures appear as being more stable and which seem to be in transition. The direction of the transition should also be noted. This is not to say, however, that these "stable" pictures do not have latent elements of change, as stated above, and it is precisely this perception of stability and change which allows us to understand an organization or social movement in a dynamic perspective, as it permits us to differentiate between the "actual" and the "potential" action that women can undertake to change their working conditions.

### 3. The "hybrid pictures"

As briefly mentioned above, working women, because of the organization of society, have an even greater ambivalence than men have about their "selves".

Men have also gone through a process of definition of self as workers and have been able, with the technological change in the organization of work, to understand their position in the process of production and comprehend the conflicts of interests between workers and nonworkers. The formation of unions has been seen by many as the "solution" to the problems of the working people, as a way to give them power in their negotiation with

management. Others still have seriously questioned their ability to produce any meaningful change in the working conditions of people. As mentioned before, this process has been even more complicated for "white-collar workers", who have long subscribed to the ideology of individualism and elitism.

It is only lately, with their massive incorporation into the labor force, that women had to put their working problems into perspective. When working in male occupations, they have generally adopted men's theories and actions, but when finding themselves segregated into specific occupations like secretarial work, with specific working conditions and requirements, they have started to reconsider their conditions as working women, both in terms of their view of themselves and of the instruments that can affect their reality. Women have created "hybrid pictures" which reflect their composite self and determine their theories of appropriate action.

In these hybrid pictures, both the elements of the self are intermingled in various ways, depending on the particular woman, but both elements are accepted. In a similar way, too, the belief in the need for consciousness-raising gets incorporated into a belief in pressure, although the particular form that this mix takes varies from woman to woman. Women see the organization's role differently, too. Many women consider the need for unions, but even these "institutionalized organizations" are viewed differently by the women in various "pictures". Many women suggest new forms of unions.

To comprehend these pictures, an analysis of the women in the organization should be undertaken to understand them as particular cases or versions of these pure and hybrid pictures. To this analysis, we turn now.

The pictures that will be discussed in the next section are:

	1	2	3
Self-image	working woman	woman	woman/worker
Theory of action	restructuring work	consciousness- raising	pressure
View of organization	support group	support group	union

	4	5
Self-image	woman worker: the reformist	woman worker: the revolutionary
Theory of action	pressure/ consciousness raising	pressure/ c-r/others
View of organization	"women's" unions	support/unions as a step towards broader social change

To the analysis of these pictures we now turn.

### III. Analysis of the Pictures: The Women in "9 to 5"

Upon inspection of the interviews, women seem to fit five broad pictures. I will first discuss these pictures separately to then try to derive from these pictures a general perspective of the women in the organization and of the organization itself.

#### 1. The working woman

The first type of picture that I will discuss takes on the following format:

Self-image	secretary
Theory-of-action	restructuring work
View of organization	support group

This picture seems best to describe Lilian, Sara, and Elsa.

Lilian

Lilian likes her office and her job. She wants to become an insurance "producer" and believes her company to be a good training place for it. She will leave only when her training there is exhausted. She considers the road to "producer" to be long and difficult, but she is confident now that she will make it. Men generally get "there" in their middle thirties; she plans on getting there in her middle forties, but this difference does not seem to affect her.

When asked whether she felt discriminated against as a woman, she said no. She feels "patronized" but not discriminated against, although there are differences in pay between the men and the women in the office. Lilian sees that men also go through less hassle trying to get to the top than women do, but she does not believe that companies are "dead set" against women. Women will have to prove they are a "little bit better than these men, just a little bit smarter and quicker than they are." At other times, she says that men in her office are beginning to realize that she knows what she is doing, yet they pull her hair, etc. It is hard for men to change their attitude towards the women in the office, as they have never "experienced anything that they did," and therefore do not understand how hurtful it is to do all the work and not get any credit for it and to be constantly condescended to.

Besides proving themselves, women also have to get disassociated from secretaries. The "word" secretary should be eliminated altogether and women should be either typists or clerks training for "assistants". If women were considered assistants, men would accept that they are useful, hence, respect them more and pay them better. She considers herself an "assistant", as she puts things together and does not take shorthand or type well.

Lilian acknowledges that our society has become education conscious, yet she believes that she is capable, in a couple of years, of getting the same job as a woman college graduate with six years of schooling.

Secretaries cannot be compared with blue-collar workers. Pay-wise, some blue-collar workers make more money than secretaries, others make less, but the distinction between white-collars and blue-collars, on the basis of "neatness", does not seem relevant to her.

Lilian got involved in "9 to 5" when she asked for a raise but did not get it. She was told that she has not been in the company for a full year and was not up for it, yet her responsibilities had changed considerably since the time she took the job. Other women in the office were also aggravated, either because of pay or benefits. The office manager has also been inefficient in dealing with internal conflicts and women were really annoyed. After a meeting, they decided to call "9 to 5" for advice and support and are happy they did.

Lilian likes "9 to 5" and appreciates what the organization did for her. "9 to 5" seems to have a nice way of dealing with problems on a "personal basis". Indeed, although one's problems are a lot like everybody else's, Lilian says, "9 to 5" never sticks you in a 'little cubby hole'." It was extremely important for Lilian to feel that she was not there alone, yelling for rights, but that there was something behind her.

"9 to 5" has supported her and she is now supporting "9 to 5". She goes to their meetings and even if she sits in the back, they know that she and the other women in the office are there. They also have ten more people to put on their membership list and can be shown as examples, as a source of courage, like "they have done it in their office, you can do it, also."

It is helpful for Lilian to know that "9 to 5" is there and that she can have their support at any time in the future. Through their examples and by talking to them, many women in "9 to 5" also helped Lilian feel that she had some worth, that as a woman she could do something with her life besides getting married and having children. (The women's movement would say that her "consciousness" was raised, although Lilian never speaks of it in these terms.)

If the organization would have been "women all the way" and all the women had "hated men", like in the "typical women's lib organization", Lilian would have left the organization right away.

If "9 to 5" had turned out to be very radical, Lilian would not have gotten involved in it at all. She comes from a very conservative family, and even Lilian's actions in her office and in relation to "9 to 5" sound "radical" to her mother. Some people think that "carry-



ing pickets in front of places" is an effective way of getting things, but she believes that this way of acting turns "people" off and that they immediately term you "a radical, a freaky, someone who does not deserve any better." (When Lilian says "people", she seems to refer to management; in general, she refers little to management.)

Lilian would not join a union. She sees unions as organizations run by men for people like "mechanics or in a big factory," but certainly not for offices. "It should be your office dealing with your office," rather than outsiders coming in and pressuring. Lilian does not seem to consider what happens when management is not responsive. In their requests, the women of her office have been successful; had they not been, she would still have stayed in the same place to learn what she wanted to know. Only if fired would she have taken the case to the labor board, because she requested something "fair".

Lilian strongly believes that if women know their worth and are well trained, when they apply for higher positions it will be "people against people" and not a man against a woman. She is sure now to get where she wants; what will happen if she does not is still to be seen.

Sara

Sara likes the creative aspects of her job, and she is also making "good money" (at least twice as much as she could ever get doing historical research, for which she was trained). She also thinks that she is doing good work and believes it to be important work, at least in terms of the functioning of the company. Yet she considers that people in management do not appreciate the work done by any of the people "under them". She sees the business world as divided in two: management and every-one else, with management making all the decisions, even those affecting directly the lives of "everyone else."

In people's minds, women and secretaries are synonymous. If the line between management and "secretaries" could be eliminated, women could move into positions of more responsibility and into management without everyone automatically considering them "secretaries" just because they are women. Women in offices perform a multitude of tasks and have very different degrees of responsibility. Women's work should be named in relation to the type of work performed instead of just being labeled "secretarial" work. Many women do not want to take on more responsibilities and see themselves as being only transients in the labor force; these women should do straight typing and filing. The women, though, for whom work is an important part of their lives, should be given the chance of advancing on their own merits.

Better education seems to be instrumental in getting women better jobs. More women should go out and get a Master's degree in fields useful within the corporate world. She herself is not clear yet about her plans for the future.

Sara always wanted to join some organization and finally decided on NOW, but got very annoyed because it was "an organization that was disorganized" and soon gave up going. She joined "9 to 5" and is now a strong supporter of the organization, which she considers to be "serious and organized". "9 to 5" seems to be directing its energies "outward". Women, rather than sitting around feeding on their own problems, do something about them. Consciousness-raising was a big word at NOW and it really turned her off. Sara says: "I don't really give a damn. My consciousness has taken all it can -- for now." She rather sees value in being organized and in showing to the world that "you're 100 percent in control of yourself." There are "loads" of people who cannot or-

ganize anything, so if secretaries do organize, it already is a way of changing their image.

Sara has gained a lot of self-respect by joining. She found it very "valuable" for herself and "they ("9 to 5") are doing something worthwhile, too." Sara feels discriminated against as a woman and thought that one way out of this discrimination was to join an organization that is doing something about it. If people are made aware of women's abilities, they will discriminate less against them. So, women have to show their abilities (one way to show them is by getting organized), but most women do not make any kind of effort in showing it and are very accepting of their position.

In her own experience, Sara has found that anything she really wanted she has always gotten. Women have to show that they do take work seriously and that they are not going to accept "anything that comes along," so women who will remain as "secretaries" will have to say to themselves, "it's because that's what you're capable of, not because that's what you had to do or were forced into doing."

Sara has an arch conservative husband and the whole concept of unions is an anathema around their house. She used to be more "liberal" but unions are something that is not appealing to her personally. They have an element of coercion that she dislikes. She prefers to fight things on her own or even in a group and to get things by merit, not by just forming a union and from a position of "strength" badger management into giving you something. There are also loads of secretaries she does not want to have anything to do with. A union encompasses a lot more people than she ever "cares to get involved with." She does not want to be labelled with a "group of idiots", just because she helped organize secretaries, per se. She also wants to help others like herself who want to help themselves.

If someone were standing in her way to getting something, she might then become more in favor of unions. Right now, though, she believes that if "you have a very clearly defined goal, you find a way of accomplishing it." "9 to 5", as a group, appears to her as a way of getting what she wants; that is, less discrimination in the work place and more possibilities to advance on her own merits.

Elsa has been working as a clerical for thirteen years in all types of offices and seems to be finally in the "best of all worlds". She has a very "professional" attitude towards her work insofar as she feels responsible for the functioning of the office and puts a lot of "herself" into it. She feels part of the office and takes pride in its "achievement". Her relation with the "partners" (bosses) is excellent and she also seems to have a future there.

Often, Elsa cannot believe how "lucky" she is in her work situation and only hopes that it will last. Elsa does not feel bad about being a secretary, and all her friends are clerical workers. Even if a boss may say, "She's just my secretary," other people might think that she is great and the issue of worth does not seem to affect her at all. She might be so detached about it because her actual bosses seem to appreciate her a lot, to speak of her as "Elsa" instead of "my girl" or even "my secretary", and to allow her to control a great deal of the work. Elsa also thinks that clerical work is an important part of the business world. She, herself, does very little typing and spends most of the day "figuring out" insurance policies.

Elsa does not speak about "other secretaries", and little about "other women". She seems to be pretty centered around her own job and work experience, about doing a good job, about "investing" herself into it.

Elsa joined "9 to 5" because of a friend. She is not an active member of the organization, mainly because her work consumes most of her time and "9 to 5"'s activities overlap a lot with it. She supports the goals of the organization and believes that there certainly is room for change in women's positions and their rights. Yet, she has been turned off by many women's groups, as she believes that change takes place slowly and that men cannot be asked to change "all their philosophies, right now." Yelling at bosses seems ridiculous to her, especially when "a lot of gals tend to do it without really performing." Her view of "change" in the working conditions of women relates more to the idea of equal pay for equal work. Elsa does not seem to stress the importance of "discrimination" in the sense of equal access to opportunities, job ladders, education, etc. She supports the organization more in terms of its being "worthwhile", that is, that its goals seem to be meaningful and it also seems to be efficient in action, instead of just for "complainers". Her contentment with her work and her involvement in it modifies, not so much her "philosophical" commitment to "9 to 5" as a worthwhile organization for all women, but certainly limits her "active commitment" to really participate in it and search for concrete changes.

Elsa has never felt discriminated against as a woman in her work and seems contented to be where she is. She has gotten there on her own and the idea of "group pressure" is alien to her way of talking and thinking. She has very mixed feelings about unions. On one side, they could be helpful in equalizing pay for men and women, but on the other, unions take away some of "your credence" and your personal options. To her, unions are so big and powerful that they are "sort of scary". If unions were more responsible to their members and structured in a more "democratic" way, Elsa would be more inclined to favor them.

Elsa's search for fairness/equal pay for equal work does not seem, though, to motivate her enough to actively participate in change (either through unions or through other types of organizations).

Women in this picture consider their problems at work to relate more to their being clericals than to their being women and seem, in fact, to deny their association with a certain type of woman. Elsa says that she disagrees with a "lot of gals" who tend to yell at their bosses without really performing and Sara does not want to be labelled with a "group of idiots."

Lilian, Elsa and Sara are all very invested in their jobs and work seems to be an important part of their lives. Sara is the only one to openly admit having felt discriminated against as a woman. The other two acknowledge that women might have a harder time getting to managerial positions than men have and that women do often earn less for the same type of work, but they are worried about it in relation to their own possibilities for advancement. Even Sara feels that if she manages to articulate well what she wants that she is likely to get it. This makes them all pretty confident of their capacity to achieve certain working positions on their own and, furthermore, makes them differentiate very strongly between the determined woman who is invested in her job and wants to get ahead (and is going to, even if it "takes her ten years more than it takes men," as Lilian says), and the woman who likes doing secretarial work, evading responsibilities and decision-making, and is willing to stay in the secretarial position. They believe that if women are going to show their work, men will have to recognize it. Women will only have to be serious about their work and prove that they are "a little bit better" than men competing for the same position, "just a little bit smarter and quicker than they are," as Lilian says.

These three women pose the problem of working women as a problem of opening up choices and opportunities for women. Instead of being forced

into taking a secretarial position, as Sara was, women should be doing the work they are capable of doing. But they find default, not so much in the work they are actually doing, which they see as being important and useful for the functioning of the business world, but in the value which is attributed by men to this work. They all see themselves as assistants, not secretaries, as they put things together and none of them take shorthand nor type well. Yet, they claim that all women working in offices are labelled "secretaries" independently of what they do, which does not allow management to differentiate between women and women, and they put all women "in the same boat."

Elsa seems to have less of a problem in that respect, as her bosses are extremely nice about letting her participate in the decision-making and treating her as "Elsa", and not as a secretary, but both Lilian and Sara think that if the correct title would be assigned to their job, management would respect them more and include them in many of the decisions that affect their office. Elsa works in a small office with two men, and they all have to share the decisions. She has a closer personal relationship with her two bosses than the other two women have, hence has better possibilities of influencing them directly. Sara's boss seems to be pretty dependent on her, and she has been able to affect some of the office practices; yet, the office is set up in a way where management makes all the decisions and "all the women" abide by them independently of their work status inside the office. Lilian works in a larger company and has no immediate and effective way of changing office practices.

This divergence of work settings relates closely to the relationship of the three women with "9 to 5". While they all see "9 to 5" as a support

group, the nature of this support is somehow different for the three women.

Elsa's situation in the office is excellent, she has no serious complaints and as such, is detached in her involvement with "9 to 5". Her work will come before "9 to 5" activities and if she has to stay in the office, she will miss their meetings. She philosophically agrees with "9 to 5" and thinks that working conditions of women should change, but this change does not involve her directly. She has been introduced by a friend to the organization and thinks that she should become more involved in it, even if she personally does not need it right now, but her own working life is more important to her and unless that work situation changes, it seems unlikely that she will become more active. Right now, she is just supportive of the organization.

Sara was not that content with her work situation and felt that she should do something about it. In personal conflicts, talking to her boss has been sometimes useful, but her basic dislikes for the attitudes of management did not seem to change, despite the conversations she had with her boss. She first joined NOW and was unhappy to be sitting around with other women feeding on each other's problems, when she finally joined "9 to 5" and is very active in the legal aspects of the organization. She does not think that "9 to 5" can be directly helpful to her in her office, but through her involvement with "9 to 5", she has gained a lot of self-confidence and capacity to cope with her own job. "9 to 5" has mainly helped her change her image of herself, and Sara believes that if women make men more aware of their abilities and appear to them as a group of well-organized, serious, work-oriented women that they will also be able to affect the image that men have of women, hence their possibility for advance-



ment.

Lilian got involved in "9 to 5" after being denied a raise and learned from that experience that group support is important to get things changed in a big office. Women, by standing together, were able to get what they wanted, but had they not been successful, Lilian would have still remained on the job.

Lilian has had the more concrete "action-oriented" involvement with "9 to 5" in relation to her office, and Sara is the more active of the three within the organization, itself. Lilian achieved her own goal by getting her raise and is now "sitting in the back" of the meetings, returning to "9 to 5" the support she received from it. For Sara, the involvement is more permanent, as her goal was, in some sense, more "abstract." She wants to change the secretarial image; while helping herself, also helping other women move into positions of more responsibility. Elsa stands for equal pay for equal work, but is less directly involved in achieving it. Clearly, none of the three women see "companies dead-set against women," as Lilian puts it. That is, they see neither management nor men as having a concrete policy of opposing women in their intention to upgrade their positions or in getting into positions of greater responsibilities. They believe that women have to advance on their own merits and will get where they want if they deserve it. Education is instrumental in increasing the credentials of women in their search for better positions. By joining efforts, women gain in self-confidence and in support, and are more able to modify the attitude of men towards them. They do not see the "group" as a support group in terms of pressure, but in terms of conveying a new different image of "women at work." Yet, none of them be-

believes this image has anything to do with what the women's movement has called the consciousness-raising of either men or women. As Sara says, "I don't really give a damn (about consciousness-raising). My consciousness has taken all it can -- for now," and for Elsa, "yelling at bosses" to change their attitudes seems ridiculous. As such, their theory of action is based on a demonstration effect, on showing to management that women are organized and "smarter and quicker" than men competing for the same position. Group action is helpful only insofar as it gives women confidence in themselves and support in changing the general image of working women.

None of these women are strong supporters of the women's movement. Elsa finds many faults with it and Lilian would have been turned off by "9 to 5", had the organization been "women all the way." Sara has a stronger identification than the other two women with the women's cause, as she, herself, has felt discriminated against; yet, her attitude is only one of support for women who are performing appropriately and doing something about their working situation, rather than being supportive of "women, per se." The outcome is, though, that all three women differentiate very strongly between women and women and are especially invested in wanting to help themselves and other women who are serious in relation to their work.

Work is central to their lives and they see in "9 to 5" an organization capable of affecting the situation of working women. However, in the process of achieving this, they do not want to lose their personal freedom nor their individuality. None of them would join unions. They see themselves as "working women," not as "workers" with interests opposed to those

of management. Elsa says she wants to keep her "credence and personal options;" Sara believes that a "union encompasses a lot more people than she ever cares to get involved with;" Lilian believes that unions are certainly "not for offices." With their belief in personal freedom and the possibility of advancement on their own merits, the whole idea of pressuring and coercion is alien to the three of them. They see a union as an "outsider" coming in from a position of "strength to badger management into giving you something." They strongly believe that women should get things on their own, speak up for their own "rights", with each office having to resolve its own problems.

## 2. The woman

The next array that I will discuss takes on the following format:

Self-image	woman
Theory-of-action	consciousness-raising
View of organization	support group

This picture seems best to describe Barbara, Alice, and Sonia. Jane and Anne appear to have many characteristics of this picture, but they also have some elements of the woman/worker. As such, we are going to analyze them separately.

Barbara believes in carving a position for herself at work. She has looked for an "industry" in which she could make it as a woman and is decided, now, to fight it through. Barbara has been looking for a "job" since she started working in a secretarial position, as she never felt good about herself in that position. Before joining "9 to 5", she did not want to identify herself with office workers at all; she never "wanted" to make that "mental connection." Contradictorily enough, though, she thinks that secretarial work is an extremely important part of business activities. She was amazed to find in "9 to 5" that many well-educated, achievement-oriented women, all worked as secretaries, and now she is accepting better her "fate" and sees it as part of her being a woman. Women are discriminated against in the job market, so the only way for her to advance is in a field where there are not so many men striving for the same position.

She is starting again, now in a different field, believing that much of her success will depend on her own initiative, on her own concept of herself as a woman. Women tend to limit themselves because of their views about their own potential and their role in society. Some women are "aware" of their possibilities and limitations; others are not, and will be stuck all their lives in positions where they will be the "low man on the totem pole." These women have never thought in terms of being anything but secretaries. Small firms are better for progressing, as the tendency for you to be clustered in a limited amount of activities is smaller.

For Barbara, the most important thing for secretaries to change is their image of themselves and their relation to supervisors. She says, "I'm learning the big thing is this respect thing". Money is important, too, but it comes together with respect. "I can see that (money) improving faster than I suppose the respect."

Barbara joined "9 to 5" because she wanted to get involved in a women's group. She sees "9 to 5" as a consciousness-raising group where women "talk about their grievances, realize that there's other people, and start talking about how you do something about it." Since she joined the organization, she feels better about her position and feels good about doing something "instead of just grumbling."

Barbara sees the importance of "9 to 5" in their action as a "support group" for women and as a "political" organization working for legislation, presenting industrial complaints, dealing with the media, etc.

"9 to 5" should encompass all women and should not become union-entrenched. Industries should decide by themselves whether to join unions or not. Unions can get secretarial workers more money but unions have not, in the past, been capable of securing for their members more respect. (Blue-collar workers have still less status in society, even if they are making more money.)

For women to gain more status/respect, they will have to stand up for their own rights -- I will take no more -- and move into higher positions; into management. Positions should be integrated, not sex-labeled, and women have to push to get into these positions. Certain firms and industries are more likely than others to allow women to advance.

Barbara has never tried to organize her office. She has tried to "generate ideas" among the women and to discuss and stand for her own rights with supervisors. She is convinced that finally she will succeed at work. This is probably why, when she talks about unions, she does not see them as directly influencing her own life; as something closely related to her future work experience.

Alice is trying to figure out what her plans for herself at work should be. Her family always tells her that she should not be doing office work, but something "professional". She never talks of work with friends, probably because she, herself, feels bad about being a secretary. For the time being, she has resolved her conflicts by separating her life into two distinct spheres: one related to work, which lasts from 9 to 5; and one related to her "own interests and feelings", which starts after 5. Now she sort of "dreams through" work from 9 to 5 and disassociates herself from it in the evening. Alice dislikes doing many tasks that secretaries are required to do, which are never specified when you are hired and which make you feel like you are always at somebody else's disposal.

Secretaries have their time disposed that way because they are women; men would just not be treated in the same way. "You need a nurturing, passive kind of person to do those things," and women are thought to "naturally" be this type of person.

Alice joined "9 to 5" a year ago, when she was very confused as to what her concrete obligations at work were. She needed help and advice and got it. She had, at that time, no clear picture of the organization's goals and activities. Now she considers "9 to 5" to be efficient in seeing important legislation through, but would want the organization to be more of a consciousness-raising group, also supportive of women on an individual basis. Because of her dissassociation between work and nonwork, Alice feels the urge to "let all her work problems out" in meetings with other women (on a weekly basis), but the general feeling of the other women of "9 to 5" was that these meetings are "just futile".

Alice considers consciousness-raising to be an important part of "9 to 5"'s activities. Many women who are hesitant to join the organization need help in "rethinking their job and rights" and have to be shown that many of the problems they face are common to all clerical workers. Older women are reluctant to join, out of a "well-grounded fear" of losing their jobs. Younger women are more reluctant out of a feeling of not wanting "to invest themselves in their job."

Alice has always worked in small businesses (but when

working as a temporary) and has therefore never considered organizing her office. She wants to be in small working places to avoid the feeling of being a number in a large pool. She sees small working places bad, though, for creating pressure. "There are a lot of things you have to do on your own and sometimes it works. Sometimes all it takes is just to assert yourself." Women have often problems in asserting themselves.

"At other times, no amount of standing up and asserting yourself is going to work, except to get you fired." In those instances, Alice considers unions to be helpful. Big national unions can be "pretty handy" in supporting workers during strikes and also in providing expertise. If Alice would be part of a big working place which had a union, she would have no problem in joining it. Many members of her family, especially in her grandparents' generation, have been union members, so the idea of unions is neither shocking nor alien to her, but she has never thought too much about unions. This is probably part of her not having consolidated yet her image of herself at work.

Alice's decision on whether she will remain in a clerical position or not for the rest of her life -- which she does not seem to want -- will have a definite impact on her views of work, of work-related changes, and of appropriate modes of action.



Sonia has been a secretary "out of convenience" for three years, but resents being regarded as a "secretary" and not as a "human being." She would want to be treated as Sonia, who happens to be working as a secretary, and not simply as a "secretary." In general, she does not identify with secretaries, whom she sees as fairly docile creatures to whom everyone looks down. Some people do not mind being in that position and should, therefore, remain in it, but others should have a chance to perform different functions and not be stuck in that occupation forever. She, herself, is planning to go back to school and become a "professional". Sonia does not relate the fact that secretaries are stuck in their position to their being women, she only emphasizes repeatedly that human beings should be given the opportunity to utilize their potentials to the best of their abilities and should be respected for what they are and not what they do. As such, she finds default mainly in the position, itself, especially in relation to the way management treat their secretaries. Management should treat their secretaries as human beings and pay them a decent salary, because even if "Mary Jones is not performing the most important job. . .she is helping the system function."

Sonia generally speaks of secretaries as women and attributes to them a certain passivity and a tendency to escape the heavy decision-making, but does not relate it to "womanhood" nor to the way labor markets operate.

Sonia believes in the need for an "international consciousness-raising thing" which would restructure the way the business world is set up and change the relationship between management and clerical workers, giving more respect and responsibility to the latter. Sonia wants to enter journalism in order to influence this process of social change.

People have to be made aware that they have different options open to them, and that they do not "have to put up with" the situation they are in now. Yet, Sonia finds that getting people upset about their present situation is one thing and changing their anger into something constructive to provoke change is something totally different.

She believes that only few people are "doers", but that "9 to 5" is an organization that is instrumental in helping people channel their complaints into "positive action" undertaken to change their working environment.

Sonia joined "9 to 5" out of her disillusionment with her job and with her "being a secretary", and was happy to get support from the organization. She is not anymore in the organization to help herself directly, as most of the things she learned from "9 to 5" cannot be carried out in her company, but to help other people change their situation. She is not going to be a secretary for long, anyhow, but her involvement in "9 to 5" is very meaningful and important to her and she plans to stay with the organization even if she does not work any longer as a clerical.

For Sonia, there is no one single solution for any of the problems that people share, because each situation is different and people involved are different, also. "9 to 5" seems to deal appropriately with the handling of these different situations and seems to have efficient "methods of problem solving."

Sonia sees "9 to 5" as a support group, an advisory group and a pressure group, capable of relating to public officials, legislators and companies, alike. Sonia "admits" having "mixed emotions" about unions, believing that they might work for big companies where they are the only possible solution for getting things changed, but she does not see her personal working life relating directly to unions in any specific way.

If we compare this format with the previous one, the difference between them seems to be mainly in the interviewees view of self and action. There is a stronger tendency in this group to relate the problems of secretarial workers not so much to the position itself, but to it being a position for women in opposition to men. The image of self has evolved from one of secretary/woman as part and parcel of the business world to one of woman forced into a secretarial position because of the ongoing discrimination of men towards women in the labor market. It is not anymore a matter for these women to "show" that they are capable, but they also have to actively transform the image that men have of them and which they see now at the roots of the overt discrimination against women and of the general "condescending attitude that most women resent. This active transformation involves a certain conflict between women and men and a direct confrontation between them. The main concern of the women of this array is how to develop this confrontation more effectively, both in terms of the men and the women who have to be confronted.

The view now is that there is a difference between women being angry about their work situation, as Sonia puts it, and "women changing their anger into something constructive to provoke change." Barbara speaks of some women as being more "aware" of their possibilities and limitations. Jane sees them as being or not, "acquiescent". They see the difference between women and women, not in terms of their liking or not, secretarial work per se -- this is typing, filing, and avoiding decision-making -- but in relation to their ability to "stand up for their own rights," as Barbara says. Barbara has never thought directly about unions. Their view of

secretarial work appears as being more related to a "middle-class" concept of women at work, by which women were only seen as transient in the labor force or else being professionals, and work turned out to be an important and permanent feature in her life. She is feeling that she has to find a "career" for herself, but she seems to believe that her "success" will depend more on her capacity as a woman to do so. Consciousness-raising and the women's movement seem to be part of her previous background, as she has previously been exposed to it and was actually searching for a women's group. In this sense, Barbara is similar to Alice. The relationship between women and work seems to be an important new element in her appraisal of herself and her view of possible action.

Alice is less invested than the other women in her job. She dissociates herself from it in the evenings and never wants to admit what she is doing. She would just like to do as Sonia does; to be appreciated for what she is instead of for what she is doing. She is in a stage of figuring out what she wants to do for a living, and like Barbara, is realizing that work is going to be a permanent feature in her life. She feels the need for women to be supported on an individual basis and would like "9 to 5" to be more of a consciousness-raising group. She was actually looking for a group that would offer her support. Both Alice and Barbara have generally expressed their discontent at work and have also attempted to raise the consciousness of the other women who work in their office. They see consciousness-raising as being beneficial to the women themselves, as it increases their ability to stand up for their own rights, as Barbara says, and to "rethink their job and rights." They do not talk so much about raising the consciousness of men or of confronting them. They per-

ceive that women are stuck and men appear as having the say, but their strategy of opposition is not clear. They have less feeling of discrimination than Lilian or Elsa have, but their anger takes more the form of stopping some office practices rather than organizing. Members of Alice's family have been union members, so the idea of joining a union is not shocking to her; still, she knows nothing about them, as they do not seem to affect her directly.

Sonia sees her working problems in a similar way to Barbara and Alice, but her stress is not so much on womanhood as on wanting to be treated as a "human being" (not as a woman). She poses the need for "international consciousness-raising" to make working people "aware" of the fact that they do not have to put up with "everything" and have other options open to them. Sonia is aware of some conflict of interest between women and men, employers and employees. She has mixed feelings about unions, but would eventually join one if she were forced into it in her work. She sees it, though, as being totally remote from her actual work situation and even further from her "plans" for herself at work in the future.

Pictures 1 and 2 vary mainly in their view of self. Lilian, Elsa and Sara are more committed to their work than are Barbara and Alice. Barbara is starting a new job, which she sees in terms of a career, and her involvement there might considerably transform her image of herself at work. Lilian, Elsa and Sara, being more directly involved in their work, want to see the work change rather than the people change. For them, the structure of work is given and people should be allowed to progress on their own merits. They see women needing not so much the support to be able to assert themselves as advice and legal support. Women have to show that they are "organized" and know what they want. Barbara, Alice and Sonia see more default in the people themselves and "9 to 5" should help them rethink their "rights" and make them aware. In some sense, they do differentiate between women who are "aware" and capable of standing up for their own rights and women who are not, but they strongly believe that by raising the consciousness of women, women can become aware. Implicit in their view of work is a feeling of sharing with other women their experiences, feeling together in the same boat, a certain feeling of "sisterhood." What is important to them is more the respect aspect of their work, their not being patronized because they are women and supposed to do certain things just because they are women. So, while Elsa and Sara would serve coffee to their bosses, Barbara, Alice, and Sonia feel strongly that certain office practices are "chauvinistic."

Sonia is not so much herself into consciousness-raising, but this seems to be more a problem of terminology insofar as she still sees "9 to 5" as an organization where women talked about what was wrong with their

office and how it could be changed and background (consciousness-raising has become a big word only among a certain type of woman). They all stress wanting to be treated as "human beings" rather than as "women", while Elsa, Sara, and Lilian wanted to be treated as "assistants" rather than "secretaries". Inherent in minding being treated as women is a recognition of an "opposition" between men and women, even if this opposition takes only a "mild form". It implies that secretaries who see their problems as part of their being a woman will try to change the "image" that men have of women and the image of women themselves. Secretaries who link their problems with the structure of the business world will only change their view of action if they see that there is a deliberate institutionalized form of opposition and discrimination and that advancing in the business world might, indeed, not only depend on one's capacity to assert herself and ask for things in an "articulate way". There is the need to experience conflict.

Secretaries who see themselves as women must, indeed, feel themselves really invested in their work and thrive on achieving, more than otherwise, the link between work and womanhood will remain vague enough not to question the structure of work itself and the nature of the conflict. Men represent also bosses/employers, besides being men. In that sense, Alice and Barbara are "theoretically" more open to unions than Elsa, Sara, and Lilian, but they do not see them as involving them directly.

Backgrounds seem to influence a greater attachment to consciousness-raising and to unions, as well as work places seem to modify the perception of "friendliness" of employers/management. However, when they speak about unions, they all see them as a last resort, and all seem to cherish the "personal freedom" that unions seem to take away.

### 3. The woman/worker

The third type of picture that I will discuss takes on the following format:

Self-image	woman/worker
Theory-of-action	pressure
View of organization	union

This format seems best to describe Helen and Kathy.



Helen never saw "secretarial work" as a career, but was not sure, either, what else she could do or wanted to do. Right now, she is out of the labor market taking care of her baby. She is not eager to return to work.

She never liked being a secretary, not even when she was training for it, but what makes the job even worse, is people's attitudes towards secretaries. It used to be one of the very few jobs that women could get, and it was looked upon as a good job. Now that "everyone is kind of education-conscious," it is not looked at as a very good job, and has almost the same status as blue-collar work; blue-collar workers being men and clericals being women. Helen believes that secretaries should demand better pay and better benefits, but the one thing that is most important to secretaries -- respect -- you cannot ask for. Bosses treat their secretaries as if they had no brain. They are just "their machine", and that is "insulting". Secretarial jobs could be better if women could really become more involved, yet bosses do not seem to want more participation. One of the main reasons for it is that bosses do not see women as being permanent in their jobs. Jobs are boring and meaningless so women, indeed, do not stay in them that long. She herself was never scared of losing her job nor of quitting it when she "had it", as she knew that she could be working again in a week.

Helen never got specially attached to her work either. In an emergency, she would stay after 5, but not as a "run of the mill thing". In the evenings she "had plans", and wanted to leave at 5 sharp. This detachment of work and her lack of fear of losing it allowed her to always stand up for her own rights. She was quite successful in getting raises, even in being treated with more respect, but the feeling of being always spoken to as if "you have no brain, or you would not be there" created a lot of resentment in her. She really minded the way she was treated by her bosses. Helen sees "the boss thing" as a problem which has always been there, with the "management versus labor" conflict being common to all segments of the labor force.

When Helen heard about "9 to 5", she decided to join immediately. She had always been dissatisfied with her jobs, had always thought that something should be done about secretarial work and was happy to find out

that other women had the same idea. Helen found "9 to 5" to be extremely useful, particularly in two respects. On one hand, it was "fantastic hearing that you weren't the only one who felt this way"; on the other, it gave a lot of people courage. Women knew that they had some backing, "not like union backing that's real legal", but the organization was, to some extent, a "threat" to many companies which were afraid to "have things in the open". Women were also able to get a lot of technical counseling on what to ask from their employers and how to ask for it.

Helen was happy to realize that other women felt the same way about their jobs as she did about hers, but the nicest feeling was to know that finally she was doing something about it. Most women just say, "I hate my job", yet they sit back and are afraid to ask for anything. She had always been an outspoken employee, even before she had "9 to 5"'s backing. She found out that it was the only way of getting something.

Helen always thought that it was hard to ask for raises, better benefits, etc., because employers could easily hire someone else in your place. Employees needed something else "besides the threat that 'well, I'll leave' if I don't get the raise", and unions seem to Helen to best represent and meet these needs. When discontented, most women just had to leave their jobs and had to start all over again in the next one. Unions could be instrumental in stopping this turnover, in getting employees cost-of-living raises and in getting secretarial work standardized. Women would know what to expect in a job, pay-wise, vacation-wise, etc.

For Helen, "9 to 5" is the second-best after a union. The individual members of the organization feel helped and the organization does a lot of legal work that should be useful to women. Yet, bosses would be much more threatened by a mass of women than by a couple of them speaking on their own. "If all secretaries in Boston were unionized, were together, then we'd have them [management] 'over a barrel'."

The attitudes that bosses have towards their secretaries will only change very slowly, "unless they [women] were forcing them to realize "the things that bothered them and women, themselves, said "no more" and were capable of making "reasonable demands and presenting them in a reasonable way." Even so, it is hard for Helen to imagine that all of a sudden bosses will decide, "Well, she really isn't as stupid as I thought."

## Kathy

Kathy might go someday into drafting but is still planning to work in the secretarial field for awhile. She likes her job, does not mind being a secretary and believes that everyone in our society is looked upon as "what they look upon themselves as."

Kathy does not want, however, to be consumed in her work and likes to have some energy left at the end of her work day to do other activities which she enjoys doing. Being active in the union drive is one of those activities and Kathy spends a lot of time on it.

She believes, however, to be at the bottom in society, mainly because she is a woman. Men, even blue-collar workers, are much better off, insofar at least as they can support themselves, a family, and eventually buy a house; but women have still a long way to go before they can obtain better pay and benefits, credits, etc. Some women are getting ahead, but these are generally women who do think highly of themselves. Women have to become more assertive.

Kathy gained a lot of self-esteem through joining "9 to 5" and the union drive at MIT. She feels now that she has something else besides her job and that she is capable of doing something on her own. She believes that the main success of "9 to 5" is its consciousness-raising capacity as women are awakened by getting together with other people and seeing their common problems. She has also benefited a lot from several readings she has done on the women's movement and from several conferences she has heard about women, unions and the economy.

Kathy believes, however, that one of the most important things for women is to feel that they are supported by each other; to feel that other people care, that they share your interests and that you are all working towards the same goals.

Kathy's brother and boyfriend both belong to unions and seem to get better working conditions for themselves than the unprotected clerical workers. She believes collective bargaining to give power to the working people, as it is hard for the individual, by himself or herself to get massive changes implemented. Big businesses do not make exceptions and with a union, at least all the employees are secured the same rewards and they also know what to expect.

Kathy understands that many people can be scared off from joining unions, but she is not and would easily go on strike, if needed. She strongly believes that the union depends a lot on the people who make it up and is certain that the union at MIT will be responsible to its members, as it is made up of "good people." Kathy thinks that people should be taken for what they are, no matter what clothes they have on or in what positions they are, and they should be given the opportunity to do what they feel like doing.

These women relate their "being at the bottom in society" to their being women, and stress the importance for women to assert themselves and support each other in order to obtain better working conditions, but they also relate their problems at work to the conflict which is common to all segments of the labor force and which opposes "management and workers".

Kathy is aware of, but not worried about conflict. She sees that supervisors only mix with supervisors, and although many women in her office resent it, she personally does not seem to mind it. The "respect" problem does not worry her too much either. She comes from a family where men do not seem to hold women in high esteem and being capable of not "depending" on men for material support seems to her more important than anything else. Her strong support for unions also comes from her background and from the concrete benefits she expects a union to give her. She has seen her brother and her boyfriend, who are both union members, obtain better working conditions which she would also like to enjoy. Only recently has Kathy been exposed, through a friend, to many ideas of the women's movement, which have "awakened" her to her problems as a woman and allowed her to put them into perspective. As her consciousness has been raised considerably through her interactions with other women, she also believes that other women would benefit from group interaction. Where a further awareness of her condition as a woman can take her in relation to her views of action is still to be seen. For the time being, she appears as a person who is easily influenced and capable of experiencing change. Her relations to other women seem to have had a permanent impact on her views. From her working-class background, she appears to have a definite sense of the conflict between workers and management, and for her, unions

are a normal way of workers to deal with employers, as they represent the power of the working people. She also bases a lot of her actual trust in the union she is helping to form, on her trust in the women who work with her and who seem to have a great influence on her views.

Becoming a secretary was as natural to Helen as it was to Kathy, as it used to be considered one of the very few good jobs that women could get. She was extremely disillusioned to find out that it was everything but an exciting job, and always minded the way she was treated by her boss. She sees the "boss thing" as a problem common to all segments of the labor force, given the conflicting interests between management and labor, but she believes this conflict to be aggravated by the fact that secretaries are women.

Unions are not alien to Helen's background and she strongly believes in threat and power. For her, "9 to 5" is only the second-best, and she would want to see clerical workers in Boston unionize. Helen does not question the structure of unions, but she questions the capacity of unions to modify the "respect" problem that most women encounter in their jobs. For her, demanding better pay and better benefits seems important and unions can certainly be instrumental in getting them.

Changing the attitudes of bosses will be harder and women will have to "force" them to understand that they are not willing to put up with certain office practices. Women must be willing to stand up for their own rights, but just "threatening" bosses does not seem to be sufficient to her. Women need a real massive organization behind them and unions seem to best represent this need.

Women in this group seem to differ in many respects as to their

work environment and work experiences, but nevertheless, they seem to have some basic characteristics in common. First of all, when compared to the previous two groups, they perceive with greater strength the existing conflict between workers and management, and they see unions as the only organization to give workers strength in the bargaining process with management. They might resent that management is not willing to be more responsive to people but they are accepting it as being part and parcel of the actual organization of work. These women also stress the discrimination that they feel in the work place and attribute their low working "status" to their being women, but they all seem to agree that changing the relation between men and women in the work place might be hard to achieve, and would like women to get at least the monetary benefits of men at work. They perceive unions as being able to provide them those benefits; changing the image of women seems in their framework to be left for each woman to deal with in her own work place, on a personal day-to-day confrontation with her supervisor. In order to do so, women might need the support and advice of an organization like "9 to 5" to help them assert themselves. Consciousness-raising is not a big issue among them. They view, though, the need for women to be "supported" and made "aware" of their problems, not for the sake of awareness, but to allow them to force employers to change their attitudes and confront them.

4. The woman-worker: the reformist

The fourth type of picture that I will describe takes on the following format:

Self-image	woman/worker (the reformist)
Theory-of-action	pressure and consciousness-raising
View of organization	support/unions

This array seems best to describe Laura, Claire, Vera, and Nancy.



Laura would like to see secretaries recognized as vital in the well functioning of the business world and re-spected for what they accomplish and "mean to the group." For her, the business world is divided into management, which she associates with men, and a large pool of women, who accomplish all the rest of the tasks. Only women with college education can "make it in the men's world" and she is sorry that she has no degree and that society is so "hung up" on them. She wants to shift occupations and find a career for herself, not just a job.

Of working as a secretary, Laura dislikes most the condescension you sometimes feel from certain individuals and the fact that you are just "switched around at their own will." Even if women are successful in doing what they are asked to do, they never get any credit for it.

Laura has tried to organize her office without success, as women are all too afraid of losing their jobs. Management also does whatever is in its power to stop women from organizing and unionizing, because it runs counter to their own interests.

In her office, she is the only one to believe that organizing and unionizing is vital for women to get changes implemented. She feels that if women do not fight for their benefits, no one is going to offer them to them and working conditions will certainly not change on their own, either.

Laura was very slow in getting excited about "9 to 5", and now she is one of its most active members. She went to the organization pushed by a friend and all of a sudden, found herself involved in all these committees. Laura feels good about her involvement with "9 to 5", as she thinks that she is doing something "important, meaningful and far-reaching" on her own, which in contrast with her job, was a very gratifying experience. She keeps on telling herself that "the only way a union was going to come, was for people to work at it" and she is putting all her energy towards that goal.

Laura is a strong supporter of unions, although she acknowledges that union meetings as we know them from past history can be very corrupt. People would be worse off, though, without them. Women should run their own union and be "responsible for everything that goes in it and out of it." "9 to 5" is a useful organization in help-

ing women move towards a union of clerical workers. The process of unionization will take a long time and management will oppose it all the way through, but women will finally all join and gain power from the universal support. At that point, they will also be supported by other unions and will all go on strike to oppose management. Laura believes it to be "pathetic" that an arrangement between "management and the people" cannot be agreed upon without a union, but unions seem to be the only way to settle disputes. Union bargaining starts off, Laura says, with the union "wanting the moon and management not going to give them the earth," and finally, they meet half-way between.

Women will become "aware" step-by-step of what their next move should be and are gradually going to look at unionizing as the natural next step.

Claire was an editor in Germany and would like to do her own writing again, but is contented right now with being a secretary and devoting all her energies in the upgrading of the position.

Her boss is more liberal than most bosses, yet her independence is related to what he really wants to give her. She hates the general attitude of bosses, which undermines the possibilities of women to make decisions on their own. Women are constantly cut down on decisions, which makes it very difficult for them to be self-confident.

The low prestige of secretarial work is related, she thinks, to the low wages secretaries are paid and this low pay is related, not to their work, but to their being women. Men in similar positions are called administrative assistants and are paid much higher wages.

Claire believes that there is going to be a "very hard road" until the working conditions of women will change in any meaningful way. She only knows that "things" are moving now and in the right direction.

She considers that both the consciousness of employers and women employees have to change. Women have to learn to trust themselves and to trust each other in order to be able to join their efforts together in a group. It seems to her that, unfortunately, the only way for women to be heard is by getting together and putting pressure on the employer. Employers have to be confronted again and again, which will not happen unless women feel secure and capable of speaking up for their own rights. Employers are so entrenched in their modes of living and thinking that it will be really hard for women to change them, especially the generation of middle-aged employers. Claire believes that women will change, mainly when confronted with their own reality. Women can be happy in their jobs, or think that they are, but when they get a raise of \$25 when their rent goes up by \$40, they are going to have to admit that there must be something wrong "somewhere." (That is actually how she got involved in "9 to 5". She asked for a raise and did not get it, despite her being a "good worker", and she finally decided to go to "9 to 5" for advice.)

Claire believes "9 to 5" to be a fantastic support group and most women do need that backing. However, only women who already feel that "something is wrong" will

approach "9 to 5" and they will soon find out that they are not the only ones to have these problems. Hopefully by getting advice from "9 to 5", these women will be able to do something about it.

Claire is very involved in the union drive at a university. She believes her "unionizing" activities and "9 to 5" activities pertain to two different areas. While "9 to 5" deals only with the more conscious people and devotes a lot of its time to legislation, lobbying, etc., she has to deal with everyone and her main task consists of convincing people of the need for a union and of the benefits of it. Without massive support, a union cannot be effective. Claire believes that the change we need in our society is of a very complex nature and is interwoven with our social system. It will take a long time to occur and action on different levels is required for it to happen. Women have to become stronger and more conscious and reflect it on the "environment of their bosses". They also have to unionize, but have to modify unions in the process. She dislikes the actual structure of unions, which are only set up to get you more money, and she wants to work towards making unions more sensitive towards women's needs and issues.

She thinks that women are in a learning process and small unions that want to support women also have to be a part of this learning process.

She says: "We know we are fighting for the right thing. We really have no guarantee for the outcome."

Vera has been one of the starters of "9 to 5". She has always resented having to do secretarial work, has always felt that women are oppressed in that situation and was happy to finally be able to do something about it. Realizing that other women, with the same background and education have similar problems at work was helpful to her, but organizing women to get change implemented is a totally different political experience, which Vera has found to be extremely rewarding. Vera is going back to school to be a social worker, to finally be capable of supporting herself with a more meaningful job. (She has a master's in theology, but this "type of training" does not get you a well-paid job.)

Women have traditionally gone into secretarial work because it is of a "higher status than being a laborer," but office workers, when compared to many blue-collar workers, do not even have a grievance procedure and women have no way of "defending themselves." Women are also slowly starting to resent some of the kinds of work that they have to do, which means that "in ten years things will probably be very different than they are now, as far as secretarial work goes." Vera thinks that tasks in offices should be less segmented and clerical workers should also share more of the responsibilities with management. They should also get much higher pay and better benefits.

The working conditions of office workers will only change through organizing and educating women as to what their rights are. Vera believes in the consciousness-raising of women, but not in the format of a "rap group." Women should be directed towards action and have their consciousness raised through direct involvement and political action by lobbying for legislation and women are constantly advised to try to organize their workplaces and find out "in practice" which changes they can and which changes they cannot implement. Vera thinks that only through this process will women become aware of how their work fits into the whole organization of society. This process is very slow, but it seems to her to be the only one.

Vera has very mixed feelings about unions. She considers them to be a "male-dominated bureaucracy", with their interests solely directed towards obtaining more money and better benefits. Their structure is also everything but democratic. Yet, she considers it useful for women clerical workers to unionize because through unions women

will be able to gain at least some of the monetary benefits that they have been denied "consistently through history." Unions would also give women the power to negotiate "both their wages and other issues that they wish to bring into the bargaining. Vera thinks that men, in general, find any group of women threatening; unions should, therefore, be even more threatening to the employer, hence transforming significantly the power relationship between men and women."

Being capable of striking and having a contract will certainly help women improve their working conditions; but it will take a lot of negative experiences from women before they realize that they have to organize and get involved in order to get what they really want.

Vera does not think that "9 to 5" should become a union, itself. The organization should continue to do the same activities it has been doing in the past, but it should also be able to direct the groups of women "who are ready" towards a democratic, woman-oriented union.

Nancy has a pretty boring and repetitious job, where she feels treated like a second-class citizen by management, but has been able to take it very well, as she is planning to go back to school in the spring. Her previous job search has taught her that women should train in more "practical" fields, and she has applied now to business school. She believes one clerical job to be as good or bad as the next one, insofar as they all are dead-end positions and they all require your having to deal with the same "attitude" of management toward clerical people. She works in a big company but happily not in one of those big divisions where the separation between the employees and the supervisor is even greater than in the rest of the company.

Management are men "who've never been sitting behind a typewriter and cannot relate to a clerical worker. They look at them as: "You're just a secretary. . .and treat them (the clericals) like typing machines."

Yet, according to Nancy, clerical workers do most of the work and management is there specifically to "manage the clericals who are the majority of the workers." The clerical people in an office are much more important than the management people but are not given credit for it. One of the reasons for this lack of recognition is that clerical positions are "a job ghetto" for women who have "lacked opportunities" and have little confidence in themselves.

Secretaries should get paid for the work they do, which is mainly administrative and not clerical. As money is the name of the game in our society, you are worth what you earn. Blue-collar workers might have no "status", but at least they make good money. Many women would be happy to remain in clerical positions, if only they got paid well for it. She, herself, wants to move to more meaningful work activities.

Nancy sees many women as accepting their actual working conditions as clerical workers, but most of the young generation of women are not prepared to take these conditions for granted. "9 to 5" is useful in organizing and structuring the gripes of these women.

"Anything that we have in the whole history of the United States is because somebody organized and complained about it." In this sense, "9 to 5" is useful as a pressure group, but "9 to 5"'s major strength lies in its ability to refer people in offices who want to organize, to a union for clerical workers.

Many industries are intimidated by "9 to 5" and deal with their members very carefully. She, herself, has never been scared of losing her job because of her involvement in "9 to 5", but many women, mainly the older ones, feel less secure in their jobs.

But eventually "(women) are just going to get so fed up with their treatment. . .and have a little bit more self-respect about them and their job until finally they will see unions as their only recourse." Nancy sees women changing through the negative attitudes that management has towards them and through their continued frustration of getting nowhere, especially when "telephone workers just got a fifteen dollars cost-of-living raise and we don't get anything." Nancy is very active organizing in her company and has found a lot of support from "the women."

Nancy has always thought of joining a political organization. She got a leaflet of "9 to 5" and joined one of the days in which management was being their "usual self."

For her, unions are the only way for working conditions to change. Unions represent a balance of power with management on one side and the union on the other. The structure of unions can be problematic. Indeed, unions can show rigidities and injustices in their functioning, but these problems have to be fought within the unions. The "concept" and purpose of a union are certainly to be maintained, as they represent the "American Way" of equilibrating power.

If clericals do not unionize, they will always be kept in a "job ghetto", and workers will only get what management decides to give them.

Nancy believes, though, that she will always be pro-union, even when she will be part of management. Unions will also help to stop the turnover existing among clericals. Employers now do not treat their employees appropriately, but employees can only change jobs when they are unsatisfied with their working conditions. If employers were to deal with women in unions, their attitude would be different. The next employee would still be union, and they would have to abide by the same union conditions.

Nancy is not sure whether unions would change the attitude of management toward clerical workers, but unions



would "certainly change their behavior, as far as how they treat the employees, how they pay them. I wouldn't care so much how stupid they thought I was, as long as they were paying me well."

Women in this group have a different sense of "womanhood" than do the women in the previous groups. They are especially active women who have, by asserting themselves, achieved for themselves better working conditions, but are now decided to get it for "all the women" in the clerical field. They do not look down, anymore, on other women as being unwilling to do anything about their own conditions, but see their lack of action more in terms of their having been "socialized" into a passive attitude and their being afraid of losing their jobs, facing the reactions of employers, etc. Women need, therefore, support and an organization like "9 to 5" that deals with them on a personal basis and slowly makes them understand that other women have also similar problems and that by joining efforts, they can achieve more than on a personal basis.

However, the image of women in this group is different from that of Barbara and Alice, who were also favoring "increasing the awareness of women." They clearly see a conflict between employer and employee and do not believe anymore in the possibility of changing men's attitudes through a simple dialogue. Now, the consciousness-raising of men implies a confrontation. Men should not only be spoken to but confronted on a day-to-day basis. Furthermore, one employee acting on her own can just be fired and women need to oppose the strength of management with another force which will defend their own interests, i.e., unions.

Laura and Kathy were also in favor of unions, but women in this group favor unions while not seeing them as a solution, per se. (In this sense, they are more like Nora, Doris, Janet, Pam and Christine.) They see the need for a union and have experienced, in their own work situation, how far women can go on their own, but they are extremely

critical of unions, which they see as "male-dominated bureaucracies." They go beyond saying, "If unions are the only solution" we will join them, as they actively think of forming a clerical union and of changing the structure of unions by making them more responsive to their members and to women in particular. They do not want to reproduce male institutions, of which unions, as we know them, are an expression, but they want to create new "responsive unions."

Women in the former group were willing to join unions because they had given to workers at least better pay and better benefits. They were skeptical of what unions can do to change the image of "women," but were not searching for any concrete alternatives to them, either. Their intention was to gain for women at least the benefits that their male counterparts got. Women in this group seem more reluctant to leave this process of "consciousness-raising" of employers to the one-to-one basis, and want, to some extent at least, to "institutionalize" it. They want to formulate concrete demands through unions, demands that represent the needs of women and want the unions to force these demands on the employers. Some women in this group go beyond this formulation and want women to be in control of the union; this is to make the union responsive to its members and to make the membership-at-large decide "its own future." Nancy, Vera, Laura and Claire strongly believe that the only way for women to improve their working conditions is through unionizing, but they are interested in changing the structures of unions to make them more responsible to women. Nancy is a defender of unions, as they represent for her the only legal "American Way" of equilibrating power. Laura

would like management to be more responsive to the needs of the working people, but as they are not, unions seem to be the only way to settle disputes. Vera does not like unions as we know them today, but unions, she thinks, give at least power to people. For Claire, too, unions represent massive support and strength.

But they believe that "unions that want to support women" will also have to be part of the learning process through which women are going now in an attempt to put their own rights in an appropriate perspective. Nancy, who acknowledges the problems of unions, considers that these problems have to be fought from within and, as Laura says, women should run their own union and be "responsible for everything that goes in it and out of it."

Nancy and Laura are both explicit about the discrimination against women in their work places and aware of the difficulty of women to join groups, but they are less concerned about raising the consciousness of women than Claire and Vera are. Nancy and Laura both come from a working-class background and although the "respect issue" is meaningful to them, getting appropriate working conditions seems more important to them. They see women as becoming "aware" step-by-step of what their next move should be, through their direct negative work experiences. The process is long but women have to experience these frustrations long enough to really want to do something about them. Claire and Vera have been more involved in the women's movement and stress the importance of consciousness-raising of both employers and employees. They both work in academic environments, where "dialogues" on women's issues are not unusual, but surprisingly enough, their view of consciousness-raising through

concrete political action and involvement rather than through simply making someone aware by talking.

All these women have benefited directly themselves from their involvement in "9 to 5" and have become more and more active and committed to the organization as time passed by, which makes them stress the need for women's involvement to raise their consciousness and makes them believe that women will take a step-by-step approach towards greater awareness of problems and possibility for action. Laura and Vera both stress the need to organize the work places and all of them are active in doing so, whether successfully or not. They are also all actively involved in the different committees of the organization and in the projects that "9 to 5" undertakes, be it distributing leaflets or lobbying for legislation. They are all committed to the organization, no matter what their plans for the future are. They want to see clericals in Boston unionize and although they are aware of the problems of unions, they are also convinced that they are the best solution (at least the only legal one), especially if women get involved in changing unions "from within", and if they try to affiliate with a union that is more women-oriented.

Women in this group want to move to other work fields, but do not feel "superior" to the women who want to do secretarial work. They attribute much of their actual work situation to their being women and believe that a "straightening-out of the mess-ups" between men and women is necessary even if their central concern is the working woman and her relation to men/employer. They see their interaction in the work place as one involving threat and pressure, but they also see the need to reshape the

form that this pressure takes because of the conditions of women and of the specific problems women face in the work place.

5. The woman-worker: the "revolutionary"

The last picture I am going to discuss takes on the following format:

Self-image	woman worker (the revolutionary)
Theory-of-action	pressure/consciousness-raising/ others
View of organization	support/unions; as a step towards broader social change

This array seems to best describe Nora, Doris, Janet, Pam, and Christine.

At first, it was very hard for Nora to accept that she was working as a "clerical". She had gone to a very "snob-bish" school and although she never thought of herself as being a "snob", she knew that she could do better and resented being stuck in that position.

She realizes now how hard it is for women, with a college degree, to find more meaningful jobs in the Boston area, and has sort of resigned herself to doing what she is doing. She might go back to actuary school because she enjoys math, but also because actuaries make good money. Nora has gone a long way since her days in college, when she was willing to "go to the barricades". Working has made her more "realistic" and now she wants her "comfort". In the business world, "your worth is measured in money more than anything else" and she resents that men, as sales agents, make an incredible amount of money, while women are paid clerical wages. Many of these men do not have her education, yet they often act in a very demeaning fashion, as if they were saying, "What you are doing is something any idiot would do."

Nora has gone up in the company as high as any woman can go. There are just no lower managerial positions for her to strive for; there are no opportunities for advancement unless she applies for a job in another life insurance company. She is decided to stay on the job for awhile, as she was developing a bad resume as to turnover; what she will do afterwards is still to be seen.

If offices were not divided "girls, as opposed to men," clerical workers could be treated with more respect, and clerical jobs would be easier to handle. When she first started working there, Nora was very abrasive and knows that the reason for it was her being upset with herself for working there. She had to do something to feel less bad about it, and the only way she could handle it was to say to herself: "I'll try not to oppress anyone else while I'm doing it, but also (I'm not going to) allow anyone else to oppress me."

Nora joined "9 to 5" to show her support of the organization. She has gone to meetings and to places where numbers counted, but she knew from the onset that she was not going to get involved in it. She believes that "one person bargaining by herself doesn't stand a chance," and that "9 to 5" represents at least a group which is capable of putting some pressure on companies, and no matter what the outcome of the conflicts is, companies have to deal with them at least as a group of organized women.



Nora has had previous "political experiences." She has seen the radical movement grow on campus, while she was in school; she has seen the women's movement develop and she, herself, has been involved on and off. It seems that "9 to 5" can bring little to Nora's exposure/consciousness-raising. She does a lot of "consciousness-raising", herself, in talking to both men and women in her office. She finds this to be very gratifying and believes that people are not likely to change unless confronted personally. This is also what she thinks she does best, her "style of being active", while other women, like the women in "9 to 5", are just "organizational people."

Nora sees change happening in the working conditions of women through action undertaken on two levels. On one level, people's consciousness has to be changed by people talking to other people and confronting them on a daily basis; on the other level, more "basic" social change has to happen in the direction of a much broader redistribution of wealth. It is not clear to Nora what form this redistribution should take, nor what the best ways are of bringing it about. She does not feel like getting involved on this second level, either, at least for the time-being; while her involvement on the first level comes out of a simple feeling of self-preservation and relates very directly to her personal life. How Nora sees "9 to 5"'s relation to these two levels is somehow nebulous, perhaps because of her own lack of involvement in the organization. When talking about "9 to 5", she mentions, though, their usefulness in articulating feelings for women and in building up pressure for companies to give up some of their policies. She probably does not see "9 to 5" as transforming society, but as a definite step towards changing working conditions for women, mainly through pressure and legislation. In a comparable frame of reference, Nora thinks that clerical workers should unionize for workers to get at least what they can. She does not see unions as a step towards something "more radical" -- teamsters are just as conservative as the businesss, or worse -- but she also thinks that it is "foolish (for workers) not to try and get something."

Doris had to work to put her husband through college and could only find a secretarial job. A couple of months ago, she was lucky, though, to be offered a teaching job for which she had been trained.

Doris enjoyed her work, but hated all the menial things which come together with secretarial work. She relates "secretarial issues with women's issues", as most of the things she was asked to do and refused to do (like picking up lunches, serving coffee, running personal errands) were assumed of her because she was a female.

Doris has tried to organize the women in her office to stop some of these "office practices" and also to formalize job descriptions, grievance procedures, pay raises. The women were very sympathetic to her ideas, but for one reason or another did not feel like joining efforts. Doris learned to differentiate between sympathizers and doers. Had she been able to organize the office, many of its procedures would have changed, and none of them would have been fired, which is usually the case in a one-to-one conflict.

For secretarial working conditions to change, Doris believes that a massive "consciousness-raising" in male executives should take place. Bosses are going to change if confronted personally and she has repeatedly brought up several "discriminating issues" with her boss. She respected him because he listened to her, and although she is not sure whether "all bosses" will listen, she thinks that a lot of the "malpractices" are habits that can be broken if men are asked to think about them.

Doris thinks that a lot of the problems also relate to the lack of sensitivity and respect of people in authority for the working people, "which centers around the issue about humanity," about understanding that secretaries are also "people".

Doris is inclined to believe that bosses do not know any better and if exposed, will change. She admits, though, that organizations like "9 to 5" might have to force companies to hire women in higher positions before they realize that, indeed, women are capable, and for big companies, the whole idea of raising your boss' consciousness might be unrealistic and the only solution for women in these companies might then be to join a union.

Doris joined "9 to 5" out of friendship with one of the women that had created the organization, but she soon became very involved in it for personal reasons. She was very frustrated with her own work and going to "9 to 5" was like a "booster" to her. She became less involved when she knew that she would not be in the secretarial field much longer.

Doris had decided to work in a small company to be able to change her dislikes on a personal basis. She sympathizes, though, with women in large companies who are treated like "slaves" and have no power to modify their working conditions. Therefore, and because she has not yet found a single secretary that loves her job, she strongly believes that the secretarial field needs drastic changes. "9 to 5" is capable of putting some pressure on certain industries, but the ultimate goal of the organization should be to form a clerical union with support from other segments of the labor force to be more powerful.

She, herself, would join a union but is aware that many women would not "lower themselves" to joining one; many find even "9 to 5" too radical. ("These women seem to have altogether a different background than she has")

Doris supports unions because some employers can become really stubborn. By organizing, women can become really powerful, but mutual support is just not enough "when it comes down to issues of being fired."

For her, consciousness-raising is "still the first thing." Being aware of situations, making employers also aware, "whether that stems through prejudice or class relationships or anything," making them sensitive to other people's needs seems to be central to her. Doris would like to see a society in which such a "sensitivity could exist," probably a classless society. For her, "such a counter-revolutionary thought might start in places like "9 to 5"."

Janet does not consider herself a secretary. She calls her position in the office "para-legal" and thinks there is still some semblance of dignity left in her job. Her feeling, though, is that she should get out of this field of work as soon as she can and she has re-applied to school.

Janet hates the condescending attitude of the attorneys in her office. Having been through college like they have, she does not understand why she has to be treated that way. They have, however, the same attitude towards every woman who comes in the office and seem to be of the "breed of people" who think that "women are inferior to men." Janet believes she has little in common with the women who want to do secretarial work. She does not want to "degrade them," but she believes she has higher aspirations than they have. She still sympathizes with them and wants to help them, out of a "feeling of solidarity". Most of these women have low-paid, boring jobs and have been cheated in their expectations, so action should be undertaken to upgrade their position, at least in terms of money and benefits.

Women need to gain a lot more respect, but respect seems to her the one thing you cannot ask for. Women can ask for concrete things and, hopefully, the younger generation of men will also have a different attitude towards women.

Janet is very skeptical about the possibility of changing the consciousness of middle-aged men who are "very entrenched in their ways and families." Perhaps consciousness-raising will have a greater impact on the men who are growing up now, but otherwise, men just grant freedom and are less obvious in their discrimination policies because they are afraid of the actions women can undertake but certainly not because their basic "attitude toward women, on a social basis, has changed."

Janet has tried to organize her office in order to change the working conditions, as "organizing" seems to her the most effective way for change to get implemented. She is very lucky to work in an office where all the women have been receptive to her points of view and, although they would not all actively talk to the attorneys, they all supported the demands that she and another woman wanted to formulate.

Janet was in the first class of women in Princeton and became very aware of the situation of a "woman in the world of men." Afterwards, she became very involved in the women's movement and in the anti-draft movement on

the campuses, and this involvement made her even more aware of "tactics" for action and "real issues." With the help of "9 to 5", she was capable of formulating certain demands in her office and of devising the appropriate strategies for implementation. She was very successful and the attorneys gave in to all the demands of the women.

Janet got interested in "9 to 5" through her intention of organizing the office. She believes in all the issues "9 to 5" is working on and right now the organization relates closer than any other one to her everyday experience. Yet, if Janet changes her field, she will not actively work for it, as she is interested in a lot of women's issues and can only work in one of them at a time. She will always be active in some organization related to the women's movement, but it will always be in the organization that is closer to her in her experience at that time.

Janet has some hesitation in supporting unions, as labor unions abuse their power and workers are often not that much better off with them than without them. However, Janet strongly favors unions as a concept and thinks that as long as they are not subverted, they serve their purpose. A union, in itself, creates a strong organization and in large companies, unions certainly are a more effective force than a small group of organized women. Women will realize that there is a trend in the history of the labor movement towards unionization and there will come a time when not belonging to a union is going to be more harmful to women than belonging to it.

Janet believes that we are right now in just one part of a whole process of social change, a change of the value system of our society. The long-range goal is the modification of the employer-employee relationship, the big corporations versus the people of the country.

Pam used to be ashamed of being a secretary before joining "9 to 5", but considers that she should think more positively about herself if she wants anyone else to do so. She does not plan to be a secretary for the rest of her life, but is one right now and believes that she might as well feel good about what she does and do something about bettering the actual working conditions of clericals.

According to Pam, clericals are among the worse off sectors of the labor force, as they "make no money, have no benefits, and no protection, "mainly because they are not organized. One of the main reasons for it is that the economy is set up in a way where there will always be more jobs at the bottom than there are at the top, and unless workers are organized, they are powerless. Another reason for it is that the job stereotyping which comes along with clerical work locates women in dead-end positions, as they are seen as transient, secondary workers. Pam would like to have less of the pyramid structure through which corporations are run and more "affirmative action plans" to see women in better working positions. She would like to see workers participate more in the decision-making, like in many factories in Europe, and also women controlling their own destiny.

Pam joined "9 to 5" because she shared the goals of the organization. She does not see "9 to 5" as helping her to earn more rights for herself nor to have her consciousness raised, but the organization allows her to do the kind of things that demand intelligence, creativity and decision-making, which she misses at work and needs to maintain a more positive image of herself. She is very involved in "9 to 5", likes more "establishment politics" (i.e., dealing with laws, legislators, etc.) than "job organizing politics" and hopes to become one day a lawyer for women's unions.

Before more profound changes can happen at the societal level, Pam thinks that the whole idea of women working outside the home has to be reshaped. Women's work seems to have no value in society and women are stuck in dead-end jobs with extremely low pay and no benefits. First, women have to become aware of their problems and then they start thinking about how to do something about them. Certain women think about going to management and to government agencies to bring about changes in their working conditions, others organize and demand changes as part of their "rights" and think in terms of unions and strikes.

(From Pam's description, it is not clear whether women evolve from one stage to another, or whether they are two different "types" of women.)

Pam would like to see "9 to 5" organize a week-long strike for management to see how valuable secretaries are, but women do not seem to be prepared yet to support such an action.

Working conditions will only change, though, when women will get organized and be capable of pressuring management into giving them better economic conditions. This can best be achieved, the "quality of work" will have to be transformed. Indeed, for working women to overcome their problems, Pam sees only one solution: they have to get organized through a union.

The union has to be made responsive to the needs of women, hence should be controlled by the women, themselves, as the big industrial unions are as prejudiced against women as is management. Women's unions will have to have local autonomy and get women integrated into the decision-making.

However, Pam does not think that even one union can accomplish the type of changes that she would like to see implemented. Change will have to be a more "national trend, both in political consciousness and in the spread of social responsibility." The idea that corporations are not to be responsible just to themselves and to their stockholders, but to consumers in general, to the people, is extremely important to Pam.

This desired goal might not be achieved in her lifetime, but certainly more and more people, as they become more "aware" of their problems and start relating them to the way their jobs are structured will also hate to be "condescended to" and will start to get involved to "change the fabric of society" so that even if we are "not all going to be on the same level, we will all have more of a piece of the pie." This is, for Pam, not just money-wise, but also and primarily more input into the decision-making, more control over her own life.

Unions, the women's movement, the consumer movement, seem all to be instrumental in slowly bringing about the change that Pam would want to see take place.

## Christine

Christine is working as a temporary while going to graduate school to become a journalist, but at this point, she cannot guarantee that she will not have to work as a secretary for the rest of her life, as clerical jobs are the only ones available to women in the cities. Secretaries are expected to act like "women/wives" and are seen as appendices of their "male" bosses. They are looked down on and lack respect, mainly because they are unorganized and do not have a history of "fighting back for anything." If office workers were to organize, they could get pretty much what they wanted, at least in terms of better pay and better benefits and, in the process of "fighting" for better economic conditions, they would also gain more respect. Indeed, if women knew that there was "somebody behind them", they would feel like standing up for themselves, without fearing to get fired.

It seems unrealistic to Christine to think about changing bosses' attitudes towards their secretaries, as certain office practices have been going on for so long. To her, only unions can change the relationship between employer and employees. She would also want to "upgrade" office work as such, as clerical workers should stop being servants. Unions could help in this process by giving to office workers some of the dignity that "craftsmanship" has conferred on many other workers in the labor force. This is not to say that clericals will get a say in how the company is run; "that's kind of out of reach. . .at this point," but it would certainly help upgrade the position.

Christine joined "9 to 5" out of her own dissatisfaction with work. She was interested in a women's movement and an organization of working women appealed to her. She is very active in "9 to 5" because the organization seems to combine work and feminism, which are both important to her. (She acknowledges that most members do not see it as a feminist group.) The confidence she gets from her work with "9 to 5" compensates for her feelings of herself at work; and she has become an extremely active member.

Christine does not see "9 to 5" as a consciousness-raising group, nor does she believe in the possibility of raising people's consciousness. She believes that only women who have experienced a certain frustration in their work and want to do something about it will join the organization. People will only join if they are sufficiently involved in their work and if they are repeatedly confronted with negative experiences. It is with their involvement



in "9 to 5" that women will become more and more active. Christine plans to stay with "9 to 5", even if not working as a clerical.

Christine has always been interested in organizing people to do something about their work situation and for her, the "more you think about organizing people, the more it gets directed toward unions." Unions are a way to make more equal the relationship between employers and employees, but big unions are as much a part of the establishment as is management, and they are not really interested in changing women's status in society. Some smaller unions seem to be more receptive to women's needs.

Because of their numbers, if office workers started organizing, they could be a really strong movement, capable of putting pressure on employers. Going on strike also seems to her a useful tool to get change implemented. But for society to change on a broader basis, having a few more unions will not suffice. For working people to have a "right" to say how companies should be run, more than "organizing" should take place, probably a whole redistribution of wealth will have to occur. "9 to 5" and unions are a first concrete step in getting people more aware of their problems and in helping them realize through concrete experiences and confrontations who their real friends and enemies are, to eventually be able, at a later stage, to ask for their "rights."

Nora, Doris and Janet are in certain aspects of their picture similar to Pam and Christine, but they are also different in many respects. For the first three women, their being women seems central to their understanding of the problems in the work place, but the conflict does not relate only to the women/men, employer/employee relationships, but to a larger social problem, which takes a particular form in the work place. Nora sees the need for a broader redistribution of wealth; Janet speaks of changing the balance between the big corporation versus the people of the country; Doris wants to make management sensitive to the needs of working people. All of them have felt, in their own work experience, their expectations cheated, mainly because they are women and women have few job opportunities open to them, but their anger does not turn solely against men, but also against the way men have "structured the business world." The three women are college graduates, exposed to both the radical and the women's movement on campus and faced now with a working situation far beneath what they have ever seen themselves do. (Doris is the only one who, at the time of the interview, had found a teaching job; Janet was planning on going back to school; and Nora was probably going to switch fields.) They all believe in pressure and in the impossibility of workers to achieve anything if fighting on their own, and as such, they favor unions as giving workers bargaining power in the search for higher pay and better benefits. But their "ideals" seem to go beyond what unions can get them and they see unions only as a useful organization in getting workers something right now. As such, none of them is actively involved as are Claire, or Laura in getting women organized and unionized. They are involved in what they see as "one aspect of a long process of social change." Nora

believes that her style of action is a "non-organizational" one, and she spends much time confronting (not talking to) people on a personal basis. Jane believes in the importance of the women's movement and says that she will always be involved in some facet of the movement. Doris believes in the need for a "counter-revolutionary way" for people to relate to people, which she considers to depend on a classless society. She does not pose any direct way of bringing it about besides making it diffuse in her own life style and in her interaction with others.

In a practical sense, these three women are not as active in the organization as their "unionizing" counterparts or even the legal lobbyists, but they have joined "9 to 5" out of their own philosophical conviction that "9 to 5" is fighting for the "right issues." "9 to 5" has done little to "modify their consciousness." They are still part of the organization insofar as they would attend meetings where numbers count and they have tried to organize their offices and have also made men and women in their offices familiar with the problems of women clerical workers.

Pam and Christine combine both work and feminism in their picture, and they are both strongly oriented towards action. Doing is important to them and as such, they are extremely involved in the organization, even if they would like to see further changes happen in society as a redistribution of wealth and a greater control of workers of their own destiny. They are more actively involved in unionizing than Nora, Janet, or Doris, as they see a great urge for working people to act and organize. As Christine says, the "more you think about organizing people, the more it gets directed towards unions." Both believe that unions have to be made responsible to the needs of women, as Nancy, Laura and Claire, but this

responsiveness seems to be geared to the present possibility of women to achieve better working conditions. Their broader goals seem, however, to involve more than unions. Unions can put pressure on employers, union members can go on strike to show their worth, but "having a few more unions will not suffice" to bring about the types of changes that they want to achieve. For them, social change encompasses all aspects of life; unions as well as other social movements (consumers, women, etc.) are instrumental in bringing about some change. They see change as occurring in steps and believe that there will be a long history of experiences and confrontations before any social balance will be achieved for all working people. Women's working conditions are part and parcel of this wider process of social change.

## 6. The Transitional Types

In the earlier theoretical discussions about change, certain pictures were said to be likely to appear as being less stable than others. These less stable pictures will be discussed here, and the apparent causes of this instability will be mentioned.

### a) Internal inconsistent pictures

The three pictures that seem to be unstable because of their internal inconsistency are the ones presented by Lyn, Anne and Beth.

Lyn does not call herself a secretary, but an office worker. She has many other responsibilities at work which are not secretarial, and it is only these activities that she enjoys doing. She has decided now to go back to school and hopes to get a better job after graduation. Lyn actually hates when people refer to her as a "secretary", as she considers society to have an extremely poor image of secretaries. Secretaries are, in people's minds, just one step above waitresses and two steps above prostitutes.

She believes everyone to have boss-employee kind of problems, but her boss, who is also a woman, is especially authoritarian and arbitrary. Her job could be really interesting under a more "democratic kind of administration". Now that Lyn has been working as a sort of secretary/administrative assistant, she realizes that a secretary can be in a fairly responsible kind of position. However, women are always in the positions of assistants, aides, para this and para that, and even if doing similar jobs as men are only paid a fraction of what men get. Women should get more responsibilities and more "recognition for who they are and what they do." They should just be treated as people, but this involves changing the way work is set up and the way we look at women's jobs.

Lyn joined "9 to 5" as an expression of her sympathy towards the organization's goals. She found out about their activities through a friend and wanted to, at least, "support it". She follows what they are doing, but she is not actively involved herself in the organization. She has the idea that "9 to 5" might be of use to her someday, but does not feel it to be related to her in her present work situation. Her office is too small a place to organize.

Lyn wanted to be part of a "women's organization, a sort of an activist kind of thing that really worked." She is also part of a women's consciousness-raising group that is not goal-oriented but wanted to feel part of an organization that was actually getting these things done." Work is also starting to be a more and more important part of her life and being part of a work-oriented organization seemed important to her. Yet, Lyn does not like to get herself involved in the "nitty-gritty stuff" of running the organization and is turned off by meetings. She knows it is "not fair" for her to want somebody else to do the work for her, but the "actual working of organizations often bores her". Her involvement seems more "philosophical" than real.

In a similar way, Lyn has a very philosophical/ideal picture of how work should be organized. She would like working places to be run "on a group meeting basis, on a joint-decision basis," although things would take an awfully long time to get decided. She is part, now, of a food coop which is run in a "democratic way" and really works, and Lyn seems to believe that similar structures -- more democratic ones -- could also be applied in the sphere of work. Lyn did not say why this scheme, which seems to be possible in her "mind", is not implemented in reality. Lyn's family, although "middle class", is a strong defender of unions. Lyn believes that people should see unions as the normal way to deal with their employers and wishes that white-collar workers would also start to think "unions". Now, their jobs depend on their relationship with their bosses and lack security. They have nothing like tenure, cost-of-living raises, sick leave, nor do they have a structured system of applying for jobs nor of getting them.

Yet Lyn considers unions to lack responsiveness towards their members. Some people in unions are working very much for themselves at the expense of everybody else. People will only join labor unions if they see them as really getting them something or if they see them as a necessity. Indeed, Lyn, herself, would be more active in her office or in "9 to 5" if she could get something out of it for herself.

Lyn's feelings about organizations -- "9 to 5", unions, etc. -- are mixed. On one hand, she wants to change the organization of work/society/power, but on the other, she wants some amount of freedom to join when she chooses to, and she also wants to get some personal benefits from her involvement.

## Anne

Anne was trained as a secretary and has been typing for so long that she has serious doubts about her possibilities of ever doing something else. She does not like typing and is happy when the typing is done and she has the time for something more creative. She believes, though, that some women do enjoy typing and that there will always be secretaries, people who are just there to do what they are asked to do. Anne does not like the fact that men draw the line, "that they have the say and the women have absolutely no say at all." The men might be pleasant about it, but that is still the general feeling behind everything they do.

Anne seems to be searching for more respect and dignity for herself and her coworkers. The nature of secretarial work might indeed not change but she wants to modify the form under which it is performed. Secretaries should be treated as "human beings", which means to her that they should have certain control over their own lives and work environment. She also believes that women perform important tasks in the office and are not given credit for it. Her office is more progressive in many respects than the average working place, yet Anne feels the attitude of men to often be "degrading". In her own work she seems to follow her general philosophy about secretarial work. She always does what she is asked to do, "takes" even the "condescending" attitude of men, but speaks up for major changes in office policy which she would like to see implemented.

Anne is not sure why she joined "9 to 5", but she seems to have expected some support from the organization. She sees "9 to 5" as an organization where people got involved and talked about what was wrong with their office and how it could be changed. For her, "9 to 5" is a source of support. Women, by joining, would get enough courage to do something about their problems. At another level, "9 to 5" is useful in getting legislative changes implemented. "9 to 5" was helpful in advising and supporting her when she tried, with two friends, to have their maternity benefits changed. They had to do all the organizing and planning, but "9 to



5" was "there" whenever needed. Once her urge to get something accomplished declined, her interest in "9 to 5" also declined. Anne seems to put a lot of the blame for this loss of interest in the structure of the organization. "9 to 5" staffers seem always to draw on the same few people to speak or to do things, and she feels sort of "outside" this small circle. She still knows, though, that "9 to 5" will be there if she needs their support and this is "nice" to know.

Anne believes that the working conditions of women have changed considerably in the last couple of years. Secretaries have gained a certain amount of additional respect that they never had before, "executives" are more aware now of secretaries as "human beings", that they have "voices" and that they "think". The women's movement seems to have been instrumental in bringing about many of these changes. People are more aware now of women doing things in all aspects of life, and "9 to 5" seems to help increase this awareness.

For the working conditions of secretaries to change in a more fundamental way, women might have to join a big union, and the union will have to set down certain rules as to what secretaries should and should not do in their work. Unions have power because they represent large numbers of people. With a union, it becomes also more difficult for companies to get rid of "the one person". But Anne is not sure whether she would join a union. A union does take away a lot of your "individual" freedom, as union members have to abide by the decisions of the union, even if they resent some of them.

She has never had the possibility nor the option of joining a union in any of her work places, so it is not clear to her what she would do if confronted with it. Anne thinks, though, that her joining would depend on the union and on her specific working problems.

Anne strongly believes in pressure and in group support, but admits to being a person who gets really active only in relation to things that involve her directly.

After graduating from college and being incapable of finding a job, Beth knew that she was not going to "skyrocket to success overnight." She decided to structure her life and set for herself the goal of earning at least \$20 more a week each year, or else switch jobs. She is also determined not to let anyone walk over her at work, nor to overwork herself as she used to do. Her work is only a way of supporting herself and eventually allow her to take courses through a tuition reimbursement system, but her central life interests lie in community work, philosophy and astrology.

From her life experience, Beth knows that she will always be capable of "surviving", that she will always find a job to support herself. She does not pretend to find "meaning" in her work, but she wants to conserve at work at least a certain sense of dignity and self-esteem.

At a certain point in her work, Beth was on the verge of collapsing. She could not take her work anymore and her boss was just a "male chauvinist from the word go". To her, "9 to 5" was a sort of "mini-therapy" group. She joined the organization in search of support, and it helped her raise herself up again in her own estimation. After getting involved in the organization, she also found strength to "shake up" a few people at work.

Beth thinks that "9 to 5" is an organization for women that want to help raise the consciousness of other working women. There will always be women that want to do this, either on a temporary or a permanent basis. She used to be very active in the organization, but is much less so now, since things started going well on her job. "9 to 5" also taught her where to go to redress a grievance and what to accept from her supervisors and what not.

Beth does believe in doing things for others. She was extremely involved in getting the Temp's bill through, but got very discouraged to see how it finally did not. She believes that "facts" speak for themselves and people should accept them if they are "spelled out in plain English." Other women have more energy than she has in fighting things through and those women should pursue their intensive activity in "9 to 5". It is not her style, though.

Beth supports unions but is not a strong sympathizer of them as pressure does not seem to be part of "her style", either. Yet she sees that the only way for "9 to 5" to bring about more structural change in the working conditions of clerical women is through devoting a portion of its activities to unionizing. Ideally, people should be able to communicate, and management should go through a sort of "consciousness-raising" so that they will take it upon themselves to see what is involved in "keeping their organization running" in terms of the well-being of their workers. But management's and workers' interests seem to be incompatible, and Beth can "sympathize" with workers who do unionize. A labor union is a front, a force that you can "pitch against another force, management, "sway them with numbers", she says. Beth has never been in a situation where she had to be part of a union to get what she wanted. One day she might have, though, to join one.

Until that day she will force herself to get better and better working conditions, even if it is often a "fearful thing" to go into the "unknown" by quitting and starting all over again.

Lyn has actually been searching for a women's organization. It is only recently that work is taking a greater importance in her life. In that sense, her experience is very similar to Alice and Barbara, and as they were, she has always been ashamed of working as a secretary and minded being referred to as one. As they, she thought that she could do better and is actually going to go back to school. Her commitment to "9 to 5" is more philosophical than real. She supports the organization's goals but her non-identification with secretarial work and her expectancy to be only temporarily in that position, makes her detached from any active involvement in the organization. Despite her middle-class background, her family was always pro-union, and Lyn, who believes everyone to have boss-employee problems, would like to see unions as the normal way for workers to deal with their employers. Her background makes her very individualistic, though, and Lyn believes that unions lack responsiveness towards their members and is not sure how much she is willing to give up of her own freedom in support of any "mass organization." She would like to see many changes happen in the organization of work, in the structure of power, in the way institutions are run, but her actual non-commitment to a definite workline and the strong link she builds between involvement and personal benefits, makes of her a "potential activist," only if her individualistic approach to action or her attachment to work change. For the time being, at certain points in the interview she stresses her desire for individuality and at others, she mentions the need for people to join efforts and put pressure on management to achieve their goals.

The other two pictures to be discussed here are more examples of

incongruity between theories and actions. Anne and Beth are both examples of declining actions.

Anne's image of herself as a clerical worker is still extremely strong, mainly because she is very skeptical of herself ever doing anything else. In that sense, she wants, like Lillian, Elsa and Sara, to upgrade the position.

Anne has some similarities with Lillian, insofar as they both organized their offices and were capable of getting things implemented. Once this action was taken, their involvement with "9 to 5" declined. She believes that "9 to 5" is an excellent support group but believes more strongly in pressure than Lillian. Her view of the strength of numbers makes her believe that she might join a union if the place where she worked had a "decent one" and the working conditions demanded joining. She does not close herself as totally to that idea as Lillian does, but she does not seem to come from a background where people thought that speaking up for your own rights is "radical." She has felt too discriminated against and resents the "condescending attitude of men." which makes her more receptive to the women's movement. She does believe in the benefits that the movement did bring in terms of people's awareness. She has some element of the feeling of "humanhood", but it is more in terms of working women as being treated as human beings.

Anne seems to believe in the need for pressure, in the conflict between employers and employees, but her involvement is strongly related to what she feels is useful for herself and she does not act otherwise. Anne sees the benefit of unions as a source of power, yet she, as Elsa

and Jane, sees them as a loss of personal freedom, and to a great extent, considers them unrelated to her own work life.

Beth is very committed to her work and expects to work as a secretary or an administrative assistant for quite some time. But she does not want to lose all her energy at work and does not expect to find any special meaning in it, either.

She has personally experienced a terrible feeling of inferiority as a woman in relation to her former boss, who was a real "male chauvinist." When she could not take her work situation any more, she found in "9 to 5" an excellent support group. Beth strongly believes that people should be capable of communicating, as does Anne, but she also believes that management's and workers' interests are incompatible, which makes the dialogue in the work place almost impossible. She is very involved in philosophy and in increasing people's consciousness of the world, but she considers management not to want to participate in any constructive dialogue. As such, she is sympathetic to workers who are frustrated from management's unresponsiveness and insensibility, and who decide to organize to "sway them (management) with numbers." Right now, she moved from a large company to a small one and is much happier in her actual work place. At least she does not feel as powerless as with her previous boss and with her former organization of work. As a result, her activities with "9 to 5" declined. She is also not a "fighter" and hates conflict and politics. She hated confronting legislation and people on the Hill when she was active in "9 to 5", and was always disappointed when they did not want to "learn the truth." If her working conditions changed, Beth envisions one

day having to join a union and she certainly will if she is forced to in order to achieve the goals she has set for herself at work. She is aware of "conflicts of interest", but also thinks that people should be able to communicate, so if forced to join a union, she might become one of the women who works towards "humanizing" them and making them more sensitive to the needs of women. For the time being though, she is working quietly, with no major expectations and without undertaking any major action.

b) Incongruity between theory and environment

This incongruity seems best to describe Jane's picture.

Jane likes her job, which used to include a lot of imaginative work, but the company hired a man two weeks ago who is actually taking away from her the more creative work, leaving her only the "non-thinking one." She and another woman used to do all his work, but the part of insurance in which they are working has always been an area "exclusively" for men and the company seems to be reluctant to have women "make it" in this field. She is very vocal about what has been going on and lets everyone in the company know what she is capable of doing and what her boss is not.

Whatever she knows of the field she has taught herself and resents the fact that her boss often comes to her with questions. She actually wants his job! The company is letting some women, in other departments, get ahead in their jobs, but she does not want to be transferred to another department. She wants the company to find an opportunity for her to advance where she is now and Jane is very determined to "stick it out", even if her boss makes her life miserable. She does not want, either, to lose all the benefits that she has compiled over the years. If the company decides, however, to fire her, they will get a "lot of kickback." She believes that the "battle" to get where she wants will be long, but she will certainly keep "fighting it." Jane does not like to be identified as a secretary. She wants to be referred to as a clerk, as secretaries are seen in our society as women who "work until they get married and have babies and, in the meantime, polish their nails at their desk." Blue-collar workers are men, and they are better off, insofar as they do not have to "put up with what a woman puts up with."

However, Jane, who believes in pressure groups, in talking to management, in the "meeting of the minds", never mentions consciousness-raising as a useful way of involving more women in changing their working conditions.

She does acknowledge the existence of two types of women, one more acquiescent and one more determined to let her boss know what is, and what is not, part of her job. (The first type of women are generally older women who are afraid of losing their jobs, their pensions and benefits.)

But the main distinction Jane makes is between women who are contented with doing what they are doing, and



women who are "restless" and want to advance and are not happy where they are. Companies have not learned yet to deal with these women and "9 to 5" is a useful organization in helping women bring to the "forefront that women now want more than what they had, . . .and they'll make it easier for women who want to get ahead."

Jane sees her involvement with "9 to 5" also as a way of doing something, rather than just complaining.

Jane is a very stable member of "9 to 5" and feels that the organization has gained over time in solidity and capacity to pressure. It has, now, the force behind it and can get things done to change the working conditions of clericals.

"9 to 5" can work on the entire industry, but it is up to the women in the companies to get together and work towards what they consider to be the more pressing problems in that particular workplace. Women have to put pressure on management in each company. They have to get together and discuss their needs and then "make an appointment with management" and as many as possible cram in the room and just tell them what they think: "This isn't going to cost you any money to implement this," and see what they do.

Jane believes in the "meeting of the minds" and is pretty "idealistic" about it. For her, unions are only a last resort, when management does not give in that easily or when required changes do, indeed, cost them more money, and they reject them altogether. She just "hates to think of having to unionize to get what you want. It just seems to me to fight a war to get what you want. There should be another, more human, intellectual step, rather than forming a union."

Jane is actually suggesting, on a broader scale, for women to follow the same strategy as the one she is using, herself, now for her own advancement. This is talking to people, letting them know what she is doing and capable of doing, pressuring her boss to give in and eventually leave, etc. Jane seems to be pretty patient in fighting that battle. How long she is prepared to fight it, though, is still to be seen and what she will do if her strategy is proven to be unsuccessful in the long run is also to be seen. Will she then, indeed, favor unions as the "best solution, if they are the only solution," as she says? Will her trust in herself and in the "meeting of the minds" disappear?

Jane seems to present an unstable picture. On one side, she is extremely committed to her work but has found it difficult for women to make it. Men seem to have directly opposed her advancement. She ideally thinks that a "meeting of the minds" should settle the conflict between men and women. Management should be told and realize that women are capable. She is aware that this might not suffice and that a serious conflict might be at stake. In her own life, she has experienced conflict and opposition from men, yet she still hopes to "make it", in a gentle way -- no need for a war. However, despite her sense of a conflict of interests, Jane believes in the "meeting of the minds" and sees unions only as a last resort, if all attempts of pressure have failed. Because of her background, unions are not totally alien to her.

The image that these women have of the nature of the conflict at work depends a great deal on the type of office they work in. For Barbara, it is more a question of the two women who share the office with her to stop certain office practices and say to their bosses, "No more!" For Jane, who works in a big office, it is a question of women "cramming into the room" and pressuring management.

Her inconsistency is related to her belief in the need for pressure, on one side, and her belief in the "meeting of the minds", on the other. Jane believes that pressure can bring about a "meeting of the mind" and seems to avoid asking herself the question: what happens if this "meeting" does not occur. She mentions that unions can be considered, then, as a last resort. She personally has failed to achieve what she wants, yet she is still decided to stick it out.

Jane, like Barbara and Sonia, does not want so much to upgrade the position, as they are women who are contented with doing what they are doing, but she, as they, did want to get out of it in some way or another. Contradictorily enough, though, sometimes more than others she is convinced that she will be able to "make it", as she seems aware of the conflict between men and women and often sees conflict as interfering with her personal plans.

c) Transitional pictures

Because of their background, Kathy and Helen were very open to unions and best described by the woman/worker picture. Shirley and Paula have been more exposed to the women's movement than Kathy and Helen had been and they believe in consciousness-raising. They also favor unions, despite the problems they see in them. They have not been exposed to the possibility of changing the structure and unresponsiveness of unions by the direct involvement of women in the union, as this option had not yet been discussed in the "9 to 5" organization at the time of the interview. It would be surprising, though, that if exposed to the possibilities of women influencing the decisions of unions, they would not favor it. Their picture can be seen as moving toward the woman/worker one.

Shirley does not consider herself a secretary. She is a clerical worker and her job is better than the average clerical job, in that it is more varied and pretty independent, as she "runs the show" on her own. Her boss controls her only minimally. She thinks that she has been lucky in comparison to other women. She has gotten several promotions and is, at the time of the interview, applying for a job two grades above hers. She hopes to get it and also hopes that the company is going to approve the reimbursement plan for her going back to school in the evenings.

Shirley has been surprised to find out how little management understands the situation of working women. "They (management) are in ivory towers" and fail to realize that women choose, even if they marry, to maintain their own identity through work, and often decide not to have children in order to achieve it.

Yet, women are now some "kind of appendage" to men and are not regarded as valuable employees. "Women should be treated as intelligent individuals; given credit for what they do and allowed to advance on their own merit." For this to happen, a complete straightening-out of the mess-ups between men and women is necessary -- which might never happen -- as well as a restructuring of the entire business world so women can be treated as individuals and not as extensions of their bosses. Nowadays, the only time a woman gets promoted is when a man gets promoted (her boss); if he is fired, she is also fired.

Shirley is extremely involved at all levels of implementation of change. On one hand, she discusses with the women in the company their working conditions and tries to argue in favor of possible improvements. She also tries to "raise the consciousness" of her boss by bringing him meaningful literature to read, as well as by showing him the shortcomings of many of his actions. On the other hand, Shirley is very active in every aspect of "9 to 5" and sees in the organization the same advantages as in any other organized group. It gives you "group identification" and public officials are much more inclined to pay attention to a group than to one person. She strongly believes in pressure and threat, and attributes many of the successes of "9 to 5" to the "noise" they were capable of making.

In her company, many men and women talk of her involvement in "9 to 5" as "your involvement in that women's lib group." She wishes to think of herself as a feminist, and of "9 to 5" as a feminist group, but that qualification is certainly inap-

propriate for "9 to 5". It is an organization of working women, as there are no men in that occupation (otherwise it would be men and women), and she is interested in people and public officials seeing it as a "labor organization." When Shirley joined "9 to 5", out of her support of working women, she had not had the time yet to find out about the shortcomings of her own job. Later on, she found the group very useful in allowing her to release her own frustrations and share them with the other women in the group ("sort of like a CR group").

Shirley would ultimately like to see a clerical union. She is strongly in favor of unions because they seem to give labor their "biggest weapon": STRIKES. She is certainly aware of the problems involved with some unions like the teamsters, etc., but sees unions as a "formative tool. . .the only way anything is going to get done." To her, all workers seem to be in the same boat, insofar, at least, as they are all "labor", but stratification and diversification in the labor force have made it impossible for different groups of workers to join efforts in creating a union, etc., without creating major "personality conflicts" and clashes. (This has been her own experience when working at the University of Florida.) Companies strongly oppose a clerical union because they know that "collective-bargaining with secretaries is a mind-boggler." If clericals had a strong union, companies would have to "raise the salaries so much and improve the conditions so much" that they will do whatever possible just to prevent it from happening. It will take a long time before women will be prepared to join a union. Wanting to join a union implies commitment and willingness to risk, and few women are "there" yet. In the meantime, "9 to 5", as it is structured now, can accomplish some improvements in the existing working conditions of women. Women should be getting better pay and better treatment, and "9 to 5", through pressure and threat, can help them to get it.

"What you can achieve within the system is limited by the system, itself." You have to go through things like legislation to see changes implemented; you have to have the power of unions to bargain with employers. "Talking of the revolution aside," which Shirley does not think is going to happen, nor is she certain it would be a good thing to have happen, these seem to be the only channels for working people to get things done. Shirley has been previously exposed to the radical movement on campus and to different groups within the women's movement.

Paula finds her work relatively interesting but is tired of always being on the "bottom rung of the ladder." Her actual work is also advantageous because the pay and the benefits are very good, as the organization functions like a sort of a union, which also allows her to be protected by a contract. Despite all these benefits, she has decided to quit to find a more challenging job, a job that matches better with her background and her qualifications as a teacher, but mainly because she would like to be treated as a person. Women are treated like "just a secretary, or just a woman, or "my girl," but not as persons, which unfortunately perpetuates among women a negative "self-image." If secretaries do not hold themselves in high esteem, it is difficult for employers to do so. Women have been "socialized" into certain patterns of behavior of passivity and too often believe that they have reached, as secretaries, a certain level and "that's where they belong." Women are stuck in that position, but men are certainly not going to upgrade them unless they, themselves, push for it.

Paula's philosophy is "either put up with it or do something about it." Slowly, women are joining together either within their own companies or with groups like "9 to 5" and are making small changes in their working conditions.

Paula strongly believes that women should become actively involved in changing their lives. If they, themselves, do not become involved, there is, indeed, no reason for conditions to change. However, "the more successes women gain for themselves," the more women will attempt to bring about positive changes. Laws supporting and defending women are also important elements in the search of women for a better environment.

Women need to be "educated" and advised but not in the vacuum. They should be told how to organize, what to ask for and how to go about it. Women will have to organize within their companies. Indeed, if all the women in an office support each other, they have a lot more strength and much better chances of getting from their employer what they require. Women are often insecure and need the feeling of "we can do it altogether."

Paula believes that different women are at different "stages of readiness" to organize and get involved. She, herself, was not a joiner and was called again and again by "9 to 5" until she was finally "ready for it." Because of her dissatisfactions with her job, she had taken a course at "9 to 5" and was happy to see that other women

had similar complaints. She was "hooked", though, by the fact that the women at "9 to 5" were doing something and now she is the co-chairperson of the organization.

Paula thinks that "9 to 5" should be helpful to women in all their different stages "of readiness" and is planning to stay with the organization even if she shifts occupational fields. She believes the role of "9 to 5" to be "multidimensional." At the beginning, the organization was concentrating more on its effects on support, education and consciousness-raising; now, because so many women "are past that point", a lot of their efforts are concentrated in "active things," like organizing lobbying for legislation, etc. Many women are also ready for unionizing, and "9 to 5" is therefore starting to affiliate with a local for "office workers". Indeed, Paula says, If all office workers are organized into the same union, they will have a lot of strength. But "9 to 5", itself, is not pro-union or anti-union and she believes that the organization should remain that way.

Paula has always been part of a union in her different jobs and she feels that it has always protected her from being fired when disagreeing with management and has given her better pay and benefits. She would like all women in clerical positions to be protected in the same way. Despite her union membership and her assertiveness, the attitude of management towards her, as a woman and as a secretary, has always been menial, and she deeply resents it. This attitude has to change, but it will take a long time before it does. She is, therefore, searching for a more meaningful job for herself now.

Shirley says that "what you can achieve within the system is limited by the system itself," and Paula has been a union member all of her working life and is still treated in a condescending way, but despite their skepticism, they both want to see all women in the clerical field unionize, as it will give clericals at least more strength and better working conditions. Both women are, in some sense, in between the woman/worker and the worker/woman. They are, in some sense, less confident than Helen or Kathy about the changes unions can implement, but their approach to work is pragmatic enough to want to see women achieve at least what they can. This pragmatism comes together with a high degree of involvement in the organization and a concrete interest in any "action-oriented" solutions, as opposed to pure consciousness-raising through dialogue. Both women stress considerably the importance of work in their lives, but mixed also with a great stress on womanhood. They both work in big companies which makes them skeptical of "dialogues" and both have concrete plans for the future to "move out" of the secretarial field, as the only immediate solution to their working problems. Both are also feeling very positive about their involvement with "9 to 5" and their self-esteem has increased considerably with it, but they also very genuinely want to change the working conditions of other working women, which gives to their actions a broader social context.



#### IV. The "Pictures" in Perspective: Stability and Change

Despite the understanding that systematizations take away a great deal of richness from the particular pictures, a brief characterization of the alternative global pictures is still an essential part of the analysis to better comprehend both the women and the organization. These characteristics are as follows:

##### 1) The Working Woman

Women in this picture speak of themselves as "secretaries" and mainly see their problems in terms of "job characteristics", and their demands are centered around making their own work a more respected and better-paid job. In order to achieve this, they find a group useful, in terms of support, and as a way of ascertaining themselves. Broader changes may be desirable, but individuals are concerned with their own position and what happens in their specific work place. They believe in changing conditions through "letting people know", mainly as solving an information gap. Most women in this group only get marginally involved in the organization, as they are basically non-interested in socio-political issues and are skeptical of organizations, unions, politics, etc. Some of them, though, do get very involved in the "legal aspects" of women's issues ("rights") as part of a general view of the world as being rational and of acting to let people know.

##### 2) The Woman

The woman has already been described in a former paragraph as being in search of a definition of herself at work and of trying to put the role of work into perspective in her own life. In that sense, it has an

element of search for "identity" which is present, too, but in a less dominant way, in the other pictures. The woman takes her "theory-of-action" and her view of the organization from the broader women's movement, which has actually given little "strategic attention" to the working woman in her condition as worker, and as such, has suggested few patterns of actions besides the "equal rights for equal work" movement.

### 3) The Woman/Worker

In this picture, individuals are more aware of the strength of the "opponent". They still believe in consciousness-raising on an individual basis, but the boss is no longer seen as an uninformed individual (who will change, if informed), but as being a "boss" and forming with other bosses a group with interests not necessarily compatible with the interests of secretarial workers. Interests are not seen as personal, but as part of a system with bosses on one side and workers on the other. Women are sometimes skeptical of unions, but they believe in group pressure. They are not always very clear as to what the organization can or should achieve, and how the problems of clerical workers relate to the broader social-economic structure, but they see that men have at least achieved for themselves higher wages and better benefits through unions, and as such, they believe in at least reproducing men's institutions, of which unions are a part. (Unions might not be "responsible organizations", but they certainly seem better than nothing. The need for unions is seen as a way of achieving a better balance between one's own contribution and pay.) There is a definite search for individual guarantees (against firing), equality of pay, chances of promotion. Women see the group/

union as a way to defend their own interests and to better their own working conditions. In some women, their sense of "sisterhood" towards other women is explicitly mentioned.

4) The Woman Worker: The Reformist

Women in this picture think that their demands will best be satisfied through the dialogue between "equal" partners, with managers on one side, and unions (as representing them) on the other. They conceive of the possibility of working together, in a positive way, within the enterprise, and do not seem to question the rights of owners/managers. They only want to participate more in the decision-making processes which affect their lives and derive from them better working conditions. They usually express a feeling for the need to change the "consciousness" of bosses as well as those of other women, in order to achieve qualitative, as well as quantitative, changes in the office; but generally, though, job descriptions and specifications are seen as capable of taking care, at least in part, of the qualitative aspects. As such, they want to make unions responsible to the needs of working women and make them "fight" over the demands that are important to women. They see that, so far, unions have not been responsible to their members and therefore they attack institutions -- unions -- as men have created them. They consider that the structure of unions should change and consider that women can create/be part of more "democratic unions."

5) The Woman Worker: The Revolutionary

These women relate their own problems, and those within the office, to the general organization of society. Participation is seen as desirable,

not only at the office level, but also at the national, socio-economic level. Action is seen more in "political" terms; that is, linking demands of office workers to socio-economic structure and consciousness-raising is now seen as part of a political process. Structural changes are desired and foreseen as necessary before any significant change can happen in the "work and life" of secretarial workers, both as women and as workers. Unions are supported because workers should gain whatever they can, but are not seen as "solutions" and capable of bringing about all the changes that are desirable in society.

In relation to these characterizations, let us analyze now the dynamics inherent in these pictures and put the transitional women and their pictures into perspective.

These five pictures should not be viewed as a continuum through which all the women move during their involvement with the organization. This is also to say that all of these pictures can be considered as starting points for any one of the women that join the organization. However, we have observed the fact that some women seem to be in "transition" insofar as their pictures and as such that they cannot be considered as fitting perfectly the alternative pictures. We can consider them as being an "approximation" of certain pictures but containing elements in their picture which makes us perceive them as moving towards another picture.

As we have said in the previous section, all women have the "potential" of moving from one picture to another, due either to the internal contradictions inherent in their picture or else as a reaction to the in-

congruities between their theories and the environment that these theories attempt to describe.

We have also suggested that some pictures seem to be less stable than others, as they describe women who are likely to be moving towards other pictures. The two pictures that have seemed to be less stable through the analysis of the women that these pictures describe, were the "woman" picture and the "woman/worker" picture. Let us consider why these two pictures seem to be less stable than the other three.

1. The Woman

a) Women in the "woman" picture appear as being in transition because they are re-thinking their situation as working women and experiencing for the first time their conditions as workers. While women are capable of divorcing themselves from their work; that is, while they perceive their work as a secondary element in their lives, they can ignore their conditions at work and "take" whatever working conditions are offered or given to them. It is when women start understanding that work is an integral part of their life, that they are likely to be working all of their lives and that they see no chance for improvement in their working conditions, that they are also likely to invest themselves in changing these conditions.

b) Women who perceive themselves as "women" also understand their opposition to men (at least in a biological sense) and are, as such, aware that women's and men's interests do not coincide necessarily. It is likely, therefore, that the women in the "woman" picture, when becoming aware of their situation as workers, will be inclined to believe that unless "wo-

men" do something about changing their own working conditions, no one else will do it for them (certainly not men).

We will say, then, that when women in the "woman" picture accept their condition as workers; that is, when they incorporate work into their day-to-day experience, that they will shape their theories-of-action and views of the organization in relation to their new view of self.

## 2. The Woman/Worker

- a) Women in this picture appear as being in transition because of the incongruity between their seeing themselves as both women and workers (or at least relating to both aspects of their "selves" during the interview) and the actions they see women undertaking to solve their working conditions. Women in this picture acknowledge the fact that they are women and as such have working problems different from those that men have, yet they suggest men's institutions to resolve their working conditions. Even if they are relatively skeptical of the changes that these institutions can bring about, they see them as "better than nothing."
- b) Women in this picture are, at the time of the interview, little involved in "9 to 5" and as such have little exposure to the ideas of the other women within the organization and to the shifts that the organization, itself, is experiencing.

It would not be surprising, though, that women who are basically in favor of unions because of their consciousness of the conflict between employers and employees, as well as their being aware of their problems as women when exposed to the idea of creating women's institutions which combine the concept of unions as actors in the process of collective bar-

gaining between employers and employees and the concept of institutions responsible to the needs of working women, would not favor them. All interviewees mentioned the need to make unions more responsible to their members and criticized their actual structure. Some women (the "woman worker: the reformist") seemed more optimistic about the possibilities of creating such "women's unions" than other women, yet few women (except the "working women" and some "women" -- not necessarily in theory, but probably in practice) would not consider it as a "desirable alternative."

c) This is why Paula and Shirley could be included in the woman worker: the reformist, as transitional types (instead of in the woman/worker's group) because their active involvement in the organization seems to indicate that they will adopt the pattern described above and that their interviews were conducted at a time when the organization itself was "formulating" its position in relation to unions and has not yet adopted the unified picture of the woman worker.

d) This picture is less stable than the others. The women who share this picture, if exposed to the woman worker's theories and actions, would probably find these theories and actions more consistent with their own self-image and their view of the environment.

e) This picture can ultimately be regarded as basically similar to the "pure picture" of the worker (picture b), with elements of "womanhood" in the self-image, the theory-of-action and the view of the organization, yet incapable of resolving those elements in more appropriate strategies than those suggested by the pure picture of the worker (as representing the man worker).

Ultimately, we can say that the "pure pictures" appear as being less stable than the "hybrid pictures". That is, the women in the "woman picture" and those in the "woman/worker picture" are less likely to remain in these pictures because of the non-acceptance/recognition/incorporation of one of the two elements of their self, either in their theories about themselves and their work situation, or in the relationship between their theories and their actions. The three hybrid pictures,

	1	4	5
Self-image	working woman	woman worker: the reformist	woman worker: the revolutionary
Theories-of-action	changing work	pressure/con- sciousness- raising	pressure/conscious- ness-raising/ others
View of organization	support group	"women's" unions	support/unions; as step towards broader social change

appear as being stable pictures. They represent three alternative pictures of combining work and womanhood\* with alternative views of self, theories-of-action, and view of the organization.

From the analysis of the interviews, it seems that the definition of self -- that is, the particular combination of womanhood and work -- is especially dependent on the background of the women (class and education) and their perceptions of themselves at work (importance of work, plans for the future, possibilities for advancement).

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\* They have some common elements with the men's pictures of integration into work-related social movements, yet with a certain basic distinction, given the element of "womanhood" present in these women's pictures. See discussion on social movements.



It is based a great deal on their definition of self, but also and primarily shaped by their definition of others as men and/or employers, as influenced by the type of firms the women work in and the type of relationship they have with their supervisors, that women define the nature of their problems/conflicts at work. It is this definition of the problems/or the "opponent" which is at the root of the basic difference between picture 1 and pictures 4 and 5, and therefore, we can consider the transformation of this "view of the problem" to determine the dynamic change of women from picture 1 to picture 4 or 5. We have found women in picture 1 (and partly in picture 2) to "idealize" the relationship between employers and employees and believe in the possibility of a "dialogue." Conflict is alien to this picture. Although unhappy about certain elements of their work situations, women in this picture have either had positive feedbacks from management -- Lilian and Anne -- or else have not attempted to obtain anything concrete which has been categorically refused to them. In other words, they have not experienced yet an "antagonistic employer," or else they have negated to themselves this aspect of their employer-employee relationship.

The dynamic change of women within the organization from picture 4 to picture 5 cannot be considered independently of a larger framework of analysis, society. The pertaining of women to one picture or the other has generally been dependent on women's involvement in other political action and/or social movements. The differentiation between both pictures is also related to the very basic distinction that women make between the actual/possible and the potential, as mentioned earlier -- a point to

which I will also return in the discussion of the organization. In this respect, the concrete actions that women in both pictures undertake can often overlap. Furthermore, women in picture 4 often appear as being more "active" than women in picture 5 (Nora, Doris and even Janet). Their basic differences lie in their "idealized" picture of society and the possibility to achieve it. The evolution of women from one picture to another has to be considered as depending on the concrete possibility of the women in picture 5 to "act out" their system of beliefs, and as such, is based on the relationship between the organization and the rest of society, basically on the content and format that the "workers' struggle" will take in this country.

CHAPTER VI

THE ORGANIZATION: AN UNDERSTANDING OF ITS DYNAMICS

"9 to 5" began in August of 1972 as a newsletter put out by ten women working in offices across the city. 5,000 copies were distributed in front of the biggest insurance companies and the most crowded subway exits in Boston. Immediately, calls and letters asking for subscriptions to the newsletter followed.

In a newsletter, Ellen Cassedy, one of the organizers of "9 to 5", writes:

"During the next year, our mailing list grew into the hundreds, and many women wrote in comments. For example:

'Maybe 9 to 5 can instigate some change in the situation, which for some reason we have so far accepted without question.'

"It was in answer to this kind of comment that the 9 to 5 staff decided that it should do more than simply raise issues. In the fall of 1973, we set about launching an action organization for women office workers. Our first public event November 19 was attended by 200 women. At this time, we announced that we were setting up an office at the Boston YWCA at 140 Clarendon St., and we suggested some immediate actions and programs: a meeting with the Chamber of Commerce, a forum with Boston employers, a job survey to recruit new members and choose targets, a course for office workers, and counselling hours on organizing and legal rights." 1

In early 1974, "9 to 5" had drawn up an Office Worker's Bill of Rights, which calls for an end to sex discrimination and a request for more appropriate working conditions.\* The organization has presented this Bill to legislators, government agencies such as the Massachusetts Commission Against Discrimination to "enlist their aid in fighting unfair and illegal employment practices."<sup>2</sup> Governor Dukakis has also endorsed it, following a meeting he had with members of "9 to 5" on March 2, 1975.

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<sup>1</sup>"9 to 5"'s newsletter, April/May, 1974.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

\*See "The Bill of Rights for Women Office Workers," reproduced on the following page.

## *The Bill of Rights for Women Office Workers*

*9 to 5* is an organization of women office workers. We seek to improve the status of the 250,000 office workers in Boston. We recognize that women office workers are entitled to the following rights:

1. The right to respect as women and as office workers.
2. The right to comprehensive, written job descriptions specifying the nature of all duties expected of the employee.
3. The right to detailed descriptions specifying compensation, terms, conditions and benefits of employment.
4. The right to compensation for overtime work and for work not included in our job descriptions.
5. The right to choose whether to do the personal work of employers (typing personal letters, serving coffee, running out for lunch.)
6. The right to defined and regular salary reviews and cost-of-living increases.
7. The right to comprehensive medical coverage for any temporary medical disability without jeopardizing our seniority, benefits or pensions.
8. The right to maternity benefits and to having pregnancy and other gynecological conditions treated as temporary medical disabilities.
9. The right to benefits equal to those of men in similar job categories.
10. The right to equal access to promotion opportunities and on-the-job training programs.
11. The freedom to choose one's lifestyle and to participate in on-the-job organizing or outside activities which do not detract from the execution of assigned tasks.
12. An end to discrimination on the basis of sex, age, race, marital status or parenthood, as insured by the laws of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts.
13. The right to written and systematic grievance procedures.

"9 to 5"'s activities can be divided into two broad categories: 186

1. On-the-job organizing: "9 to 5" has served as a support group for office workers who wish to change their working conditions.

2. Public activities: "9 to 5" has been involved in setting standards for fair treatment of insurance workers with the Massachusetts Department of Insurance, it has led a maternity benefits campaign picketing the State House to protest state Senate President Kevin Harrington's actions to stop a maternity bill, it has filed legislation to regulate temporary employment agencies, it has protested against discriminatory advertisements.

#### 1. The Structure of the Organization

The above-mentioned activities are undertaken within a very loose structure. "9 to 5" started off with a chairwoman, a staff of two, and several committees which are formed and dissolved as needed to plan current activities. Since then, the staff grew, as did the numbers of committees (these include now the insurance, the university, the publishing, the temporaries, the media and the fund-raising committees, besides the Planning Committee, which works out the details of campaigns and the Board of Directors, which determines "9 to 5"'s long-range goals). "9 to 5"'s annual election of officers determines, through ballots given by the membership at large, who will serve on these two last committees; the other "working" committees are formed ad hoc on the basis of the interests of the various women members.

Despite its "unstructured"/non-hierarchical organization, "9 to 5" has grown immensely since it first started three and a half years ago and seems now to be everywhere in the Boston area. Their bi-monthly newsletter circulates to 6,000 people/institutions; universities such as Harvard Medical Area and MIT have started a union drive supported and advised by "9 to 5"; women are in offices all over the city saying to their employers, "No more."

## 2. The Structure of the Organization and the Women's Movement

This "unstructured" structure seems to relate directly to certain basic goals of the women's movement. In its search for equality between sexes, women have questioned the institutions and practices of society which seem to perpetuate the myth that men are superior to women (these are all "male-dominated" institutions that oppress women) and have attempted to create their own institutions in which all women are equal and also have equal opportunities. This creation of alternative institutions reflects, to a great extent, their belief in the possibility of achieving non-oppressive institutions.

In an attempt to describe women's liberation as a movement for equality, B. Bovee Polk writes:

"Women's liberation is perhaps the first social movement in recent times to take the idea of equality seriously. . . . The significant social development in women's liberation is that women can see that little will have changed in their lives if they are willing to substitute the domination of organization leaders for the domination of men." <sup>3</sup>

One of the major problems women's groups have encountered, as well as many of the criticisms they have received, relate to the difficulty of combining this lack of organizational structure with effectiveness in action. All of the women who have joined "9 to 5" stress the importance to them of finally doing something to change their working conditions, instead of simply sitting around and complaining. In their notices for distribution on what "9 to 5" is, the organization also says: "9 to 5, Boston's Organization for Women Office Workers, is organizing to DO SOMETHING about problems that we have all been

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<sup>3</sup>B. Bovee Polk: "Women's Liberation: Movement for Equality," in Towards a Sociology of Women, C. Safilias-Rothschild, Xerox College Publishing, Lexington, Massachusetts, 1972, p. 325.

grumbling about for many years. . . .We are determined to bring our grievances out in the open -- and solve them!"

In this respect, "9 to 5" is fairly atypical of the women's movement as, to a large extent, the movement has been primarily formed of small "consciousness-raising" or "rap" groups in which women gather to attempt to understand their personal problems and have not tried to go much beyond developing an analysis of the links between these problems and the structure of society.

"The consciousness-raising group becomes a place where women can express their rage and begin to find constructive outlets for it. The group serves the important functions of helping a woman assess the reality of her oppression, helping her identify ways in which she is not being egalitarian, and encouraging her to continue her quest for equal treatment in the face of negative sanctions. . . .Women, then, through sharing the struggle to attain egalitarian relationships with men begin to form egalitarian relationships with each other and come to rely less heavily on the approval of men and more on the judgments of women." 4

Besides many negative images that people, both men and women, have of the women's movement, partly because of the multitude of groups, objectives, etc., which are encompassed under the general goal of "liberating women," we have to acknowledge the fact that not too many groups within the movement are geared towards sustained and systematic action and as such, have helped reinforce the social image that women are not interested, organized enough, "smart" enough, to bring about any change in their societal role.

"9 to 5", by stressing the need for action (instead of "grumbling"), has helped both to change the women's image about themselves as capable of initiating action and gaining "victories", as well as the image of men, who

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4. B. Bovee Polk, op.cit., p. 324 (underlining in text).



feel "threatened by a group of organized women" capable of formulating rational demands and standing behind them.

This commitment to action has been a rallying point of all the women within the organization, independently of their being involved directly in public activities and/or on-the-job organizing, or their just being members who consider the organization's actions useful and impressive, and as such, support them.

This emphasis on action has to be related, however, to the nature of the organization, that is, to its being an organization of women office workers who, besides stressing the need for women to understand the conditions of working women on the basis of their own experiences, are also interested in changing them.

Changing working conditions cannot be undertaken by a ten to fifteen member women's "rap group", but has to become the goal of an organization representing a mass of women and becoming linked to the structure of society through the media and public events.

Within the women's movement, other groups have also become massive and public. These have been mainly groups seeking the establishment of women's rights, as is the National Organization for Women, whose major concern is "ending the discrimination against women in the obtaining of employment and in pay, reforming abortion laws, equalizing educational opportunity, and providing child-care facilities,"<sup>5</sup> and the women's caucus of the left-wing political groups, as is the International Socialists or the Socialist Workers' Party, who are, however, part of organizations that are dominated by men. A few local women's groups around the country have also

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5. B. Bovee Polk, op.cit., p. 321.

been formed around issues of women and work. These groups, which are not national in scale, as is NOW or the women's caucus of the left-wing political groups, have generally grown through the effort of a small group of women who have first started by sharing their discontents about their working conditions and then decided to actively get involved in changing them. This attempt to bring about change has taken two alternative forms. On one side, organizations have been created, like "9 to 5", Women Employed, or Coffeebreak, which have centered both around fighting for women's rights and "helping women help themselves" in their own work places, by supporting them, advising them, and assisting them to build sufficient self-confidence to be able to face the confrontation at work. (Some women members, as mentioned before, are only involved in one of the two aspects of the organization.)

On the other side, many women unsatisfied with their working conditions have turned to unions in an attempt to change these conditions. In an article, M. Popkin writes:

" . . . Most union drives seem to have grown out of employee associations where common gripes were aired and changes dreamed of. Often, these employee groups focused on "women's issues" such as child care, personal leave days, maternity leave policies, elimination of demands for personal services, and promotional opportunities. The groups that evolved into union-organizing drives found that their pre-union status did not allow them to build an ongoing organization, nor did it win them any recognition from management, which refused to entertain suggestions from groups "not representing a majority of employees." Without union status there is no legal recourse for demanding that an employer negotiate and no way to insure that employee interests will continue to be safeguarded. Moreover, organizing one or two thousand employees is a monumental task requiring time, money, and effort beyond the capacity of most employee groups." 6

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6. Maggi Popkin, "Raises, Not Roses," in The Second Wave, Vol. 4, No. 1, p. 9.

The general prejudice of white-collar workers against unions, the non-responsiveness of unions to their members, and their general inertia, as well as the socialization of women into seeing unions as organizations of men and for men, explains all too well why women office workers, while being among the poorest paid and least prestigious workers in society, have resisted for so long this unionizing process. Unionized women earn substantially more than non-unionized women, but women, because of the labor movement's neglect of women workers, are skeptical, and justifiably so, of what unions can achieve for them besides higher wages. Pay is an important element in women's dissatisfactions, but it is far from being the only one, or even the most important one to them. Women consider that while taking away their union dues and their personal freedom, unions might not help them get other working conditions such as promotion possibilities, an end to sex stereotyping, which are important to them.

To many women, though, unions appear as the only viable alternative for workers to have more bargaining power when dealing with management; and are making serious attempts towards changing the structure of unions by requiring them to be more responsible to their members and to their specific problems. The formation of the Coalition of Labor Union Women (CLUW) is a step in this direction. Smaller unions, too, have made considerable efforts to become responsive to the problems of working women, as discussed previously in the descriptions of the unionization process going on between clerical and office workers.

This process of building organizational forms that are different from the existing ones and that respond to both the needs of working wo-

men and to their ideologies (of responsiveness to people, honesty, lack of corruption, oppression, and hierarchy) is only starting. With the ever-increasing participation of women in the labor force and with the expansion of the service sector in the American economy, which employs a majority of white-collar workers, this trend is likely to become more and more important. It is also extremely likely that an influx of women union members will have a decisive impact on the existing labor movement.

### 3. "9 to 5" and the Choices of an Organization of Women Clerical Workers

As serious and important as the above-mentioned trend appears to be, there still will be a long time before unions will be seen by most women as the normal way to deal with their employers, and before unions and women will learn to deal with each other in a way that suits the interests of both parties. Many of the problems of organizing women clerical workers relate to the disparities in working conditions of women. These conditions depend on whether they are employed in a small office or a large firm, whether they are working in the insurance industry or in a university.

"Traditionally, unions have organized on either a craft or an industrial basis. Craft unions were composed of skilled craftsmen who performed similar work in different industries, such as tool-and-die making. Industrial unions were formed to include the vast numbers of semi-skilled and unskilled workers found on assembly lines such as auto, steel, electronics, and rubber. Members of these unions had in common their place of work rather than the particular task they performed. Industrial unions are considered far more powerful in their ability to close down an entire plant rather than only a small fraction of one." 7

It was important for "9 to 5" to understand and determine what kinds

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7. M. Popkin, op.cit., p. 39.

of unions can best meet the needs of this wide range of women office workers, both in terms of union structure and policies and organizing potential, before being able to advise women as to what types of unions to approach and specifically to be able to refer them to a union or a couple of them. This brings us to the first organizational choice.

a) Crafts Unions Versus Industrial Unions

Most of the unions currently organizing clerical workers are not primarily office workers' unions, but industrial unions with white-collar departments. Women clerical workers, however, want their own problems to be dealt with and see with great concern the possibility of their being lumped together with other white-collar workers, like professional and technical staff. Historically, the hierarchical fragmentation of the labor force has also been reproduced within the union and office workers risk seeing their interests relegated in favor of higher-status workers.

According to Karen Nussbaum, of "9 to 5", a craft basis for organizing women office workers has the great potential of best representing their needs, but at the moment, no established union seems to be interested or equipped to take on such an effort.<sup>8</sup>

If clerical workers do organize within large industrial unions, two points seem to be crucial for them to pursue in order to see their concerns taken care of. First, women clerical workers will have to retain sufficient autonomy within the union for their needs not to be submerged under those of other workers. Second, concentrating their efforts in negotiating with one large union instead of spreading themselves thin among several

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8. As mentioned in M. Popkin, p. 39.

small unions will probably confer to them power within the union, hence strength of maneuvering and the possibility of creating pressure. Large unions seem to have the potential of having an insurance division and a university division, etc., which relate to the specific problems of women in insurance and in universities, while also responding to the needs of all clerical workers on a city-wide basis.

After a long search and a careful analysis of all the elements involved, "9 to 5" has decided to refer women who want to unionize to the Service Employees' International Union (SEIU).

This brings us, however, to the second and probably the most important choice that the organization had to face.

b) Should "9 to 5" Itself Become a Union?

Karen Koenig, Chairperson of the organization, said in the interview: "9 to 5 is not pro-union nor anti-union." This simple statement does not mean, however, that "9 to 5" is apolitical nor that the issues of unions belong outside the realm of the organization. It implies that "9 to 5" had to make a serious decision: whether to become, itself, a union; or whether to work jointly with a union and be able to have all the groups of women interested in unionizing join this single union. "9 to 5" opted for the second.

Indeed, as seen before in the analysis of the interviews, although a large percent of the women were in favor of unions, others were skeptical of them, and others still thought that they would never join one. Furthermore, if "9 to 5" turned into a union, it might turn off many of the potential members who have not joined yet. The strategy of "9 to 5" has been,

very recently (after three years of existence), to work together with a union and refer to it the "women that are ready for it," as Vera said. This decision is based on the acknowledgment that women clerical workers do not only differ in relation to their working conditions, but also as to their readiness to get involved in a process to change them. All the women in the organization, without exception, mention at one point or another during their interview the differences that they perceive between some women and others as to their willingness to go "beyond grumbling."

Some of the women in "9 to 5" do not want to identify themselves at all with the women's movement (because they do not want to be considered "libbers"). If "9 to 5" had turned out to be "women all the way," they would never have joined the organization. As such, we can observe that "9 to 5" has to be responsive, not only to the various problems that women face in their work place, but also to their alternative views of the organization. Carol Berg, "9 to 5"'s Secretary for the period 1974-75, said: "There is no one single solution for any of the problems that people share, because each situation is different and people involved are different, also."

And this leads us to the third choice the organization had to face, which, to some extent, overlaps with the previous one; that is:

c) Diversity Versus Direction

"9 to 5", by allowing a certain diversity within its membership, also endangered, in some sense, its survival. Diversity implies that each woman should undertake the activities that she thinks best fit her need, and "9 to 5" has never undermined women for not doing something; but on

the other side, certain women felt that they wanted to go beyond the possibilities for action that the organization was offering them, and starting a union drive was the only possible alternative to keep these women within the sphere of the organization.

However, giving too much direction and leading all women towards unionization was dangerous, too, and the organization had to split both its activities and the structure within which these activities could be undertaken. We have mentioned before the legal activities of "9 to 5" and its organizing activities; now we refer to its split into "9 to 5" and the union drive.

Charlotte Cooper, Co-chairperson in 1975, said: "The more you think about organizing working people, the more you think about unions." But this statement seems to be true for only a segment of the women clerical workers, as many women even see "9 to 5" as a "radical" or a "women's" organization. To many women, though, "9 to 5" is less threatening than unions are and seems to open doors, but not to corruption. In other words, "9 to 5" appears to them as being a low-cost/high-benefit organization, as opposed to unions, which are high-cost/low-benefit.

In order to gain strength and support, "9 to 5" had to encompass all women willing to do something about their working conditions, with the hope that women will change through their experience at work and with the organization, but to this point I will return when discussing the dynamics of the organization.

This diversity versus direction dilemma is another aspect of the problem we had discussed earlier; that is, spontaneity versus organization. "9 to 5" believes in the need for organization and is, indeed, extremely



organized in all its activities. It only claims that this organization should include everyone and decisions should represent all segments. Organization should come from below, not above, from within rather than from an outside structure (male-dominated structure). The organization has some general goals and guidelines, but it is concerned with avoiding the rigidities that have been solidified in most men's organizations, to be able to respond to the changing needs of both the individuals and the organization itself.

Many of the women interviewed mentioned the positive effect the "personal treatment" that they received when they first contacted "9 to 5" had had on their involvement. "9 to 5" is extremely aware of the necessities of different women and of their variations in personalities. In each of the pictures we have described, we have seen very active women and less active ones, some very involved in what they feel as being important, others just supportive. "9 to 5" seems to have room for each and all of them. Variations in "styles" are dealt with through alternative modes of involvement and action; differences in working problems are studied in various committees; the university committee, the insurance committee, the media committee, etc. Each woman can supposedly find a committee in which to work, a committee that also reflects her own concerns. Women are also invited to public events and to various workshops on organizing; women and the economy, women and unions, etc., besides the monthly meetings and the constant availability of the staff to respond to work problems, etc.

Having decided to stay away from becoming a union, "9 to 5" still works together with a local in order to be able to refer all the women in-

terested towards the same union. This mode of operating allows it to gain in strength, power of control and responsiveness, while also keeping itself open to all clerical women concerned with changing their working conditions within a loose structure, made personal when necessary and organized when required. This seems to be no easy task for an organization. Yet, few would deny the rapid growth and the concrete achievements of the organization, as well as its concern for each and all the women who have approached it in one way or another. Even Al Gayzagian, representative of the John Hancock Mutual Life Insurance Company, mentioned on February 20, 1974: "I'd have to say that "9 to 5" represents the most serious effort right now [of organizing]. They combine union activity and job grievances with women's rights questions."<sup>9</sup>

The choices have not been taken arbitrarily, however. They came about as a result of the internal dynamics of the organization in response to the requirements of the environment. The organization had to define a structure for itself, in order to be able to operate within the environment. The organization also had to define its goals when facing the choice of becoming or not a union. The various women within the organization took alternative positions on the issues, and based their choices on their views of what the organization is about and where it should go. As a whole, the organization that supposedly functions in a democratic way had to make the choices that would be compatible with the views of the various women. Sometimes, these views were not incompatible. Most women, for example, wanted the organization to be able to have a certain structure while still

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9. As quoted in "9 to 5"'s newsletter, April-May, 1974.

being responsive to its membership. At other times, the choices made were such that they encompassed all the views of the various members and allowed for the co-existence of these views. This is how the "9 to 5" organization co-exists with Local 925. Women who want to join the local do so, women who do not favor unions are still capable of being inside the organization. Other times still, the organization cannot make such clear-cut choices and faces real dilemmas.

"Dilemmas consist of conflicts of requirements that are considered central and therefore intolerable."<sup>10</sup>

Dilemmas represent situations of choice in which all of the available options seem to be unacceptable from the point of view of the various members. Dilemmas can have their roots in conflicting purposes that result from certain differences among its members. These dilemmas can be called dilemmas of incongruity, as opposed to the dilemmas of inconsistency that arise when various elements of the "organizational picture" become incompatible.

We can speak of an organizational picture in similar terms as those that we have used to describe individual pictures. An organizational picture can then be considered as composed of three elements -- a self-image of its members, a theory-of-action, and its own self-image. These elements have to be described in order to be able to refer then to possible dilemmas of incongruity and inconsistency. To an understanding of these elements, we now turn.

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10. Argyris, C. and D. Schon. Theory in Practice, *op.cit.*, p. 30.

#### 4. The Organizational Picture and Its Dilemmas

##### a) The Self-image of Its Members

"9 to 5" was started by a group of ten college graduates who had been incapable of finding any job to support themselves but a clerical one. Since then, many other women, also college graduates, have joined the organization surprised to find other women with the same background who are also in the same work position. Acknowledging this common pattern has helped these women regain confidence in themselves and relate their problems to a larger social problem. The organization also has members of blue-collar origin, but a much smaller percentage. Surprisingly enough, though, but in accordance with the research done by various social scientists on the linkages between oppression and social involvement, its members are not among the worst-off segments of the clerical labor force. All the women do refer in their interviews to the terrible working conditions that other women have to put up with, and consider themselves to be better off than many, if not most, clerical workers. All the women believe that they deserve change. They feel oppressed, discriminated against, poorly paid, etc., and do not want to "put up" with it. The working women want mainly to improve their own working conditions. The rest, out of a sense of "sisterhood," want to help themselves and other women, too, especially the more oppressed. While men have created unions to modify their working conditions in jobs they expect to maintain for the rest of their lives, most of these women are involved in a process of change, but dream of moving away from their actual working position. Although some of them might, indeed, be skeptical of their possibilities of doing so, many have applied to schools in more

"practical" areas in order to be able to find more meaningful jobs thereafter.

Women have learned through the women's movement that all clerical workers do not want to become managers; hence, they are trying to improve the slots of the clerical women, even if they themselves might not be working in clerical positions. This feeling of sisterhood seems to be especially strong in the woman worker, who is also the woman who is most determined to change her own situation either by changing fields, going to school, or opening for herself other channels for advancement. Many women have expressed, though, that despite their idealistic plans for the future, they might still have to work as clericals at least for some periods of time.

It is difficult, however, to build a movement on a transient labor force, although many women state that their involvement in the organization is independent of their future plans. This high turnover has an even greater impact on attempts at unionizing. To a great extent, too, the organization is defeating its own purposes. By offering support to women in clerical positions, the organization usually increases women's confidence in themselves, which often leads them to strive for alternative positions and abandon their commitment to the organization.

Also, by increasing women's self-confidence and capacity to request for changes in their offices, the organization loses some of its members as soon as the women have achieved their personal goals.

The difficulty of building a movement on a transient labor force is probably the root of one of the most important organizational dilemmas. It is even further accentuated by the fact that the organization is clearly

centering exclusively around issues of women clerical workers, and it has not made any deliberate attempt to join efforts with other segments of the labor force. Only a few women mention in their interviews the communality of problems between the various segments in relation to the employer/employee conflict, and they see blue-collar workers as being better off in at least one respect: they have a union to protect them and to bargain for them to get higher wages.

Women in the organization seem to be extremely aware of the stratification in the labor force, and not only do they see it in relation to blue-collar workers, but also, as mentioned before, within the clerical labor force itself. This makes certain women reluctant to associate with other women with whom they do not want to be identified. This fact actually divides the clerical movement and diminishes its power. Along similar lines, women in publishing consider they have little in common with women working in insurance offices, and they consider themselves to have different grievances. When attempting a union drive that encompasses various industries, accounting for differences among industries might be inconsistent with the objective of gaining massive support.

For the time being, though, as mentioned earlier, all the women feel good about their involvement in "9 to 5" and about the fact that they are finally "doing" something. They have all gained in courage and assurance through this involvement, but they perceive themselves as being different from, if not better than, the non-joiners. None of them seem to be scared of losing their jobs, and none of them seem afraid either of dealing with the reproof of their employers when they find out about their involvement. Some of them even find that "9 to 5" gives them more

leverage in their arguments with their employers, who are often "afraid of having "9 to 5" on their back," as Donna said. Most of them mention, too, having learned from "9 to 5" where to go to redress a grievance or deal with a discriminatory policy in their office.

Women in "9 to 5" believe that the "other women" will eventually get so frustrated with their actual working conditions that they will also join the organization. They see this process as a very slow one, accelerated, though, by the fact that young women are not ready to put up with the same things as older women do. Most women in "9 to 5" also believe that non-joiners will someday recognize the benefits that the organization offers to its members, and Janet goes even further by saying that "there will be a time when women will realize that not belonging to a union is more harmful to them than to belong to one." This leads us to an understanding of the theory-of-action of the organization, as perceived by its members.

b) The Organization's Theory-of-Action

Women within the organization perceive, as mentioned above, that clerical workers will join "9 to 5" out of their own frustration at work and perhaps, too, as a result of the "demonstration effect" that the unionizing of certain industries might have on the overall clerical labor force.

Women have to take the first step. They have to contact the organization, and then "9 to 5" can work on getting them interested and involved. As such, women who are in "9 to 5", or who contact it, are already a step ahead of the non-joiners insofar, at least, as they have experienced frustrations/problems, have accepted them, and want to do something about them.

Given the structure of the organization, women realize, too, that

they have nothing to lose from joining. By joining, women gain a lot of self-confidence. They see that they can be effective in undertaking other activities; they see that other women have similar problems (so it is not only "them"); they get advice; they "share". This allows them to become more and more involved in several aspects of the organization and, depending on the type of firm they work in, they might also consider organizing. "9 to 5" encourages women to get involved, both at work and in other activities.

Vera, one of the founders of the organization, said: "It is only through direct political action that women will come to realize what their real problems are, who their friends and who their enemies are." And this predicament has been true for most of the women in the organization. All the women involved in previous political action, either on campus or in the women's movement, or elsewhere, are among the most active members in the organization, and the most radical.

But this theory has not proven to be true for the women who have attempted to organize their offices and who have been faced with an understanding and co-operative management. These women have usually diminished their involvement in the organization. Only those who have encountered negative responses became more aware of the "true nature of management" and have often started seeing unions as the "only resort." Some women have also come to realize that management will only give in to some irrelevant requests while postponing or refusing the others that conflict with their own interests. For many women, these "gains" are enough and the process of enlightenment, as predicted by Vera, does not occur, at least in the first experience with management. Much of this process of enlight-



ement depends on the size and type of offices. Small offices might have better employee/employer relations.

The organization's theory-of-action perceives of women as moving from one theory-of-action to another, mainly through their own involvement and frustrations. In the organization, women are, however, only encouraged to "get involved," but are not forced into it and at all times several options for involvement are presented to them. Women have the tendency to choose the activities that best fit their theories-of-action and their view of self, thus often avoiding possible changes in these theories as a result of concrete experiences. The organization's theory of allowing for individual choice is inconsistent with its theory of "learning through experience." These experiences might only be undertaken after long periods of inactivity, and members might leave the organization before these experiences ever happen. This is not to say that this theory-of-action is inappropriate. When acted out, though, it does not always bring the expected results. For the time being, this theory-of-action has allowed for a reproduction within the organization of the various groups of women who belong to the overall women's movement. The working woman, the woman/worker: the reformist, and the woman/worker: the revolutionary, are particular examples of women's rights groups, women's liberation groups, and radical women's groups as applied to the sphere of work and specifically to a movement of office workers.

The emphasis of the organization on consciousness-raising and on action through one's own experience is, however, a new element in the workers' movement. These elements have not been incorporated by men. The direction and strength of the office workers' movement may be influenced

by this emphasis.

"9 to 5"'s most active members consider that sooner or later women will perceive of unions as the only solution to their working problems, but they do not believe, either, that this will happen overnight. The political consciousness of women has to be raised and this can only be done through direct involvement over a long period of time; "9 to 5" appears, then as a necessary organization in this attempt to increase the awareness and involvement of women.

A woman on her own cannot perform this function, but "9 to 5" without a union cannot function or learn, either. And this is primarily because, as stated above, although women perceive of unions as the only legal way to deal with employers from a position of strength, they also do not want to reproduce the hierarchical, authoritarian/oppressive organizations of men. They want to build their own unions. Organizations like "9 to 5" will have to work with existing unions to restructure them and transform them in order to meet the needs of "working women". At the time of the interviews, speaking about joining a union was only a "hypothetical" question, and most of the women did not see it as a concrete possibility nor as relating directly to their own lives. Since then, though, "9 to 5" started working together with SEIU, and this has been the goal stated by the woman worker: the reformist.

Indeed, it is this woman and others like her "who, being ready for it," have made serious efforts in starting an alliance with a union. These women, who are among the most active ones in the organization, have taken upon themselves the search for a union and the dealings with it,

considerably helped, of course, by the regular staff. All their strength and euphoria is vested now in creating an alternative union, a women's union.

Whether creating an alternative union is inconsistent with the structure of unionism and the specific form it has taken in the United States, is a question that only the concrete experience over a long period of time can answer. The organization will undergo a test of congruity between its theories and reality and its development will depend on this test.

It is not surprising at all that the women workers have strongly influenced the path of the organization and set the roots for where it should go. By working together, they have conceptualized and then materialized their goal. They have been shaped by their involvement in the organization while they, in turn, have helped shape it. They are presenting to other women an "alternative picture" and actually some of these pictures are moving towards the woman worker picture.

This leads us to a brief discussion of the organization's self-image.

c) The Organization's Self-image

As stated in the Bill of Rights, "9 to 5" perceives itself as being an organization for WOMEN OFFICE WORKERS. As such, it is committed to fight for issues of sex discrimination and women's rights, as well as for better wages, benefits, a grievance procedure, etc. In all newsletters or public notices, they say to fight for both Rights and Respect, rights representing the needs of workers, respect, the needs of women; rights and respect is what working women want and need for themselves.

As mentioned before, the organization is committed to achieve this by maintaining sometimes conflicting goals: spontaneity and organization, individuality and collectivity, unionism and non-unionism. How inconsistent these strategies are and how they are going to change over time will depend on the internal balance between the various women in the organization, who for the time being seem to co-exist, and on their capacity to change their environment as well as to develop new strategies to deal with a transforming society.

The success of such an enterprise is related to the ideological strength of the women involved. Indeed, the women are committed to creating new institutions, which are non-hierarchical and process-oriented. Insofar as they are concerned with sharing among each other, with discussing and reshaping their actions, if necessary, their success depends mainly on the strength of their ideological shell and to their commitment to it. As an ideology, it might be successful, not because it is necessarily better than men's ideology and institutions, but because women have committed themselves to it and are going to make it work. The process needs, however, to involve a majority of working women to be really successful, but women in "9 to 5" seem to be optimistic about it happening one day, even if that day is still far away. Their emphasis on consciousness-raising is an important element in their success. On an everyday basis, their small victories give them further energy to keep on fighting for reform and building new modes of action and interaction.

CHAPTER VII

CONCLUSIONS

This study has attempted to describe the "9 to 5" organization as part of a movement of office workers. We have analyzed the conditions in society that appear to be at the roots of the emergence of such a movement. The organization of office work, the change in the consciousness of women, as well as their new economic responsibilities have been considered to be among the main factors that have pushed women office workers to question their actual work conditions. Women have started to interact to get these conditions changed. The strength and survival of the movement have been seen to be dependent upon its possibility to respond to the needs of the different segments of the clerical labor force. The various constituencies that form the clerical labor force have, indeed, various views on the nature of the changes that they would like to see implemented in their working conditions. Variations among women also occur in relation to the depth of the desired changes.

The "9 to 5" organization has been seen as a case study of this broader social movement. As such, it has been seen as a particular response of a large group of women from the Boston area to the generalized problems of women office workers. Some of the choices that the organization had to make were common to all organizations. Indeed, "9 to 5" had to decide for a structure that would be responsive to its membership while allowing it to operate effectively in society. Other choices were related to more strategic issues: to maintain its actual organizational structure or to turn into a union.

The organization was also described as facing important dilemmas. "9 to 5" has to be responsive to various constituencies and to various

ideologies, but by defining itself on various issues, it automatically "alienates" part of its potential membership. For the time being, "9 to 5" allows each woman to maintain her individual picture and encourages her to change through action in the organization and in the workplace. This theory of action has allowed for the co-existence within the organization of three major groups of women of different theories and actions. These three groups have been found to replicate in an organization of office workers the three large groups that have also been described as being part of the women's movement: the women's rights groups, the women's liberation groups, and the radical groups.

Also, building a movement on a transient labor force creates serious long-range problems, as the process of consciousness-raising and organizing has to be repeated again and again. For "9 to 5", joining an existing union has become a necessity, but with this necessity comes also the difficulty of avoiding the "institutionalized" aspects of unions that women have so strongly opposed. Not forming a union excludes bargaining power, being part of a union obliges the "parties" to a set of fixed rules, negotiations and settlements, which might call for the institutionalized structure of unions that women are actually not prepared to accept. Whether they will, indeed, be able to create a different union is a question that only experience will be able to answer. The uniqueness of this organization and its possible strength relies on its emphasis on both consciousness-raising and political action. This combination is an "action response" and a "theory response" to the women's perceptions of themselves as women and as workers.

Most studies of organizations do not link the organization's structure and activities to its membership. Our concern was to relate the organization to its members, emphasis that was justified by the "unstructured" structure of the organization and its mode of operation. If a static analysis of the women in the organization were to be undertaken, they could have been seen as pertaining to just one group of women: those who have achieved a certain level of awareness of their problems, awareness that has led them to undertake the concrete action of joining an organization oriented towards change. But given our concern to understand the dynamic relationship between theory and action, our interest is to move beyond this simple observation and understand how women within the same organization are capable of perceiving the same organization in different ways and therefore undertake alternative actions and expect different results.

Women were found to pertain to five pictures that described the relationship between their theories and actions. These pictures were based on the description of three elements: their view of themselves, their theories-of-action, and their view of the organization.

This research was not to explain how the various women happened to belong to particular pictures, but to describe their various pictures and to understand what leads women to move from a certain pattern of theory and action to another one.

We have mentioned that the literature that attempts to explain the reasons why individuals belong to particular organizations, or subscribe to given ideologies, is not conclusive. It fails to incorporate in one single study all the elements that are necessary to fully comprehend human



behavior in the area of work-related politics. These are psychological elements as well as ideological ones. Although this was not the focus of this research, in some of the interviews women's background, work experiences, and work settings have been found to clearly influence the women's distribution among pictures.

As mentioned above, women were found to belong to five alternative pictures, as summarized in the table on page 89. Each of these pictures was discussed at length and illustrated by the various interviews. Following this analysis, the stability of the various women and their pictures was explored.

Self-acceptance of women of themselves as both women and workers was found to be important in explaining the stability of certain pictures. As such, "hybrid pictures" appeared as being more stable than the pure ones. Instability was also found to be caused by the internal inconsistency within each picture, as well as by the incongruence between women's theories and the existing reality was also found to influence the stability of the various pictures.

The research also found two pictures, the woman picture and the woman/worker picture, to be less stable and described them as transitional pictures, as they seemed to move towards other pictures. The woman/worker clearly moved towards the woman worker picture when she was exposed to that picture, as it seemed to take better account of reality. The woman's transition was less clear and depended on the women's views of self and others. Her picture could move either towards the working woman or the woman worker picture, depending on her definition of herself and of her work-related problems. The three more stable pictures were found to be the working

woman, the woman worker: the reformist, and the woman worker: the revolutionary. These pictures have shown to shape the choices and activities of the organization. They also represent the two major alternative theories and actions within the organization, alternatives that are consistent with the major divisions in the overall women's movement, of which the office workers' movement is an expression.

The view of the leaders of the "9 to 5" organization is that women, through negative work experiences and through direct involvement in the organization and in activities, will change their pictures and move towards the woman worker picture. The leaders of the organization do not consider that this change will happen overnight, but they are fairly confident that this general trend in the office workers' movement will occur. Whether, indeed, this conversion of pictures will happen over time can only be confirmed or disconfirmed by reality. This merger has not occurred, however, in the overall women's movement. The "9 to 5" organization would become an exception if, indeed, it were to happen within their organization.

How different these two "ideological types" existing in the women's movement are, from the ideological types existing within the men's movement should be researched further. This research would allow us to understand in what sense these types are particular to women, and to what extent they are ideological types that exist in society at large. Such an inquiry would explain further whether these types have pictures that are internally more consistent than other types, consistency that allows them to maintain themselves over time. It would also show whether in other movements one of the two types have been disconfirmed or not by reality,

or whether they have been able to coexist despite a single reality. If these two types are, indeed, well defined within movements, and specifically within movements of working people, the question of whether the other three pictures described in this study can be seen as anomalies, or as particular versions of the two "ideological types," is a question that should be posed and analyzed empirically. Further research in this area would be useful.

The meaningfulness of this particular study lies in its attempt to link the organization to its members, to understand interpretively the different patterns of theories and actions of the various women within the organization, as well as to see these patterns in a dynamic perspective. This study is only a first attempt in this direction, hopefully others will follow.

APPENDIX: SUMMARIES OF THE INTERVIEWS

Lilian started off as a switchboard operator in one company, moved to another one, and got there several promotions. She likes the office, likes the job, but finds fault with the pay and the benefits. She wants, one day, to become an insurance producer and "9 to 5" was helpful in showing her her worth; in insisting that women can do things in life besides getting married and raising children. She believes the road to "producer" to be long and difficult, but she is confident now that she will make it.

The part she dislikes most in her job is the "patronizing attitude" of the two men who supervise her. They often pat her, saying, "You have been a good girl today," and this infuriates her. They also ask her to do things that are not part of her job, and she resents it. She would like to get credit for what she does.

In her job, she complains generally to the office manager, mainly in relation to the actual work, but things still do not change. She never complains directly to her boss, as he is away two or three afternoons a week, while his personal secretary takes care of his work. He does not have the time to sign important things and she has to "make up" reasons for why papers are not signed. The office gives her the opportunity to learn all the things she will have to know, in order to become a producer in fifteen years or so. The office is small though, and her chances of promotions there are null. She will stick to it until she "learns well all there is to learn in this office" and then will move to another company.

Lilian went to college for two years, but started working as a switchboard operator because she was "sick of books". She thought it was going to be a temporary job, but liked it and decided to stay in it. "There's a future in it, if I just stick to it," she says. People think that women college graduates are "above people who are going to secretarial school", yet Lilian thinks that "you can learn just as much and get just as good a job in, say, ten or fifteen years as somebody who's gone through six years of college."

Lilian believes that the word "secretary" should be eliminated altogether. In an office, but a lawyer's office, there are two types of women: the ones who are part of the typing pool and the ones who "assist" men in getting their work done. Women start working in the typing pools and then move on to be assistants, but few of them are secretaries, as such. For her, a secretary is "somebody who sits there and answers the phone and does typing and takes dictation and stuff." She would like to be called an "assis-

tant", as she spends most of her time "putting things together, . . . does not take shorthand nor type well." If women were considered assistants, men would accept that they are useful, hence respect them more and pay them better.

Lilian does not believe secretaries to be directly comparable to blue-collar workers. These include from a garbage collector, who makes a lot better salary than a secretary, to a factory worker, who probably makes less. Secretaries should not be named either white-collar nor blue-collar workers; they earn little, but look "neat".

The problem of secretaries is that men have never been in their position before:

"When I do get into positions where these men are now, it'll be different for me, probably because they never experienced anything that we did. So, I don't think that they can really change their attitude, because they don't realize that it's a patronizing attitude, condescending, and that they're hurting us in some way by taking all the credit. They just assume that this is the way it's supposed to be, and I don't really know how we're going to teach them that that's not the way it really is. Because I could say that boys my age, when they get to be men they'll be different, but they probably won't. They'll just be the same way. They'll take the word "secretary" -- "Well, this is my secretary. She's my slave."

Men go through less hassle trying to get to the top than women do. Companies are not "dead-set" against women, but women will have to prove that they are "a little bit better than these men, just a little bit smarter and quicker than they are." Men get "there" in their middle thirties; she expects to get there in her middle forties.

Lilian does not feel herself to be strongly discriminated against:

"I don't feel discriminated, really, that much. I mean, as far as pay-wise, yes, but not a heck of a lot. People in my office are beginning to realize that I know what I'm doing, and they still like to pinch me in the rear end or pull my

hair, or something like that, but it's not really that bad. Discrimination -- it's hard -- people cry "discrimination." I don't know. I've been patronized, but I haven't been discriminated, really. There's not too much of it in my office."

Lilian did not join "9 to 5" totally on her own. She was extremely aggravated by the fact that, despite "all the shifting around" she had done and everything she had learned, she was still getting the same pay as when she was on the switchboard. A raise was refused to her because she had joined the company less than a year ago. Other women in the office wanted a better health insurance, paid overtime, more raises, etc. "There were quite a few girls behind me in the office, even though I was the catalyst, and I went out, went to most of the meetings of "9 to 5", me and another girl. They were all behind us, and they all wanted it. They just wanted something. There's no point in talking, because he (the manager) would not listen."

Lilian liked to read "9 to 5"'s newsletter, handed out to her at the subway station, but she never really thought of joining them until she was refused her raise. She liked her job, and did not want to leave it; she just wanted it to be a "little bit better". On night, she went to one of their meetings and joined. She is glad she did.

At first, she was afraid "9 to 5" would be a really "radical organization -- women all the way, and stuff like this, but they're really reasonable. Like, they say, 'We want our wages,' and none of them hated men . . . which is what I didn't want. I like the meetings. It just feels good to be part of it ("9 to 5")." "9 to 5" gave Lilian a sense of perspective and a feeling of support. Also, "9 to 5" acts as if your problem is individual, "which is what I like."

The women in her office got together to decide what to do about their gripes and decided to call up "9 to 5" for advice.

"We called them, and we had luncheon, and she told us to write everything up, from the biggest problem to the smallest, and she wanted a listing of what everybody did in the office, what their jobs were, and at that point, I had nine different jobs that were mine. It was getting a bit aggravating to do all this stuff. We had then to decide which was the best way to approach the big man about all this stuff, and we figured the best way, and the safest way, was --

she asked us to meet with the lawyer from "9 to 5" on how much legal protection we had and what could be done for us if we were fired, because the company is such that they will fire you. They don't even care. So, we figured the best way to do it was to let it leak out and get back, so that it was only like a rumor, and then we'd purposely leave something laying out where he could see it."

And it worked! They got raises and a better medical insurance. She is glad the strategy worked out well, as her company is owned by a huge corporation of California and they could have fired them all, without blinking. The fact that her boss found out that they went to "9 to 5" and to a lawyer of the Labor Board certainly helped in avoiding their firing.

Lilian sees now her relation to "9 to 5" as a "source of courage" for other women. Women would say, "Well, they did it, we can do it." She goes periodically to meetings, but sort of "sits in the background."

Presently, there is nothing "9 to 5" could do for her directly, nor for her office.

Lilian's mother considers her a radical, though she is not.

"My mother thought I was strutting around burning my bra and saying that I didn't want doors opened for me, and all this other stuff. I want to be equal in a job, equal as a person, but I still want to be treated as a woman. I don't like them to start slapping me on the back and inviting me to have a cigar in the men's room, or something. If they had turned out to be extremely radical ("9 to 5"), I wouldn't have gotten involved at all, because carrying pickets in front of places and stuff like that, I just have never really wanted to get into that. I suppose, in a way, it's effective. It's a shorter way of getting to where you want to go, but I think doing it the quiet way, meeting and negotiating, that's the way



to do it, and not all this screaming and yelling.

"A: Some people think that screaming and yelling is the only way to get there.

"Well, I don't think it's a very effective way, because I think it turns people off to what you're trying to do. You know, they immediately term you as radical and you're freaky and you don't deserve any better, so I don't see how you can get anywhere by acting like that. It's irrational."

Lilian would not join a union:

"From what I've seen -- Liberty Mutual unionized, and it's a lot more difficult now. Everything is -- you have to go through the union, and things are run by men. It's a big thing. I think it should be your office dealing with your office. It shouldn't be outsiders coming in and saying, "My union demands that you do this, and this, and this." You know, unions are great for mechanics and people like that -- or a big factory, something like that, a union would be good. But, like, at Liberty Mutual now, they're still doing piecemeal work; they still don't know what they're doing. They have job descriptions of what they're going to do, but it doesn't make it any better."

Had their strategies not worked, she would still be on the job, "because it's a good place to learn." They could have fired her, but she was prepared for that and would have gone to the Labor Board. She was prepared to do this because she felt that what she wanted "was fair."

Sara is a college graduate trained to do historical research. She needed a job to support her husband, who was back in school, but her background was of no help. In every single agency where she went, there were two lines: the males on one side, the females on the other, and all the agency cared about is "how fast you could type."

After four months, she had to take up a secretarial job and once you have had secretarial experience, you get secretarial jobs very easily, and finally, that is what you end up doing on a permanent basis.

Sara works now for an insurance company. When she started the job more than two years ago, she knew nothing about insurance. Now, she is handling all types of problems, especially when the salesmen are not in the office, "everybody comes to her whenever there is someone on the phone who needs something." She was sick of doing all the "dog-work" parts of the job and asked the partners to hire a typist/clerk to do it. Sara's demand coincided with one woman leaving the office and the partners did hire a woman to do her filing and typing.

Sara likes her job;

"I'm very good at details, and I'm very organized, and I enjoy organizing things. I enjoy the contact with the clients. . . One thing that's got any kind of interest to it at all, I enjoy, or something that I haven't done before. Once I've done it for a long time, I'm no longer interested in it, or once it's organized to the point that I think a monkey could do it, then I no longer have any interest in it."

She thinks this job is the best one she has ever had. It is varied, sometimes interesting, gets her twice as much money as she could ever get doing historical research, yet from "the prestige point of view," being a secretary is not rewarding at all.

Sara dislikes having to deal with "people's attitude toward what a secretary is, and what she is capable of doing." She also resents having to do wives' personal business and always finds excuses not to do it.

Generally, she would do everything she is asked to do, even if she does not like doing it.

"Certain things that really aggravate me, I might mention it to one of the other girls. I don't think I ever mentioned that I couldn't stand typing and filing, because they'd look at me so peculiarly, because they'd say, "What are you doing as a secretary?" And that's really an excellent question, and I don't want to get into it.

"If it's something I really don't want to do, I won't. Then I just go to my boss and tell him, "I've just had it up to here, you'll have to make some other arrangement.

"A: How does it work out, generally?

"Well, you know, it usually takes me quite a while to build up to tell him that, and then I'm always so surprised, because I think he's intimidated by it, and in a way, I am very efficient, and very organized, which he isn't, and he relies on me enormously, and in one sense, I have him over a barrel. He'd hate to lose me. So, he pretty much acquiesces to whatever I want, or when it comes to a subject of opinions or what's going on in the office, or who does what, he listens to me, and for the most part, acts on it."

Sara does not get along "famously" with the other women in the office; she does not feel any particular "kinship for them." The women are usually much younger, and their interests are just not hers.

Sara believes in the existence of a wide spectrum of secretaries, going from a typist, to an administrative assistant and a personal secretary to a corporate president. The secretary who is worst off, according to her, is the legal secretary. She has worked in a law firm before and "you weren't being badly treated, you weren't treated at all."

"What has always disturbed me is, people above the secretarial levels, or administrative levels, make no distinction. I think that management just think that you're 'secretaries', although it is a very wide field and a very wide range of

job duties within it, there isn't that distinction."

Sara does not believe secretaries to be above blue-collar workers:

"I find most blue-collar workers are getting much better pay than secretaries, and to a certain extent, within their own jobs, they have an ability to be individuals, in that they have their particular job to do and they do it, but a secretary has to be a constant reflection of somebody else's desires. And you have to subjugate your personality to somebody else's, all day long. And whenever it's a simple matter of there are two ways to do something, you always have to do it the other person's way. The blue-collar worker, he's told, 'Do this.' And he gets to do it exactly his own way, with very little inconvenience."

On the assembly line, it might be different. Some days, Sara sees herself staying in the secretarial job market forever. Some days, she does not. It all depends on whether she is feeling "aggressive or not that day."

For her, there is a "stigma" attached to the term "secretary", and if women are able to change the term, their working conditions in the office are also going to change. Indeed, if women would be called typists, clerks, administrators, or any term which describes their jobs, their "real" value would be acknowledged and the line between management and secretaries would become less definite.

Sara always toyed with the idea of joining various organizations and finally joined NOW, but got very annoyed because it was an "organization that was disorganized." She went to a "9 to 5" meeting and found the organization "serious and organized."

"It was the first meeting I went to where nobody was sitting around griping about their own particular problems where they were working; you can only hear so much of that and you're not interested anymore. consciousness raising was a big word at NOW, and it really turned me off. I don't really

give a damn. My consciousness has taken all it can -- for now. And they seemed to be directing their energies outward, rather than sitting around feeding on their own problems. So, I decided I would attend more meetings, and, in fact, I don't always wait for something official; I just go. I enjoy what I'm doing for them, and I still feel they're accomplishing something."

Sara is active in the insurance committee and feels good about the committee's involvement with the legislation. To her, the whole operation is "business-like".

"If secretaries organize, it's a way of changing their image. Just to have organized, itself, says a lot about you. There are loads of people who can't organize anything, but if you can create an organization that can actually achieve something, then, in a way, you're showing the world you're 100 percent in control of yourself."

Indeed, Sara gained a lot of self-respect in this organizational process.

"You are what you pretend to do. I can see a value in being organized, in itself, even if you don't accomplish much on the outside, you are accomplishing a great deal on the inside. . . If you want respect, it comes while you're attempting to search for it, just because you are searching for it."

Now, she is not intimidated anymore by her supervisors and she finds it much "easier to endure things."

Sara is against unionizing:

"I'm not interested in the slightest in unionizing, at all. My husband is an arch conservative and I really think, over the last eight years, he's influenced me a great deal in my political thinking, since I used to be liberal enough, in a very suburban way, and he's

a stockbroker -- one of those die-hard capitalist types -- consequently, the whole concept of unions is an anathema around our house, and isn't even anything that personally appeals to me. I'm not really by nature a 'joiner'. I've always been a traveler -- do things on my own. A union I would find too restricting and confining, and I always have the feeling I'd be wound up labelled with another group of idiots, and then I'd be stuck all over again with something I wasn't interested in because I'd helped organize secretaries, per se. There are loads of secretaries I don't want anything to do with. I don't care whether they ever get ahead, and if they improve their lot on their job, well, I think that's fantastic, if they can do it, but there are loads of them who don't. You know, there are loads of them who hate to see other people who do; and I don't care whether they ever do. I don't care what happens to them, and a union, to me, would -- it just means that it encompasses a lot more people than I care to ever get involved with. I don't like the idea of unions. I prefer to fight things on my own, but also with a group, if you have merit getting things, but just to form a union, just to have the strength to badger management into giving you something, it doesn't appeal to me."

Sara believes that an informal group that wants to get something can be as successful as a union. Numbers, indeed, mean a great deal and unions have been very successful, but she considers union practices "revolting" and, in the past, responsible for a "good deal of our economic woes."

"A: How about if you wouldn't get the things that you wanted, through your own effort or through a group's pressure?

"I don't know. I've never really run into that. Anything I've really wanted, anything that I could define as a goal,

in my own mind, clearly enough, I've always gotten. But I think that's true with goals in anything. I think if you have a very clearly defined goal, you find a way of accomplishing it, so I really don't know what would happen if I want to use the case where I had a very clearly defined goal and there was someone standing in my way. It might be, at that point, that the way I would find to accomplish it would be through a union, I don't know, but I certainly have no interest in them now, but maybe I'm too close to them."

Sara feels discriminated against, as a woman:

"(I joined "9 to 5") because I do feel discriminated against, and I obviously thought that one way out of this discrimination was to join an organization that's doing something about it. I really do think that if more and more people are made aware that women are just as capable as men, then it's going to eliminate a great deal of that discrimination. In fact, now I -- you know, to be very fair about it, I think men have a very good case -- most women don't make any kind of effort, and a lot of women are very accepting of their position. But I do think "9 to 5" could, quite actively eliminate discrimination just by making people more aware of women's abilities; and also, it gives women a chance to develop some skills, in a way, too. It makes women more active, and I think, also, with any luck, if "9 to 5" grows, and more women join, it makes those who don't join feel very guilty.

"I think, eventually, those people are going to be very uncomfortable by seeing that women can go out and do other things; they can go out and get into management; and that if you happen to be a secretary, it's because that's what you're capable of, not because that's what you had to do or were forced into doing. You're not there because you were discriminated against;

you're there because that's all  
you're good for. And I have to make  
my choice, also, about what I want  
to do."

Sara argues, with conviction, that the line between management and "the rest of the people" should be eliminated. It is not only a matter of women moving into management, but secretarial positions should also be revalued and restructured. Women will have to go ahead and get master's degrees in fields that are more useful to organizations than "liberal arts" and make themselves indispensable within the corporate world.



Elsa has been a clerical worker for thirteen years, has worked in large firms, in small offices, and in different types of industries. For more than a year now, she has been working for two sales agents who separated from the main insurance agency, but are still linked to it. She worked for that insurance agency before. Now, she is "in the best of both (business) worlds": on one hand, the work is varied and interesting; on the other, you don't get the "dead weight" of the chain of commands that you get in the big corporate businesses. She respects her bosses and is "contented to work" for them.

She is not doing secretarial work, per se; she has no shorthand and does not type well. Her job includes a lot of clerical work, a lot of "figuring out" insurance policies.

Elsa gets on very well with the partners. They seem to appreciate her work, she gets raises even without asking, and they listen to her suggestions. They also pushed her to get a license as a sales agent. She also got her security license and is planning to help the partners, sooner or later, in selling and renewing pension plans.

Elsa seems to be a very efficient worker. She stays late at night to work with the partners when they are around, and when they are out and something comes up that she can handle without bothering them, she does handle it. "They (the partners) should not have to do paper work, unless it is necessary."

Elsa does not feel that she is put upon nor expected to do things." She is referred to as Elsa, not as "my girl", nor even "my secretary". She has refused to type papers for their children, but otherwise she would do almost anything for them, as she likes them and they like her.

"I sit there in great surprise most of the time, that they are like that. And I'm always afraid that it's going to change. I know I work hard. I know I put in a full day's work, whether or not I do it ten minutes late. But I like doing it; it's enjoyable. And also, the idea of working in a small office -- one reason I do like it is that right away I see the results of what I did. When I do something -- a presentation for them -- that they want me to prepare; you know, they may do the basics and then I type it up or just set it up, and they go out and make a sale. And for them to come back

and say, "We did it," is just -- I think it's super, and I can see their appreciation, even if they don't say so. It's just the fact that they went out and did it, and I know I helped. It makes all the difference in the world. They're also very quick to tell me they're grateful, or just to say, "That was great," which a lot of secretaries don't have. Even the stated appreciation -- even if I didn't get a raise -- just for them to say, "Hey, you did a good job." It makes all the difference in the world."

Had she not gotten this "promotion" to work with the partners, she would have quit the mother insurance company, as she was overworked and tired of working for agents who only cared about their commissions. She used to complain about her workload and the pressure, but only got her supervisor to think she was a "complainer".

Elsa does not feel bad about being a secretary and associates mainly with other clerical workers. Yet,

"Lawyers or doctors, or someone like that, they may look down on the secretary as just a clerical job, but most of them can't live without them, and if the girl leaves the office for a day, he's lost. I think a secretary is looked on from different angles and different perspectives. Like, a secretary's mother might think she's great, but the secretary's boss may say, "She's just my secretary," but it depends on who's looking at it."

For her, blue-collar workers used to be looked down upon much more than white-collar workers, but this image is changing now, as the blue-collar workers make more money than the white-collar workers.

Elsa got involved in "9 to 5" through friends. She had heard of the organization before, but did not pay any attention to it. She respects her friend's opinion and having her there influenced her joining.

"Indeed, you don't have to go into it

'cold', and my friend, of course, is great, too. And when she does something, she tears it apart and gets right into it if she likes it, and by the time she talked to me about "9 to 5", she was already involved in it and involved in that insurance committee, and also had looked into other women's groups and didn't like them, so in comparison, she 'blew up' "9 to 5". She thought it was quite a good group -- a worthwhile group.

She went to "9 to 5" to see for herself and found the organization "worthwhile". The organization is doing something and doing something constructive, and it is not just an organization for "complainers".

"I think there is room for change, definitely, in women's positions on jobs and their rights and the quality as far as pay goes, but I can't go along with women's liberation as going to the other end of the pole. I don't think you can yell at bosses and say, "You have to change all your philosophies right now, immediately." People don't operate that way. It's going to take time. You can teach an old dog new tricks, but it takes a long time to do it. "9 to 5" is not quite as adamant. They're adamant in the way that they do things, but not just to sit down and say, "This is wrong and that's wrong," which I think an awful lot of gals tend to do without really performing."

Elsa is not very active in "9 to 5"; her work in the office takes up a lot of her time. She will not get more involved in "9 to 5" unless she really believed in what they are doing, or in the "particular cause" they are defending. She is planning, though, to go more often and learn more about it. Although "9 to 5" cannot help her with her actual job, her present situation being ideal, she still does not know what can happen to her in the future.

"I don't think I should necessarily put it off because of the job. If "9 to 5" is worthwhile, whether or not it's related to me right now, it's worthwhile

for all, and I want to try to get more involved. I can't say -- you know, using something just because you need it isn't really fair, which is what I guess we all do, but. . . I guess, then (if the job were bad), I would feel more urgency for what they're doing."

Elsa has never felt discriminated against as a woman, in her work. She has felt discriminated against in other areas -- credit, etc. She does not favor the "extremes" of the women's movement, but does "strongly believe in equal pay for equal work."

She has mixed feelings about unions. Unions are so big and so powerful that they are "sort of scary." Furthermore,

"It takes away some of your credence. When they go on strike, you have to strike, whether or not you believe in what they're striking for. You probably believe in it if it's for a pay raise, but even if it's something else that doesn't really affect you, you have to do it.

"Unions could be helpful in equalizing job opportunities for women, in particular, in a big office -- any office, never mind big or small, but I saw it mostly in big offices, where there are women at management level and men at management level, and you know the pay is different. It's drastically different, and I think it's grossly unfair. I don't care if a man is taking money home to a family. To me, it doesn't matter; he chose that road, and if a woman happens to be single, or if she's married and working, she deserves -- if she's putting out the same eight hours a day -- she deserves the same. Unions may be helpful in equalizing that. I guess the big thing with unions is that -- I think maybe if they have to collect dues every year, then every year they feel that they have to do something to prove themselves worthwhile in order to earn those dues, and I think

in a particular year, when they've solved the immediate problems, I think they can reach a point where they're going to do something just to give themselves something to do or to prove they're worthwhile for that year, and it's something that doesn't really need to be done."

Elsa resents the unions' bureaucracies. Indeed, if unions could be more responsible to the people, they could become meaningful organizations.

"Unions could be run by the people or the employees, and maintained, really, but I think it's hard to maintain. If they could make it almost a democratic thing where, within a company, people are elected on a -- not necessarily every year, but every couple of years. They run it and then let the employees have a look at it and elect . . . then it would be worthwhile, yes. If it could be done fairly, very fairly, and supervised so that it didn't get to be one of these huge massive unions that control other people's lives or jobs."

Barbara is a college graduate who took up secretarial work while looking for a job that would match her education. She soon found out though, that these jobs are not open, and that the only way to get them is to work your way up inside a company. Therefore, she just accepted an office job in an advertising firm, hoping to get promoted soon to be an "account executive".

Barbara chose the advertising field because she was told that there is a large turnover there and that women go ahead in it, easier than in other industries. She is very interested in finding a field and a good position for herself.

The company that hired her seems to fit these expectations, so she has not even bothered to inquire what her specific obligations are, nor what her benefits will be. Furthermore, she hopes to learn in this firm skills that she will be able to use in other advertising firms, if she finds the need to quit to advance faster.

In her actual job, what she resents most is to feel like being the "low man on the totem pole" and to be treated disrespectfully. Her work is tedious and unchallenging, but the worst part of it is her relation to some of the men. One of the men, whom she has named "male chauvinist pig" had the nerve to say that filing was "women's work and that is why he would not do it."

That sort of attitude is, to her, the most irritating thing about secretarial work, because secretarial work has to be done and it is a vital activity in the companies. The normal thing would be for secretaries to be in training positions and to be moved into management from there. This used to be the case when secretaries were men, but now women are stuck into their positions.

Barbara has been looking for another job all along, but when she saw any chances for implementing positive changes in the office, she has always voiced it out. These objections have made some of the men see her as a "woman liber".

When asked what secretaries should demand, Barbara said:

"I'm learning the big thing is this respect thing. Because, well, the money's bad, and it'd be nice to see that better, but I think that'll go along. I can see that improving faster than I suppose the respect. One thing

is because it's a female job, and one thing I've noticed, it partly has to do with the women in the position."

Indeed, Barbara works with two other women who allow men to oppress them and have not reacted to the attitudes of the men, despite her mentions and explanations. Women seem to set up themselves, their future limitations.

However, women are objectively discriminated against in building a career for themselves. She does not think that she has limited herself because of her concept of women, yet she finds it difficult to advance in her job, and she resents it. Secretaries seem to have more status than blue-collar workers, "not much more, but a little bit more."

Barbara got involved with "9 to 5" because she wanted to get involved in a women's group. She went to one of their meetings but didn't really get involved, at first, because she was reluctant to identify herself as an office worker. "I just didn't want to make that mental definition." Now she is very active in many committees and does different small tasks for the organization. "9 to 5" helped Barbara personally, in that much of her "frustration was due to work". She really did not like what she was doing and felt that being a secretary sort of "degraded" her. She shared her feelings with many of the women of "9 to 5", who are also well educated and hate their jobs, and that helped her.

"In a way, that's kind of a flaw. I think the movement would be more valid if it were people like these two women that I work with who are -- I mean, they never thought in terms of being anything but secretaries."

Barbara distinguishes the "9 to 5" member from the ordinary secretary insofar as they are, if not better educated, at least more concerned about "women and how women are treated, are aware of such words as consciousness, rapping about things. . . and has gotten involved in social movements." These other women (the ordinary secretaries) are dissatisfied, and they talk about it, but they "accept more and protest less".

Barbara sees "9 to 5" as a consciousness raising group:

"As a group to get women together, talk about their grievances, realize that there's other people, and start talking about how you do something about it -- say, working for legislation, working within your industry to present complaints, talking to personnel, various things,

which is what it's doing. I don't see it as a group -- maybe as a group leading other groups in the direction of unions -- but not the group itself going that way. I think that would be a very bad thing for it to happen, if it became very 'union-entrenched'. The reason I say that is because it needs to remain as a general group so it can take in all sorts of different types, like the various industries, themselves, make this schism. Which is what has happened, for the most part. Like, the people from the universities have broken off -- not really broken off, but they're spending most of their time working on a union movement, which is separate from "9 to 5"; again, out of "9 to 5", but it's separate."

Since Barbara joined "9 to 5", she feels better about her position; she feels she is doing something to correct it, "instead of just grumbling". She has not tried to organize the office, but she has tried at least to "stimulate ideas". For her, "9 to 5" is more political than a union. It cannot act on its own within the corporations, but it can influence legislation, get the attention of the media, etc., and that is extremely important.

Barbara favors unions, but is a little bit skeptical about the depth of the changes unions can bring about.

"The union movement for secretarial workers appears to be a necessary step to get the financial benefits that secretaries should have, particularly in Boston, because you're so low-paid, in contrast -- the amount they're getting here is so much lower than they are in other towns, and the cost of living is so high. It seems to be the only way; you just can't do it singly; you have to have some big power behind you to be able to do it. . .

"A: Do you see that a union could change any of the respect, because you put a lot of emphasis on that?

"That -- see, that's a much more difficult thing. I don't really know. I tend to doubt it, because when you look at the union movement in, say, the automobile industry --



because the person doesn't have to work quite as hard, and because the union says, 'You can't treat this person as a slave', I suppose it's gained some respect, but really, not that much. The blue-collar worker is still -- still doesn't, at least in my own mind and most of my contemporaries', doesn't have the status of a white-collar worker, even though he may be making as much or more money. It's a societal thing. I don't really know what brings on respect."

As to gaining more respect, that will take time and broader social changes.

"I think, as women gain in status, if nothing else, and more and more, as secretaries begin putting up these limits, as far as, 'I will take no more,' that at least on the surface they'll have to be given more respect -- to their faces. The ideal thing -- and as more and more women who were secretaries move up into management -- would be to have the secretarial position integrated; have more men enter it, too, though that competes, but just to show that it's not a sex position. There's no reason why it should be."

Barbara has had very good experiences with sharing work among the women in the office:

". . . the sisterhood thing. You really have to have that to endure any sort of working situation."

Alice "drifted" into secretarial work as there was nothing else for her to do. She thought she would do it for awhile, while figuring out what she really wanted to do. Yet, she has been working, on and off, as a secretary for four years. She is working now for a temporary agency and considers this job to be "atypical", as she has no big complaints about it. She has a certain control over her work and enjoys working alone, at her own pace. Sometimes, though, she has to work with people experienced in accounting, and then the pace is too fast for her, as her experience in bookkeeping is almost null. The office is very easygoing, and she likes that. At least, this job does not have any of the personal conflicts she had to deal with in her previous job.

In her last job, she was an administrative aide to a man she did not get along with. The work was interesting when she was allowed to do the things on her own. Yet, many times her boss would just take responsibilities away from her to have a better control of the situation.

Her other jobs were so boring, that she had to quit. Alice considers job descriptions to be essential for secretaries, so they would know what their duties are. She dislikes having to do anything that comes up and in a lot of secretarial jobs, it is just understood that you are always at somebody else's disposal.

When she had asked to get a job description, her boss had said to her, "Let's be friends", but at other times, the atmosphere was not really friendly.

"I will never, ever take another job where I'm the only office worker or one of just a few who are really outnumbered by professionals, or people who have the power to supervise you. It's horrible; it's really horrible. That's one of the major reasons I joined "9 to 5". It was really pretty awful. Nobody really knew what I was doing, or appreciated the problems I was having, and most of the other people there didn't really know what office work was like, or how much time it took to work out a page of figures, something like that. Above a certain number of secretaries, it gets also horrible. . . . There just seems to be so much intrigue and gossip and division."

Alice is not very optimistic about the possibilities of finding a good job. She believes to be better now at screening bosses in job interviews, yet,

"From all the women I know, I don't think anybody ever really liked her job, really liked it. Some are less bad than others."

When things were going really poorly at her previous job, Alice would try to have talks with her boss about it, but "they did no good";

"Anyway, I don't like long talks like that, you know, about something that should be so obvious. there's no need to go into it in that great detail. It seemed to me I was so obviously right that it didn't require any discussion, and I guess I was getting a little arbitrary towards the end of that job, myself."

Alice has no definite opinion as to how secretaries are looked at in our society. She only knows that her family and friends think that "it is not something that she is supposed to be doing at this time in her life." She should be doing something "professional", "anything else". She actually feels bad when people ask her what she is doing, probably because she is not living up to "everybody's expectations."

Alice believes that blue-collar jobs differ a lot from each other, some are better than secretarial jobs, others are worse. She used to accept any salary and take any working condition, thinking that she was lucky to find a job. Now, she feels very differently and considers her work to be very useful. Alice believes that secretaries should be better paid and have better benefits, but her main emphasis is on job descriptions and lack of independence.

"9 to 5" represents, for her, only a small fraction of women clerical workers. Indeed, secretaries do not realize that they have common problems among themselves and even if they do, they don't join for different reasons. Older women are afraid of losing their jobs by joining, and younger women do not believe that they should bother at all, as they are only going to be secretaries for a short while.

When Alice joined "9 to 5", she really did not have a good idea of the organization. She had expected to find "not exactly consciousness raising, but something like it, something like proselytizing women who work, hesitant to join, for one reason or another, and helping them to re-think their

job and rights, and things like that; but there's very little of that." She thought there would be more "personal discussions", which is not to say that Alice does not feel strongly about the legislative issues that "9 to 5" is handling, but she expected more of the other aspect.

"I really agree that if "9 to 5" has to really limit -- has to really choose between personal support for women who are having a hard time -- individual women who are having hard times in their offices -- and pushing through bills that will affect women throughout an industry or just all working women, I think it is more important to concentrate on legislation, but it's too bad you can't have it both ways."

Alice differentiates between the "9 to 5" joiner and other women that "need a lot of personal support."

"The women who do most of the work at "9 to 5" are just the kind of women who probably have the least trouble in their offices, because they're very bright, articulate, competent, energetic, unbelievable. They probably have no problems in their office -- they have some problems in their office, of course, but a lot fewer than less assertive women. It seems to me there aren't very many that will attend meetings regularly. At some meetings, you'll see a few, and then you might never see them again, ever."

Alice tried to start a committee in "9 to 5" to help women working in small businesses, but "we could not find enough issues to justify our existence" and the group split. It seemed to them, that organizing in big industries was a much easier task, as women had many more problems in common. The committee met for awhile to discuss general job dissatisfactions:

"Just even to realize that other women have the same problems. I don't know, it's just helpful. You don't really talk about your job. I mean, I don't talk about my job with my friends, why burden them, you know. It's horrible, and usually, I don't even want to think about it, but when you're meeting with someone for an hour every week, one hour you'll devote to really letting it all out, and it doesn't have to spill over

into your personal life or anything, so that was good, but there wasn't even enough interest to continue doing that. I guess the general feeling was, it was just futile."

Alice still goes to meetings or big actions where numbers are important. She has not found a "niche" in the organization for herself. "It's the kind of feeling of maybe I will (find a niche) and maybe I won't, but I'm not much of a teacher and I could be just a good member of rank and file. . . I'm just not that active a person. I don't do a lot of things." She is still interested in "9 to 5", but her "active interest" declined.

"Work just stopped being that big a part of my life, and now, I don't think that's really so good; it's just something you kind of dream through for eight hours, and your real life is reserved for those few hours between 5 and the time you have to sleep. I have kind of a bad conscience about not being as active as I was in "9 to 5", but I really think I need some time, myself, to figure out just what's happening with me, personally; whether I'm going to go on just being an office worker."

Alice believes that secretarial work is not likely to become meaningful and secretaries are not apt to climb the position ladder, as "men still run things". Women are discriminated against.

"Women's work just isn't viewed as important as men's. A woman's time isn't regarded as valuable. At least, in offices that's definitely true, so I think it's just a problem. I think one of the big problems with secretarial work is that most secretaries are women. If more secretaries were men, things would change faster.

"A: How is that?

"Because men wouldn't be treated in the same way. In the first place, men wouldn't stand for having their time disposed of that way. Being ordered around that way. And, in the second place, it wouldn't oc-

cur to people to order them around that way. I think a lot of people expect secretaries to do a lot of things that aren't related to office work, at all. You just need a nurturing, passive kind of person to do those things."

When asked about unions, Alice says:

"I really have no feelings about unions at all, except I guess that it would be good to have a national organization behind you, if it came to things like strikes. I don't know. I haven't given that much thought to it. I've just thought that unions (national unions) have more money than a smaller group and they have more expertise, so in a conflict, those two things can be pretty handy."

Unions do not seem "strange" to Alice; they do not scare her. She would definitely join them, although she acknowledges the fact that unions can be very bad and corrupted. For many people, though, the fear for unions is more emotional than rational.

As to the possibilities of fighting on your own, Alice says:

"There are a lot of things you have to do on your own, and sometimes it works. Sometimes, all it takes is just to assert yourself. If you always behave like a doormat, you'll always be treated like a doormat, you know. Sometimes, all it takes is just to assert yourself and demand what's due you, in terms of pay and respect and work conditions, and things like that."

Sonia has been a secretary for three years, on two different jobs. She had quit the first one, as it was an extremely demanding job and she was not willing to spend her evenings at it; she will leave the second one as soon as she puts together the money to go to college. She has been accepted and is planning to go for a master's in journalism.

Sonia has been a secretary "out of convenience". It's been the easiest way for her to support herself, but the idea of being a "professional" is very important to her, mainly because she feels the job of a secretary not to be of her liking. She would want more responsibility, initiative, chances for advancement. Sonia feels that she could do a lot of her boss' responsibilities, but he does not seem prepared to "dole out more". She does not mind as much the work she has to do, as the attitudes of people. The general supervisor has the nerve to ask his 50-year old secretary to wash the walls of his office; her boss seems to be blind to her plights. She refuses to do what she feels to be denigrating, not always, though, in an overt way. Mainly, she resents being "treated as a secretary, and not as a human being". She sees herself as Sonia, who happens to be working as a secretary, and not simply a "secretary". Her resentment gets translated in the long talks she has with her friends over the phone during work hours, and in the slow pace of her work. With more responsibilities and better pay, she thinks, the whole secretarial pool would be more productive and efficient.

In general, she is very outspoken about her discontent and does not mind the presence of strangers to the office to voice it.

Sonia considers many women to like secretarial work. These women tend to "escape" the "heavy" decision-making and to appreciate a less pressurized working atmosphere. For these women, who should remain in the clerical labor force, more respect is still needed. Management should treat them as human beings and pay them a decent salary, because even if "Mary Jones is not performing the most important job. . . she is helping the system function."

-- Sonia's personal and social identification with these women is very low --

Sonia considers secretaries to be much better than blue-collar workers, as the jobs of the latter are incredibly boring. As to the pay and the benefits that both groups receive, many secretaries seem to be doing well, although she is personally dissatisfied with her salary.

Sonia joined "9 to 5" out of her own frustration. She received one of their leaflets, and got "sucked in from the minute she walked in the door". She is extremely active there, is the group's secretary and is involved "in every facet of the organization". At first, she went because she was very dissillusioned with her work, but she soon realized that organizing her office, to change her own situation, is almost impossible. She is now involved in "helping other people change their situation" and one of the things that she thinks is so important about it is that you make "people aware that they don't have to put up with this."

The idea is to make people realize that there are alternatives to their own.

"I think that one thing about it is that there is no one single solution for any of the problems that people share, because each situation is different in some way or other, and the people involved are different and the policies are different."

thinks very highly of the efficiency of "9 to 5".

"I feel that what we've accomplished thus far is phenomenal, and I think once we realize that a particular bad situation exists, our methods of problem-solving and handling the situation are really quite good and constructive . . . because we're not a bunch of demonstrators who just stand out on a street corner and rant and rave about nothing."

The main function of "9 to 5", as Sonia sees it, is to change the unhappiness and discontent of working women into something "positive", helping them to change their work environment. More and more women are becoming aware of the ridiculous regulations in the workplace, of the unfairness of the treatment, etc., and are not willing to put up with it. Many, though, are not "doers", but "9 to 5" is useful simultaneously as an advisory group, a support group and a pressure group. Sonia has mixed feelings about unions. She does not feel that a union is the right answer for her, though in large workplaces it might be the only answer. She would like that women could join the union on a voluntary basis, in order not to create ill feelings, but she acknowledges some of the problems inherent in this practice. One of the most serious problems is dis-



crimnatory hiring of union versus non-union members, as she herself has been refused jobs on the basis of her belonging to "9 to 5" -- although she is not an office organizer/pusher. The implementation of a union of women office workers on a national scale seems, though, to Sonia, a desirable goal. It might take a long time to get there as "the business community have to recognize the union as a viable organization, and working women have to recognize it as a viable organization, too." The process of building this union will be a long one, and it will probably happen in a "trial and error, example kind of situation"; one industry at a time will try it and then the next one and the next one. It will demand, though, changing "people's attitudes", both those of employers and employees.

On a social basis, Sonia is more interested in changes that allow the individual not to feel "stuck", to allow him or her to grow at his/her own potential. "Getting people to see themselves as people and not as extensions of their job" seems to be a recurrent theme in her conversation. For this to happen, there seems to be a "need for an international consciousness-raising thing, and it's not something that is going to happen overnight. . . You have to start somewhere, I feel very strongly about it. . . I guess that's why journalism attracts me." Allowing everyone to get a chance to develop herself or himself is the main thrust of Sonia's beliefs. This is not to say that Sonia does not believe in power, in amassing power for the working people, in having them strike or sit down to show their strength and conviction.

Helen

Helen did not want to commit herself to four years of college (which she sees now as a mistake) and went to secretarial school for two years.

She worked as a secretary for five years, on five different jobs and is now out of the labor force, taking care of the baby. If the job had been exciting, she might have considered going back after the baby, but it wasn't. She went a long way improving her working conditions from the big insurance company, where bells would ring for you to work or stop working, to the small legal office, where her boss was willing to discuss with her her gripes for two hours.

Helen was very vocal about her gripes; about her involvement in "9 to 5". She would discuss overtime and raises with her boss; but what she resented most was the "attitude thing".

"I'm sure the majority of complaints for a secretary are the way that the boss treats you, you know. It's the subtle things. It's not really -- like, he'd come out and scream at you or something, but they always -- you're just there to do their work. You're their machine. They'll dictate and you're just a machine, taking it down instead of a dictaphone. You're not expected to ever give a suggestion, and so often a slight suggestion or something like that is looked at like -- you know, don't even bother. It's these small things, and it's insulting. And you really feel so inferior. And I saw that with some of the older men and the older secretaries, it was even worse than with my boss and I."

Helen was never scared of losing her job and feels sorry for anyone that does; yet, she understands that older women might have a hard time finding a job and feel afraid of losing their present one.

Helen thinks that she gained a lot more respect standing up for her rights than the ones that did not; still, her job was basically meaningless and boring, as her boss did not think that she had any "kind of a mind to use."

Secretarial jobs could be better, if women could really get "involved", yet bosses do not seem to want women to participate more. Jobs should be broadened; "I know all this is idealistic, but the boss should not be the one to know everything and you know nothing."

Helen felt bad about being a secretary:

"Probably for this reason: Number one, I was never happy in the job; I mean, I wasn't even happy when I went to Katherine Gibbs. I didn't like that. And to top that off, people's attitudes make it ten times worse. And I think that's a common problem. And every day, you're treated like you don't have a brain at all.

"A: So, you start believing it?

"Yes, you really do. You think, 'I must not have a brain, or I wouldn't be here.' You really feel a lot of resentment."

Helen considers secretarial jobs to be typical jobs for women. It used to be one of the very few jobs that women could get; it was looked at as a good job and it was clean work. Now that everyone is "kind of education conscious", secretaries are looked down upon and are on an equal status with blue-collars. Blue-collar jobs are men's jobs, clerical jobs are women's jobs.

For Helen, secretaries have in common with other workers "the boss thing; management versus labor." Yet, secretaries are generally very unprotected, and the only alternative open to them when working situations are untenable is to quit, and that is part of the problem: "secretaries are so transient in their jobs that when they hire you, they don't think of you as a permanent job."

Helen always thought that something should be done to improve the working conditions of secretaries, so when she found out about "9 to 5", she joined immediately.

"It was fantastic hearing that you weren't the only one who felt this way. I think it gave a lot of people courage. It's the kind of thing, you have some backing, not like union backing that's real legal, or anything like that. The different companies are hearing about them. I think that they're doing a lot of work, and there is the threat. Before, I just don't think there ever was really a threat. The bosses never really felt threatened at all. But they are. I think they're doing a lot of work."

"Even going back to the insurance company, I would always complain if I didn't like something. And they would call you up constantly to the personnel department to discuss how you were coming along in your job, and did you have any complaints? I always voiced them, but it was frustrating, because no one else would ever do that, it seemed. But that was the best part about "9 to 5". You realized there were other people that felt this way and that would do something about it. I mean, it's slow, granted; I mean, they're not all of a sudden going to change somebody's mind or anything. . ."

Helen feels very good about her involvement with "9 to 5", and was very active before having the baby. She felt that instead of just complaining, she was doing something and that in the far future, there "might be some improvements."

Helen favors unions. Bosses would be much more threatened by a mass of women than by a couple of them, speaking on their own: "If all secretaries in Boston were unionized, were together, then we'd have them 'over a barrel'. Then they'd have to do these things." (give raises, have job descriptions, etc.). Indeed, unions appear to Helen as the only way to have a secure and stable working situation without "your having to leave" whenever you want a raise, and it is not granted or you resent doing something that your boss expects you to do. Procedures would be standardized, wages and benefits, also, and women would know what to expect. "9 to 5" is the second best, after a union; the individual members feel helped and the organization does a lot of legal work that should be useful to women.

Yet, for Helen, getting the bosses to respect their secretaries is really crucial and,

"I can't see how that would change attitudes, really. Unless they were forcing them to realize these things. In some companies, they probably never give it a second thought -- the way that the women are treated."

Unions do not seem to be very instrumental in bringing about this respect.

"I can't imagine them (bosses) all of a sudden deciding, 'Well, she really isn't as stupid as I thought,' or something like this, but maybe they would if they thought you were standing up for what you thought, doing something about it, you know, making demands that are reasonable, presenting them in a reasonable way. Maybe, then they would respect you that way."

Helen has felt discriminated against as a woman. Men just expect women to do certain things for them. If women were more educated, they would be less discriminated against. Yet, women are denied the opportunities to increase their education by taking courses paid by the employer. They are only offered courses of typing and shorthand.

## Kathy

Kathy was trained in high school to do secretarial work. She has been working in clerical and secretarial positions for eight years and expects to stay in the clerical field at least for the time being. In the long range, she wants to draft. She is still learning a lot on her actual job at MIT and finds the work interesting. She also enjoys her relations with her colleagues and gets along well with the man and the woman who supervise her. She likes to be busy, but not pressured, which she seldom is.

Kathy is very happy about the fact that her job does not drain out of her all her energy. She still feels like doing other things after work. She is now actively involved in the union drive at MIT and a great portion of her energy goes into it. She feels sometimes tied down and used to enjoy working as a temporary.

Kathy is not scared of losing her job. Her working as a temporary helped her in gaining confidence and in being able to move to different situations. The atmosphere in her office is very casual. Many of her colleagues feel that here is a definite break between workers and supervisors. Supervisors talk to supervisors, secretaries talk to secretaries; but she personally does not mind it.

Kathy does not feel bad about being a secretary and thinks "everyone is looked upon as what they look upon themselves as". If you are enthusiastic about it, others will be, too.

For Kathy, there are different kinds of secretarial positions. Some positions require a lot of skills, others are relatively easy jobs. Secretaries are looked down upon in society because their work does not require much training and every single woman gets typing in high school.

Blue-collar workers are better off than white-collar workers -- Kathy identifies blue-collar workers with her boyfriend, who is a plumber; and her brother, who is a pipefitter -- they both make more money, have to use their brains and their bodies more than she has to; plus, their schedule is often less rigid. Kathy accepts that assembly-line work can be boring, but at least these workers seem to have a concrete product in front of them.

Secretaries are at the bottom in society, mainly because they are women. She would like to feel that she can support herself, a family, and eventually buy a house; but "women

have a long way to go."

Kathy joined "9 to 5" after a conference they had organized. One of the women was articulating things that she could not put into words, but realized that the woman was saying "just what she felt." She went to the conference through a woman that had a great deal of influence on her.

"I met \_\_\_\_\_, and she's done a lot of reading and she would give me different books to read and ask me how I felt about the women's movement. I would just turn right off and say, you know, "Women don't have anything to say. And I really did think they were just spastic chicks running around. And she got me interested in the whole thing. And she would give me books to read, like when she gave me one by Mary Daley, and Selma Firestone, and different ones, and as we would talk, she would explain things in a different way, that I could understand. She got interested in the union drive and she invited me to the university conference meeting and I went with her. But, she's been a big influence on me."

Kathy gained a lot of self-esteem through joining the organization and "felt much better" because she didn't feel that all she had was just her job. Kathy finds "9 to 5" a good consciousness-raising group that "awakes people". It was useful to her:

"Getting together with people. . . seeing all the interest that other people had, and feeling it myself, too, about doing something for yourself, and doing it yourself."

Kathy is very active in the union drive at MIT. She has wanted a union for clerical workers for a long time and enrolled full-time in her present job just to be able to see it through. She does not fear unions and feels that "our union has got something. . . I think it consists of some really good people within, really down-to-earth (unions) depend on the people who make it up. . . I'm sure there'll be more problems, but I don't mind; it should be such a good thing."

Kathy is very hopeful about the changes that unions can bring about. These changes go from better wages, to less

discrimination in the workplace and more meaningful work.

"The main reason, I feel, for the union is because I don't just look at it as MIT, my own little world, and my own little job; I look at it as all of Boston. I hope one day we'll go, you know, unionize for all the clerical workers so that they'll feel more like they are something. There are a lot of people who just don't like their jobs. They just waste their life away, wish it away, don't enjoy working. . . They need something to make them feel they do matter in this world, not just little ants running around.

"Wages could be increased a lot more from the starting level and all the way up. . .

"Through a union, people would get a fairer deal for themselves. They would be able to risk it. They are being discriminated against for anything. . . then they would have a place to go and bring it up as a point, instead of having it breed. . ."

Kathy benefitted a lot from the union drive. She attended a lot of meetings that explained the role of women, the role of unions in our economy, and the "whole picture" got clearer in her mind. Furthermore, she believes that even if the union drive did not succeed, it would at least show to people that others cared.

Kathy believes in individual achievement (specially when people are "pushy"):

"I think you can go wherever you want to, today. There are little things . . . I think most of it comes from the person, himself. I do. Because there are women making it. Not that many, maybe, but there could be. But I think that's because women don't think enough of themselves."



Changes in society will occur through the action of individuals and through the power of unions.

"I think that's got to come from within each individual. I think they have to motivate themselves, move themselves, to feel like they're worth more and then they will be. Do you see what I mean? I think that it's happening right now. I think with the women's movement, as it is, in all the magazines. . . all of that, I think that people are realizing more that they are people. There are still people that have. . . in their own home, maybe, they're not respected as much. Today, I see more and more people demanding more respect and getting more respect. Secretaries, too.

"By yourself, without collective bargaining -- collective bargaining is a power -- if there's ten people in my office, or thirty people, and we all get together and say, "This is not right. We should have something a little bit more, here. Maybe we should have a union (or whatever it is at the time), maybe a pension plan." Well, then, that's fine, but as an individual to change something that massive, you can't. They don't make exceptions like that in a big business."

Furthermore,

"With all people, no matter what clothes they have on, I think people should take people for what they really are; themselves."

Many more people are trying now to break away from our system of work and money and Kathy thinks this trend to "really be important."

Laura was a good high school student, but no one in her family had ever gone to school. The normal thing for her to do was to take a job. With no specific training, the only job she could take was that of a secretary. Now, she regrets not having gone to college and resents the fact that her working experience does not count as much as college degrees when it comes to job promotions, hiring, etc.

Her present job seems to be the best she has ever had as there is a concrete product to her work: A power plant that is going to create energy. Before, paperwork appeared to her as meaningless junk. Still, this job is by no means a place where she would like to stay for a long time. She hates to feel like a "peon who is condescended to". It is a couple of engineers that bother her and the woman who supervises all secretarial workers. She gets along well with the other women on the floor, even her direct supervisor. She dreams of a better life for herself. Traveling, being with other people, seems to attract her. The point is to get away from this world where people do not recognize your acquired skills and only look for degrees. Working under conditions where "people switch you around at their own will" is not to her liking. "It would be so good to get up in the morning and say, 'I can hardly wait to get there,'" but that has not happened to her, either as a bookkeeper, a receptionist, a secretary, or an administrative assistant.

She thinks though that she is good at work, if only it would be recognized! In general, secretaries, she thinks, should be recognized as what they really are: "They're vital", and should be respected for what they accomplish and "mean to the group".

Laura has tried to organize her office without success. She is actually the only one there to believe that "organizing and unionizing is vital and good". In this organizational process, she distinguishes the "men" and the "women", associating men with management and women with work similar to hers. She strongly believes that things are not going to change by their own, as men will not benefit from it; hence, women have to "fight" for change. Among the things she resents most, is the stratification of labor, which she considers to be unfair. Many women could be doing more than what they are doing, but on the other hand, they are not recognized for what they do. She still enjoys more what she is doing than having a blue-collar job. In some sense, she considers herself above blue-collar workers, as she would only take their job if

she would be "positively starving". Her job requires at least some thinking.

Working in "9 to 5" is very gratifying to her. She feels good about doing something on her own, for herself. Besides, if you don't work at bringing about change, it will not happen. She is active in all types of committees, goes to all meetings, has lunch with so and so. She strongly feels herself part of "9 to 5". "Everything is so important" there! However, ultimately she would want women to unionize. She thinks, though, that they might be a long way to it; women are scared to lose their jobs, they get intimidated, are not appropriately informed, but mainly, "their thinking will have to be changed."

Unions, in her eyes, represent the people. The company seems to try to avoid unionization and discredit them; but they are the only solution: "Where would people be without them?" A lot of women are against them because they are corrupt; she thinks, however, in terms of a women's union, a union of clerical workers that "women, themselves, will run and be responsible for everything that goes in it and out of it, and it will be totally independent." For this union to happen, it will take time, but it will certainly happen. Some sectors -- universities, publishing -- are more progressive and are unionizing; they will set the precedent for the rest. Management will try to oppose it, but if "enough women are getting into it, I don't think we'd miss"; after all, unions can be supported by other, larger unions and "if you don't accept them, we're all going to go out on strike." The way to get strong is to have a lot of people!

"Certainly, one person is just a radical, and two people are two radicals, but a big group is something to deal with." Unions give people more leverage:

"Wages and benefits, the kinds of things that we need to have, but you're not going to get them any other way. Nobody's going to give you anything they don't have to give you, and if you ask for something, you're not going to get it. You have to demand it. It's sad and it's kind of a waste, like union bargaining starts off, the union wants the moon, and management's not going to give them the earth, and you meet half-way between. That's absurd, but unfortunately, a way to obtain things, and until somebody comes up with a way that everybody's going to use without paranoia,

then that's it. It's a part of the system, which is pathetic, but you need it, you absolutely need it.

Laura does not think, however, that work conditions will change considerably over time; "not unless things become socialized", but she would not want to see that happen. We would lose, also, a lot of our personal liberties; "everybody would be stuck". Unions are a concrete way to deal with big organizations, at their own level; changing management people does not make sense, you can't; condescended individuals within a firm can be coerced, though, by the union.

As long as she will be working, she will try to bring a union about, a union of women clerical workers to which "9 to 5" is a stepping stone.

"You have to do it step-by-step. You can't do it "cold turkey". No way! It would just turn other people off. I think it's a gradual process. The first step is to make people aware that they are a unity. And then make them aware of the problems, and that they're not just one person in one lousy office. That it is universal. So, you deal with it a step at a time.

"One day, somebody will wake up and say, "Well, why don't we have a union? Let's get a union." It'll come to these women, not as somebody approaching them and saying, "Organize industry". But, it'll jell, and they'll realize that this is the next step in the order of things. They'll welcome it instead of being afraid of it."

Claire was an editor in Germany, but was not fluent enough in English to become one in this country. She has been a secretary at Harvard for eight years. At first, she was very unoutspoken about the things she disliked doing and was supposed to do, but her anger grew. As a result, she joined "9 to 5" and decided to start a union drive at Harvard to change the working conditions of women. It took her seven years to question what she was asked to do.

Claire thinks of going back someday to doing her own writing. Right now, though, she is gratified with the idea of working to upgrade the secretarial position.

Claire works for one professor and is supposed to take care of his office. He wants to be disturbed as little as possible, and she enjoys being independent, running things her own way, dealing with students. He is more liberal than most bosses, realizes that a secretary has a really tough time, but "that does not make him a good boss."

Claire has long talks with her boss about the things she minds, but she resents that secretaries have no power over their bosses and are limited to receiving what "they want to give them." No one expects a secretary to make a wise decision, and the more you are cut down on decisions, the less confident you get and the less likely you are of making any.

Part of the low prestige of secretaries is their low wage. Indeed, if you earn little, you cannot be worth much. The low wage of a secretary is related to the fact that she is a woman, as men automatically earn more for a similar position and are directly called administrative assistants, not secretaries.

Claire is also a Harvard organizer. She calls together, every second week, all the employees on her floor and coordinates discussions on women's problems, on unionizing issues. These discussions are very popular now. Claire believes that both the consciousness of employers and employees should be raised. Women have to learn to trust themselves and unless they do so, they will not join a group effort to better their working conditions. The union drive at Harvard is difficult. On one side, secretaries are more radical than in other industries, more educated, but they are also proud of being at Harvard and do not want to lose their jobs.

"You find always good people among everybody, every age group, class group, anything. But

in the older woman category, you find either the bad ones or good ones. You hardly find anything in between. In the younger category, you find everything more wishy-washy. . . from good to really bad and everything in between."

Women do not join groups easily. They are not accustomed to do it, and are not expected to do so.

"They think it's radical. They don't want to be radical; they don't want to rock the boat. They think. . . they don't want to lose their jobs. They want to stay in the relations they had before because that gives them security. If you're nice to your boss, he can't do anything harmful to you, so if you're just all smiling. . . "

Many women do not believe they hate their jobs, and even "claim they love it". The attitude, "just be nice and everybody likes you," is a very frequent attitude among women, who are trained to always be "nice".

Claire used to suffer by herself. One day, she got a \$25 raise when her apartment was raised \$40. She asked for a larger raise, and it was refused.

"I also had a very hard job, and I worked very hard. I thought that somehow they respected me for that. I thought they recognized that I really worked hard. I worked overtime; I worked on my lunch break. I was always there, and I thought . . . when I asked for at least 15 dollars more a month they would just say, "Of course." Like, you're really nice and you're really good. And I didn't get it. So, I talked to other people about that. It took me a lot of guts to talk to other people, because I thought of myself so inferior that I thought, "If I tell others, they'll think of me as inferior, too." You know, there's a big pride in you, you just don't want to tell people that."

She started talking to other secretaries and found out that she was actually the best paid secretary in her department. Women usually do not want to discuss their salaries as they are ashamed of what they make. Claire knew there was "something wrong" going on, but had no idea of what it was, nor what to do about it; so she "wandered into "9 to 5"

for help. Claire is a strong supporter of "9 to 5" and has actively worked with the organization since her joining.

"I think that "9 to 5" is an incredibly good organization. They're very wise. That's why they stayed non-political. I know that all that are in "9 to 5" are really favoring unions, but they cannot come out in the open and say it, because it would scare. . . because it really goes in one single direction, and so, what their aim is, really, is to go and raise consciousness first. They try to get people aware of what's going on and prepare them for the next step, because it's really two steps to go. Well, we at Harvard and MIT, we go both steps at the same time. It just will take a long time to get everybody to be there. But I'm convinced that it's going to be reached, too."

With the "9 to 5"s advice, she started the union drive at Harvard and is now deeply involved in it.

Claire sees the union's drive activities as being different from the activities which "9 to 5" undertakes. "9 to 5" is more into the legal aspects, into maternity laws, day care, and women's discrimination. Her activities in the union drive are centered around raising the consciousness of women.

"'9 to 5' and Harvard's union drive work in different areas. '9 to 5' people had a scheme to go union, themselves, and realized they wouldn't even get started; it was too difficult for them. They are going union Boston-wide, and trying to get everybody in Boston. They are getting the most conscious people first. They get the best people first. We got to deal with everybody. That's a different category. We got to talk to the worst opponent. I got to sit there and talk to them. '9 to 5' really doesn't need to do that."

"9 to 5" is a very good group for Harvard's organizing activities.

Claire believes that change will occur through the joint action of political organizations ("9 to 5" and unions) and the consciousness raising of individuals (employees and employers, alike).

"It will take a generation, I believe. It's so slow moving. With the women's liberation movement, together with everything else, I believe it's possible, but I don't think it will be done from one day to the other. . . . It has a lot to do with our social system. It has a lot to do with what people think of themselves. And, it has a lot to do with what men think we should be like. It's all interwoven. It's very complex. That's why you can't get to it so fast. It becomes a very, very complex situation."

Claire strongly favors unions, as a concrete form of pressure, "despite her middle-class, snobbish background."

"Unions are one little way of getting respect. That doesn't mean we shall reach everything. It's one little step in the right direction. . . . Right now, we know we are fighting for the right thing. We really have no guarantee for the outcome. We only know if all of us work as hard as we do, it will be right."

Claire believes the "overall women's movement" to really help in bringing about changes for working women.



Vera believes her story to be a very common one; she has a master's in Theology and could not find anything but secretarial work. She worked for the anti-war movement, but her paycheck was not secure, so she looked for a stable job and is working now, for three years, as a secretary to physicians.

Vera has mixed feelings about her job. She likes the people she works for, but finds her job boring and alienating, mainly because most of her work is done from tapes. She works for three physicians; one of them, the "big boss", is really nice to her, calls her his assistant -- not his secretary -- and she appreciates it. She believes to be lucky to be treated like a person and is really sympathetic to women who experience the "non-beingness" of office work. Vera is going back to school to be a social worker. Not that she is so excited about it, but her incapacity of finding any job that made some sense at a liveable wage reinforced her view that more and more degrees are needed in our society in order to do meaningful things. Yet, she is still skeptical of her chances to find a better job once out of school, and she might be back doing office work. When she disagrees with what she has to do on her job, she does talk about it and her supervisors are generally very nice about it. In general, she wants to have the choice whether to run errands, make coffee, etc., and does not want to be told that she has to do it.

For Vera, the worst part of secretarial work is that supervisors do not recognize you as a person, much less as a "woman who is oppressed in that situation". Being a secretary in a pool is very different from being a personal secretary, but both situations can be equally oppressive.

The pay and benefits of office workers is terrible, although they are "an essential part of any business"; furthermore, most offices do not have a grievance procedure and women have no way of "defending themselves".

"The only answer to get around it, being able to feel confident about making a grievance. . . is to unionize."

The organization of office work will also have to change, for Vera. Management will have to share more of their responsibilities with the office workers; and the latter will have to get a better understanding of where their work fits into the whole business operation. This process will happen, however, only through the "organizing and education of women, as to what their rights are, and making them see that through

organizing they can get -- gain -- something and make their jobs more important in the job line, and hopefully make them less tedious".

Vera was one of the women who helped found "9 to 5". There were ten of them, all college graduates, who felt oppressed by their work and felt strongly about organizing other women. They went out to test their support and were encouraged by the positive reactions they got. At that point, they decided to become a more "mass organization".

Vera feels really good about having started an organization like "9 to 5".

"I feel really good about it. In some ways, it surprises me that it's come as far as it has, and it will keep going. I mean, now I know that it will keep going and it pleases me. When I first started doing it, it was a personal satisfaction to be able to share some of that garbage that you get at work with a bunch of other women that were sympathetic and also politically aware -- not just saying, "Oh, dear, that's terrible," and being sympathetic, but saying, "We could really do this or that about it." That was important for me. I guess I was always pretty optimistic about what we would accomplish, but I still -- sometimes when I look back on what we started with and where we are, I've got to laugh."

When asked about her view of "9 to 5", Vera says:

"I think that the organization spends a fair amount of time doing educational work with women and consciousness raising, not in the typical form of consciousness raising that you think of as a rap group, but a lot of our general meetings are focus-set around discussing issues. . . I have a personal philosophy that consciousness raising isn't enough and you have to move from that into political action, and I think the criticism I have of the women's movement, in general, is that it's done too much consciousness raising and not directed women enough into action. . . "9 to 5" does a lot of political action, in that we lobby for legislation. That's actually

a minor part of what we do, but that's a form of political action. We're constantly advising women at work places on how to go about organizing, helping them along. I think that's political action: doing something where you work. It's real important. And when I said I think the women's movement is at fault for doing too much consciousness-raising, part of that is that it's too much individually, personally centered, and that's fine to look at your own experience, but I think that it's much more powerful when you can take that and relate it to a group, and have that group do something out of the experience."

Vera would like to see women office workers unionize. Many women seem to be ready for it, especially the more intellectual "liberal" universities' secretaries and the women of blue-collar origin whose mother (not father) has been a union member. She, herself, has mixed feelings about unions. Unions seem to be the only way for women to get the better pay and benefits that have been denied to them "historically", yet unions are "male-oriented bureaucracies" and most unions are not very democratic. The process of women joining unions will be a slow one. According to Vera:

"Women would get together first and gripe. . . or it could be just two women meeting together for lunch and constantly they complain about the same thing, and then they talk to other women and they find out it's universal almost, so there's that step of getting a group, and then figuring out what you're going to demand from the employer, and then making demands and finding out which ones he gives in to and which ones he doesn't. It's not a fast process. It takes maybe a year or two years, and then when they've had a defeat, or enough defeats that they realize they can't go any further the way they are, then I think it opens them to thinking about unions."

Central to Vera's picture of social change is the transformation of the power relations between men and women; unionization is a first step toward that change.

"I think that the fact that women office workers would unionize and therefore have power in negotiating both their wages and other issues that they would wish to bring into the bargaining, is very threatening to the employer and to the business, and therefore, changes the power relationship significantly. Therefore, it changes the position of women for the better, because we would have a collective voice against the collective voice of the male employer. I really think that in ten years the business picture will be very different as far as women having more power than they have ever had in saying what they will do and what they won't do."

Nancy was tired of going to school and after two years of college wanted to make some money. The only job she could find was a clerical one. She has had two jobs since then; the one she has now is in the personnel department of a big company. She has to type numbers all day long, but the job is not bad insofar as she gets along well with her supervisor and the other women in the office. However, it's boring and repetitious and "frankly, I think I'm a little smarter than that".

In general, she feels like a peon in her job, like a second-class citizen, but seems to be able to take it because it is a temporary thing; she is going back to school, this time in a more "practical" field: business.

Nancy hates the attitude that management has toward clerical people. Any clerical job is almost as good as the next one; the terrible part of them is "just the attitude". Management are men "who've never been sitting behind a typewriter and cannot relate to a clerical worker. . . . They look at them as: you're just a secretary".

Office workers are probably considered to be above blue-collar workers, but they should not be. Money is the name of the game in our society, and blue-collar workers do make more money. She sees no status attached to just working in an office.

For Nancy, the clerical workers are the most important people in the office, and management is only there to control them. An office could function without management for a week, but not a day without clericals. Secretaries should get paid for the work they do, which is mainly administrative and not clerical.

Nancy joined "9 to 5" in one of these times, when at work management was being their "usual self". She had always wanted to get into some group, "whether it be a political group or whatever" and happened to get a leaflet on a day she was mad enough to say, "I'll go".

Nancy knew that she was not going to be a secretary forever, yet many women are stuck in that position and she wanted to help them.

"Well, nothing ever gets accomplished unless people complain. Any of the civil liberties or anything that we have in the whole history of the United States is because somebody organized and complained about it. It's what I

always wanted to do. I think that's the only way things ever get done, because that happens to be the way our system works, or we like to think that's the way it works. And I just decided it was time -- that I could do at least some small part. "9 to 5" is maybe just one way of doing that. . . . You have to get out and do something about it."

Nancy has found, though, that her involvement in "9 to 5" has helped her in her work. People know that she is in "9 to 5", and because of that "they think twice what they say to her"; she has therefore never been scared of being fired.

Nancy sees "9 to 5" as a pro-union organization that realizes that "that's eventually what people are going to have to do." As a pressure group, "9 to 5" can get away with a lot more than a union can; it can also help raise women's consciousness:

"(Women) are just going to get angry enough and have a little bit more self-respect about them and their jobs, until finally, it's their only recourse (unionizing)."

Nancy plans to stay with "9 to 5" even after going back to school. She wants to become management one day, but expects to keep her ideas about unions intact. One of the problems of management is of never having been clerical before.

Clerical jobs have such a low status in society because the work is mainly done by women. Women can generally type, and if they do not finish their education, the obvious thing for them to do is to enter the "job ghetto" for women. The older women generally do not resent being treated the way they are, but the younger women do.

The only way for women to gain some recognition and importance is through unions. Unions represent, for Nancy, a balance of power. "If you just have the management, you'll always have a job ghetto and only get what they decide to give you, or what they decide to take away."

Unions can create some concern within management about the well-being of their employees. Presently, management does not care, because employees are unprotected and can only leave when they find the working situation to their dislike. Management knows that "they have twenty women out there waiting to fill the job, from a high school grad to a Ph.D."

"(Unions" would just upgrade the whole attitude of the position, because they (management) know, well, even if they fired you, the next woman they got in there would still be union, and they'd still have to deal with her in the same way."

Nancy has talked about unions with several working people and acknowledges some of their problems, yet for her, "a bad union is better than none, and rather than giving up having unions, the problems of unions should be fought within the union itself. "The purpose of a union", she definitely agrees with.

As to the changes that unions can bring about, Nancy says:

"Well, I don't know if it (unions) would change their attitude, but it would certainly change their behavior, as far as how they treat the employees, how they pay them. I wouldn't care so much how stupid they thought I was, as long as they were paying me well. It's just like racial discrimination. You can hate Blacks all you want, but you better hire them. As long as you hire them, you can keep your opinions to yourself. . . . (Unions are useful) because it's legal, it becomes the only strong way. Pressure groups are good. They have their place, but if you want legal clout, unions are recognized. So far, that's the only medium that I'm familiar with that could achieve that kind of a goal."

Nora started working in an office three years ago and is still working in the same office. She is not a secretary there, but a "financial plan analyst". She got her actual job by virtue of "being in the right place." She had only intended to stay in the company for one year, to straighten up her economic situation; but not wanting to go back to school nor to work in a federally funded program, she felt her options to be "limited, especially around Boston." She seems to like living a comfortable life and is therefore thinking of going to actuary school, because "actuaries get paid very well"; and she also enjoys math. Although her actual job involves some mathematical skills, some autonomous thinking and coordination, she is still treated as a clerical worker in terms of salary and benefits. Nora strongly resents it. The job, in itself, is not bad (it is the best one she has ever had), but the social relations are terrible. In the business world, according to Nora you are worth what you earn and clerical workers get paid low wages, and are viewed as "stupid", as "not worth very much". Clerical workers are mainly women and insurance agents are men, who go out to sell insurance and make really "good money". Although the agents seem to depend on her for a lot of their calculations, many of them still "act obnoxiously" and she gets infuriated. Her relationship with the other women is very good. She was actually surprised to find out that many of them are college graduates, not being able to do something else for a living.

At first, she was very abrasive in the office, as she "can't deal with being condescended to", but men got to realize that they were going to get a nasty comment back, or have their work put at the bottom of the pile, so now most of them are nicer with her. Her boss even calls her in to discuss issues of feminism, not because he specially cares, "but because he finds her amusing." Much of her abrasiveness had to do with the fact that she was "upset with herself for working there"; she could be doing something better, "I won't even say more meaningful, but more challenging."

Nora would certainly have left after a year, hadn't she got a promotion. She was also starting to develop a bad resume as to turnovers, and wanted to stay at the same place for awhile, "no matter what it was."

She is really not scared of losing her job, even if the labor market is tight, because she has acquired skills that are hard to match. Many women have been fired from her company, mainly because they were overqualified for the job and were doing a "half-assed job" because they weren't "motivated".

Nora considers the labor force in an office to be stratified; the secretary being on the top (although she would never



want to be a secretary, in order not to depend on one person). The opportunities for advancement beyond being a secretary are null. This means limited amounts of money and having always to take this "incredible galling attitude." This is, for Nora, the most "unpleasant thing about clerical work."

Clerical workers consider themselves to be middle-class, and Nora considers this to be in the way for them to unionize. For many women in the Boston area, their jobs are a temporary thing and they "don't want to put too much emotional involvement. . . into bettering the job." Women are scared of losing their jobs, but mainly they want to dissociate themselves from it, thinking, "in my soul, I'm not a secretary," makes them feel better about what they have to do.

"I mean, if you say, 'I'm going to get really involved and I'm going to work to do this, that and the other thing,' that means you've accepted that that's what you're going to be doing."

When asked about the differences between blue-collar and office workers, Nora stressed the fact that blue-collar workers are mainly men and office workers are mainly women. Blue-collar workers seem to be better off insofar as they are unionized, but they have "similar kinds of feelings of frustration and an inequitable pay situation."

Nora joined "9 to 5" out of a feeling of support. She wanted them to say, "Well, wow, that's someone else." She has gone to meetings, to the State House, etc., but she never felt she was "really going to get involved." She is not sure why she feels that way, but she believes to do better in "personal things", namely, to articulate things at the office, to talk a lot to people there, and in a "certain way that satisfies her." In talking to other women, she helps them see what they don't see; this is doing to them what the "women's movement did to her".

Nora talks to men out of a feeling of self-preservation:

"I don't feel I'm doing a job that's especially socially useful, I mean in any sort of altruistic sense. It's just a job. And for a long time, that bothered me, and then I decided. . . that all you can really ask is to do the job well, and not try to oppress anyone else while I'm doing it, but also not allow anyone else to oppress me."

In taking her first job, she felt that she had let herself down, so the only way she could deal with it was to say, "Okay, you're going to take the job, but you're going to make a personal commitment to not let things go by, to talk to people and try to bring things to people's attention". This is her "personal" style, as opposed to the "organizational" style of the women who are extremely active in "9 to 5". Sometimes, she is embarrassed by her inactivity, but it is just not "her style".

She is, though, a strong supporter of "9 to 5", and thinks

". . . it's fantastic to have an organization that is for clerical workers, . . . it will bring certain issues to public consciousness and try to put pressure on officials and things like that. Also, it articulates a lot of things that people might be feeling, but didn't want to say, or hadn't really thought about. They thought maybe it was just them, not more general."

Nora sees action happening on two levels. On one level -- organizational level -- "9 to 5" is useful in getting regulations passed and implemented, in getting public support; in eventually creating a union. On the other level, changing people's consciousness has to be done on an individual level, indeed, "people aren't really changed until they're confronted personally". Actually, it is at this level that she sees herself operating.

Nora would want deep changes to happen in our society:

"I think a big problem is how profit is distributed and who it is who gets the money in our society, and that the kind of changes that we need are pretty basic and not just cosmetic things like slightly higher pay, although I'd like to see that.

"I'd like to see a much broader redistribution of wealth."

It has been a long time since Nora has been involved in radical politics. Working, as opposed to college, has made her more realistic, not more conservative, she thinks. She believes, though, that the "personal amount of effort she is willing to put into it (politics), above and beyond what she has to do to survive, has lessened."

Doris graduated from college and was trained to be a teacher. Yet, the only job she could find to support herself and her husband, who was in school, was a secretarial job. She was just offered a teaching job and had accepted it.

Doris has a certain facility with numbers, so after changing jobs twice for lack of funding, she finally found a more challenging job in an investment counseling office where her boss, overwhelmed with work, was very willing to let her do, on her own, as much work as possible. Her relationship with her boss was excellent, yet he was controlled by the president of the company and could not give out all the flexibility that she could have gotten otherwise. Her job was varied, which caused some resentment among the other women in the office.

Doris believes her boss to have respected her; it took some time, though, for the other men in the office to trust her. At first, her boss expected her to do things she would not do (pick up sandwiches, make coffee), but after periodical talks with him, he respected her points of view, "even if he did not agree". Doris was, in general, very upset about secretarial issues which were "related very much to women's issues", and used to voice out her anger. Yet, she was never as capable to voice out her anger as the day she gave the notice of her leaving and the president of the company wanted her to do things she felt were unreasonable.

"I didn't have anything to lose by telling him about the way I felt about the whole thing. . . I felt really good about saying those things. I had always wanted to say them before, and I think that's part of the fear tactic that they have on the secretaries. They hold the strings; they hold the 'fire/hire' pursestrings. If you're nice to them, they'll give you a raise; there's no systematic way of getting raises. . . .

"There were times before that I had gone in and I had to fight for money and they'd say, 'Well, we don't have very much money, we'll give you \$10,' and I said, 'No, I want more than that. I know that the company's making a profit. I want part of that profit. I work hard, too. I've taken over blah, blah, blah since I've come here and I was paid that much then, so I need this much.' I demanded things like that, but I've never attacked him, I guess, the way I did there. And also,

at that point, I told him that I had respect for my boss because of the way he had treated me and the things he had tried to do for me; and I thought I had not gotten that from him and that's why I had difficulty respecting him. Those things -- I don't know. I don't think I could have said it to him before, and that's what's sort of rotten about the job, in that I stood to lose my job. He was the type of man that had a temper; the next minute he could say, 'You're fired!'"

The worst part of a secretarial job relates, according to Doris, to the things that are expected of you. Probably because you are a woman, your supervisors expect you to do all these "low and menial" things that they could do, but want you to do for them. Indeed, secretarial work is different than an executive's work, yet both need to feel responsible for what they are doing, both need to have "a sense of worth".

Doris has tried to encourage some of the other women in the office to attend "9 to 5" meetings, with little success. The youngest woman used to go with her and reported back to her boss. In general, Doris was very vocal about her involvement with "9 to 5". Her boss wanted her to keep him informed, "in case he had to deal with any of the issues". The president seemed less relaxed about it, fearing that "9 to 5" "would put him in the wrong or put publicity around". On several occasions, she has offered to help the other women to take a stand against their boss, but she never got anywhere. "They were always too afraid. . . They continually griped about not getting a raise", but never got in to ask for it.

Doris joined "9 to 5" out of friendship with one of the women who originally started the organization. At first, she was very active, then for personal reasons, she felt that "9 to 5" was not serving her needs.

"Partly because I had gone to graduate school in education and I was really trying to find an education job; I had really kind of given up on the secretarial field as being the field that I wanted to do."

Doris went to "9 to 5" because she was frustrated with her job and going there periodically was like a "booster" to her.

"I needed to go back every two weeks to get some energy to say, 'I am right. What I'm saying is right. I don't want to give up.' We talked about tactics, about how to get other people interested, how to approach your boss, how to do things. I guess I went to hear other people who felt the same way I did. . . to energize myself and, also, if I could find any way somebody else had done it in their office, how they had gotten someone interested, what their tactic was, how I could use that."

If the women in the office would have been more receptive, they could have had many things changed in their workplace. They could have stopped little things like getting coffee for the bosses; they could have gotten regular raises and job descriptions, could they only have agreed on it and threatened to "walk out". They would never have fired them all for fear of publicity, suits, etc. She was basically never scared of losing her job and never feared to ask for things: "I got my way, so I got quieted."

At first, her reasons for joining were personal, but then Doris developed some solidarity with the other women in secretarial positions and with the women in her office.

"I guess as part of a woman's issue, the part of secretarial is a wide-open field that needs to be changed. I don't know a secretary that really loves her job. I think it's not because of the work that's done, but the way you're treated that makes all the difference in the world."

For Doris, the ultimate goal of "9 to 5" should be to have a union of women office workers. "9 to 5" can put a lot of pressure on different industries, can get a lot of publicity, some power from a large membership but forming a union should be in the "foreground of thoughts". She would personally join a union, but is aware that many women would not. Many of the women in her office considered "9 to 5" to be a radical organization; their general background was so different altogether; they would never get out on the street and demonstrate. Most women "wouldn't lower themselves to join a union". Doris would go even further, saying:

"I think that the issues have to get watered down by joining with other working people, especially secretarial issues would have to be modified, but I see that that may become a necessity, because of the inability for secretarials to get that strong of a union by themselves. So, I think, for the sake of having a union, it may be worth it to do that."

Women, in general, are more powerful than they think. If they would just organize, they could get a lot: job descriptions, pay scales, review, better benefits. "In some places, you have to have a union to have those demands met"; in others, however, by "raising the consciousness of male executives" through the organized group action of the women in the office, your demands could be met. "I think it depends on the employer and the employees"; large firms seem to differ also from small firms. Unions seem to be able to get you a better pay, of avoiding your getting fired; but unions seem incapable, though, of raising the consciousness of the employee.

"The union would raise the issues, which would raise the consciousness, so that, hopefully, they would stem from each other. That's not necessarily true. By raising the issues that women office workers need to have a pay scale, or they need to have the same benefits as men, raising the issues for the employers to deal with, whether they can respect afterwards, I don't know where that will definitely happen; I think that could consciously follow. . . .

"If women have their consciousness levels raised to the point that they understood why they felt mistreated, and why they should be treated better, I guess the whole thing is the person being able to deal with that and having respect for himself in that position. From there can stem the communication that is required. I sort of feel that employers will never listen without a union, or maybe they'll never be able to. Maybe, they'll be forced to follow the guidelines of pay, and maybe they can never deal with that. I think that would be too idealistic to say that everyone would agree, but I think that more people will. . . .

"I keep coming back to the first thing being consciousness, being aware of situations.

"Beyond that, I have to believe there are good people in the world that need to have their goodness tapped, which is part of the thing I feel about people not being aware is the reason. Where that stems through prejudice or class relationships or anything -- not aware of the other person's needs and being, and, therefore, doesn't come to grips with it. As far as society changes, I could do away with the class system; I could do with a whole new society -- the class system this society has does not instill the kind of sensitivity that I would hope for. That's a whole counter-revolutionary thought that maybe has to start in places like "9 to 5", working for that ultimate goal. I'm not sure how we think that'll happen, but somebody's got to be working on it."

Ultimately, in Doris' eyes "9 to 5" is an organization that is trying to make people sensitive to each other; a "humanity-cut thing, trying to bring down the classless society". One aspect of it is the secretaries, who should not be moved like "blocks" in the office, and employers having sensitivity for the working people and respect.

"I have right now -- I have not so much divided the consciousness raising with the wage-job description thing. I had not divided them so much before, feeling, I guess, that when it would come, I'd have to deal with it. You pointed out to me that the unions may not be able to raise consciousness; I think that before you had said that, I had felt that one would follow, that because the wages would be there, the consciousness would be there, also; and I guess I see that what you are saying is probably -- that that may happen, idealistically -- but that that may also not happen, and I'm not sure how to raise the consciousness when the issues that come up aren't enough. And I would just have to say, 'I don't know'. It probably takes more than just talking with someone, but I don't know what that is."

Janet started as a secretary for lack of anything better. Actually, she does not consider herself a secretary, but a para-legal. She went to college, graduated in American Studies, wanted to work in the film industry but could not find a job. She was broke, so after a month and a half of looking for "good" jobs, she had to take "any one that came along". At first, she thought her job was transient and never stopped to consider what she was actually doing, but soon she realized that her situation was not so unique. There were other women in the office who had also been to college and were doing the same type of job, and they became very friendly. This friendship allowed her to take the job better. She strongly feels, however, that she has to get out of that job as soon as possible.

Janet considers herself to be above secretaries -- not to "degrade them" -- and to have little in common with the women that really want to do secretarial duties. She believes these women to exist; it is only something that she, personally, hates doing and does not have to do, as there still is some "semblance of dignity left" in her work. Her job is actually pretty free. She does most of the work on her own, "so the time is her own" and it is not too much of a routine, either. Furthermore, her relation with her boss is excellent; he seems to respect her and accept her points of view. On different occasions she emphasizes the para-legal aspect of her work, and the boredom of other secretarial jobs.

Janet joined "9 to 5" to get some support and advice. She had not been on the job market before and did not know what to expect, what to offer. She is now active in "9 to 5" out of a feeling of solidarity with all these women who have been "cheated in their expectations" and have boring, low-paid jobs. Once again, her non-identification as a secretary makes her involvement in "9 to 5" more detached, less related to her own life.

"9 to 5", however, has helped her and her college friends organize the office. They have had meetings with the attorneys and have presented, in an organized and coherent way, their gripes and expectations. She feels pride in having been the main organizer and of having led the discussions with the attorneys. Actually, she seems to have some organizational skills -- acquired on campus during the anti-draft movement -- and to be aware of tactics to achieve specific ends; "9 to 5" also helped. When asked if "9 to 5" nourished her organizing the office, Janet said: "I needed the information from "9 to 5" to become organized in the office; and I needed to want to organize in the office to be interested in "9 to 5"."



Janet believes that women in their office might receive better pay, or better working conditions, because men are interested for "their own sakes, to work in a relaxed atmosphere or to grant freedom"; but she is extremely skeptical about changing the basic attitude of men towards women and strongly resents the attorneys' condescending attitude. It is only on the younger generation of men that consciousness raising will have an effect, certainly not on the older, so talking with them about respect to women, women's rights, etc., is just useless. She does, however, have informal talks with the attorneys on these issues; when the women don't like something, they prefer, though, to go in as a group. Janet thinks that having been through college should gain her some respect; however, being a woman does not help, as the men just feel that "women are inferior to them". Being so friendly with the women in the office has kept her on the job, but her attachment to the job is so limited that she never feared losing it. Actually, at first she felt it "a blessing to get fired". She would have taken them to court though, as a case of discrimination.

Janet is mainly involved in "9 to 5" because the organization relates closely to her actual work situation, but her central interest lies around women issues and her involvement in the women's movement has always been important and will always be. Her schedule and possibility of "involvement" limits her to one activity at the time, and she always picks up the one closest to her actual life-experience. Her "involvement" though, is continuous, in one form or another.

". . . that's really important to me, women getting better jobs, women getting the same pay. . . At any level you're at, there are so many issues related to women, that you can always find one to fight for."

Janet sees the labor force as being really stratified, secretarial workers being well above blue-collar workers. The work atmosphere might be as structured for both types of workers, but "there's a different type of person in a blue-collar job and a secretarial job." (some feeling of superiority) Blue-collar workers, however, are a little bit better off insofar as they are unionized.

"I have a hesitation about it (unions), because I know that a lot of labor unions abuse

their power, and the workers aren't that much better off than they might be without them, but I do think, on the whole, that they're worth having, particularly the concept. And I think, as long as they are not subverted, that they serve their purpose."

Many women in secretarial positions are afraid of joining unions; Janet acknowledges this fact and considers it a normal stage that everyone that belongs to a union went through. She thinks that women should be told that "there's going to come a time when not to belong to a union is going to be more harmful than belonging to it." The greatest benefit of a union is that of being a "strong organization", of which employers get more easily intimidated than by a group of organized women.

In the long-range, however, Janet would want the whole "employer-employee relationship to be changed."

"The big corporations versus the people of the country. All that has to be changed. That seems the long-range thing. It's just our part of it that we're on right now."

For Janet, change happens in steps. First, you have to raise people's consciousness, get them to join a group, then get them to join a union, and then "workers becoming becoming more powerful politically, financially, and socially." There are so many things to do and you can only do part of one step at a time; therefore, Janet decided on getting involved in issues related to women, to her own working experience. She wishes only there would be more time for her to do more things, to get more "involved."

She'd always try though, to make "things better, no matter where I was."

Pam is a college graduate who wanted to live in Boston and could not find any job but a clerical one. She looked on several occasions for a "real" job -- professional or administrative -- but was unsuccessful. She is now working with a temporary agency as a typist and is trying to get into law school.

Pam used to be ashamed of being a secretary, but her attitude has changed. She says that until she starts thinking "better of it (of being a secretary), nobody else will." She is insisting, now, that her work is valuable and meaningful, and should therefore be rewarded with "prestige, money, and benefits." She always preferred to work as a temporary so as not to be tied into a secretarial job in case a "real" job appears; but now that she expects to be in school in a year from next fall, she hopes to be hired on a permanent basis in the company she works for. In this company, she has the opportunity to work pretty independently; the working environment is not bad, the bosses seem to respect her, but she considers herself to be totally "underused." She feels that she "wastes essentially eight hours a day."

Pam thinks that people consider a secretary as a kind of "competent, agreeable, amiable flunky." Her feelings of being a secretary have changed, through her involvement in "9 to 5", and even if she is not going to be a secretary for the rest of her life, she is one now and might as well feel good about it. Compared to other secretaries, she has a good job; she does know what is going on, does get responsibility, has flexible hours, a good relationship with the people she works for. "It's about as good as I could expect to find, and I just lucked into it."

When she dislikes something (like being called "my girl"), she does say so; indeed, as she gets "more secure and more confident" as a secretary and in her feminism, she is "less apt to take that shit; less apt to compromise."

But, for the most part, what she does not like about her job is that it is a secretarial job, not "specific kinds of situations."

Pam is not scared of losing her job; she has the backing of "9 to 5", but other women have good reasons to be scared. She wants to be a lawyer, to work with women's unions and help these women.

Pam got involved in "9 to 5" almost a year ago. She shared

the organization's goals, but mainly saw it as a way to do "the kind of things that my job doesn't let me do, which is to organize something on my own and to use my own initiative, my own intelligence and make decisions, to evaluate situations, to propose solutions, alternatives, etc."

Because of the organization of her workplace, she is not capable of doing any organizing in her office. Anyhow, she enjoys more "establishment politics"; filing legislation, dealing with the law, rather than "job organizing politics."

Her activities with "9 to 5" give her a lot of satisfaction, and she is getting a lot out of it in this way. She does not see "9 to 5" as a means to earn rights for herself, nor to have her consciousness raised.

Pam sees "9 to 5" as having a multiplicity of roles, "with each committee and with the membership-at-large.

"I think that "9 to 5" spans the spectrum from the beginning of education for women who are beginning to see that their job situation is bad and it's bad, not because of their fault, but because of the way the system operates, both within their company and within society, on the whole. So that people are just beginning to wake up and see that something's wrong, and then you have the people who say, "Well, yes, we can do something about it, but we can only do it through instituting management changes. We're still going to them or we're going to a government agency to tell management something." And then you've got the people all the way up there who are saying, "We're going to organize and demand changes as our right, and we're going to have the power and the money and the numbers to back ourselves up. We'll have strike funds so that if they don't give us what we demand, we can make life miserable for them." And if "9 to 5", or any other organization of working women could just organize a week-long strike, a walk-out, then everyone would realize how valuable we are."

Pam does not consider secretaries to have any prestige in our society; furthermore, they "make no money, have

no benefits, and no protection, because we're not organized." Better economic conditions are the first thing secretaries should demand. People should not be stuck in their jobs, either, nor discriminated against because of being a woman. In the long range, Pam would like to see workers make decisions that affect their own lives.

Economic gains can be achieved through organizing, and "are best done through unions", but unions will have to be responsible to women, hence controlled by them. The time is still far away when women will experience, at the national level, the need for unions. The change that unions can bring about is limited, though; more profound changes can only happen with an increased "political consciousness and with the spread of social responsibility." The idea that corporations will not "be responsible just to themselves and to their stockholders" seems to be the desired goal, probably not to be achieved in her lifetime. In the meanwhile, women should at least create unions responsible to them, avoiding the "professional union people." Pam believes in the benefits from decentralization and people's participation; indeed, "nothing can be imposed from above and be effective."

Certain existing movements seem instrumental in bringing about change. These are: the unions (that will, hopefully, one day also reshape the content of work), the women's movement, and the consumer movement.

"What I want to see? Oh, the whole idea of unionization and involvement of workers in decision-making. I really hate to be condescended to. I hate it more than anything in the world, and I feel that most people, as their image of themselves improves, that's the thing they hate most of all. And the whole trend for the last ten years in our country, on almost every level, has been that. There are fewer and fewer people on the top looking down condescendingly on all of us down here on the bottom, and, in time, I think people are getting fed up with that. Not necessarily in good ways; I think George Wallace speaks to that in all of us, as much as I despise the man and would move to Australia if he were elected, this is what he's talking to. And if we can utilize this resentment of the people up there to transform the fabric of society so that -- we're not all going to be on the same level, but all of us will have more of a piece of the pie, not just the money thing, but decision-making. We'll have more control over our own lives,

and that's what I think the whole issue of unions for women and organizations for women is about. It's on the much broader level of 'let me have control over my life', and if I make the decision that I'm willing to work 9 to 5 doing these tasks that I don't particularly like, in exchange for the money and the benefits and all the rest of it, then that's my decision, but I don't want to be in the position, and I don't think anyone does, where I don't have any choice, where my only option is to be a secretary or a waitress."

This is one level of action, the one she sees herself and "9 to 5" involved in. The other one is more "geopolitical", changing the whole structure of society, and this one will take more than her lifetime.

Christine went to college and could not get any interesting job. She soon found out that secretarial jobs are the only ones available to women in the cities, and even though she is going to graduate school to become a journalist, "office work is not something I can rule out (for the future), as it's the one skill you have that you can always find a job with." Christine has worked as a secretary for four years now, in all types of firms and institutions: an engineering firm, in offices as a temporary, in a hospital, and in a university.

Now, she is registered with several temporary agencies to have more flexible schedules and to be able to go to school. If she had the choice between taking a permanent job or a temporary one, she would take the permanent one, as a temporary job means pressure and mistrust from employer and fellow workers.

She considers secretarial work to be "dull" and resents the fact that people think that you do it because you are incapable of doing anything better. After all, she had also been to college and does not see why everyone else in the office should be introduced but the secretaries.

Working as a temp does not allow for much complaining or changing of working conditions, but in her last permanent job at the university, she used to be very vocal when she disliked something. To some people, however, it does not make any difference what you mind.

Christine considers that secretaries are really taught and asked to adopt a woman's role; this is not to be ambitious for themselves, not to question anything; "to be really like a wife". With this role, secretaries are looked down on in our society; as all women are, in some sense. This lack of respect derives also from the fact that secretaries are unorganized and do not belong to unions; hence, they do not have a history of "fighting back for anything". Blue-collar workers seem to be much better off, at least pay-wise, and they have also gained some pride from making their work a "trade".

It is not that women cannot be organized, as it has so often been said, but that women have been overborne by the "old time" union people. Furthermore, office workers have not been organized in the past, and starting the process now is difficult, as people are afraid of losing their jobs in a recession. Women are realizing now, however, that they are going to work for the rest of their lives (probably

as secretaries) and that they might as well do something about it. The counter pressure is big, though, as many women do not want to antagonize their bosses, when they work in a close relationship with one supervisor; nor do they want to be an "oddball" who talks about organizing when they work in a big office. She, herself, has never been scared of losing her job, as she never really cared too much about them.

Christine joined "9 to 5" out of her own job dissatisfaction. She was interested in a women's movement and a movement of working women really appealed to her, as it was related to her own life. Although her parents are in unions, she does not have a strong union background, but as soon as you start thinking about "organizing people to do something, the more it gets directed toward unions, because it really changes the relationship between employer and employees. . . to make it more equal."

When asked about unions, Christine said that "some unions are pretty much a part of the establishment, and they're not really interested in changing women's status in society", all they can get you is better pay and a good pension plan. There are, however, other unions that are more responsible to their membership and seem to be interested in changing your actual working conditions.

"You can also get intangible things, having people treat you better, by organizing for the concrete things, like better pay and benefits and standing up for yourself in your job."

Having people/unions back you up in your plea, seems essential to Christine. She wants, also, to "upgrade" the work: Office workers are not servants, and should be recognized as valuable workers within the organization. This is not to say that they will ever get a say in how the company is run; "that's kind of out of our reach. . . at this point."

Christine is very active in "9 to 5" and is now a co-chairperson in the organization. She worked for several committees, and as she does not have an office to organize, is centering her main activities around the organization itself. She enjoys her activities and is doing a lot of things she never thought she could do. The confidence she gets from her work with "9 to 5" compensates for her feelings of herself at work.



Christine does not believe people's consciousness to be raised until they get involved, themselves, in specific situations or confront their own realities. In other words, people change through their own life experiences.

On a broader scale, changes will also happen slowly. Society seems to need a whole restructuring.

"The way that the whole American political system is set up, things are run by such a small group of people that most of the people in the country don't have a say in anything, so that it would take a much bigger change than a few more unions. I think if the whole social system changed more, and maybe working people could feel that they had a 'right' to say how the company was run. You know, if the 'wealth was distributed,' but I think it would have to be a much larger-scale thing than 'organizing'.

"(A. Do you think unions could be a 'first step' toward that, though?)

"I think they are. Being in "9 to 5" and being in favor of unions changed my political viewpoints a lot, in that I'm much more of a socialist now than I was before, because it only seems fair that people who work day in and day out should have more of a say, more of the 'wealth' of the country, more back from their labor. That's why a lot of the people on the left really like unions, because it is a way for working people to get some more out of their labor. Yes, I'd say it's a 'start' in that direction, but we've had unions a long time now, strong ones, and it really hasn't changed the political system that much, so. . .I think it's just the way people think about their work that has to change. A lot of people don't feel like they deserve more than what they get. It's just so hard, because so few people own the stocks in the companies, and they control them. You know, all the interlocking directorships, that it's hard to break that down."

Lyn calls herself an office worker, with many secretarial responsibilities. She went to college and decided to work for awhile in services for old people, before deciding whether or not she was interested in social work and community organizing. She is decided now to go back to school, and hopes that graduate school will allow her to get a better job. She is still on her first job and likes the work, but resents "being told to do things" that she does not feel are part of her job.

She would like to take more initiative on things and follow them through, but right now she is assigned only to do "mediocre things."

Lyn is very outspoken about the things she dislikes, but her boss gets very defensive when she talks about them. "It basically comes down to, 'Well, I have the say-so and you don't.'" She believes everybody to have "boss-employee" kind of problems, yet she could be much better off working for a more "democratic kind of administrator."

Lyn "hates" when people call her "secretary", as she considers secretaries to be treated as if they were only one step above waitresses and two steps above prostitutes. Much of this treatment is related to the way "work is set up" and the way we look at "women's" jobs.

Lyn joined "9 to 5" when she found out from a friend what the organization was doing. She felt that their goals "sounded like a really good thing", and although she was not thinking of undertaking any action in her office, she had the "idea that it ("9 to 5") might come in use someday." She is a strong supporter of the organization right now.

Lyn says:

"I would like to be part of a group, especially a women's organization, a sort of an activist kind of thing that really worked. In some sense, it's got particular goals accomplished for itself or for other people. And right now, I'm turned off by meetings and the nitty-gritty stuff that's necessary to get involved, so I'm not really sure. I'm trying to say two different things. On the one hand, the actual working of organizations often bores me, and it seems

very frustrating to me. I don't like to take the responsibility for things, and yet I want somebody else to do it for me, and that's not fair. On the other hand, I'd like to feel part of an organization that was actually getting these things done."

Lyn is also part of a women's group that is not "goal-oriented" but allows her to talk of her problems at work and elsewhere.

Lyn's family is "very middle-class", yet strong defenders of unions. Lyn feels that way, too. She believes union jobs to be indeed better:

"They get a much more structured system of applying for jobs, getting jobs, and pay raises; they get an automatic 5½% a year, or whatever the going rate is, automatic sick leave, benefits, and so forth. We get the sick leave and benefits, but we don't get the automatic pay raise. And we don't have the security of knowing we'll be paid such and such after 5 years, etc. I think union jobs probably are more secure. They have things like tenure. I think our security depends on the relationship with the boss."

The only way for secretaries to implement changes in their work conditions is through unionization and pressure.

"Part of it could be that if secretaries just become very scarce, then they will become more valuable. If nobody wants to be a secretary, then they have to start paying more, but that's not going to happen, probably. There's a lot could be done as a unionized sort of thing. I don't think many secretaries belong -- many white-collar workers belong to unions, and I think it would be neat if everyone sort of saw that as a normal way of dealing with their employers. It bothers me that I'm not a union activist kind of person and none of the people in my office are, really. I don't think it's a good situation for unionizing. There are too many different people with different roles in the office. I also think professionals should be more conscious of their relationships in work to

each other, and to their employers and to the people who aren't as skilled as they are."

Lyn finds working environments too hierarchical, with all decisions concentrated at the top. "This keeps the boss in a secure position and the rest of us kind of not knowing what's going on." Furthermore, women get the worst jobs:

"The payment is a concrete way of looking at what happens, and it's really unfair that women are in the position of assistants and secretaries and aides, and para-legal this and para-medical that, and are paid a fraction of the cost that the man is getting paid and they're doing just as much work in terms of the time they're spending, and the difficulty of the particular thing they're doing. As far as I can tell, in a lot of cases it's not the way it should be. It should be more equal. Aside from just the money part of it, I think . . . I would like to see myself and other people in my position being given more responsibility, being respected more for who they are and what they do, and just treated as people. And I think I've got a good deal, compared to a lot of people."

Lyn believes that these problems will only be overcome through collective action, yet she says:

"On the one hand, I like a certain amount of freedom to not be part of an organization, or not see myself as a part of the mass movement, if I choose to. On the other hand, there are people in power who spend billions and billions of dollars every year for useless, dangerous kinds of things.

A: Do I understand you to say that on the one hand you would like to be part of group action, and on the other hand you want your freedom?

Yes."

Anne went to junior college in a secretarial program and took several accounting courses. She likes working with numbers, but her work involves also a lot of typing, and she is "sick of that". Yet, she believes her chances of ever doing anything else are low: she had just been "typing for so long". Her present job is her fifth clerical job, and it compares quite favorably to the previous ones. Besides the amount of typing she has to do, Anne dislikes most "the political things that go on around the office". Under that qualification, she includes the "over-restrictive" attitude of the president, who sets up policies on attendance, which are sort of "degrading", and the general "gossiping" among the women.

Her job is not that flexible; she has only control over the time she has after all the typing is done, and "there isn't much time" after that. She gets along well with her boss, mainly because she "complains mostly to herself"; "I do not confront him (the boss) as often as I should, whenever there's a problem. . . that's one of my problems." What Anne minds a lot is that the "men draw the line; they have the say and the women have absolutely no say at all. We are secretaries and that's it. We are here to do their bidding. They may be pleasant about it, but that's still the general feeling behind everything else." The men also chose the woman office manager, and as far as she could say, she should not be office manager, furthermore, they go along very poorly. "She (office manager) does not like anything I'm doing at all."

In general, Anne believes the office to think of itself as being a little more "progressive" than other offices. For one thing, they do give their secretaries very good benefits and they also include them in the profit-sharing plan if they stay on the job for more than five years. This plan was never well-explained to them and many of the secretaries feel "cheated". In her office, secretaries are treated as human beings, but they are still treated as secretaries (which means "below" everyone else).

She believes that there will always be secretaries, and that secretaries will always be working under the control of someone else, "that is basically what secretarial jobs are all about". Anne would like to have more control over her working day, yet in a secretarial position, "you still have to do certain things that someone asks you to do and I don't think that that will ever change."

Secretarial jobs have changed a lot with the last couple of years, yet a lot more change should be "instituted". Com-

to other jobs, there are certainly worse jobs, but there are a lot more better jobs. Some blue-collar jobs are better than secretarial jobs; others, on the assembly line, are worse.

Anne is not sure why she joined "9 to 5". She thought that people needed to be "awakened to the fact that secretaries are human beings" and that they needed to be treated as such. She believes that "9 to 5" could be instrumental in bringing that about. Indeed,

"Women would join "9 to 5" because they become aware that they had problems and then, through "9 to 5", they would get up enough courage to do something about their problems."

She, herself, got a lot of encouragement from "9 to 5" to fight for an improvement of the maternity benefits in her office. Anne joined two other women in an effort to improve the maternity benefits, and to their big surprise, the changes they proposed were accepted and implemented. Many of the women (12 out of 15) were afraid to join them, thinking that they might get fired, or else they "don't want to cause any waves that might, in turn, hurt them."

"I speak up on big things. I don't speak up about little things, because little things I just let go. . ." She does speak up about raises, not about everyday things. The three women also asked to be informed about the big things that happened in the office:

"It helped us feel more important that we were told these things from them (the men), instead of hearing it from someone else. I think that it might have seemed like a small thing, but it really wasn't."

For Anne, the basic accomplishment of "9 to 5", at this point, is their "consciousness raising and very little else." "9 to 5", as an idea, is a very good idea; an organization where things that bother you can be discussed. Yet, Anne believes "9 to 5" has serious organizational problems that she resents and which induce her to be almost "inactive". These problems are related to the fact that "9 to 5" staffers always draw on the same few people to speak or do things.

"We (she and another woman) were as much a part of it as we felt we could be, because we were mostly being talked to, not with. Since that time, I haven't gone to any meetings."

Although she has told "9 to 5" about her feelings, she felt no major changes in their attitudes. Yet, she still feels that "9 to 5" will always support her and other women.

"I think they're mostly a supportive group. They might give you ideas about what you could do, but that you're the one that does the work, takes the initiative to make the change. Of course, legislative changes, they would do."

When asked as to what changes she would like to see happen in an office, she mentioned having discussed with other women, the "utopian office, where people did their own typing and filing", but she, personally, does not think "it will ever happen". She believes that not everyone can be an executive, and,

"I also think there are people who love to do this kind of thing. I mean, there are some people, someplace, who really enjoy sitting at a typewriter all day and typing. That's just the way I think, but I think there are people who could never be executives and they they will have to do some sort of work, and secretarial jobs are fine for those kind of people, if they want that kind of thing."

Anne believes the conditions of secretaries to have improved in the past few years;

"I think that we have gained a certain amount of additional respect than we ever had before; I think that people - executives - are more aware of secretaries as human beings rather than machines, now; that we have voices, that we think. That we can take the initiative to do things, certain things that need to be done, that we help them."

The women's movement probably played a major role in bringing about these changes. Major changes in the office would only happen if every secretary were to join one big union, and for the union "to set down certain rules, in which case, there would still be secretaries, but they wouldn't be doing the same kind of work."

When asked about unions, Anne says:

"In a union, you have more power. . .

We all want this. We all feel we deserve it."

Yet, if you're a member of a union and the union makes a decision, you have to go along with it, and "the decisions might not always be what you would want them to be." believes, though, in the importance of people getting together, "that's one of the better ways of getting things done." Reflecting on her lack of involvement in "9 to 5", Anne says:

"I guess it's that I'm mostly concerned with things that involve me, that I'm not the type of person who's going to go out and fight for a general cause in the insurance industry, although I think it's good, but people are. That's just the way I would do something. I think what they're doing is good, but it doesn't involve me right now."



Beth

Beth got her bachelor's in History of Education, but her degree could not get her a salary at the end of the week. She started off at the phone company and quit to take a secretarial course for college graduates. After it, she had hoped to get "the job". Her "guiding philosophy for the last few years" had been to earn at least \$20 more a week each year, and to accumulate more skills. She said, "I wasn't going to skyrocket to success overnight, and I had better structure my life."

She had a job she liked at Northeastern University, but the grant that she was working under was suddenly shot. And here she was, on the street again, trying to find a job in December, when actually no one quits at this time of the year. She had thought of working for city planners who "impart visions of a more hopeful lifestyle for people" but did not find a job in that area, and ended up in a construction firm. The job was awful; very demanding, a lot of pressure, and her boss was a "chauvinist, from the word go." One night, she felt that she was going to have a nervous breakdown and thought she really should do something about it. She was determined to stick to the job for a while, but could not take it alone and found good support in "9 to 5".

Beth wanted her title changed to administrative assistant and more money, as she believed she deserved it. She was very happy to do a good job, but didn't expect "to be run roughshod. I don't want to lay down and let them walk all over me." So, she went to argue about it with the person in personnel, but he was not willing to rock any boat. The other women who were in the same position (and also wanted to have their titles changed) were not prepared to fight it. So, not wanting to turn herself into a "walking case of martyrdom," she quit. Before doing that, though, "9 to 5" gave her the strength to shake a few people over there and to feel better about herself. Finally, there was not one thing she liked about the job, so she asked herself, "Why the hell am I staying here?" and left. Beth is working now for a non-profit group, just got her title changed and a raise, and is "reasonably content" with her actual job. She would like to work for a bigger firm, to have more people around, and also have a tuition assistance program, as she would like to study philosophy. Beth is sort of resigned to doing what she is doing; she can grow to be an office manager and earn  $\approx$  \$200 a week; and this is all she wants, as long as she can do the things she likes: community work, philosophy, astrology, etc.

Beth has been very active for a while in "9 to 5", but hasn't been too active since things started going well on the job. She has learned enough, "been educated enough" through "9 to 5" to know where to go to redress a grievance. She also "got in touch" with herself to know how far to go, "whether to go or not to the NLRB"; but her stage of extreme activity has passed, as she has been extremely discouraged in her attempts to see the Temps' bill through. Indeed, Beth and her colleagues had spent days after days, weekend after weekend, drafting the bill, talking to legislators at the State House, researching, "lobbying", etc., and the agencies "had money to hire lobbyists, pay them their salaries, get lawyers to write briefs, go over there and become palsy-walsy with the legislators. . . and all of this (their time and effort) ended up right down the chute."

Beth believes that she is an idealist, but:

"Once you spell something out in plain English, what more needs to be done? . . . The thing either speaks for itself or it doesn't. Take it or leave it, that's my attitude."

Beth thinks that "9 to 5" is an organization for women that want to help raise the consciousness of other working women. There will always be women that want to do this, either for a while or permanently.

The only way for "9 to 5" to bring about more structural change in society, is to have a "portion of their activities devoted to unionizing clerical workers.

It is not that Beth is a strong sympathizer of unions, but if nothing else, "a labor union is a front, a force that you can pitch against another force, management. . . You can possibly try to sway them with logic, and if that doesn't work, sway them with numbers." Beth would like to see management and workers communicate, but as they seem to have incompatible interests, unions serve at least as a pressure group to redress a grievance and "it's perfectly respected by the government and by everyone else." She says:

"Ideally, the people at the top should have a sort of consciousness raising so that they will take it upon themselves

to see exactly what is involved in keeping their organization running. I mean, without the workers, you will not have an organization, but until there's some sort of insurrection, which is absolutely threatening to shake the foundations of the organization, I'm sorry to say that a lot of these people couldn't care less, they don't know what's going on, they have no motivation, no strong, philosophical conviction that they should even care about these other people, you know -- just, 'Let's keep the thing going; let's get the accounts straight; let's play a little golf; let's celebrate the fact that we have arrived.' I hate to say it, but this is the sort of bourgeois mentality that a lot of them have."

"But I must say, that I can sympathize when workers do get fed up and decide to unionize. I can honestly see what has driven them to that, and I've never been in a situation where it was that bad where I had to do that. But then, again, that's me. I have never been in that situation. If I were in a situation -- if the shoe were on the other foot, who knows? I might have to do it, myself."

To effect more profound change, "it does take a lot of stamina", that she, personally, does not seem to have. She is not afraid of losing her job, like the old lady in the engineering place. She has forced herself, in the past, to get better working conditions, although "it's a fearful thing when you're going into the unknown." She has done it, though, before and she is "still in one piece, has survived it", and believes it's the best way to get ahead.

Jane went to college for three years, but lacked the money to finish school. She looked for a job through an employment agency, and the only job she was offered was a secretarial one. At that time, she was happy to get it.

She used to really like her job, as it had a lot of responsibilities, but a couple of weeks ago the company hired a man to supervise her and another woman; and he actually took away from her the creative work, leaving her only the "non-thinking" one. Jane considers to know better than her boss what is going on in the department, and resents the fact that people will call her his "girl". Jane justifies the hiring of her boss as follows:

"I think they were afraid, for the fact that two women made it in a specific part of the industry where there are no women who are high up in that field. It's a very exclusive part of insurance; there's very few people in it, and it's all bond men and they all have their bond girls. No matter how long a woman has worked in that part of the industry, she has always worked for men, and I know this is in companies which I deal with."

Jane wants to advance on her job and is decided not to quit, even if her boss makes her life miserable. She'd rather stay there and "fight it", and if the company decides to fire her, "they're going to get a lot of kickback, between myself and "9 to 5" and newspapers; and I'll write everywhere."

Jane is very vocal about her dislikes and whenever she is upset, she "yells just how she feels". She tells people in the company that her boss is inefficient and unnecessary and hopes that when his probation time is over, he will have to leave. Actually, she and the other woman have forced her former boss to quit. Jane believes her chances of advancement to be good. Actually, the company is now letting some women get ahead in their jobs. She does not want, though, to get ahead in other departments but in her own, where chances of advancement are extremely low, and she thinks that the company should find an "opportunity for her to advance where she is now."

Society looks at secretaries as women that work until they get married and have babies; and, in the meantime, polish their nails at their desk. Jane would therefore prefer to be referred to as a clerk, but generally, she does not like to be classed. Secretaries might just be slightly above blue-collar workers insofar as they wear dresses, but blue-collar workers are men, and therefore do not have

to put up with what a "woman puts up with."

Jane is one of the more solid members of "9 to 5" and believes the organization to have now the momentum and power to bring about changes in the working conditions of secretaries. However, women have to organize their own workplaces:

"The best way to do it is to find out how many women in your company feel the same way you do without making them sound like they're going to be intimidated, to get it down on paper, to think of the best problems that we have; in other words, what we could get the answers to right away, what we could get solved, and then getting the women at least -- getting them all fired up about it without getting them scared about it, and then just go in -- make an appointment with management -- and as many as possible cram in the room, and just tell them just what we think: 'This isn't going to cost you any money to implement this,' and see what they do.

"A: Do you think that would be like another pressure group?

"Right. Within the company itself. Like, "9 to 5" can work on the entire industry, but it's up to the women in the companies themselves to get together and work in their own company."

In her workplace, women have been very supportive of her efforts to demand affirmative action from management, yet many would not join "9 to 5", as they think of it as a women's lib group.

Jane is very active in her company, and women come to tell her that they saw her on TV, ask her questions, etc., which is good for her and for "9 to 5". Men tease her about it, but generally, she gets along well with everybody except her boss -- who hurts her possibilities of getting ahead.

Companies have not yet learned how to react to women who "aren't happy where they are"; a lot of women are happy, but more and more women are getting restless. Jane believes "9 to 5" to be useful to the "unhappy" women.

"Making it known now that women are getting together to try to get what they want, that we are a force to be reckoned with and not just someone to work under you all day long. I think that's the main thing. We've just brought it to the forefront that women now want more than what they had and, you know, we're going to try to attempt to get that."

In the sense of making it easier for women who want to get ahead, "9 to 5" is also useful to her, personally. Jane joined "9 to 5" out of a feeling that together "something could be done" and that unless one does something about changing a situation, one has no right to complain. Now she is very active in different aspects of the organization, but her main role is as chairwoman of the insurance committee and wants to continue in this role "until we get to the ultimate goal which is happiness and equality for all women in insurance."

Jane believes in unions if they are the "only way", then "it's the best way"; but she just hates to think of having to unionize to get what you want.

"It just seems to me to fight a war to get what you want, there should be another, more human, intellectual step, rather than forming a union. There should be a meeting of the minds. . . . It is idealistic, but to me it seems a better solution than a union."

Shirley does not consider herself a secretary. She has been to college for three and one-half years, but dropped out mostly because she was not sure of where she was going. After working at a couple of jobs, she came up to Boston totally broke, and walked into Mutual Life Insurance, the place where she works now. She did not care what the job was like, she only knew that it was better than waitressing. She has mixed feelings about how exciting the job is; on one side, it is a little bit better than straight secretarial work, but on the other, it is pretty boring after you have figured it out. All in all, however, she has some variety, although "it's stifling", insurance companies have a set of policies and you have to follow them. More than her actual job, she dislikes the company environment and resists being a company person. She does not seem to be closely supervised; otherwise, she says, she would go "bananas". She seems to have a pretty high opinion of how she is performing her job; of how capable she is of "running the show" by herself.

Her plans for herself at work seem pretty clear and realistic. She wants to go ahead in her same work-line, eventually doing some social services work, and get a degree while working (through the company reimbursement policy). She is actually hoping to get a job two grades above hers.

Shirley is very verbal about being in "9 to 5", probably she is the "figurehead" of the company. Many women who work with her in the office resent her involvement and her comments on the company. She is not scared, however, to lose her job; if they fire her, she'll "fight back". Trying not to be paranoid, she still thinks that she did not get a promotion last spring, because of her activities in "9 to 5". She feels pride in what she is doing, in her courage. "If they got me so scared of losing my job that I quit doing what I'm doing, I wouldn't be a person."

Shirley says that she would like to see herself as a feminist, but that "9 to 5", as she sees it, is not a feminist organization, but an organization of working women (mainly because there are no men working as clericals).

She actually considers herself very lucky to have the job she has, so many of her activities are not directly related to improving her conditions, but for the "good of the people". She actively tries to "raise the consciousness" of her boss by talking to him, lending him literature, keeping him informed (the boss seems, at least, pretty receptive). Shirley seems to have a strong feeling of how terrible the

jobs of most women are. Therefore, she thinks that the most important thing that "9 to 5" could accomplish, structured as it is now, is to improve the existing working conditions of women. She does not think -- as many feminists do -- that most women want to become management (although she is very ambitious for herself, and would like to get there), but women should get better pay, better treatment, etc. A union seems instrumental in that sense, and "9 to 5" should work towards creating a union of clerical workers. All workers seem to be in the same boat, but blue-collar workers seem to be much better than clericals in at least two respects. First, they create a sort of product right in front of them -- craftsmanship; then, they have a union to support them.

When there will be a clerical union "they (companies) would have to raise the salaries so much and improve the conditions so much. I mean, collective bargaining with secretaries is a mind-boggler."

Shirley is so strongly in favor of unions because she considers them to give you the "biggest weapon" for labor, which is strikes. She is aware of the problem involved with some unions, like the teamsters, etc., but she "tends to look on unions as a formative tool. . . the only way anything is going to get done." Many women are afraid of them, but ultimately it will have to happen.

Shirley reads about the conditions of working women, she assists at conferences, takes courses.

For these conditions to get better, you would have to "get into a complete straightening out of all the mess-ups between men and women, which I don't know is ever going to happen." Women are now some "kind of appendage" to men and are not regarded as valuable employees. "They should be treated as intelligent individuals; given credit for what they do; allowed to advance on their own merit." For this to happen, however, you might need a complete "restructuring of the entire business world." Furthermore, "management are in ivory towers" and they don't understand the situation of working women.

"They don't understand the reality of what's happening in society today. And they don't understand that there are more and more and more women who are choosing not to marry or, if they're choosing to marry, are going to maintain their own identity and are choosing not to have children. You know. They just can't comprehend it, I guess. Or don't want to. Or both."



When Shirley joined "9 to 5", she was not really frustrated from her own job, she hadn't had time to be, but she felt like helping everybody; helping other women. Then, "9 to 5" was, for her, a good "release of frustration. . . a sort of CR group." But mainly, she is proud of the results "9 to 5" is getting and the more things happen, the more she is inclined to work hard. She is active in all spheres; she is everywhere.

Also, the more successful "9 to 5" is, the more it is supported by the media, the Governor, etc., the more women contact them and join. However, there is a long way to a union. Women are often "sort of secret sympathizers", but "I think most of them (women), through apathy and fear, would not want their name on anything. I think it's going to take an awful lot more work with the public consciousness before clerical women realize that they need help and are willing to make the commitment and take the risk to get that help." Right now, "9 to 5" allows for a group identification, for you "get a lot more attention" as an organized group.

Shirley thinks of herself as a "fairly political person". When asked as to why she gets so involved, she says:

"Maybe it goes back to what I said, if I could be doing what I really want. I've been doing some sort of social services work. I see a lot of things about what is wrong with the way the world is today, and when I was in college, I went through a period of being a screaming radical. And I really got nowhere.

"And as long as this country is set up the way it is now, what you can achieve within the system is limited by the system itself.

(A: The maximum being a union, you mean?)

"I suppose. You have to go through things like legislation, and dealing with people like that. It's kind of depressing. I mean, I suppose if I could just sit down and fantasize, I could get into what kind of a society I'd like to live in, but it would take a complete overthrow of everything in this whole country and a complete re-ordering, which, talk of the revolution aside, I don't think is going to happen."

As to her view of how things get changed, she definitely believes in pressure, in "making enough noise".

"I think it's the actual threat of things, rather than the things themselves, that get things done."

Paula is a teacher and taught in New Jersey, but could not find a teaching job when she moved to Boston. So, three years ago, in order to support herself, she started working as a secretary/typist in a work-processing center of a large company. The work she has to do is very often interesting to her because many of the reports deal with educational issues, but she feels that she is not working to her capacity and is looking for another job. She would like to work in an organization that deals "with people rather than a product," but the jobs that she could get in this area pay very poorly. Her actual job pays at least very well and gives her very good benefits. It will be hard for her to match them in another job. Paula resents, more than anything, "being on the bottom rung of the ladder," where people do not respect you and the discrimination between you and upper-level office staff is made so arbitrarily. When asked to do something that she considers to be "an insult", Paula explains very thoroughly to her supervisor why she minds it and will not do it. She has never had a problem with it; she just gets teased. Her situation is different, however, than that of most women, as she works under a contract and could hardly be fired. Paula gets along very well with her colleagues and her immediate supervisor; it is mainly the top management that she dislikes so much.

All in all, however, she thinks that her job is "great" when compared to the jobs of other secretaries.

Paula feels discriminated against as a woman and would like to see women equal to men "in personal things, opportunities, training, etc."

"I would like to be treated as a person. And I think every secretary wants to be treated as a person, not as just a secretary, or just a woman, or 'my girl'. . .I'd like to see women be able to move up into other positions, women who are not happy in what they are doing."

Paula believes that secretarial work is looked down on in our society, mainly because it is a woman's job and women are incapable of "selling themselves", of showing how indispensable they are. If secretaries don't have a high esteem of their work, it is hard for employers to have it, even if the "whole place is lost" when they are not around. For her, blue-collar workers are better off than women of office workers. Women will have to fight on their own to

have their conditions bettered, and even if they have not succeeded before in doing so, they alone can bring about changes. Men are scared of giving in and feel threatened by women. The process of changing women's attitudes is slow, because they are accustomed to taking the back seat. Furthermore,

"People, I think, would rather have what they have, even if it's bad unless they see that the better thing is a sure thing. The more successes women gain for themselves, women are going to see that the percentage is better at attempting a positive change, and I think slowly more women will attempt it, and I think that's how it's going to happen. Plus, the laws have changed, and making women aware of laws, and helping them to enforce them. Because, again, there's no reason to do it if they don't."

Women will have to organize within their offices. "9 to 5" is a good backing, but having the support of the whole office seems to be a superior way -- in terms of tactics -- to get something from the employer.

Paula is a co-chairperson of "9 to 5" now. She was aggravated with aspects of her job, went to take a summer course that "9 to 5" was offering, and got more and more involved with the organization. At first, she was happy to see that other women were also aggravated by the same things, but when she saw that they were doing something to change it, that "hooked" her. She was quite protected by her job contract, "not that she wants to sound unselfish", but she really wanted to help other women, too. Women are often insecure and need the feeling of "we can do it all together." She, herself, was not a joiner, but was called again and again and finally was "ready for it". Women seem to be at different stages of readiness, and "9 to 5" has to be helpful to women in each of these stages. Paula plans to keep attached to "9 to 5", even if she does not work anymore as a secretary. Someday, she might have to go back to it and "I still might be there for a while, but hopefully not."

Paula sees the role of "9 to 5" as being multidimensional.

"Educating, giving advice, working with maybe three women in a company, going into the company and organizing. Serving as a sort of legal counsel, changing laws,

helping other groups who have our same interests, keeping it in the public eye as much as possible, and mainly, just spreading the word that we exist and that we're slowly winning victories, you know, so 'jump on the bandwagon now, and help us help you.' It sounds sort of corny, but that's what it really boils down to, and eventually, unionizing."

Indeed, Paula's ultimate goal for women office workers seems to be unionization.

"We're ('9 to 5") starting to affiliate now, because there are just so many women who are ready; we don't want to lose them and have them -- what we see, in the future, is to have all the women we come in contact with and want to organize, organize into the same union, so they will have some strength. That we will have the backing of an international union, aside from having a local of office workers."

Sooner or later, jobs will be divided in union-non-union jobs and women will try, for their own benefits, to find the union jobs. The process is only long, but it is "starting already".

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