



UNIONS AND THEIR FUTURE

CHARLOTTE A.B. YATES, MCMASTER UNIVERSITY

STATE OF UNIONS – CANADA

Unions – agents of change/ products of capitalism

Stagnant Rate of Unionization: 29.7% 2011 (total membership rose by 80,000 over 2010)

Growing gap in unionization rates amongst women (31%) and men (28%)

Declining strikes – 10.6 hrs lost/yr/employee (1976) vs 1 hr/yr/employee (2011)

Union Wage premium is declining, from 7% to 0% in some sectors

Avg annual wage ↑ of unionized workers was 1.3% (2011) vs CPI of 1%

Employers and governments more hostile to unions





Melanie

Age: 41

Immigrant: Trinidad

Work: p-t kitchen help

Wage: \$10.25 w/4yr exp

Educ: 1 yr Univ; HR cert

Biggest challenges:

- paying rent; no phone; lack of employment supports to find better job

Union does not rep. p-t or casual employees

Cost: resents unions.

Racism at work.



James

Age: 19

White

Work: Uni student + p-t service work

Wage: \$10.50

Biggest challenge:

Pay fees & do well;
How can I find a decent job? “The future is rushing towards us”

Knows no union members. Sees nothing they could do for him.

Cost: irrelevance



Rachel Age: 25

White

Work: p-t retail

Wage: \$11.50

Educ: BA

Biggest challenges:

- Low pay; unpredictable hours
- Wants more from work and life

Tried to organize retail store. Now back at college w/ no union contact.

Cost: lost activist

Long-term Goals

Montreal civic workers - pension

UFCW agricultural

Union

Unions

Members

Workers



OSSTF - sick days



Living wage TDLC

Short-term Goals