

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

monthly newsletter of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights

August 1992



(INTERCEDE)

CHANGES TO IMMIGRATION ACT OPPOSED

Many groups and individuals are joining together to oppose changes to the Immigration Act that are contained in a proposed law called Bill C-86.

Bill C-86 was introduced in Parliament by the Mulroney government without prior public consultations and it contains provisions that will "change the whole history of immigration in Canada" according to prominent immigration lawyer, Barbara Jackman.

The Mulroney government seems in a big hurry to implement the changes in Bill C-86 which passed second reading in Parliament last June 23. This means that there is "approval in principle" of the proposed law and it could be approved before the end of the year and implemented by January next year.

Immigrant and refugee advocates and lawyers, church, labour, women's groups, human rights and other groups oppose many provisions being proposed such as the following:

- For the first time, terms and conditions will be imposed on immigrants, in much the same way that they are now being imposed on "live-in caregivers" or domestic workers. An immigrant will be forced to stay in a specific part of Canada or perform a specific work for a number of years as a

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DOMESTIC WORKERS CITE ABUSES UNDER FDM NOW LCP

In their monthly meeting last July 5, Intercede members expressed frustration over their vulnerability to common abuses resulting from Immigration requirements and delays in issuing new employment authorizations.

Immigration counsellors Ingrid Gonzalves and Phyllis Ramkumar, who were invited by INTERCEDE to answer questions about the new Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP), tried their best to assure workers that Canada Employment and the provincial Labour Ministry would deal with the abuses.

But domestic workers remained skeptical. They feel helpless, for example, about the common practice of prospective employers and employment agencies to make them work on a trial basis before they are accepted.

They also feel forced to comply with demands to start work immediately even before they have received a new employment authorization because they fear losing a prospective employment and because they have nowhere to live when they don't have jobs.

Gonzalves and Ramkumar warned that workers under the FDM now LCP should not work before they receive an employment authorization from Canada Immigration as this would constitute a violation of the LCP. The counsellors assured that

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Come to INTERCEDE's Monthly Meeting on Sunday, August 9, 1992, from 3-5 pm at Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street (south of College, east of Spadina).

2-3 pm New Member applications and renewals

3-5 pm Speaker: Alexandra Dagg, Coalition for Fair Wages and Working Conditions for Homeworkers

There will be no legal clinic at this meeting.

Members with ID nos. 1827-1904 must renew or lose their membership.

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condition for permanent resident status. There will be no restrictions on the power of Immigration officials to impose any terms and conditions.

- The Immigration minister and his officers will have retroactive powers so that they can impose new rules that will apply to those whose application for permanent residence is already being processed. This violates the most basic principles of fairness.
- Immigration officers will have the power to turn away genuine refugees at Canada's borders without any hearing nor appeal nor any help from a lawyer.
- The appeal process will be more restricted. Genuine refugees can be removed from Canada even if an appeal is still in process. In addition, changes to many procedures will make it more difficult for refugees to prove they are genuine.
- A person can be refused entry into Canada based on past association. Trade unionists or human rights activists would all be vulnerable to exclusion under these provisions.

Changes in the proposed law are against Canada's international moral and legal obligations to admit and

protect people, of any race, who are seeking safety here.

These changes reinforce the bias against poor immigrants of colour and their valuable contribution to the economy and culture of this country.

Government measures such as recent restrictions on family reunification, higher education criteria for domestic workers and the current proposals in Bill C-86 feed racist prejudices that Canada is being overrun by bogus coloured refugees or that coloured immigrants are stealing jobs away from white people.

Reforms to Canada's Immigration law must be based on anti-racist and just principles. There should be fair and prompt determination of refugees with right to meaningful appeal.

Human rights of immigrant must be respected, they must be free from arbitrary and retroactive decisions made by Immigration officials. Immigrants must be ensured the right to be reunited with their families. Immigration officials must not be allowed sweeping and arbitrary powers such as those provided in Bill C-86.

INTERCEDE joins the call for the government to immediately withdraw Bill C-86 and to allow time for public discussions and consultations before reforming the Immigration Act.

**MEETING OF
CARIBBEAN DOMESTIC WORKERS**

Sunday, September 20, 1992
3 pm - 5 pm
INTERCEDE Office
489 College St., Room 402, Toronto
call 324-8751 for more info

We wish to thank the Employment and Immigration Canada (Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program); Secretary of State (Multiculturalism and Women's Program); Ontario Ministry of Citizenship; Ontario Women's Directorate; the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (Community and Social Services); and the City of Toronto Grants Review Board for their continuing support.

TO ALL SUBSCRIBERS (Does not apply to current members)
 INTERESTED TO CONTINUE RECEIVING THIS NEWSLETTER? SEND THE FORM BELOW WITH PAYMENT.
 IF NO RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION BY END OF AUGUST, WE'LL REMOVE YOUR NAME FROM OUR MAILING LIST.

RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION :

NEW SUBSCRIPTION : CHANGE OF ADDRESS :

MAIL TO : INTERCEDE, 489 College St., Suite 402, Toronto, Ontario M6G 1A5

Please send *DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS* to :

MEMBER ID NUMBER : _____ NAME : _____

ADDRESS : _____

CITY/PROVINCE : _____

POSTAL CODE : _____ TELEPHONE : _____

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES :

INTERCEDE Members :	FREE	Non-member Domestic :	\$5.00
Non-Profit Organizations:	FREE	Others	\$20.00

From Pg 1 - Abuses Under LCP

a new employment authorization should arrive within a month after sending in an application.

However, workers are caught in a bind and usually start work according to the wishes of a new employer or an employment agency. Yet, they also know that they are jeopardizing their status and can be penalized if caught working without a proper new employment authorization.

In the above situations, a domestic worker feels she has no recourse. She is not amenable to reporting an employer who is willing to hire her nor will she want to report an employment agency she is depending on to find a new employer even when the employer or agency is clearly asking her to violate LCP conditions.

A worker who has applied for permanent residence would be caught in the same bind if she lost her job before receiving an open employment authorization. It takes three months or more before an open work permit is issued after applying for permanent residence. Meanwhile, she cannot find a job in domestic work because employers are not willing to hire at this stage of the program; neither can she start applying for jobs outside domestic work because she has no open work permit yet.

This means being jobless, having no income, and not being able to look for a job for at least three whole months or more until she gets her open employment authorization! The gravity of this situation is compounded if she has no place to

live or if her family depends on her earnings. The penalty she suffers includes not being able to apply for UI for fear this would jeopardize her application for permanent residence.

When asked, Gonzalves made it clear that one who is on social assistance could be inadmissible under the Immigration Act.

Women who have been on open employment authorization for more than two years wondered why no explanation is ever given for such a long wait for landed status.

Those on open employment authorization usually have less chances of getting better jobs, are usually paid less, or are restricted from jobs that require permanent residents. This is why they consider the current waiting period of 18 months or more for permanent residence as unfair and inconsistent with program expectations. Delay in getting permanent resident status subjects them to abuses including unfair wages and work conditions.

FACILITATOR WORKSHOP - 2nd of Series

Sunday, August 23, 1992
10 am - 5 pm

Centre for Christian Studies
77 Charles Street East
(Bay Subway, south of Bloor and west of Bay)

Confirm by calling 324-8751

CALCULATION OF PAY FROM JULY 1, 1992

	MONTHLY (12/year)	SEMI-MONTHLY (24/year)	BIWEEKLY (26/year)	WEEKLY (52/year)
GROSS WAGES	\$1,144.00	\$ 572.00	\$ 528.00	\$ 264.00
DEDUCTIONS:				
Room & Board	320.67	160.33	148.00	74.00
Income Tax	150.30	74.90	68.85	34.30
Canada Pension Plan	21.06	10.53	9.72	4.86
Unemployment Insurance	<u>34.32</u>	<u>17.16</u>	<u>15.84</u>	<u>7.92</u>
NET PAYMENT	\$ 617.65 =====	\$ 309.08 =====	\$ 285.59 =====	\$ 142.92 =====

Minimum wage in Ontario is currently \$6 per hour. Even though your employer/worker agreement or "contract" may have stated your wage at less, your employer must pay you the current legal minimum wage. Overtime pay is "time-and-a-half" your hourly wage, \$9 per hour if you get minimum wage. Maximum deduction for meals taken is \$2.20 per meal. Be sure to get a written statement of earnings with your salary.

STAFF NOTES

Lots of fun...

It was a fun-filled day for INTERCEDE members and friends who went in six buses to Niagara Falls last July 12. Many thanks to staff and volunteers who kept things organized so everything went smoothly.

Watch for...

the anti-racism presentation at INTERCEDE's Annual General Meeting (AGM) on Sunday, October 4. This will be the proud accomplishment of the 15-20 members who have been creating scenes and skits about racism during the past three workshops.

Thank you bouquets...

to Company of Sirens theatre company and specially Cynthia, Sheila and Kim. Same to Carlos

Bulosan Cultural Workshop's Martha, Albert and Johnny. They have been enthusiastic facilitators and participants in the anti-racism workshops. More bouquets to the participants themselves who have proven to be natural actresses and creative talents.

HELP...

If you know of any employer needing a domestic caregiver worker, let INTERCEDE know so that we can give out the information to interested parties.

ANTI-RACISM WORKSHOP

Sunday, August 23, 1992

1 pm - 5 pm

Centre for Christian Studies
77 Charles Street

(Bay Subway, south of Bloor, west of Bay)

Register now tel. 324-8751

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Canada Immigration Centre	973-4444
Educ & Skills Training Ctr, Labour Council	345-8312
Employment Standards Enforcement	326-7160
Immigrant Women's Health Centre	323-9986
Immigrant Women's Job Placement Centre	656-8933
OHIP	
Toronto	482-1111
Scarborough	1-800-263-3814
Mississauga	275-2730
Ontario Human Rights Commission	326-9511
Unemployment Insurance	730-1211
Workers' Compensation	927-9555
Revenue Canada (taxation)	869-1500

Toronto Rape Crisis Center (24 Hr line)	597-8808
Assaulted Help Line	863-0511

EMERGENCY HOUSING

Nellie's Hostel	461-1084
Evangeline's	762-9636

LEGAL SERVICES

Parkdale Community Legal Services	531-2411
CLASP (Osgoode Law School) Legal Clinic	736-5029
Kensington-Bellwoods Community Legal Serv.	363-0304
Metro Tor. Chinese & SE Asian Legal Clinic	971-9674
Toronto Workers' Health & Safety Legal Clinic	971-8832

ORIENTATION MEETING FOR DOMESTIC WORKERS SPECIALLY NEWCOMERS

Sunday August 16, 1992

10 am - 4 pm

George Brown College, Room 541
200 King Street East (King Subway)

Participants will receive Orientation Kits
and Certificate of Participation

Free lunch

Register by calling 324-8751

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Place : 489 College St., Suite 402, Toronto, Ont
Time : Monday - Friday, 9 am - 4 pm
Telephone : (416) 324-8751 Fax No. 324-8790

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