

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

monthly newsletter of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights

August 1996



(INTERCEDE)

INTERCEDE AT WOMEN'S MARCH AGAINST POVERTY



"We are present!" say these INTERCEDE members who joined more than fifty thousand women in a cross-country march against poverty organized by NAC-CLC. The energetic contingent is all smiles in front of the Parliament Building in Ottawa where a huge rally

and tent city culminated the march on June 15. The phenomenal march stopped at about one hundred communities, cities and towns where women from all walks of life raised demands to eradicate poverty and to ensure women's economic security.

You Are Welcome

DOMESTIC WORKERS AND CAREGIVERS

Live-in or live-out, caregiving in hospitals or senior homes,
on temporary or open permit, immigrant or citizen

YOU ARE WELCOME TO INTERCEDE MEETINGS

EVERY FIRST SUNDAY OF THE MONTH

(if it falls on a holiday, meeting is on second Sunday of the month)

Next INTERCEDE Meeting

SUNDAY, AUGUST 11, 1996 from 3 to 5 pm

Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil St. Cor. Spadina

Topic: THE UNITED NATIONS CONVENTION ON THE PROTECTION OF THE RIGHTS OF ALL MIGRANT WORKERS AND MEMBERS OF THEIR FAMILIES

2:45 - 3:00 pm Member Application & renewals of Member ID nos. 95-0093 to 95-0104

3:00 - 5:00 pm Orientation for newcomers

3:00 - 5:00 pm CLASP Legal advice

MORE BAD NEWS FOR IMMIGRANTS

Children born in Canada will no longer automatically be Canadian citizens.

The idea is being floated by the Minister of Citizenship and Immigration, Madame Lucienne Robillard, who has stated her intention to introduce legislation to this effect when Parliament opens in the Fall.

This move spells more bad news for immigrants and refugees who have to confront the backlash against them because of adverse immigration policies such as the \$975 "head tax"- policies that imply negative images of them as freeloaders and abusers of the system.

This proposed change to our citizenship laws will fundamentally change the way we Canadians become citizens, from the principle of citizenship by place to that of citizenship by blood.

Currently, we acquire citizenship by place, not by blood. Anyone who is born within our territory or who resides here and fulfills the requirements of citizenship can acquire the right to enjoy all the rights and privileges as well as responsibilities of Canadian citizenship.

Based on the principle of citizenship by place, babies born within our territory automatically acquire the right of citizenship.

If we change our citizenship laws by adopting the principle of citizenship by blood, babies born in Canada will not automatically become Canadian citizens. This can make them stateless persons - a situation that contravenes the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child.

Canada is a signatory to this Convention adopted in 1989 which states that a child has the right from birth "to acquire a nationality" and which obliges States to "en-

sure the implementation of these rights in accordance with their national law and their obligations under the relevant international instruments in the field, in particular where the child would otherwise be stateless."

The proposed removal of the automatic right of citizenship from babies born in Canada is apparently meant to solve a problem: that of preventing temporary residents in Canada such as tourists, refugees, or workers on temporary permits, from seeking permanent residence based on their relationship to their babies who are Canadian citizens by birth.

But how big is this problem, if it exists at all? How big is it so that we now must change the very fundamental principle of citizenship in this country? Since there are no statistics to show how many babies are born to non-residents in Canada, the Canadian Council on Refugees, a national advocacy group, asks: are they "fixing a problem without knowing if there really is a 'problem'? Do they want to fundamentally change the way citizenship is accorded in Canada in order to facilitate a couple of deportations?"

The Liberal Government's moves to change our citizenship laws have dangerous implications to the lives of all people of colour in this country. We fully expect that a national debate over who has the right to be a Canadian citizen will mainly be based on and will only reinforce xenophobia and racism.

To begin with, even now, citizens who are people of colour do not enjoy all the rights of citizenship because of racism. The proposal of Madame Robillard is salt rubbed on our wounds.

The Canadian Council of Refugees is leading a campaign against the removal of automatic citizenship of babies born in Canada. They are asking organizations to sign a letter opposing the move. (Fax 514-277-1447).

You can do your part to oppose the changes proposed by the Immigration Minister: Write her a letter to oppose these changes and tell your friends to do the same. For more information, call INTERCEDE (416) 483-4554.

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DID YOU CHANGE ADDRESS ?

Please inform us by phone or mail so that you can continue getting your newsletter and we don't waste postage expenses for returned mail!

TO ALL SUBSCRIBERS since June 1995 (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 JULY, WE'LL REMOVE YOUR NAME FROM OUR MAILING LIST.

RENEWAL SUBSCRIPTION NEW SUBSCRIPTION CHANGE OF ADDRESS

MAIL TO : INTERCEDE, 234 Eglinton Ave East, Suite 205, Toronto, Ontario M4P 1K5

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

NAME : _____

ADDRESS : _____

CITY/PROVINCE : _____

POSTAL CODE : _____ TELEPHONE : _____

YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES :

INTERCEDE Members :	FREE	Non-member Domestic :	\$20.00
Non-Profit Organizations:	FREE	Others	\$25.00

GET HIP WITH OHIP!

Did you know that work and even a lack of work can have a long term effect on your health?

That is why it is important to have health coverage at all times because you never know if, when or why ill health may strike. OHIP is available to domestic workers who are on temporary status and to those who have been approved in principle for landing.

As stated in the July edition of Domestic Cross Cultural News, there is help for Open Permit holders who are having difficulty in renewing their OHIP.

If you have an open permit make sure to request a letter from Immigration stating you have passed your medical as this is a requirement of the Ministry of Health to renew your OHIP. If you have not been requested to complete a new medical, Immigration will send you a letter stating that you passed the medical taken before you entered Canada under the LCP.

Unfortunately, the Ministry of Health may still refuse you if it has been over two years since the medical expired and may advise you to ask Immigration to issue you instructions to complete a new medical. Should this happen, please contact INTERCEDE so that we can appeal this decision for you and get approval for your OHIP card as soon as possible.

SMILE, YOU MAY BE ON CANDID CAMERA

by Carol Salmon

Do you ever feel like you're being watched? Well, you may be right.

In the Toronto Star of July 22, 1996, there was a disturbing article stating that a growing number of employers are renting video surveillance equipment to make sure their domestic worker is looking after the children and the home properly.

Whatever happened to the old-fashioned way of talking to your worker: to find out how she is doing, what did the kids do today, are your hours too long, do you like the food we eat or would you prefer to get the money and to buy your own, how's your room is it comfortable, are there some evenings that you would like to go out, do you find that the housework I ask you to do is too much given that I want you to simultaneously look after the kids? And in the end, if you really feel you cannot trust your caregiver you let her go, you do not spy on her.

There seems to be an underlying assumption that immigrant women cannot be trusted and that the only way to get to know their work ethic and character is to secretly videotape them.

Every workplace has its bad employees. To infer that because there are a few bad domestic workers out there, that an employer is justified in using a hidden videocamera is offensive and unjust. Further, it is a slap in the face to the majority of domestic workers who work very hard, under difficult conditions, for little money and who love children.

In my experience employers rarely complain about the care given to their child. They'll complain because the worker is asserting that her hours are too long and/or that she has the right to be paid properly. If the caregiver is working late it's not due to the kids but often because dinner is served late, dishes need to be done, toys need to be cleaned up after kids go to bed, etc.

The live-in caregiver program was implemented to address the need for affordable childcare for Canadian families. In practice, however, these childcare workers are also expected to clean the house, do the laundry, serve the guests, cook the food, walk the dog, etc.

In my experience, it's been domestic workers who have been abused and exploited, not the children they look after. These immigrant women are sponsored to Canada on temporary status, forced to live in for over two years in their employer's home, often working long hours without overtime pay, expected to perform duties outside of childcare, rarely given a lock on their bedroom door, and are expected to be satisfied with these conditions. If anything it is employers that need to be monitored more carefully.

A spokesperson for the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada states that the home as a workplace is a huge unregulated area. In other words, if your employer chooses to put in a surveillance system in their home it is not considered a violation of your privacy.

These devices can be hidden in teddy bears, smoke detectors, anywhere. For all you know your employer could decide to monitor what you're doing in your bedroom or even in the bathroom!

INTERCEDE is opposed to any system that would perpetuate the continued exploitation of domestic workers. The home is clearly a workplace for domestic workers and the use of a surveillance system is an absolute invasion of their privacy.

Write to INTERCEDE and let us know what you think about the use of these hidden camera devices to monitor nannies and caregivers.

- Are you too timid to ask for a salary increase, even if you know you deserve it? Do you want to be more assertive?
- Are you feeling unsure about yourself most of the time? Do you want to be more confident?
- Are you resentful that women don't have the same power as men or that men don't treat you as their equal? Are you aware of gender imbalances and how to correct them?

COME TO INTERCEDE's GENDER-AWARENESS WORKSHOP

SUNDAY, AUGUST 25, 1996 1 - 5 pm

LET'S TALK ABOUT....

Self-assertiveness, leadership, feminism

Facilitator: Pilipinas Support Network

JOIN US Call 483-4554

MONTHLY MEETINGS

Sunday, September 8, 1996

Topic: Sexual Harassment in the Home Workplace

Presenter: Chan Nankoosingh

Workers Information & Action Centre of Toronto (WIACT)

Sunday, October 6, 1996

Annual General Meeting and Elections

Theme: The future of INTERCEDE depends on its Members

CARIBBEAN GROUP MEETING

Call Carol for time and place

Tel. 483-4554

GRUPO HISPANA REUNION

Llame a Coco

Tel. 483-4554

C P R CLASS at St. John Ambulance

Sunday, Aug. 18, 1996 1-5 pm

or Saturday, Aug. 24, 1996 1-5 pm

Space is limited. Register and pay \$20 to INTERCEDE

YOU MIGHT BE MISSING SOMETHING IF YOU HAVEN'T JOINED YET...

INTERCEDE Caregivers Cooperative, Inc.

Giving our best service, Getting the best benefits

Call 486-0548

VANCOUVER CDWCR

Committee for Domestic Workers' &

Caregivers' Rights

(an INTERCEDE Affiliate)

Contact Julie or Lorina (604) 874-0649

We wish to thank the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program); Canadian Heritage; Multiculturalism Program; the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (Community and Social Services); the City of Toronto Grants Review Board, the Trillium Foundation, and Urban Rural Mission for their financial support.

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c/o INTERCEDE

234 Eglinton Ave. East, Suite 205

Toronto, Ontario

M4P 1K5

FIRST CLASS

IMPORTANT PHONE NUMBERS

Canada Immigration Centre	973-4444
Canada Employment Centre	730-1211
Educ. & Skills Training Centre	
Labour Council	537-6532
Employ. Standards Enforcement	326-7160
Women's Health in Women's Hands	593-7655
Immigrant Women's Health Centre	323-9986
Immigrant Women's Job Placement Centre	488-0084
OHIP TORONTO	482-1111
SCARBOROUGH	1-800-263-3814
MISSISSAUGA	275-2730
Ontario Human Rights Comm.	326-9511
Unemployment Insurance	730-1211
Workers' Compensation	344-1000
Revenue Canada (Taxation)	869-1500
Centro Para Gente de Habla Hispana	533-8545

CRISIS LINE

Toronto Rape Crisis Centre - 24 HR	597-8808
Assaulted Women's 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 Services	924-4244
Metro Toronto Chinese & SE Asian Legal Clinic	971-9674
Toronto Workers' Health & Safety Legal Clinic	971-8832

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Place: 234 Eglinton Ave. E., Suite 205,
Toronto, Ont. M4P 1K5

Time: Monday-Friday, 9 am - 4 pm

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