

Domestics' Cross-Cultural News

monthly newsletter of the International Coalition to End Domestic's Exploitation

JUNE 1985

MINISTERS MEET IMMIGRANT WOMEN

On June 1-3, 1985, a national consultation with immigrant and visible-minority women took place in Ottawa with ministers in the Mulroney Government. Among the groups invited to attend were the Congress of Black Women of Canada, the Canadian Council of Muslim Women, the National Council of Jewish Women of Canada, and INTERCEDE.

The consultation was initiated by Multiculturalism Minister Jack Murta, and it also included Health and Welfare Minister Jake Epp, Employment and Immigration Minister Flora MacDonald, and Secretary of State Walter McLean.

Approximately forty-five women met in closed sessions to draft a brief on issues dealing with health and social services, employment and training, immigration policy, language programs, and funding. The brief contains concrete recommendations for changes in government policy.

In a three-hour session with the Ministers, on June 3, the women presented highlights from the brief and heard initial responses from government representatives. In the section on 'immigration', concerns about the rights of foreign domestic workers were put forward. The brief emphasizes the steady rise in rejections under the Foreign Domestic Program, and the need to fund community-based counselling. It urges the government to continue funding the INTERCEDE Service Unit.

The participants at the Ottawa con-

sultation elected an 'Action Committee' to continue the liaison with the Ministers. The Honourable Jack Murta assured the women that each minister would reply in writing to the concerns in the brief, and that they would meet with the 'Action Committee' in September, 1985.

Among those elected to the 'Action Committee' was INTERCEDE co-ordinator Judith Ramirez.

Representatives from 'mainstream' organizations, such as the National Action Committee on the Status of Women and the Canadian Labour Congress, also attended the consultation as observers.

1984 STATISTICS

Immigration Minister Flora MacDonald recently released the 1984 statistics on the Foreign Domestic Program to INTERCEDE.

Although the Program continues to have a high landing rate in its third year - over 90% - there are some disturbing trends in evidence. The rejection rates vary significantly across Canada, from a low of 2% in Manitoba and British Columbia to a high of 19% in Saskatchewan.

Another cause for concern is the steady rise in the rejection rate: 2% in 1982, 5% in 1983, 7% in 1984. When taken together with a 30% drop in the number of requests for landing in 1984, a 15% drop in landings, and a 25% rise in rejections, 1984 figures are worrisome.

The rate of entry into Canada of fo-

LILIBETH'S CALENDAR

Recent happenings...

- * on May 24 INTERCEDE attended a public forum on "Health Needs of the People in the Philippines" at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education
- * on June 1 Judith Ramirez was the keynote speaker at a conference on "Women and Work" in Edmonton
- * on June 3 INTERCEDE attended a national consultation in Ottawa between Multiculturalism Minister Jack Murta and representatives of immigrant and visible-minority women

Coming up soon...

- * on Sunday, July 7, INTERCEDE will hold its Annual General Meeting at 58 Cecil Street, 2-5pm. Guest speaker: Akua Benjamin, of the Congress of Black Women of Canada
- * on August 11 Tanglaw Ng Kabataan is sponsoring a pilgrimage to Our Lady of Fatima, in Youngstown, NY. For information and tickets, call (416) 252-4510 or 532-1155

...AND CONGRATULATIONS!

- * to CONCEPTION URBINA who graduated last month from a Health Care Aid course...we're proud of you!
- * to AMY SUMABAT who's just gotten a new job...give it your best shot!
- * to DULICE BENJAMIN for the birth of her healthy baby girl!
- * and to our new landed immigrants: EDNA BAUTISTA, NORA GABINO, and TERESITA TOLENTINO, from the Philippines; ROSELYN PARK, MARGARET NEIL, and VIVIENE BRITTON, from Jamaica; and VISNA ILJIC from Yugoslavia...welcome aboard!

- Beth Udasco

Newsletter Committee:
 Desiree Hipplewith, Lynette Munian,
 Judith Ramirez, Pamela Skeete, Sonia
 Thomas, Daphne Tucker, Beth Udasco

1984 STATISTICS (con't)

reign domestic workers is keeping pace : there were 4,390 in 1984 as compared to 3,569 in 1983 - an increase of 23%. The number of renewals for domestics already in Canada is also relatively constant: there were 11,375 in 1984 as compared to 12,136 in 1983 - a slight decrease of 6%.

The total number of foreign domestic workers in Canada stood at 15,707 in 1983 and 15,767 in 1984.

INTERCEDE is making a formal submission to Immigration Minister Flora MacDonald to express our concerns . A preliminary meeting was held on June 28, 1985, in Ottawa, with the Minister's Special Advisor Dennison Moore.

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

If you have been residing in Canada for more than one year, and you have with you one or more dependents, under the age of eighteen, whom you are supporting, you can apply for the 'Baby Bonus' through the Department of Health and Welfare.

You must first obtain a form from Health and Welfare and you must also submit a letter from Revenue Canada stating that you have been remitting taxes.

To obtain your letter from Revenue Canada go to their office at 36 Adelaide Street East 2nd floor. Be sure to take your social insurance number with you! Ask the receptionist to give you a letter stating that you have been paying taxes for the previous year.

You will receive the letter by mail, and you can then forward it to Health and Welfare along with their form.

For more information contact the Department of Health and Welfare at (416) 224-4403

- Desiree Hipplewith

STRONG FIRST YEAR FOR SERVICE UNIT

Domestic workers put INTERCEDE's Service Unit to very good use in its maiden year! Launched in March, 1984, the purpose of the Unit is to offer in-depth counselling to domestic workers, especially those seeking landed status in Canada.

Two full-time counsellors, both former domestic workers, offer information and referral services by telephone, face-to-face interviews, escort services, and ongoing liaison with immigration officials.

In the first year of the Service Unit's operation, which ended February 28, 1985, staff handled 1,196 inquiries and counselled 675 domestic workers. INTERCEDE's monthly legal clinic also advised 69 domestics, bringing the year's total to 744 domestics served!

Of the people who contacted the Service Unit, 45% were West Indian, 31% were Filipinos, 5% were from the UK, and 19% from other parts of the world. The overwhelming majority of clients - 89% - sought assistance with immigration matters, and a full 86% were in Canada on temporary work permits.

Historically, the Metro Toronto area has received the lion's share of foreign domestics. In 1984, according to figures released by the Immigration Commission, 58% of foreign domestics worked in Ontario. An estimated 2/3 of these were in the Toronto area.

INTERCEDE feels strongly that, as long as foreign domestics are coming into the country in significant numbers, community-based counselling and advocacy should be made available to them as a matter of course.

JOIN INTERCEDE

\$5 Year

SUPPORT THE GROUP THAT SUPPORTS YOU!

NATIONAL NETWORKING

The month of June has been a busy one for INTERCEDE. Our co-ordinator Judith Ramirez has been traveling and networking with other groups concerned about the rights of domestic workers.

On June 1 Judith gave the keynote address at a 'Conference on Women and Work', held in Edmonton, Alberta. The event was sponsored by the National Household Careers Corporation, a group which promotes the recognition of work in the home. Judith spoke on 'The Hidden Work Force', underscoring the fact that women who work in the home - for no pay or low pay - make an enormous contribution to society in unrecognized goods and services.

The conference was attended by many domestic workers, representatives of women's organizations, and government officials. Conference organizer Bernadette Swan, who is the Executive Director of the N.H.C.C., said that Alberta needs a campaign like INTERCEDE's in Ontario to protect domestics under provincial labour law. At the moment they are completely excluded!

On June 15 Judith gave the keynote speech at the 'First Conference of Immigrant Women of New Brunswick: Strategies for Equality'. Sponsored by Women Working With Immigrant Women, the event attracted a good cross-section of the community. Judith spoke on the theme 'Playing from Strength', about how to effectively grass-roots organizing and lobbying.

Conference organizer Betty Lee, who is also on the Executive of W.W.I.W., spoke about the fact that New Brunswick's labour laws do not protect domestics and that many cases of abuse have come to light.

Among the special invited guests at the conference was Myrna Richards, President of the New Brunswick Advisory Council on Women's Issues, who said that she is ready to press for

NATIONAL NETWORKING (con't)

immediate changes in the labour laws to protect domestics from exploitation.

When INTERCEDE formed in 1979, only one province included domestic workers under its labour laws. Today, seven provinces afford varying levels of protection.

INTERCEDE salutes the initiatives being taken by immigrant and visible minority women in Alberta and New Brunswick on behalf of domestic workers' rights in those provinces. We were proud and happy to be present at both conferences to share our experience in organizing for change. We look forward to being an ongoing resource, and we congratulate them for getting off to such a strong start!

INTERCEDE MEETING !

Our next monthly members meeting is scheduled for SUNDAY, AUGUST 4, from 2-5pm, at the Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street. Everyone welcome !

SUBSCRIBE TODAY!

As we mentioned in last month's issue of the newsletter, the one-year grant from P.L.U.R.A. has run out. We would like to keep sending 'Domestics Cross-cultural News' to everyone on our mailing list, but because that now includes close to 1000 people, it is a very expensive proposition.

We suggest the following yearly rates:

Government Departments	\$25
Community Organizations	10
Individuals	5
Domestic Workers	Free

Support the cause of domestic workers' rights! Subscribe to 'Domestics Cross-cultural News' today! Send your cheque or money order to:

INTERCEDE
58 Cecil Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5T 1N6

CONGRATULATIONS COLUMBIA!

Service Unit counsellor Columbia Diaz just gave birth to twin boys, Richard and Robert. Best wishes, Coco and Dards!

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Open daily, Monday - Friday, 9am-4pm

416-977-3467

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