

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

monthly newsletter of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights

May 1993



(INTERCEDE)

NAC-INTERCEDE PROJECT ON DOMESTIC WORKERS IN CANADA'S ECONOMY

by Carol Salmon

INTERCEDE and The National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC) have joined together to do a project on the worth of domestic workers here in Canada.

Ms. Victoria Ragas has accepted the contract position to coordinate this joint project which is a component of NAC's Future of Women's Work Campaign.

This campaign is a participatory research and popular education project that will be based on several pilot projects. It has been designed to investigate the global economic restructuring that is taking place and how it is affecting women's work in various sectors and locations across Canada.

As head of the Domestic Worth Project component of the campaign, Ms. Ragas will organize consultations with domestic workers across Ontario and Vancouver to discuss what is happening to them in their work. Workshops organized outside Metro may be the first opportunity for these women to come together and will therefore include information and resources on immigration, labour and human rights as well.

These discussions are geared to help participants to begin making connections between what is happening to them in their communities and to other women both in Canada and internationally.

Data gathered through the various pilot projects of the Future of Women's Work Campaign will be used as a basis for analyses and development of strategies to meet women's needs. And for the development of political and economic alternatives that will give women new work possibilities and an effective place in our society.

See Calendar for upcoming workshops!

NAFTA IS BAD NEWS FOR WOMEN, IMMIGRANTS

INTERCEDE members are going to be counted among the thousands of women who will descend on Ottawa on May 15 to say no to NAFTA, the North American Free Trade Agreement!

Domestic workers are just one of many groups that have been mobilized by The Action Canada Network's (ACN) cross-country caravan to Stop Free Trade and to fight for Jobs, Justice and Equality.

The Free Trade Agreement (FTA) has already helped to destroy hundreds of thousands of jobs in the economy. NAFTA will intensify the downward pressure on wages, as corporations pit Canadian, American and Mexican workers and their communities against one another in order to gain competitive advantage.

NAFTA is an attack on democracy. It will undermine further the laws of all our governments. Rules governing trade under NAFTA will be set by a powerful Free Trade Commission and Secretariat that have no accountability to Canadians. Laws protecting our health, jobs and environment can be struck down as "barriers to trade".

NAFTA contains no minimum social, labour, human rights or environmental standards and no mechanisms to raise wages. The investment chapter of NAFTA will further prevent Canadian governments from requiring foreign investors to operate in a way which ensures benefits for Canadians and from giving preferential treatment to Canadian-owned enterprises.

ACN is asking for all groups who oppose the conservative agenda that has produced record unemployment, undermined social programmes and made life more difficult for women minorities and other

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The monthly meeting will be on Sunday, May 2, 1993 at Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street from 3-5 p.m.

2:00-3:00 pm New Member Applications and Renewals. Members with ID numbers 92-1041 to 92-1206 must renew or be dropped from membership list.

3:00-4:00 pm Domestic Workers' Rights in New Immigration Law
Speaker: Toni Schweitzer, INTERCEDE Board Member

4:00-5:00 pm- Learn to Dance

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disadvantaged groups to unite to oppose NAFTA and to put forward a people's agenda in the pre-election period.

Excerpts taken from Action Now, a publication of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women

NEW INTERCEDE MEMBER WRITES HER APPRECIATION

I really enjoyed reading my first newsletter, the March 1993 issue of Domestic's Cross-Cultural News. It is very informative and helpful. Congratulations to the Staff. I have only one regret: why only now did I join INTERCEDE? I should have known a lot of things already, especially my rights and freedoms as a domestic worker. Yes, I asked friends and heard different things, but they were "hearsay". Now that I'm a member of INTERCEDE, I have the fullest confidence about my rights under the law.

The first monthly meeting I attended on February 7, 1993 was indeed educational. I enjoyed the open forum wherein workers like me could ask questions and receive answers. I asked several questions and received reliable answers.

How I wish I can be a very active member. How I wish I have all the time to participate in all of INTERCEDE's activities. I guess I should just try to have the time.

Keep up the good work, INTERCEDE - a lot of domestic workers like me need you. More power to you!

Thank you Lilian M. Olivar for your letter. Do make time for the group meetings such as the Pilipinas Group on May 30, 1993.

DOMESTIC WORKER TELLS SEXUAL ASSAULT STORY IN COURT

by Columbia Tarape-Diaz

Rita Cruz is a domestic worker, who asked herself the questions "will I get justice?"; "what is going to happen to my temporary work permit if I go through this trial?"

Rita Cruz, testified in court that her landlord sexually assaulted her. Rita rented a room for \$300 where she spent her off days. One night when she was in her room, her landlord came in without knocking and tried to pin her waist and mash her breasts. Rita was able to run to the washroom and lock herself in for 30-40 minutes. Upon knowing that her attacker left the house, Rita immediately called a friend and reported her experience. Also, she informed another friend who immediately came to her rescue and took her away from the house.

On the day of the court hearing, Rita Cruz made clear to everyone that what she was telling was pure truth and with sufficient people who could attest to the incident. She felt relieved by just bringing the information to the court where she believed she would get justice.

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We wish to thank the Employment and Immigration Canada (Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program); Secretary of State; Multiculturalism and Citizenship; 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 MAY, 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 :

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YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES :

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

HOW TO CALCULATE YOUR PAY

Effective January 1, 1993

	MONTHLY (12/year)	SEMI-MONTHLY (24/year)	BIWEEKLY (26/year)	WEEKLY (52/year)
GROSS WAGES	\$1,210.73	\$ 605.36	\$ 558.80	\$ 279.40
DEDUCTIONS:				
Room & Board	341.25	170.62	157.50	78.75
Income Tax	166.50	82.00	76.05	37.90
Canada Pension Plan	23.39	11.70	10.80	5.40
Unemployment Insurance	<u>36.32</u>	<u>18.16</u>	<u>16.76</u>	<u>8.38</u>
NET PAYMENT	\$643.27 =====	\$322.88 =====	\$297.69 =====	\$148.97 =====

Minimum wage in Ontario is currently \$6.35 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.

Gross Wages are based on a 44 hour work week with no overtime. If you work more than 44 hours in a week you should get overtime pay or, if you agree, paid time off instead. Overtime pay is "time-and-a-half" your regular hourly wage. If you are paid the minimum wage of \$6.35 per hour, your overtime pay is \$9.52 per hour. You may or may not agree to take paid "time-and-a-half" off instead. For example, if you worked ten hours overtime, you should get 15 hours off with pay within the next 12 weeks.

The maximum deduction for board is \$49.35 per week (\$2.35 per meal). No deduction is allowed unless you actually eat the meals. So, if you miss all six meals during your two days off, only \$35.25 (\$49.35-\$14.10) should be deducted from your pay for meals. Room is calculated at a rate of \$29.40 per week for a private room or \$14.70 per week for a shared room.

Income Tax deductions are based on Code 1 exemption. If you are supporting dependent children, your tax deductions will be lower and your net pay will be higher. Income Tax is calculated on gross wages.

Your employer is required by law to withhold Income Tax deductions, Canada Pension Plan (CPP) contributions and Unemployment (UI) Premiums from your gross wages. Your employer sends these deductions together with their own contributions to Revenue Canada every month. Each pay day, your employer is also required by law to give you a Written Statement of Earnings.

It is important to keep a record or diary of all your hours of work and any violations made by your employer. If you have kept complete and accurate records of the hours and the days you worked and what you were paid, the stronger your case will be should you wish to make a claim at a later date.

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When the attacker was interrogated, he told a very different story. His story was seconded by his wife who pictured Rita as a loose woman who was having an affair with her husband. Once again, a woman's sexual past behavior was concocted in court to justify or lie about a sexual assault!

Rita claimed that the couple lied. However, the judge made a statement that the attacker had not been declared not guilty but because there was "technically reasonable doubt", the accused was set free.

Meantime, the accused had threatened to have Rita "deported" for going to court. Rita is one more of countless women who felt victimized by the court system. She is also victim of the temporary permit aspect of Immigration's Live-in Caregiver Program (LCP).

Is it any wonder that women, but most specially domestic workers on temporary status, have kept silent about sexual violence against them?

Perhaps going public may serve as a healing process for victims and deter the accused from committing such acts again.

MARK YOUR INTERCEDE CALENDAR

MONTHLY MEETINGS: Planned topics and activities:

Sunday, June 6, 1993

"Changes Domestic Workers Want in Labour Law"
Composing our own Song

Sunday, July 4, 1993

Employment Standards and other protections

INTERCEDE BOWLING SUNDAYS

Thorncliffe Park Bowlerama, 1:30 pm -4:30 pm
Thorncliffe Park Drive
(Pape Subway, Thorncliffe Bus)
For more info call Eva 324-8751

Domingo, 16 de Mayo 1993

Reunion Hispana

3:00 - 5:00 p.m. Centre for Christian Studies
77 Charles St. (Bay Subway)
Llama a Coco Diaz 324-8751

Sunday, May 16, 1993

Chinese Domestic Workers Meeting

Topic: Domestic Workers in Canada's Economy
(Future of Women's Work Project of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC))
2:00 - 5:00 p.m. Cecil Community Centre
Basement 58 Cecil Street
Call INTERCEDE 324-8751

Saturday, May 22, 1993

WINDSOR GROUP

Topic: Domestic Workers in Canada's Economy
900 Howard Ave., Windsor, Ont.
2:00 p.m. - 5:00 p.m.
Register with Victoria (416) 324-8751

Sunday, May 30, 1993

Pilipinas Group

Topic: Domestic Workers in Canada's Economy
(Future of Women's Work Project of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC))
2:00 - 5:00 p.m. at Cecil Community Centre
58 Cecil Street
Call INTERCEDE 324-8751

Question and Answer

Q. I have been working with my employer from January 1992 up to present. I was issued a T4 slip that states a gross income of \$8,400, with contributions for UIC and CPP but without any amount for Income Tax deducted. I am paid \$700 net every month. I know that my T4 is incorrectly done and brought this to my employer's attention but she refused to change it. She told me that a copy of my T4 was already forwarded to Revenue Canada.

A. You have completed a whole year with your employer and the total gross she reflected in your T4 is the total amount of the net income of \$700 every month you received. Your employer is supposed to reflect in your T4 the amount of taxes that she has withheld from your monthly gross income. It is not your fault that no income tax is shown on your T4. Make an appointment with INTERCEDE and bring all your documents.

Q. While walking around at the mall, my mind was occupied with my pitiful condition as a live-in domestic, and did not realize that I just passed the cash register without paying. When I was about to return to pay the item, I was ushered by the security guard to an office and soon a Police Officer came, who took information and gave me a date to appear in court. Can I be deported because of this situation, or will my Immigration papers be affected? How can I get a lawyer for free or with minimum fee.

A. I sympathize with you, however, you have been accused of a crime and whether it's serious or not, it has to be dealt with. Your Immigration papers may be affected if you are unable to clear your record. It is important to seek assistance from a lawyer and you can apply for Legal Aid.

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Place: 489 College St., Suite 402, Toronto, Ont.
Time: Monday-Friday, 9 am - 4 pm
Tel: (416) 324-8751 Fax: (416) 324-8790

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c/o INTERCEDE

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