

DOMESTICS' CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS

monthly newsletter of the Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights

May 1995



(INTERCEDE)

\$975 LANDING FEE REMINDS US OF CHINESE HEAD TAX

Since February 28, 1995, the Ministry of Immigration has imposed a "right of landing" fee of \$975 on applicants for permanent residence in Canada. Refugees and prospective immigrants must pay this fee in addition to the processing fee of \$500.

As a result, a family of four composed of husband, wife and two children would have to pay a total of \$3150 to apply for permanent residence, dependents' processing fee being \$100 each.

The announcement of the new fee structure was greeted with consternation by domestic workers who calculate that it would take at least five months' net wages to apply for a family of four...that is if they receive a minimum wage of \$6.85 per day.

The \$975 could represent as much as three years' salary for an applicant earning an average wage in a Third World country like Sri Lanka. A family of four applying from the Philippines would have to save up all of a year's average wages.

Clearly, the hike in landing fees will restrict admission to women who generally earn less, to the poor of the Third World, and to those most in need of political and economic refuge.

Because the "right of landing fee" is so high, only those who can afford it or who can scrape up the amount can have the "right" to become Canadian immigrants. This is a systemic way of keeping out those who don't have the money to pay the fee; it is a way of putting up barriers against those with low incomes who will take longer to save up the required amount.

The \$975 fee is being called a "Head Tax" by many people who are reminded of how Canada controlled the entry of Chinese immigrant families from 1885 to 1923. During those years, Chinese immigrants had to pay a head tax of \$500, which was equivalent to the price of buying a house at the time. This head tax was later replaced by the Chinese Immigration Act which expressly excluded all Chinese people from immigrating to Canada.

The \$975 "head tax" against immigrants and refugees today is as discriminatory as the head tax against Chinese immigrants of yesteryears. It is being imposed within the context of anti-immigrant sentiments during a time of economic hardship. It is also part of government cutbacks that is hurting mostly women, the poor, people of colour, and the most vulnerable in our society.

Why should Canada just welcome people who are well off, with higher education, able to speak English and French, who are usually "white"? Why close its doors to those who are poor, who are usually people of colour from poor countries, who are seeking refuge from war or poverty?

These are the questions raised in protest during a demonstration on April 22 at the Liberal Party headquarters on St. Mary's Street against the \$975 head tax on immigrants and refugees.

Please sign INTERCEDE's petition against the \$975 landing fee.

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

at INTERCEDE Meeting, Sunday May 7, 1995 3 to 5 pm
Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil St. Cor. Spadina

Topic: **Health, Environment and Protective Laws**

Presenter: **Nita Chaudhuri**, Environmental Health Promoter, Sth Riverdale Community Health Centre

2-4 pm Member Application & renewals of Member ID 94-1175 to 94-1213

CLASP Legal Clinic will be open

Angry protest against hanging of domestic worker

Sunera Thobani, president of the National Action Committee on the Status of Women (NAC), condemned Singapore's execution on March 17 of a Filipina domestic worker saying that "this heinous event highlights the need for an immediate end to all discrimination and injustice against migrant women and domestic workers in Canada and in receiving countries everywhere."

"The hanging of Flor Contemplacion brings to sharp focus the day-to-day violation of fundamental human and labour rights of migrant women, particularly domestic workers, who leave family and country behind in search of employment abroad," said Fely Villasin, NAC vice president and coordinator of INTERCEDE.

"As a sending country, the Philippine government is to blame for its policy of exporting women's labour without ensuring adequate measures

to protect their rights," she added, calling on the Philippine President, Fidel Ramos, to heed demands not only to establish bilateral agreements with receiving countries to protect migrant workers, but also to formulate economic policies that would make migration an option rather than a necessity for Filipinas.

Thobani called on the Canadian government to stop discrimination against domestic workers in its immigration and labour policies and sign and implement the 1990 United Nations Convention for the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of their Families.

"It is high time that Canada seriously question the current economic model of development that subjects women to poverty in the South as it does in the North," Thobani said.

CARIBBEAN GROUP MEETING
will take place on Sunday, May 28, 1995
Call Carol for location tel. 483-4554

Calling Pilipinas

MAG-USAP TAYO - LET'S TALK

**Educating ourselves about
Violence Against Women**
Sunday, May 14, 1995 - 1 p.m.
at Cecil Community Centre
58 Cecil Street (just south of College & Spadina)

In Pilipino/English
Call Eva 483-4554

MONTHLY MEETINGS
Call for details tel. 483-4554

- ☛ Sunday, June 4, 1995, 3-5 pm
Topic: New Facts about Citizenship
- ☛ Sunday, July 9, 1995, 3-5 pm
Topic: New Facts about Sponsorship

VANCOUVER CDWCR
Committee for Domestic Workers' &
Caregivers' Rights
(an INTERCEDE Affiliate)
Contact Julie or Lorina (604) 874-0649

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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 April 1994 (Does not apply to current members)

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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, 234 Eglinton Ave East, Suite 205, Toronto, Ontario M4P 1K5

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YEARLY SUBSCRIPTION RATES :

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

Domestic worker wins sexual assault case

How many more stories of violence against foreign domestic workers will we need to hear about before the Canadian government ends the temporary permit live-in work system that makes these women vulnerable to abuses of all kinds, specially sexual assault?

When will Canada stop discriminating against them and allow domestic workers to enter Canada as landed immigrants - instead of drastically cutting their numbers and setting landing fees beyond their reach?

Shernette Edwards, a domestic worker from Jamaica, did not have to be so vulnerable to the sexual assault she suffered at the hands of her employer, Doctor Umesh Jain.

Shernette arrived in Canada in 1992 as a live-in domestic worker. She was assigned a room that had no lock, was paid \$700 a month for work that stretched 12 hours a day, and was expected to eat only left-overs.

One night, she was sexually assaulted by her male employer. He had entered her bedroom, which is also his home office, on several occasions that night. On the last occasion, he pulled the blanket off her and forced her to masturbate him. He ejaculated into a garbage can, and went back into the living room to read.

Next morning, Shernette gave notice to the doctor's wife that she was leaving the job. The female employer swore obscenities at her and told her she could not leave. When Shernette packed her things, the police were called on the pretext that she might have stolen something or abused the children.

This made Shernette decide to tell her female boss about the sexual assault and to report it to the police, submitting the garbage can as evidence.

At the subsequent trial, the employers portrayed Shernette as a liar and a bad person. Despite that, the doctor was convicted on January 1995.

It took a lot of courage for Shernette to overcome her nervousness and anxiety during her ordeal. But she did not want the same thing to happen to anyone else and proceeding with a case against her employer was the way she could set an example.

Shernette's courage and perseverance has paid off with the conviction of her attacker. She is grateful to those who lent her support and wishes to thank her friends, INTERCEDE counsellor Carol Salmon, the Jamaican Canadian Association, the Victim-Witness Assistance Program of the Attorney General's Office, and detectives Currie and Ward of 41 Division for helping her throughout the court process.

Sexual Assault is a crime! Tell someone you trust, talk to your doctor, to a counsellor, call INTERCEDE, if you have been abused. Break the Silence!

NEXT ORIENTATION MEETING

Sunday, June 25, 1995

12:30 - 5 pm

Learn about Immigration and Labour rules
Workshop on Self Assertiveness

COME AND JOIN US

INTERCEDE

Goes To Quebec for three days

May 20-22, 1995

Fee \$60.00 per day only

Tour price includes:

2 breakfast

Luxurious Modern Motorcoach with tour guide

Hotel accomodation (4/room)

Make your reservation NOW
by paying \$50.00 deposit.

FREE CONCERT - ALL WELCOME

The Manila Children's Choir

Sunday, May 7, 1995

7 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.

Bathurst St. Theatre

(1 block south of Bathurst Subway)

The Manila Children's Choir will be in Toronto for the first leg of their 1995 tour to Canada, U.S. and China. The group of about 30 children, aged 8 to 14, perform a varied repertory of tribal, folk, light classical and sacred songs. This concert is sponsored by the San Lorenzo Ruiz Filipino-Canadian Community Centre as a tribute to the Filipino-Canadians in the Greater Toronto Area.

FREE CONCERT - ALL WELCOME

Applying for Landing in Canada - Live-in Caregivers

A live-in caregiver is a person who was approved to participate in the Live-in Caregiver Program (or the former Foreign Domestic Movement) at a visa office outside Canada. Under this program, caregivers are given an employment authorization to work in a Canadian home, providing care for children, the elderly or the disabled. The term "live-in caregiver" also applies to foreign domestics who came to Canada under the Foreign Domestic Movement which was cancelled in January 1992.

You may qualify for landing from within Canada, if you:

- are in Canada
- have a valid employment authorization to work as a live-in caregiver or foreign domestic.
- have successfully completed at least two years of full-time employment as a live-in caregiver of foreign domestic within the three years since you entered Canada
- live in your employer's home
- can support yourself and your dependants (see below) without asking for welfare.
- or your dependants are not the subject of an immigration enquiry,
- and your dependants do not have a criminal record,

- and your dependants meet health and security requirements,
- have a valid passport.

If you live in Quebec, the ministère des Affaires internationales, de l'Immigration et des Communautés culturelles (MAIIC) must also approve your application.

Dependent children must be:

- under 19 and unmarried, and/or
- full-time students who have been supported mainly by their parents since the age of 19, and/or
- children of any age with a disability who require support from their parents.

You can include all your dependants living in Canada or abroad on your application for landing in Canada. This means that their applications for permanent residence will be processed at the same time as yours. However, all your dependent children, including those living outside Canada, must pass medical and security checks before you can be landed.

Source

Citizenship and Immigration Canada

We wish to thank the Citizenship and Immigration Canada (Immigration Settlement and Adaptation Program); Canadian Heritage; Multiculturalism and Citizenship; Ontario Ministry of Citizenship; Ontario Ministry of Health; Ontario Ministry of the Environment; 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.

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Place: 234 Eglinton Ave. E., Suite 205,
Toronto, Ont. M4P 1K5
Time: Monday-Friday, 9 am - 4 pm
Tel: (416) 483-4554 Fax: (416) 483-9781

INTERCEDE STAFF

Coordinator/Editor: Fely Villasin
Counsellors: Columbia Diaz
Carol Salmon
intake Worker: Eva Jacob

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c/o INTERCEDE

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FIRST CLASS