

Domestics' Cross-Cultural News

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

OCTOBER 84

MAYOR EGGLETON BACKS CHANGES IN LABOUR LAW

On October 9, 1984, INTERCEDE appeared before the Mayor's Committee on Community and Race Relations to seek support for changes in Ontario's labour laws. The Committee had been studying our brief "Upgrading the Status of Domestic Workers in Ontario" for several months.

At a previous meeting on September 11, 1984, the Mayor's Committee had failed to reach a decision due to objections from one of its members who held that the "abuse of domestic workers is a thing of the past". At that meeting, Desiree Hipplewith, a former domestic from Guyana, had been questioned in a hostile way, ostensibly because "she is putting herself forward as a victim of abuse".

In a letter to Mayor Art Eggleton INTERCEDE objected to the disrespectful treatment of our delegation. We asked for, and received, assurances that the Mayor, himself, would be presiding over the next meeting.

Our October 9 delegation was led by INTERCEDE Co-ordinator Judith Ramirez, and two domestic workers on temporary work permits, Elvira Boncato (Philippines) and Patricia Mapp-Ottley (West Indies). Also included in our delegation were: Carmencita Hernandez, of Kababayan Community Centre; Akua Benjamin, of the Congress of Black Women and the Ontario Coalition of Visible Minority Women; and Alison Kerr, of the Social Action Committee of the YWCA.

We urged the Mayor's Committee to take a decisive stand on behalf of domestic workers' rights. Akua Benjamin pointed out that the issue "is a fight against racism and sexism", and Alison Kerr stressed that "longstanding abuses must be ended".

Members of the audience were also moved to speak out: former Ontario Human Rights Commissioner Bromley Armstrong appealed to the Mayor to support all the INTERCEDE recommendations "because they (INTERCEDE) are in the trenches and they know what the issues are".

Trevor Hitner, an equal opportunity consultant, underscored the fact that "the principle underlying all the recommendations is that domestic work should be treated just like work in an office or a factory".

After deliberating for one hour, the Mayor's Committee voted overwhelmingly in favor of endorsing all the INTERCEDE recommendations in principle. The motion was put forward by Alok Mukejii and seconded by Anne White.

In bringing the meeting to a close, Mayor Art Eggleton said that he strongly supports the efforts of INTERCEDE for "their pioneering work which many people in the future will appreciate."

INTERCEDE's letter-writing campaign to Ontario Labour Minister Russell Ramsay is still going strong! We are now awaiting the release of the study commissioned by the Minister on the "prevailing wages and working conditions" of domestic workers in Ontario.

WATCH...WATCH...WATCH...WATCH...WATCH...WATCH

Desiree Hipplewith, Service Unit Staff
Mendel Green, Immigration Lawyer
Judith Ramirez, INTERCEDE Co-ordinator

on "ETHNICITY", Cable 10, Rogers Cable TV
Tuesday, October 23, at 6:30 pm
(also on Mac-Lean Hunter, Graham and Scarborough cable)

Re-runs on Rogers Cable on Friday, October 26, at 1:30 pm, and Sunday, October 28, at 6:30 pm

Don't miss this exciting and informative show on domestic workers' rights!!!

COCO'S CALENDAR

Recent happenings...

- * on September 22 INTERCEDE had a booth at the CECIL COMMUNITY CENTRE OPEN-HOUSE... the event was attended by over 800 people
- * a recent issue of the well-known Filipino newspaper BALITA featured an article on the work of our co-ordinator Judith Ramirez
- * on September 23 INTERCEDE attended an informal meeting called by members of the ONTARIO STATUS OF WOMEN COUNCIL to discuss issues relating to visible minority women
- * on September 11 and October 9 INTERCEDE made deputations to the MAYOR'S COMMITTEE ON COMMUNITY AND RACE RELATIONS and won support for changes in provincial laws

Coming up soon...

- * INTERCEDE's monthly members meeting on Sunday, October 14, 2 - 5 pm, at Cecil Community Centre, 58 Cecil Street
- * on October 13 INTERCEDE will address a meeting of the ONTARIO STATUS OF WOMEN COUNCIL at the Park Plaza II
- * on October 28 Judith will participate in an informal meeting with leaders of the NATIONAL ACTION COMMITTEE ON THE STATUS OF WOMEN to discuss domestic workers' rights
- * next month's INTERCEDE members meeting is set for Sunday, November 4, 2 - 5 pm, at 58 Cecil Street...mark this date in your calendar!!

AND CONGRATULATIONS...

- * to our new landed immigrants : SHARON WILSON, MARJORIE SUMNER, BEVERLEY WILSON, and REMONI SHARMA, from the West Indies; CECILIA GRAVE, from Portugal; ESTELITA TOMAS, LILIA SANTERA, and LINDA CORPUS, from the Philippines
- * to our birthday celebrants LINDA LISING, ERLY VISCARRA, EVELYN DESTACAMENTO, CHIT VALDES and ZENY NEGRILLO
- * to Steering Committee member BEVERLEY WILSON who is engaged to be married
- * and finally, our sincere best wishes to NENA CASTANO who just gave birth to a boy!

KNOW YOUR RIGHTS

On October 1, 1984, the Ontario minimum wage for domestic workers rose to \$3.50 per hour. If you are a landed immigrant in Canada, the very least your employer must pay you is:

<u>Monthly</u>	\$662.00 Gross Pay
	238.00 Room & Board
	36.80 Income Tax
	8.92 Canada Pension
	15.23 U.I.

That leaves you with: 363.05 NET PAY

<u>Weekly</u>	154.00 Gross Pay
	55.00 Room & Board
	8.70 Income Tax
	2.08 Canada Pension
	3.54 U.I.

That leaves you with: 84.68 NET PAY

If you are an experienced domestic worker you can negotiate a much higher rate of pay with your employer. The above is only the legal minimum. For more information about your rights contact:

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT (416) 929-3240

- Cecilia Grave

WELCOME TO NEW IMMIGRATION MINISTER

On September 18, 1984, the INTERCEDE Steering Committee sent the following message to The Honourable Flora MacDonald:

"On behalf of the INTERCEDE membership we wish to congratulate you on your appointment as Minister of Immigration in Canada's new government.

We are looking forward to working with you to ensure the rights of foreign domestic workers in this country."

Newsletter Committee:
Columbia Tarape Diaz, Cecilia Grave, Desiree Hipplewith, Judith Ramirez, Pamela Skeete, Sonia Thomas, Daphne Tucker

MELROSE MORGAN APPEALS TO NEW MINISTER

Melrose Morgan is a domestic worker from Jamaica who has been in Canada since 1979. She was refused landing in 1983 and ordered to leave Canada by April 9, 1984.

In our May newsletter we reported that Melrose Morgan had come to the INTERCEDE Service Unit in March, 1984, and that a six-month extension had been granted by immigration officials. INTERCEDE immediately appealed her rejection to then Immigration Minister John Roberts, who said that Mrs. Morgan would be re-assessed if she successfully completed her upgrading.

In June, 1984, INTERCEDE wrote to the Minister's office to let him know that Mrs. Morgan had finished her Health Care Aid course with flying colours and that she was ready for re-assessment. John Roberts' office took no action and acted as if no commitment had ever been made.

INTERCEDE had appealed to Mr. Roberts on the grounds that Melrose Morgan had not been able to meet the upgrading requirement because her employer would not give her time off work, even though this is required under the Foreign Domestic Program. The same employer later fired Mrs. Morgan when she became ill and had to be hospitalized for a brief period.

As soon as Mrs. Morgan found new and more sympathetic employers, she began to upgrade herself and take other steps to strengthen her application for landing.

Her present employers, Rubin and Judy Osten, are very happy with Mrs. Morgan's job performance and have extended a long-term offer of employment. Her sister is landed in Canada and ready to assist with settlement plans for Mrs. Morgan's two dependent children, ages 12 and 16.

After the federal election, INTERCEDE appealed to the new Minister of Immigration, Flora MacDonald, to intervene on Melrose Morgan's behalf. We have had no word as yet. In the meantime, Mrs. Morgan's work permit expired on September 30, 1984, and further extensions were denied. She is now in Canada illegally, unable to work, and waiting for the new minister's reply.

Melrose Morgan needs your support. She was promised a re-assessment and she deserves another chance to settle permanently in Canada. She kept her side of the bargain by doing well in her upgrading but the Minister failed her by not keeping his side of the bargain.

INTERCEDE urges everyone to write to the new Minister of Immigration urging her to land Melrose Morgan without further delay:

The Honourable Flora MacDonald
Minister of Immigration
Place du Portage
Phase IV, 14th Floor
Hull, Quebec

Tel (819) 992-4883

BARBARA DONALDSON ACCEPTED FOR LANDING!

Barbara Donaldson is a domestic worker from Jamaica who came to Canada in July, 1980. She was refused landing in September, 1983, and notified to leave the country by August 17, 1984.

Ms. Donaldson contacted CLASP who appealed the decision to the Ontario Regional Office of the Immigration Commission. She also came to the INTERCEDE Service Unit and, as her counsellor, I asked local immigration officials to review her case. In a letter to Mr. Walter Bye, Supervisor of the Foreign Domestic Program at the 130 Bloor Street Canada Immigration Centre, I requested a re-assessment on the grounds that Barbara had made significant progress in the areas where she was previously weak.

On August 11, 1984, Barbara Donaldson was re-assessed by Walter Bye and granted a one-month extension of her work permit, pending the review of her case at the regional office. Mr. Bye agreed with INTERCEDE that Barbara was now qualified for landing and he urged the regional office to rule in her favour. We are happy to announce that Barbara Donaldson has just been accepted for landing!

Congratulations Barbara!

- Desiree Hipplewith

SUPPORT MELROSE MORGAN!

MEMBERSHIP DRIVE GOES OVER TOP!

On Sunday, September 9, 1984, INTERCEDE officially ended its one-month membership drive at a spirited meeting attended by roughly seventy-five members. Excitement was in the air as people tried to guess whether we had gone beyond our goal of 50 new members, and, if so, by how much, etc.

When the Membership Committee announced the results everyone was surprised and delighted : 75 new members had joined INTERCEDE!

Since the momentum was still strong, the meeting decided to continue the drive until the next monthly meeting on October 14. At press time the new total stands at 82 new members! This is a full 64% more than our original goal of 50!

On October 14 all prize winners will be recognized for their outstanding contribution to INTERCEDE's first membership drive. They are:

FIRST PRIZE (10 or more new members)

Elvira Boncato and Cora Castillo

SECOND PRIZE (7 - 9 new members)

Una Johnson

THIRD PRIZE (5 - 6 new members)

Luva Wright

Every member who participated in the drive can feel proud of the enormous success that we had. A special thanks to the women who served on the Membership Committee for a tough job well done!

- Columbia Tarape Diaz

*LILLIAN ALLEN STANDS UP FOR MELROSE!

Well-known dub-poet Lillian Allen has written to Immigration Minister Flora MacDonald urging her to land fellow-Jamaican Melrose Morgan:

"As a writer/performer and community development worker, I make connections with all kinds of people, particularly those who are least looked after in our society, and who consequently must face the most massive barriers. They are people who must struggle continuously for very very basic things that most in our society take for granted; the opportunity to utilize one's own potential and personal resources to make a living and carve a future for oneself and one's children.

At this point, this opportunity for MELROSE MORGAN depends solely on a favourable decision from you regarding her status in Canada.

Ms. Morgan's record in Canada...proves that she deserves to live here permanently and, our country, Canada, will benefit from her persistence, resilience and willingness to prevail."

INTERCEDE SERVICE UNIT

Monday - Friday 9:30 am - 4:30 pm

Tel. (416) 929-3240

Evenings and week-ends, leave a message on the machine and we will return your call!

All INTERCEDE services are free of charge

NEXT MONTHLY MEMBERS MEETING ON NOVEMBER 4 !

DOMESTICS CROSS-CULTURAL NEWS
c/o INTERCEDE
348 College Street
Toronto, Ontario
M5T 1S4

Place
Stamp
Here

First Class