

P O S I T I O N P A P E R

The Committee Against the Deportation of Immigrant Women has been formed in response to the growing discrimination and harassment faced by Immigrant Women. Our primary task is to mobilize support within the black community, other immigrant and ethnic communities, and amongst womens' organizations across Canada.

The urgent necessity for building support in defence of immigrant women is based on the following facts:

- (1) Immigrants, primarily those from colonial and third world countries have been used as a source of cheap labour in this country by Canadian corporate interests such as Noranda Mines, Inco, Falcon Bridge, Alcan, and financial institutions such as Bank of Nova Scotia, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, "massive imperialist investment in third world countries". Men and women in the Caribbean and Latin America, for example, are forced to work for an average of \$40.00 per month in factories and mines owned by Canadian corporations. During a period of economic expansion within Canada, these same men and women are encouraged to emigrate and work at substandard wages in this country. Jobs that Canadian workers are reluctant to accept; hotel and office cleaning, dishwashing, factory and construction work, have historically been filled by

immigrants. Their efforts to demand higher wages, better working conditions or unionization have been jeopardized by their immigrant status, their lack of human and democratic rights.

(2) Similarly, during a period of economic crisis, immigrants are blamed for mass unemployment the Government using the immigrant worker as a scapegoat for its own economic incompetence and mismanagement. Social discontent and anger is directed against the immigrant, and the Government pretends to "alleviate unemployment" by conducting mass deportation of immigrants. Bill C-24, the new racist immigration law, gives the Government unlimited power to do just that.

(3) Women, in general, face discrimination at every level of society. Job ghettoization and low wages, cut backs in social services, oppression of women in the family situations, name but a few areas of exploitation faced by women. Immigrant Women, therefore are further threatened by the double blow of racism and sexism. They are discriminated against for being women, as immigrants, and in the case of West Indians, for being black as well.

A few years ago, deals were worked out between the Jamaican and Canadian Governments to send Jamaican women to Canada as domestics and housecleaners. While Canada donates

a hundred million dollars in "aid" to the Jamaican Government, they simultaneously deport large numbers of Jamaican mothers and their children back to Jamaica, creating an increased economic burden on the Jamaican economy.

These women are being deported for allegedly falsifying entry documents and for petty offences committed under domestic and financial pressure. Most of these women were advised by the government representative at the time of applying to enter Canada that it was not necessary for them to declare their dependent children since they were not accompanying them to Canada at that time. This fact has always been within the knowledge of the governments in their country of origin and, to some extent, within the knowledge of the Canadian Government. One can't help but wonder if this is not a calculated conspiracy between the puppet governments in the third world and these so-called developed capitalist countries.

The Committee Against the Deportation of Immigrant Women claim some of the women facing deportation were brought to the attention of the immigration department by their spouses or other individuals during the course of violent acts being committed against them in their homes. One such case is the case of RUBENA WHYTE, who was charged in a court of law for wounding her male assailant during a domestic quarrel. A majority of these women being sought by the Immigration Department are self-supporting with dependent children.

While these innocent women are being deported to their home countries to face massive unemployment and poverty, wealthy, subversive elements like Peter Wittingham and white racist Rhodesians are given open-arm invitations to settle permanently in Canada. This type of discrimination is typical of governmental policy. Over seventy-five per cent of the Department of Immigration's annual budget is used to develop large police forces, designed to "hunt down illegal immigrants". These immigration officers harass the communities, particularly terrorizing women. They have been known to storm, without warning, into an apartment or house where an immigrant woman is living, tearing through personal belongings, without any respect for individual privacy and even using physical violence in the "pursuit of information leading to the whereabouts of an illegal immigrant". Many immigrant women, particularly those from the West Indian and East Indian communities, will testify personally to the brutality of immigration officers. This type of discrimination, sexist harassment by employers and supervisors in factories, cut back in social services, housing shortages, lack of day care facilities, massive layoffs and deportation, all add together in making the life of an immigrant woman too miserable to bear.

What alternatives do we have the choice is unemployment and poverty back home or unemployment and poverty here in Canada. What choice do we have but to defend our human rights and fight back against the system that tries to deprive us of these rights. We must organize together to

defend ourselves. This is the living reality we face as immigrant women and this is the living basis for the formation of the Committee Against the Deportation of Immigrant Women. (C.A.D.I.W.)

As an initial activity, the Committee Against the Deportation of Immigrant Women held a press conference on December 19, 1977, where women representing various communities and women's groups gave personal testimony of deportation cases involving racial and sexual discrimination and violations of their human rights.

Our long-term goal is to develop a united campaign in defence of Immigrant Women. C.A.D.I.W. will hold a rally on January 28, 1978, which is a continuation of the defence campaign for a stay of deportation orders issued against Jamaican mothers and a discontinuation of proceedings pending at the Immigration Department against West Indian mothers accused of falsifying entry documents. It must be clearly pointed out that the only claim the Immigration Department has against these mothers is that they did not declare their children at the time of their application to enter Canada. These women are fully employed and for the most part the sole supporter of their dependent children.

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