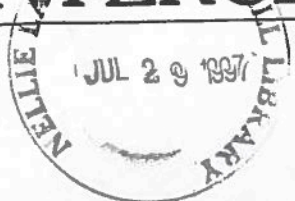


WG-131

# INTERCEDE:

# Toronto Organization for Domestic Workers' Rights

November 5, 1988



## OPEN LETTER TO NEW BOARD

We are writing this open letter because we are gravely concerned about the future of INTERCEDE. The stability and effectiveness of the organization are in jeopardy as a result of serious irregularities at the recent annual general meeting held on October 2, 1988.

Our major concerns centre around the election of the board of directors. At the meeting, Carmencita Hernandez made a motion to void the work of the duly appointed Nominating Committee. The confusion that surrounded the subsequent selection of directors resulted in five out of thirteen board members being elected illegally:

- The bylaws provide for an orderly rotation of seven board members at this year's AGM (two years after incorporation). Instead, all board positions were declared vacant and two directors whose terms do not expire until 1989 were 'voted' out of office. They were INTERCEDE Vice-President Lynette Munian, a former domestic from the Caribbean, and Wenona Giles, a feminist academic.
- The bylaws require that each director be a voting member of the organization "at the time of her election and throughout her term of office" and that to qualify for voting membership one must be "active in the work of the organization". Two directors who had agreed to stand for re-election this year were replaced by individuals who are not voting members and who are not eligible for such membership.
- The bylaws expressly state that "the directors shall consist of 60% domestic or ex domestic workers from various ethnic and racial backgrounds." In the past, INTERCEDE has always included three Asian, three Caribbean and one European domestic worker on its board to ensure fair representation of its major client groups. Of the six new directors chosen on October 2 to represent domestics, six were Asian and only one was Caribbean. None was European. Both Lynette Munian and Jackie Harewood, Caribbean directors, were replaced by non-Blacks. The result is that Caribbean domestic workers have lost their voice in INTERCEDE.

Because of these violations of INTERCEDE's bylaws, nearly 40% of the new board is in office illegally.

These illegal directors displaced board members duly elected at last year's AGM\*, including INTERCEDE President Jackie Harewood, a former domestic from Barbados; INTERCEDE Secretary Gina Hayden, a former domestic from Ireland; and well-known community activist Ceta Ramkhalawansingh. Melita Carbungco, a former domestic from the Philippines who is a plaintiff in INTERCEDE's overtime Charter challenge, was also replaced.

The gross irregularities in board selection were a result of the confusion which occurred after the Nominating Committee's report was unexpectedly bypassed. Directors who have served INTERCEDE with dedication were illegally ousted, thereby depriving the organization of the strength and stability guaranteed in its bylaws.

We appeal to the remaining directors to rectify this shameful situation before INTERCEDE's excellent reputation in the community and with funding bodies is irreparably

damaged. We call on you to convene an emergency members' meeting to elect new board members according to the requirements of INTERCEDE's bylaws.

Sincerely,

Catherine Albert - Past President  
Vice President Lynette Manian  
Melita Carbungco Board Member  
Gina Hayden - Past Secretary  
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\*Some were appointed by the Board during the past year as provided for by the bylaws.