

## Women against Mulroney's Trade Deal

One of the most odious aspects of Mulroney's free trade deal is the impact it will have on women's equality. Job loss, reduction in wages and working conditions will impact disproportionately on women. Moreover, it is women who will suffer most from the inevitable erosion of social services that will be produced by the more market oriented environment created by the deal. Many leaders of the women's movement believe that Mulroney's deal could threaten the gains we have been fighting for over the last two decades.

### Women against free trade

To help mobilize women against the free trade deal, as well as putting forward feminist alternatives to the Mulroney deal, a new group called "Women Against Free Trade" was formed just before Christmas. The OFL Women's Committee and ONDP Women's Committee have played a pivotal role in organizing the group uniting the major organizations of the women's movement in a campaign against free trade.

Women Against Free Trade have already held a successful public meeting, attended by more than 100 women, and a press conference protesting the inclusion of advertisements for free trade material in the baby bonus checks. Future activities will include community informational meetings; various pickets; and other responses to developments on behalf of women.

### Jobs

A greater proportion of women work in the industries most at risk from the deal. Industries like clothing, footwear, textile and leather goods, acknowledged even by the Tories as the industries most likely to be hard hit, employ a higher than average proportion of women.

In Ontario, a large proportion of women in the sensitive industries are older, over 45, who speak a language other than English as their first

language. An older immigrant woman will find it difficult to retrain and relocate. The free trade deal will hit the most vulnerable worker.

Mulroney's trade deal will increase inequality for women and others who suffer employment discrimination. It goes in the opposite direction of the fight for affirmative action, for equality in the work place.

### Social services

While the Tories claim that our social and health services were never on the table, most analysts agree that social and health services will be badly affected by the downward pull of a more market oriented environment created by close economic association with the United States.

Perhaps the simplest way to understand the problem with the Mulroney trade deal is to look at the future we

want. Women and unionists are not fighting for a future that looks like Reagan's America. When free trade promoters talk about a "level playing field", they are looking longingly at the southern U.S. where employers don't have to deal with unions and can pay a pittance to manufacture their goods. They are dreaming about a society where Capital alone is what counts.

Mulroney's free trade deal is bad for women. It will increase inequality between men and women, it will make the rich richer and the poor poorer along the lines of Reagan's America. Since women are the majority of the poor, they will be hardest hit. Everything we in the women's movement, labour movement and New Democratic Party have been fighting for goes in the opposite direction.



*USWA Women's Conference*

*(Left to Right), Janet Davis, OCBCC, Julie Davis, Executive V.P. OFL, Leo Gerard, USWA District 6 Director, Michael Lewis, USWA.*

**PAY EQUITY BILL 154  
PROCLAIMED JANUARY 1, 1988**

## LCMT to pilot equality project

The Labour Council of Metropolitan Toronto will soon be launching a project aimed at increasing the participation of women, visible minority women and immigrant women in decision-making levels of union activity. "The Equality Project for Union Women and Visible Minority Women" is co-sponsored by the Labour Council's Women's and Human Rights Committees. Funding is expected through Secretary of State and the Labour Council.

To achieve its goal, the Labour Council aims to identify and remove barriers which make greater participation difficult or impossible. They will be contacting women, visible minority women, immigrant women and local

executive officers to get their input and ideas. The Council will also organize workshops to raise awareness of how racism and sexism affects labour and to develop support networks for the groups involved.

The Equality Project will culminate in a conference involving all levels of union membership. Conference participants will identify concrete strategies for unions to use in working towards equality of representation.

For information contact: Anne Swarbrick or Catherine Legere at (416) 441-3663. Interested women, minority women and immigrant women in the Toronto Area are particularly encouraged to call for involvement.

## Campaign report released

"Kids not Cash" campaign report has been released. The report outlines in its recommendations immediate steps the Ontario Liberal Government must take to build a comprehensive, high quality, universally accessible, non-profit, publicly funded child care system.

## Angela Davis to speak in Toronto

February is Black History month in Canada. The Toronto Black Women's Collective is celebrating this by bringing Angela Davis to speak in Toronto on Friday, February 26, 1988 at Convocation Hall at 7:30 p.m.

Contributions can be made and sponsors are asked to donate \$50.00.

Contact:  
BWC Black History Month  
Committee  
P.O. Box 147  
Station "E"  
TORONTO, Ontario  
M6H 4E1

## CONVENTION '87

Delegates to this year's convention unanimously supported the policy paper "A Statement on Equal Action in Employment." Unions in Ontario adopted a plan of action in the workplace, at the bargaining table and in our unions.

Two events were sponsored by the Women's Committee. For the third year, participation increased at the new delegate orientation session. This session familiarizes new delegates with the procedures of the convention

floor and provides an overview of the OFL structure, convention rules of order and the process of resolutions.

The Women's Forum was once again a standing room only event. The theme of this year's forum was "Working Together For Affirmative Action". Sister Bonnie Robichaud received a standing ovation after her presentation. The panel, Julie Davis, Bob Rae and Barbara Issac stimulated active discussion from the floor.

## OPEIU "Building Solidarity"

A Northern Ontario local union representing office workers recently held its first annual meeting.

Representatives from all areas where OPEIU has members attended the meeting. That's a departure from previous practice where separate meetings were held because of the distance between Sault Ste. Marie, Wawa, Elliot Lake, North Bay, Tim-

mins and Thessalon.

OPEIU Ontario Vice-President, Janice Best addressed the meeting and spoke on union structure and the apathy of members.

The meeting helped to build solidarity. The local may be small in size but the members are big on their union.

## Child care lobby

The OFL Women's Committee participated in the annual childcare lobby at Queen's Park on November 9th. The Ontario Coalition for Better Child Care organized to lobby MPPs for improvements to child care funding and services, and the wages of child care workers.

Over 400 lobbyists, including 80

USWA local presidents, asked MPs for their position on amendments to Bill 154. Because this pay equity legislation excludes workplaces with less than 10 employees and where there is no male comparable, if not amended 85 percent of child care workers will get no help from the Bill.

## Know your rights!

A new booklet produced by INTERCEDE is a guide to the rights of domestic workers in Ontario.

Contact:  
Intercede  
58 Cecil Street  
Toronto, Ontario M5T 1N6

## New educational material

Four of NAC's policy committees have produced educational pamphlets in both French and English on the following issues:

- violence against women
- sexual orientation
- women, peace and politics
- pension reform.

These pamphlets are available at N.A.C., 344 Bloor Street West, Suite 505, Toronto, Ontario M5S 1W9 (416) 922-3246.

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