

ETHNOS

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Newsletter for Ethnic Liaison Officers, N.S.W.
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INDUSTRIAL DISPUTE AFFECTS IMMIGRANT WORKERS

Immigrant communities and trade unions are anxiously awaiting the outcome of a report detailing alleged complaints about sexual exploitation of immigrant women and racial discrimination at the railway workshops in Sydney recently.

A three-member Industrial Board, created by Commissioner G.L. Walker of the Australian Arbitration and Conciliation Commission, is investigating allegations and will submit recommendations to the State Rail Authority and the Australian Railways Union in three months time.

The Commissioner heard Roger Law, a State Industrial Officer of the Australian Railways Union, make the allegations public during a hearing on a dispute involving work bans by women cleaners on dayshift at the airconditioning depot in Eveleigh Railway Workshop at Redfern, because of alleged exploitation.

The Ethnic Affairs Commission's Project/Planning Officer for Industrial Relations, Mr. M. Young, together with Mr. C. Gonzalez Ethnic Liaison Officer with the Labor Council of N.S.W., and Roger Law, have visited the railways workshops to talk with immigrant workers about the allegations, and to see working conditions there.

A confidential report on their observations was later filed with the Chairman of the Commission, Dr. Paolo Totaro.

"The Industrial Board's report and eventual recommendations will bear great significance on future complaints of this nature," Mr. Gonzalez says.

He has called on immigrant workers and other people with similar complaints to come forward and present evidence to the Industrial Board.

The Board is composed of Mr. Harry Shirlaw (with the State Rail Authority), Dorothy Buckland (Commissioner with the Ethnic Affairs Commission), and the Chairperson, Sue Jobson (with the Anti-Discrimination Board). The Ethnic Affairs Commission is also assisting the inquiry by providing interpreting and translation facilities.

WORKING PARTY HELPS IMMIGRANT WOMEN

A women's Refuges Working Party which meets regularly under the auspices of the Ethnic Affairs Commission has been instrumental in providing information to immigrant women about the facilities and purposes of women's refuges.

The Working Party's achievements to date are:

- * the production of a multilingual poster on refuges with a central telephone number, which is displayed throughout Sydney and in selected country areas;
- * the production of a small version of the poster for use as railway carriage advertisements;
- * the planning and production of a series of radio announcements about refuges in 14 languages, to be played on both commercial and community radio stations;
- * negotiations for the installation of three-way telephones at four refuges so the staff can communicate - via interpreters - with the large numbers of immigrant women using those refuges;
- * production of a "Welcome to our Refuge" statement in 10 languages, outlining how refuges operate, which can be given to new residents.

The Women's Refuges Working Party work is co-ordinated through the Ethnic Affairs Commission and includes staff from the Commission as well as refuge workers, representatives of the Women's Co-ordination Unit, Department of Youth and Community Services and Immigration and Ethnic Affairs.

For further information please contact the Project/Planning Officer - Women, 231 7285.

GRANT TO ASSIST THE BLIND OF NON-ENGLISH SPEAKING ORIGIN

The N.S.W. Government, through the Ethnic Affairs Commission, has given a grant to the Royal Blind Society of N.S.W. for \$3,000 to research the needs of the blind of non-English speaking origin.

Census figures show that 358,000 people regularly use other languages in addition to English in Australia. The proportion of this population who are visually impaired is not known but the Society says the incidence of blindness among immigrants may well be higher than average because of work-related eye injuries. This is probable because of the high proportion of immigrants employed in unskilled or semi-skilled positions in all areas of industry.

The requirements for special services for visually impaired people of different ethnic origin are not known in detail. Because of different linguistic, social and cultural backgrounds, the requirements for rehabilitation, or for on-going services are in many cases likely to be different from those of the mainstream. "Talking books" in languages other than English would be an obvious example.

The research grant from the Commission will enable the Royal Blind Society to help blind and visually impaired people in ethnic communities to have access to appropriate specialist services relating to their visual handicap.

For further information, contact the researcher, Ms. Merryn Dowling at the Society on 747 6622.

YEAR OF THE DISABLED AND FUNDING

This year has been internationally recognised as the Year of the Handicapped Person. The five principal objectives of the year are:

1. To provide maximum opportunity for disabled persons to make satisfactory physical and psychological adjustments to society.
2. Promote efforts to provide disabled persons with proper assistance, training, care, guidance and suitable work and to ensure their full integration into society.
3. To encourage study and research projects designed to facilitate the practical participation of disabled persons in daily life.
4. To educate and inform the public on the rights of disabled persons.
5. To promote effective measures for the prevention of disability and for the rehabilitation of disabled persons.

So that these aims can be met, the New South Wales Government has allocated \$700,000 which is available through the Minister of Youth and Community Services for funding relevant programmes.

It has come to the attention of the Commission that, whilst a number of grants have been allocated already, not all ethnic organisations may be aware that this money is available.

We would urge community groups to use this opportunity to initiate projects for disabled persons in their communities.

The Ethnic Affairs Liaison Officers of the Commission are available to advise and assist ethnic groups wanting to apply.

For further information contact our Liaison Officers on 231 7454.

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR MIGRANT PRISONERS

People of non-English speaking background are apparently over-represented in the Remand Section of our prisons, according to statistics of the Department.

Following consultation between the Ethnic Affairs Commission, Corrective Services, and barrister Anna Frenkel, a questionnaire has been designed from which it is hoped to define specific causes of this problem.

The questionnaire will be administered to all prisoners of non-English speaking background who are in the Remand Section during the next six months.

About fifty percent of the current immigrant prisoner population will also be asked to complete the questionnaire. It has been designed to give information specifically about three areas which may be causing this problem:

1. lack of access to interpreters on arrest and before magistrates;
2. lack of knowledge of bail;
3. lack of knowledge of Legal Aid Services.

Irene Mamontoff, Chief Psychologist with the Department of Corrective Services has already had preliminary discussions with Commission staff, and the Commission will provide interpreting services as required during the six months' survey period. It will also have access to the results of the Questionnaire so as to follow up and monitor the issues involved.

For further information, please contact the Project/Planning Officer - Law on 231 7287.

WHO ARE USING COMMUNITY JUSTICE CENTRES?

About three months ago Community Justice Centres opened their doors to the public in three areas of the State. These centres are an innovative experiment by the Government as an alternative to the judicial process in disputes of a minor nature between people in on-going relationships, such as neighbours, family members.

The Commission has been involved since planning of the Centres began; community consultation, mediation training and selection, and now in the operational phase involving provision of interpreting and translating services for the centres, are some of the practical ways the Commission is taking part in this pilot scheme.

The three centres, in Redfern, Bankstown and Wollongong, have so far received most of their work through referrals by health workers, police and magistrates.

The most interesting fact to emerge in the first three months of operation is that almost 50 per cent of people using the Centres were born overseas.

This could have implications in terms of future planning for the Centres in relation to recruitment of staff, and their training, if this proportion tends to remain the norm.

In the meantime, the Commission is interested in initiating research into how disputes are resolved in immigrant communities generally, and what access to justice is available to minority groups.

For further information, please contact the Project/Planning Officer - Law on 231 7287.

WHERE TO GET INFORMATION

One of the difficulties many organisations and individuals face when dealing with matters affecting immigrants is that of where to get background information.

1. The Ethnic Affairs Commission now has a Library/Resource Centre which is building up a specialised collection of materials on immigrant issues.

It is designed for use as a research library for both Commission staff and outside people who are working on issues relating to the immigrant communities.

Being a Resource Centre, it contains not only reference books and research reports, but also film, video-cassettes and sound cassettes which cover a wide range of topics.

The Library/Resource Centre can also provide an information service in so far as the librarian, if contacted, will assemble collections of materials on specific topics including lists of periodical articles, books, and so on.

For further information or assistance, contact the Commission Librarian on 231 7381.

2. Newsletters such as "Ethnos", which offer specialised information are also prepared by the Anti-Discrimination Board, the Commissioner for Community Relations, and the Ethnic Communities' Council of N.S.W. Like "Ethnos", they are also a valuable source of information on issues which are related to the area of ethnic affairs.

The Anti-Discrimination Board's newsletter, "ADB-INK" discusses issues of discrimination as they affect the community, especially women/immigrants, the aged and the physically handicapped.

Copies can be obtained by contacting the Board on 231 1655.

"Community Relations News" is available from Mr. Grassby's Office, P.O. Box E280, Canberra 2600, and outlines the types of cases referred to the Commissioner for action.

The Ethnic Communities' Council "Newsletter" contains a variety of information both for, and about, ethnic communities in N.S.W. and can be obtained by contacting their office on 267 7255, or writing to P.O. Box J15, Brickfield Hill, 2000.

For information regarding "Ethnos" and contributions to it, please contact the Editor, Ms. Dione McDonald on 231 7386.

COMMUNITY LEADER'S ACADEMIC HONOUR

In recognition of his work in chemistry, Associate Professor Manuel Aroney, O.B.E., of the Department of Inorganic Chemistry (Sydney University), has been elected a Corresponding Member of the Academy of Athens.

Professor Aroney joined the University in 1955 as a teaching fellow. A main area of his research is the determination of the three dimensional structure of molecules using physical techniques.

The Academy of Athens is concerned with the cultivation of and propagation of scientific and humanistic studies. Few scholars outside Greece are elected to its membership.

In 1980 Professor Aroney was awarded an O.B.E. for his services to the community, which include his involvement with many bodies concerned with ethnic communities.

He is a foundation member of the Ethnic Communities' Council of N.S.W.

ALL IN A DAY'S WORK

In the January/February issue of "Ethnos" we spoke of new links being forged between the Ethnic Affairs Commission and the Local Government Association of N.S.W., because of the importance of this tier of government to newly arrived immigrants.

The Deputy Co-ordinator of the Commission's Community Interpreter and Information Service, Mr. Luciano Ginori, has now been invited by the Local Government Association to address Local Government personnel on the topic, "Dealing with Migrant Clients".

Luciano is himself experienced in training staff and running staff development courses at the Commission; on this occasion he will be discussing the use of interpreters in counselling and interview situations, resources for referral within Local Councils, and the difficulties people face in learning English.

The training session will be held at Burwood Council Chambers on 16th June, 1981.

For further information please telephone, 231 7462 and speak to Luciano Ginori.

CULTURAL ACTIVITIES

New Arabic Theatre Production

A new Arabic Theatre Company - the Arabic Contemporary Theatre - is being launched in Sydney with a drama called "Winter of Wrath", written and directed by Maher Khouzam.

The company is trying to build up an Arabic audience for serious drama in Australia.

"Winter of Wrath" is a contemporary play in Arabic set in the Middle East during the run up to an election.

The play is being sponsored by the Institute for Australian-Egyptian Culture and is the first play for the Arabic Contemporary Theatre. All the cast are immigrants from Egypt and are united in their love for theatre.

One of the Commission's Arabic interpreters, Mike Nasir is a co-producer, and Maher Khouzam worked for the Commission for over two years before joining the Commonwealth Attorney General's staff.

"Winter of Wrath" will be staged at TURNER HALL, ULTIMO, on Friday 29th May, Saturday 30th May, and Sunday 31st May, 1981.

For further information contact - Mike Nasir on 231 7100.

WHAT N.S.W. LIBRARIES OFFER ETHNIC GROUPS

During the years 1977 to 1978, special funds were made available to various State Libraries to improve services and books for people of non-English speaking background. Since 1978 the following grants have been made specifically for ethnic services in four Libraries:

Wollongong - which received a grant of \$7,000 for salaries;	
	and \$9,000 for services;
Marrickville - which received	\$9,000;
Fairfield - which received	\$7,000; and
Randwick/Botany - which received	\$3,000.

These grants were made in the 1980/81 period.

Special funds are essential for promotion, provision of books, hiring of short-term staff to catalogue books in languages other than English, and other related services.

The total holdings of books in community languages in public libraries in N.S.W. stand at about 94,300, but there are still a number of books yet to be catalogued.

As part of its inter-library loan service, the State Library has a "Box Service" of 726 boxes of books in 28 languages, or 21,780 volumes for readers of non-English speaking background. However, the Library staff say this collection needs to be assessed and pruned and new volumes acquired.

For further information about Library services for immigrants please contact Ms. Roxanne Maynes on 240 4319. At the Commission, please contact the Librarian on 231 7381.

STAFF MOVEMENTS

Ms. Luba McMaugh, Senior Liaison Officer with the Commission for the past three years, has been appointed to a challenging new position with the Office of the Counsellor for Equal Opportunity.

Luba will become one of the new Conciliation Officers and her extensive experience in community liaison with immigrant groups in New South Wales whilst with the Commission, is expected to be of great assistance in her new position.

Mr. Ilija Vickovich, Planning/Project Officer, Law, is leaving the Commission to become a partner in a law firm in the Fairfield area.

Ilija has done important research for the Commission and has been closely involved with the innovative pilot project of the New South Wales Government in establishing Community Justice Centres.

The Commission is one of the prime training grounds for people involved with community work and specifically work with ethnic minorities. As such, it is proud of seeing its own people so appreciated by other organisations.

STOP PRESS

The Labor Council of N.S.W. and the Trade Union Training Centre have organised a "pre-ACTU Conference" seminar in Sydney for June 11, 1981.

The seminar is designed to provide background information, discussion and recommendations for those unionists who will be attending the special A.C.T.U. Migrant Workers' Conference in Melbourne.

The Sydney seminar is open to all unionists. The Melbourne Conference is for representatives of unions and A.C.T.U. State Branches, workers credentialled by their unions, and community organisations.

For further information about both these important events, please contact Mr. Carlos Gonzalez at the Labor Council on 264 1691.

MORE READING ABOUT IMMIGRANT ISSUES

1. Fascism, Anti-Fascism and Italians in Australia 1922-1945, (A.N.U. Press) is a book by historian, Gianfranco Cresciani which provides a so far unknown record of Italo-Australians' history before and during World War II.

It highlights the links Fascism had with Italian authorities here and the ordeal of Italian settlers in the cities and the outback during the Depression, and the difficulties they faced after the outbreak of the war.

The book delves into one of the many subjects which have long been neglected by scholars and is an important contribution to the history of Australia.

The book was launched by the N.S.W. Attorney-General, the Hon. Frank Walker, at the offices of the Ethnic Affairs Commission last month.

2. The Italian Farming Soldiers: Prisoners of War in Australia, 1941-1947 by Alan Fitzgerald, (Melbourne University Press). This is the story of 18,000 prisoners of war put to work on farms in Australia which greatly assisted the Allied war effort.

Local farmers and the maroon-clothed prisoners at first suffered from language difficulties and mutual suspicion. But the farmers soon came to value the cheerful, hardworking captives. By 1947 many who had been repatriated to Italy were already planning to return to Australia as immigrants. Today more than 600,000 Australians can claim Italian descent.

3. Sydney: A Social & Political Atlas, by M. Poulsen & P. Spearritt, (Allen & Unwin). Two years after the Ethnic Affairs Commission publication, 'Participation', this volume presents basically the same data as we did, but with extensive, well-informed commentaries and illustrations. A must for welfare, political, education and union organisations.

Liaison Officer of the Month



Mr. Leo Vineburg, Ethnic Liaison Officer and Director of Affirmative Action, with the Department of Public Works.

Leo Vineburg, who is Assistant Secretary (Administration) of the Department of Public Works, is both the Ethnic Affairs Liaison Officer for the Department and its Director of Affirmative Action.

Leo, who has worked in the personnel area of the Public Service for the past 20 years, is committed to the concept of equal opportunity for minority groups such as migrants.

He has been a member of the Management Committee of the Ethnic Communities' Council and has a broad knowledge of the issues involved in assisting immigrants to take their place in the work force.

"In Public Works we have two distinct work forces: there are the clerical and professional workers and then there are the "day labour force" workers.

"There are about three thousand of each and we are conducting a survey to establish the extent of the migrant population and what proportion have English language difficulties.

"On the job English language training is needed not only for office staff but also by the maintenance workers, tradespeople and apprentices who are part of the "day labour force".

Leo sees it as fundamental to the concept of equal opportunity that employees have equal access to training and development activities.

During a recent meeting with workers designed to get first hand information about their needs, one worker demanded to know why those of non-English speaking background were going to get what he saw as 'special treatment'.

Leo explained why it would not be 'special':

"English language training may be what they need in order to overcome the disadvantage they experience in the work place.

"Perhaps for some women in the Department the appropriate training course would be assertiveness training," Leo said, emphasising that equal opportunity is for everyone.

In March, Leo's Department piloted the "Career Development Workshop for Migrants" designed by the Ethnic Affairs Commission and the Public Service Board. These workshops are designed to assist staff to develop appropriate skills for interview situations, and related career development skills.

"It is relatively easy to identify the problems of clerical and other office staff, but there are many staff members who comprise a 'hidden problem'; for example, some of the thousands of cleaners in Government Stores. To take only one aspect of their problem, for the cleaners to have access to Study Leave (an entitlement of all staff), special budgetary allocations have to be made for each individual case. We have only scratched the surface so far," Leo says.

"There are talents waiting to be developed."

Ethnos is a bi-monthly publication, edited by Ms. Dione McDonald (Senior Publicity Officer). For all editorial enquiries ring 231 7386. All circulation/distribution enquiries should be directed to Ms. G. Brooks on 231 7374.