



Migrant Justice and Human Rights

A Resource Guide on Migrant Workers' Rights and
Organizing in Canada

Prepared by:

Angela Ciceron, Community Engagement Assistant (CHRR)

Image Credit: Immigrant Workers Centre Montreal



chrr.info



Purpose

The Centre for Human Rights Research (CHRR) hosted Mostafa Henaway, a long-time community organizer with Immigrant Workers Centre in Montreal, for a series of events at the University of Manitoba in March 2024. His main lecture, titled “No One is Disposable: On Migration, Capitalism, and Class”, was held on March 12, and was followed by community events aiming to spark conversations and build solidarity on issues affecting migrant workers in Canada. Henaway emphasized the structural and transnational issues propelling migrant workers to undertake precarious work under neoliberal capitalism, as well as efforts made by migrants to resist against these structures. This resource guide aims to expand on this conversation through providing resources on the experiences of migrant workers under neoliberalism and their role in Canadian society more broadly.

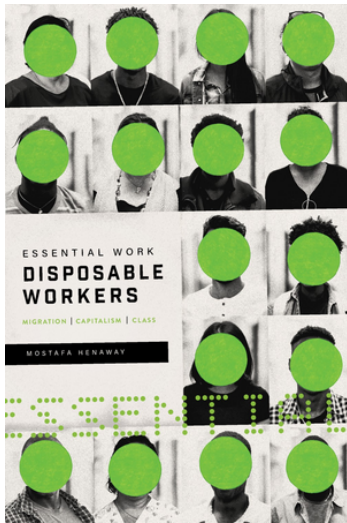
Speaker

Mostafa Henaway, a Canadian-born Egyptian, is a long-time community organizer at the Immigrant Workers Centre in Montreal, where he has been organizing for justice for immigrant/migrant workers for over two decades. He is also a researcher and PhD candidate at Concordia University. His first book, Essential Work, Disposable Workers: Migration, Capitalism, and Class was published by Fernwood Publishing in 2023.



Published Works

► Books



Henaway, Mostafa. 2023.
Essential Work, Disposable Workers: Migration, Capitalism, and Class. Halifax: Fernwood Publishing.

► Articles

Cardona, M. S., Henaway, M., & Shragge, E. (2018). Winning Reforms: The Struggle for Justice for Placement Agency Workers in Quebec. *Social Policy*, 48(3), 6-.

Choudry, A., & Henaway, M. (2012). Agents of Misfortune: Contextualizing Migrant and Immigrant Workers' Struggles Against Temporary Labour Recruitment Agencies. *Labour Capital and Society*, 45(1), 36-65.

Choudry, A., & Henaway, M. (2014). Temporary Agency Worker Organizing in an Era of Contingent Employment. *Global Labour Journal*, 5(1), 1-22.

Hanley, J., Salamanca Cardona, M., Henaway, M., Larios, L., Dwaikat Shaer, N., Ben Soltane, S., & Eid, P. (2018). Transportation and temp agency work: Risks and opportunities for migrant workers. *Cahiers de Geographie Du Quebec*, 62(177), 409-422.

Organizations

► Immigrant Workers Centre, Montreal

Based out of Montreal, the Immigrant Workers Centre (IWC-CTI) aims to defend the rights of immigrant workers through education initiatives, resource and information sharing, and mobilization on workplace issues.



► Migrante Canada

Migrante Canada is an organization which mobilizes on issues surrounding Filipino migrant labour and migrant workers more broadly, and has several chapters throughout Canada, including one in Winnipeg. The organization itself is a chapter of the broader Migrante International, which is constituted of 200 member organizations within 23 countries.



► Migrant Workers Alliance for Change

Migrant Workers Alliance for Change (MWAC) is based in Toronto and aims to support migrant efforts at self-organization. They provide supports relating to employment and immigration issues and strives to unify workers from various sectors and communities to create change.

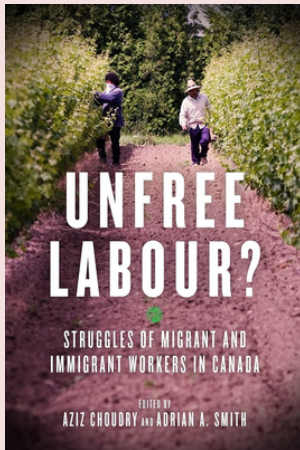


► Migrant Workers Centre BC

Migrant Workers BC provides legal assistance and offers public legal education and training to migrant workers. They have also worked on policy reform and test case litigation, and are driven by the goal of ensuring equitable rights for migrants.

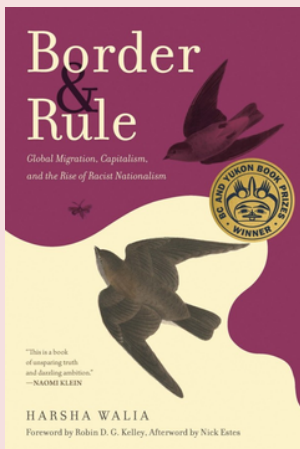


Books



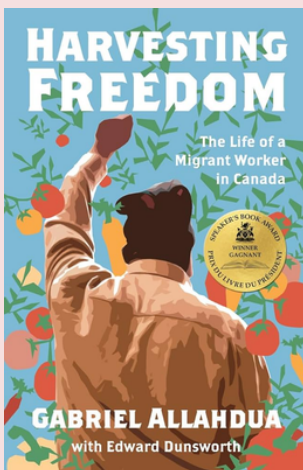
Unfree Labour? *Struggles of Migrant and Immigrant Workers in Canada (2016)*

Aziz Choudry and Adrian A. Smith
Binghamton, NY: PM Press.



Border & Rule *Global Migration, Capitalism, and the Rise of Racist Nationalism (2021)*

Harsha Walia
Winnipeg, MB: Fernwood Publishing.



Harvesting Freedom *The Life of a Migrant Worker in Canada (2023)*

Gabriel Allahdua, with Edward Dunsworth
Toronto, ON: Between the Lines Books

Articles and Reports

Migrant workers' fight to unionize in the Yukon (2023)

By Paige Galette, published in Briarpatch Magazine

Dreaming of home care futures (2023)

By Megan Linton, Mary Jean Jean Hande, and Ethel Tungohan, published in Briarpatch Magazine

End of Mission Statement from the Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery, including its causes and consequences (2023)

By Tomoya Obokata, United Nations Office of the High Commissioner on Human Rights

Justice for Im/Migrant Home Care Workers in Manitoba (2023)

By Leah Nicholson, Mary Jean Hande, and Migrante Manitoba

Equal rights for migrant care workers The case for immigration policy transformation (2021)

By Rishika Wadehra, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives - National Office

Essential but expendable: How Canada failed migrant farm workers (2020)

By Kathryn Blaze Baum and Tavia Grant, The Globe and Mail

The role of migrant labour supply in the Canadian labour market (2012)

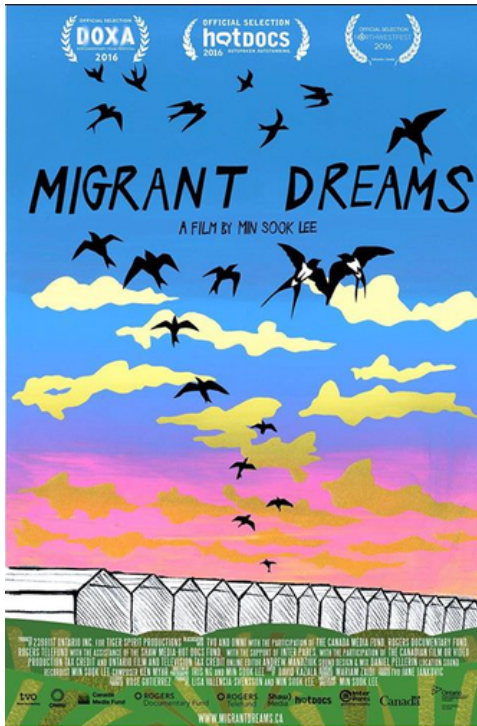
By Stan Kustec, Citizenship and Immigration Canada

Transient servitude: migrant labour in Canada and the apartheid of citizenship (2010)

By Harsha Walia

Other Media

► Documentaries

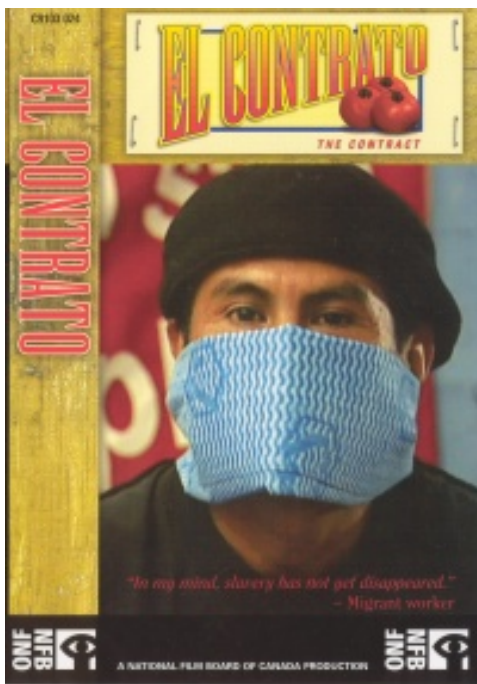


Migrant Dreams (2016)

By Min Sook Lee

“MIGRANT DREAMS tells the untold story of migrant agricultural workers struggling against Canada’s Temporary Foreign Worker Program (TFWP) that treats foreign workers as modern-day indentured labourers and ties low-wage migrants to one employer. Min Sook Li’s incisive film exposes the underbelly of the Canadian government labour program that has built a system designed to empower brokers and growers to exploit, dehumanize and deceive migrant workers who have virtually no access to support or information in their own language. Workers willing to pay exorbitant fees to work at minimum wage jobs packing the fruits and vegetables we eat in our homes. Canada it seems, has failed them.”

Source: Cinema Politica



El Contrato (2003)

By Min Sook Lee

“This documentary from Min Sook Lee (*Tiger Spirit*) follows a poverty-stricken father from Central Mexico, along with several of his countrymen, as they make their annual migration to southern Ontario to pick tomatoes. For 8 months a year, the town's population absorbs 4,000 migrant workers who toil under conditions, and for wages, that no local would accept. Yet despite a fear of repercussions, the workers voice their desire for dignity and respect.”

Source: National Film Board of Canada



A Time to Rise (1982)

By Anand Patwardhan and Jim Monro

“On April 6, 1980, the Canadian Farmworkers Union came into existence. This film documents the conditions among Chinese and East Indian immigrant workers in British Columbia that provoked the formation of the union, and the response of growers and labour contractors to the threat of unionization. Made over a period of two years, the film is eloquent testimony to the progress of the workers' movement from the first stirrings of militancy to the energetic canvassing of union members.”

Source: National Film Board of Canada

Podcasts



Essential but Disposable Labour: Migrant Workers Exploited in Canada

Collaborative Network to End Exploitation



Don't Call Me Resilient, Episode 4

How we treat migrant workers who put food on our tables

The Conversation



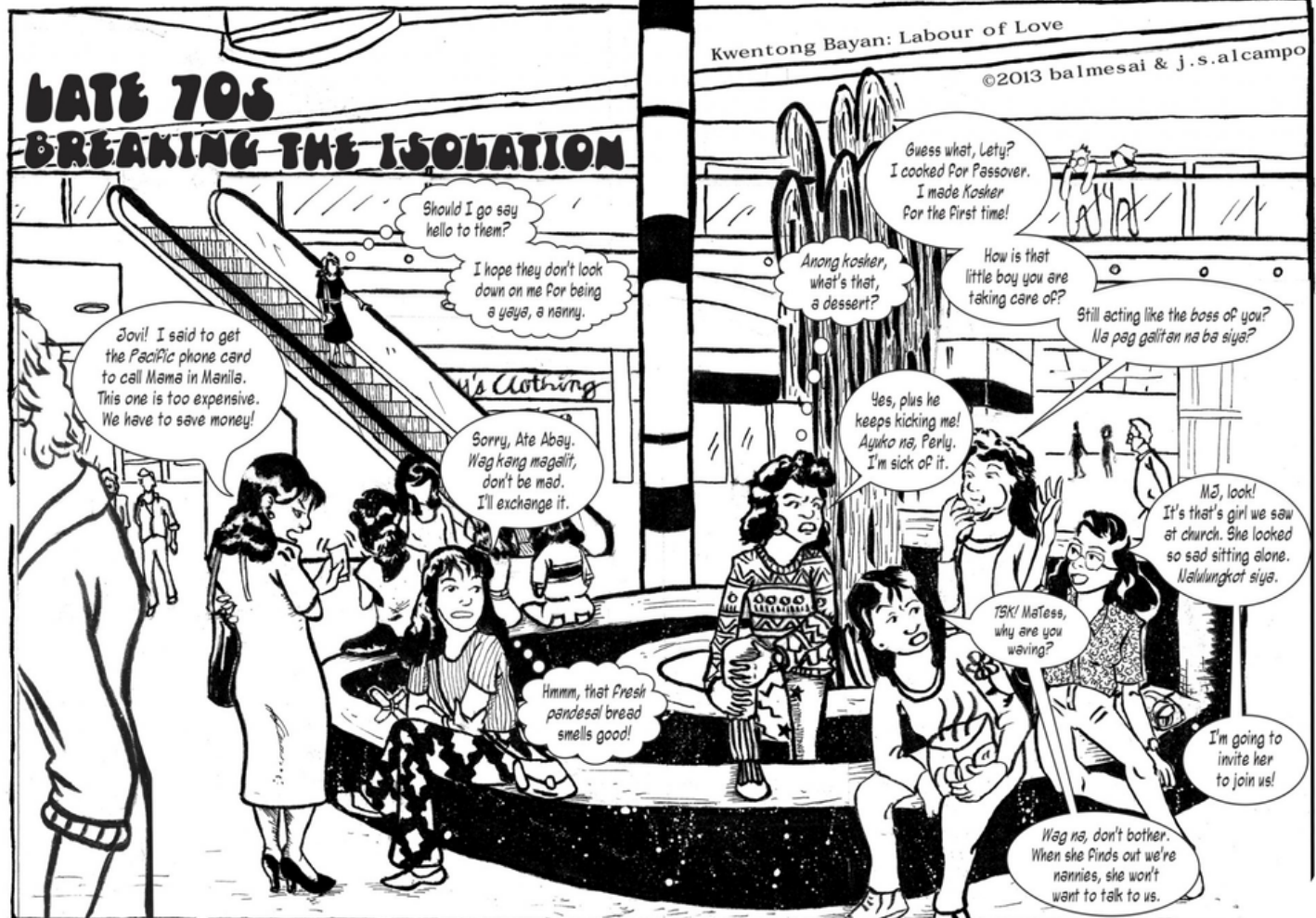
Global Migration Podcast

Centre for Migration Studies, University of British Columbia

► Graphics

In 1973, the Canadian Federal government introduced the Temporary Employment Authorization Program. It permitted domestic workers to come to Canada as short-term migrant labourers. But unlike European domestics, they were not granted landed immigrant status, so had to leave their families to work abroad.

By the late 70s, Filipino community leaders in Toronto began to notice more and more young Filipinas arriving without their families. They met at churches and malls on their days off. These informal gatherings sparked the creation of the first social support and advocacy groups. It began with caregivers reaching out to each other.



Kwentong Bayan: Labour of Love (2015)

By Althea Balmes and Jo SiMalaya Alcampo

in Drawn to Change: Graphic Histories of Working-Class Struggle,
Graphic History Collective