

Unfree Labour?

Struggles of Migrant and Immigrant Workers in Canada

Edited by Aziz Choudry and Adrian A. Smith

Over the past decade, Canada has experienced considerable growth in labour migration. Moreover, temporary labour migration has replaced permanent immigration as the primary means by which people enter Canada. Utilizing the rhetoric of maintaining competitiveness, Canadian employers and the state have ushered in an era of neoliberal migration alongside an agenda of austerity flowing from capitalist crisis. Labour markets have been restructured to render labour more flexible and precarious, and in Canada as in other high-income capitalist labour markets, employers are relying on migrant and immigrant workers as “unfree labour.”

This book explores labour migration to Canada and how public policies of temporary and guest worker programs function in the global context of work and capitalist restructuring. Contributors are directly engaged with the issues emerging from the influx of temporary foreign workers and Canada’s “creeping economic apartheid”—the ongoing racialization of economic inequality for many workers of colour. The collection also examines how migrant and immigrant workers have organized for justice and dignity in Canada. As opposed to a good deal of current writing that often ignores the working conditions and struggles of racialized migrant and immigrant workers, the authors contend that migrant workers, labour organizations, and migrant worker allies have engaged in a wide range of organizing initiatives with significant political and economic impacts. These have included both court challenges to secure legal rights to unionization and grassroots alternatives to traditional forms of unionization through workers’ centres.

Contributors include Aziz Choudry, Adrian A. Smith, Sedef Arat-Koç, Abigail B. Bakan, Joey Calugay, Jennifer Jihye Chun, Jill Hanley, Jah-Hon Koo, Mostafa Henaway, Deena Ladd, Marco Luciano, Loïc Malhaire, Adriana Paz Ramirez, Geraldina Polanco, Chris Ramsaroop, Eric Shragge, Sonia Singh, Christopher C. Sorio, and Mark Thomas.

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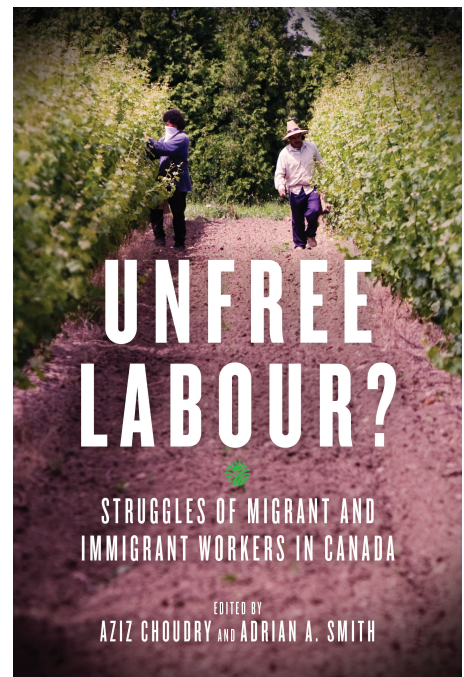
Aziz Choudry is associate professor in the Department of Integrated Studies in Education at McGill University and visiting professor at the Centre for Education Rights and Transformation, Faculty of Education, University of Johannesburg. He is author of *Learning Activism: The Intellectual Life of Contemporary Social Movements* (University of Toronto Press, 2015), coauthor of *Fight Back: Workplace Justice for Immigrants* (Fernwood, 2009), and coeditor of *Learning from the Ground Up: Global Perspectives on Social Movements and Knowledge Production* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2010), *Organize! Building from the Local for Global Justice* (PM Press/Between the Lines, 2012), and *NGOization: Complicity, Contradictions and Prospects* (Zed Books, 2013). He serves on the board of the Immigrant Workers Centre, Montreal.

Adrian A. Smith is an activist-scholar with interests in the legal regulation of labour migration in historical and contemporary forms. He has published in the *Canadian Journal of Law and Society* and *Socialist Studies* and is currently completing a manuscript tentatively entitled *Migration, Law and Development* situating Canada’s temporary labour migration programs in global history and socioeconomic development. He is a member of Justicia For Migrant Workers. In July 2011, Adrian joined Carleton University’s Department of Law and Legal Studies.

ACCOLADES

“Analyzing the contemporary production of ‘unfree’ labour in Canada’s immigration and neoliberal economic policies, this book makes an excellent contribution to the fields of labour and migration studies. Grounded in the struggles of migrant workers against racialized bondage, the studies presented by Choudry and Smith draw much needed attention to one of the most important movements of our times. A must read for all concerned with labour rights and economic justice in an increasingly polarized world.”

—Sunera Thobani, author of *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada*



SUBJECT CATEGORY

Labor Studies/Emigration & Immigration

PRICE

\$20.00

ISBN

978-1-62963-1-424

PAGE COUNT

192

SIZE

9x6

FORMAT

Paperback

PUBLICATION DATE

04/16

DISTRIBUTED BY

Independent Publishers Group
(312) 337-0747
www.ipgbook.com

DISTRIBUTED IN THE UK/EUROPE BY

Turnaround Publisher Services Ltd
t: 020 8829 3000
orders@turnaround-uk.com

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