Globalization and Migrant Labour Conference

Focus on South Asia

November 25-November 27

SFU Harbour Centre, 515 West Hastings Street, Vancouver, BC

Coast Salish Territory

Globalization is a complex phenomenon grounded in the flow of capital, mainly from the North to the South, and the flow of labour, mainly in the counter direction. Within the global “South” there is a differential in development, with flows of capital within developing nations, and a flow of labour from the less developed to the more. Globalization is thus marked by an unprecedented migration of labour that is further distinguished from previous historical migrations by its largely temporary character. Migrant labour in the period of globalization is characterized by its total subservience to the needs of capital: its flow, its temporary character, and its conditions of existence are governed by the nation states to purely serve the interests of capital.

While Canada as one of the most developed nations of the global North exports capital both through direct investment abroad and the hiring out of services that can be performed abroad, it also imports labour in the most cost-effective way to work on its fixed capital in the agricultural sector, in construction, and in the service industry. These are temporary foreign workers, whose numbers now surpass the number of regular immigrants, who constitute the most exploited section of the labour force, a second class of labour without the historically earned rights of workers in Canada.

Within South Asia labour migration produces both the lure of prosperity and the overwhelming experience of misery. On the one hand the failure of nation states to provide the basic necessities of life to vast numbers of their people drive them to seek work abroad, attracted by the prospect of good wages that they can remit home for the betterment of their families. On the other hand this binds them to the most oppressive exploitation in the receiving countries, where they are dehumanized and often deprived of health and life.

The conference will explore a common framework within which the various experiences of labour migration in the period of globalization can be brought together. It will focus on the experience of South Asian migrant labour in the specificity of national conditions but attempt to integrate these different experiences into a global understanding.

The proceedings of the conference will be published and will include submissions by scholars and activists unable to attend the conference.

The conference is being organized by Dr. Hari Sharma Foundation for South Asian Advancement and is sponsored by the Morgan Centre for Labour Studies at Simon Fraser University, the Department of
Gender, Sexuality, and Women’s Studies, SFU, Dean of Arts and Social Sciences, SFU, Institute for the Humanities, SFU, Race, Autobiography, Gender, and Aging Centre (RAGA), University of British Columbia, Canadian Farmworkers’ Union (CFU), and Progressive Intercultural Services Society (PICS), and South Asian Network for Secularism and Democracy (SANSAD).

Registration

Pre-registration for the conference is required as seats are limited. The opening plenary is open to people not registered for the conference but requires prior notification to: cbanerjee@telus.net

For registration contact: Chinmoy Banerjee: cbanerjee@telus.net

Registration fee for the conference: $40.00 (includes lunch and refreshments on November 26 and November 27)

Registration for conference and dinner on November 26: $60.00

Cheques should be made out to: “Dr. Hari Sharma Foundation” and mailed to: 9155 Wiltshire Place, Burnaby, BC, V3N 4L6.
GLOBALIZATION AND MIGRANT LABOUR CONFERENCE
FOCUS ON SOUTH ASIA
November 25-27, 2011

PROGRAMME

November 25: 6.00 pm  Reception

7.00 pm  Opening Plenary: Chair Zahid Makhdoom
Room 1900, Fletcher Challenge Theatre
Larry Grant: Welcome from the First Nations
Chinmoy Banerjee: Dr. Hari Sharma and the Hari Sharma Foundation
Gary Teeple: The Morgan Centre for Labour
Studies and the Labour Studies Programme at Simon Fraser University

7.45 pm  Screening of El CONTRATO

November 26  9.30 am  Registration

10.00 am  Morning Session: Chair Gary Teeple
Room 1700, Labatt Hall
Genevieve LeBaron: Neoliberalism, Migration, and the Changing Contours of Labor Unfreedom
Tania Das Gupta: Precarious workers in the South Asian Community: Race, Gender, Class and Migration Status
Satya Sharma: Where Ethnicity and Class Intersect: The Political Economy of Farm Working in the Lower Mainland of British Columbia
Cecilia Diocson: Resisting the Temporariness of Migrant Labour: Organizing and Educating Migrant Workers in Philippines and Canada

12.00 pm  Lunch
November 26  2.00 pm  **Afternoon Session**: Chair Habiba Zaman  
*Room 1700, Labatt Hall*  
**Vinod Kumar Adhikary**: Issues in Nepali Migration under Globalization  
**Viola Perera**: Rights and Challenges of Sri Lankan Female Overseas Migrants  
**Hussain Bux Mallah** and Haris Gazdar: South-South migration and Citizenship: Ethnic Bengalis in Karachi  
**Samarajit Jana**: Sex-Workers Led Initiatives for Rights and Justice: A Case Study from Kolkata, India  

*5.30.00 pm Banquet*

November 27  10.00 am  **Morning Session**: Chair Sunera Thobani  
*Room 1600*  
**S Irudaya Rajan**: Impact of Global Crisis in the Gulf in South Asian Migration  
**Mahendra K Lama**: Irregular Migration from South Asia in Japan: Nature, Dimensions and Policy Issues  
**Junaid Rana** (Pakistani Migrant Workers and Post-9/11 Islamophobia)  

*12.00 pm Lunch*

November 27:  1.00 pm  **Roundtable**: Chair Harsha Walia  
(Room to be decided)  
**Charan Gill, Sunera Thobani, Zool Suleman,**  
**Raj Chouhan, Adriana Paz, UFCW Canada**  

*3.00 pm Closing Plenary*: Chair Harinder Mahil  
*Room 1700, Labatt Hall*  
**Jim Sinclair**: Changing Times, Changing Labour—the Challenge to Organize and Fight Back