

**Immigrants
are welcome
here**

pages 3, 4 and 5



**Justice for
Grassy
Narrows**

page 7



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HANDS OFF LEBANON

ARMS EMBARGO NOW!



From Lebanon to Gaza end Israeli terrorism

by: Sid Lacombe

The Israeli state is determined to sow more terror and death throughout the Middle East and their actions are likely to bring about a much larger regional conflict.

As we go to print, Iranian missiles are raining down on Tel Aviv and the Israeli state is calling for an even larger response against Iran.

Their attacks on Lebanon— including the indiscriminate pager attacks that killed civilians, children and medical workers as well as mass bombing campaigns in the south and east of the country are just the beginning.

They also assassinated Hezbollah leader Hassan Nasrallah by bombing and destroying a whole block of buildings in Beirut.

These are war crimes that must be opposed.

The Israelis call this new aggression an “escalation to de-escalate” which is an Orwellian turn of phrase akin to “war is peace”. Yet the US administration has agreed with this formula as have many in the western media. US President Joe Biden says he is arguing against an expanded regional war but has not condemned the Israeli aggression nor have they limited weapons being sent to Israel.

This long-expected expansion is partly about Benjamin Netanyahu’s attempts to save his political career by appeasing the far-right that props up his government. It is also about using the particular moment — amid the chaos of the Gaza genocide — to expand Israel’s territory in Lebanon, Gaza and the West Bank.

For Israel, Lebanon has always

been a target. They want to both eliminate any communities of Palestinian refugees that live there because they fear those descendants can delegitimize Zionist control over the area. That was behind previous

health crisis and famine. Official reports put the death toll in Gaza at more than 40,000 people including 15,000 children but even those horrific numbers are likely underestimated.

their eyes, Israel could be relied upon to punish one or several neighbouring states whose discourtesy to the West went beyond the bounds of the permissible.”

This is why all the stories we hear

Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Iran and Yemen. It is they and the US who are responsible for the spiral of violence we see.

Canada

The Canadian government also continues its blanket support for Israel.

The NDP is trying to pressure Trudeau and has called for recognition of the Palestinian state, sanctions on the Netanyahu government and an immediate arms embargo in wake of the Lebanon attacks.

This is a good start and is worthy of support. Any time we can push a government to end its support for Israel and further isolate the state, that is a positive step.

But there will never be peace in the region while the Israeli state exists. It’s an ethno-nationalist project that needs to be dismantled.

That means that our movement is stabbing at the very heart of Western Imperialism and should be prepared for even greater blow-back from the billionaires who profit off of the advantages that come with that brutality.

To be fully rid of the Zionist entity, we need to dismantle the capitalist system where a tiny minority benefits from these horrors if we are ever to stop them altogether.

This will require deepening our movement in workplaces, and among community and activist groups.

Israel’s aggression is a sign of its weakness and the relative decline of US power globally. We in Canada have a specific role to play to further weaken that Western bloc. We need to both call for an arms embargo today and build towards the end of capitalism — a system that means endless war.



Aftermath of a deadly Israeli airstrike in Beirut

invasions in 1979, 1982 and 2006 and the massacres they conducted from Sabra and Shatila to Qana.

But for Netanyahu these attacks are also about burying the humiliating defeat the IOF suffered at the hands of the Lebanese resistance in 2006.

Any ground invasion by Israel would lead to a serious fight that they may lose.

Gaza Genocide

These attacks are following on almost a year of genocide in Gaza. Each day there are fresh massacres of civilians and an escalating

Imperialism

The Israeli state enjoys endless support from the Western Imperialists because it is a linchpin in the project to control the region.

An editorial in Israeli newspaper Haaretz in 1952 summarized what Israel means to Imperialism:

“Israel is to become the watchdog. There is no fear that Israel will undertake any aggressive Policy towards the Arab states when this would explicitly contradict the wishes of the US and Britain. But if for any reasons the Western powers should sometimes prefer to close

about the Democrats in the US trying to curtail Israeli actions are false. They have no intention of stopping the Zionists.

Indeed if they did it would be a simple matter to shut off weapons shipments and financial aid to the Israelis. Instead the US just announced another \$8 billion in assistance to Israel.

And so the larger conflict that Netanyahu wants is likely.

Western media will still describe these attacks as retaliation and self-defence for Israel.

This is absurd.

The Israelis have bombed Gaza,

Strike levels show mood to fight

by: Ritch Whyman

If you look at the state of class struggle over the past four years, the bright light is the remarkable return of the strike — not just in Canada, but around the world. On the East coast of the United States, ports are currently shut down by a dock workers strike. In Canada, we’ve also seen some massive strikes.

It is worth looking at this more closely to see what it means for ongoing struggles on various fronts.

Throughout COVID, hundreds of thousands of workers were forced to go to work while managers worked from home. People who make mattresses, people in Amazon warehouses, nurses, and many other workers were told they were “essential”. People were told they were COVID heroes. But as time went on, that wore thin.

Coming out of COVID, we watched the exponential growth of pandemic profiteers making billions of dollars while people sacrificed their lives to keep working and had their wages frozen at the same time. These two things came together, generating anger. Then there was the explosion of inflation, creating an incredibly combustible situation.

We went from an extremely low point of people fighting back at the beginning of COVID, because of this idea that ‘we’re all in this together’, to a situation where as we came out of COVID that notion crumbled when your boss wasn’t at work. It crumbled again when the landlords jacked your rent. And it crumbled again when you were told your wages wouldn’t go up to match inflation.

So we’ve seen a response to that, whether it’s conscious or not. And it is remarkable when you look at the numbers.

Since 2022, 1.4 million workers in Canada have gone on strike. That’s an incredible figure. The overwhelming number of those strikes were not defeated. People may not have won everything they wanted, but it is hard to think of a single strike where employers’ concessions actually made it through to the vote. And quite often a strike occurred because a bargaining team came back and said, “This is the best contract we’ve negotiated in 25 years” and workers said it’s not good enough.

Just to break down what these numbers represent, there were 1,100 strikes in that time period. In 2021, there were 158 strikes — that means each week 3 groups of workers de-

cidated they had enough of what their employer was putting on the table and decided to stand up and challenge the whole market edifice we’re raised with. You’re challenging the bosses and saying no, this is not a one-sided fight.

In 2022, there were 150 strikes. And in 2023, there were a whopping 730 strikes — just as inflation hit its peak.

So far, in 2024 there have been 71 strikes, up to the beginning of June. This doesn’t include the WestJet me-

chanics strike, the rail strike and others. Still, that is 2.5 strikes per week.

And some of these strikes have caused real shifts in workers’ confidence. If you look at the Ontario building trades strike in 2022, about 40,000 workers walked out. It opened up the floodgates for more people to start to demand more. Then the education workers led an illegal walkout in the fall 2022, which while it didn’t win everything, did beat back Doug Ford’s anti union legislation and electrified everyone in the labour movement. In

the spring of 2023, the federal public sector workers went on a massive strike, rebuilding in that workplace.

Recently, at WestJet, a heroic group of 700 mechanics, challenged the federal government. They decided to read the federal labour code a very particular way, and they said you do not have the right to take away our democratic right to strike. And the Courts backed off in the face of it. The union called the employers’ and government’s bluff, watched the employer demands change overnight from 2, 2 and 2% to massive gains, and won that strike. WestJet workers punctured the dirty deal between Jagmeet Singh and Justin Trudeau that may have played the key role in sign that deal.

And the level of struggle is not letting up. Montreal Ports went out on strike during COVID, and were legislated back to work by Trudeau. Now they’re going back out on a three-day rotating strike. Grain workers at the ports of Vancouver are out, postal workers are moving into a strike position soon, as are college faculty. There are big strikes coming down the pike that socialists have to pay close attention to, because this is where workers get a sense of their own power.



Port workers strike in Montreal

Migrant students: from cash-cow to scapegoat

by: Rohit Revi

There is a rising anti-immigrant movement in Canada, that has also been focused on migrant students. Last month, Immigration Minister Marc Miller slashed the numbers of migrant workers, international students and refugees allowed to enter Canada – fuelling Conservative leader Pierre Poilievre and the far-right, while the NDP has remained silent.

At the same time, we also see some incredible fightback, like the students in Brampton, with the Naujawan Support Network, who have been camping for one month now, demanding dignity and fairness (see page 8).

What has led to this situation? Knowing that is crucial to knowing how we can fight back. And the answer lies in the market economics of the post-secondary education system in Canada.

Neoliberal austerity

This story begins in 1988. At that time, government funding accounted for roughly 84 percent of an average university budget. But in the 2000s, that figure dropped to just over 50 percent, a 30 percent drop.

What happened in the 1990s?

Well, Conservative premier of Ontario Mike Harris and Conservative prime minister Brian Mulroney happened.

This chart shows how public funding to universities was drastically reduced between

1995 to 2000. To make up for that money, the tuition fees paid by Canadian students increased at the exact same rate. In other words, this was an attack on public education. Public funding was slashed, and the cost of education was offloaded onto students and their families.

This is not something that Mike Harris introduced, this is also the story from 1990-95 under the New Democratic government of Bob Rae. Only Harris was much more shame-

less in how he went about it.

There were similar developments in other provinces. As recession hit Canada in 1990, the provinces made budget cuts including to public education. The recession itself was driven by Mulroney's austerity, who along with Margaret Thatcher and Ronald Reagan were the holy trinity of a neoliberal austerity.

up 'Strategic Plans' to recruit more and more migrant students.

From 2013 to 2023, the number of migrant students in Canada increased by 200%. And these students were charged twice, thrice, and sometimes 5 times the tuition fees as our domestic colleagues.

In 2018, tuition fees and rental expenses that migrant students paid

transfer of wealth from the old colonies back into the Empire.

Let us sit with that for a moment.

In addition to this being an education issue, this is also a labour issue. Over the last few years, with the rise in cost of living in Canada, migrant students have been forced into working all the dangerous and minimum-wage jobs. We know that the Canadian food economy is built on temporary migrant labour: from farmworkers to many of the transport workers, to fast-food retail workers, to gig economy delivery workers. We saw how the entire system was dependent on migrant labour – temporary, precarious, racialized migrant labour – during the pandemic shutdown.

So this is also not just about the post-secondary education. This is also about racism in the labour market.

In 2019, the Federal Government released a report titled 'Building on Success: International Education Strategy (2019-2024)'. It says: "Due in part to the aging of Canada's population, immigration is required for workforce growth. International students make excellent candidates for permanent residency: they are relatively young, proficient in at least one official language, have Canadian educational qualifications, and can help address this country's current and pending labour market needs."

This is how the Federal Government has dangled this idea of 'permanent residency' as a carrot, only to use migrant students to save the post-secondary education system from going bankrupt and exploit their labour. And now Marc Miller and Justin Trudeau say permanent residency was never a promise? Having worked so hard in this country, having saved its post-secondary education system from a crisis, having kept the economy afloat during the pandemic, the students must all go back now, just so you can try to win another term in the office? Its disgusting. This is why the slogan

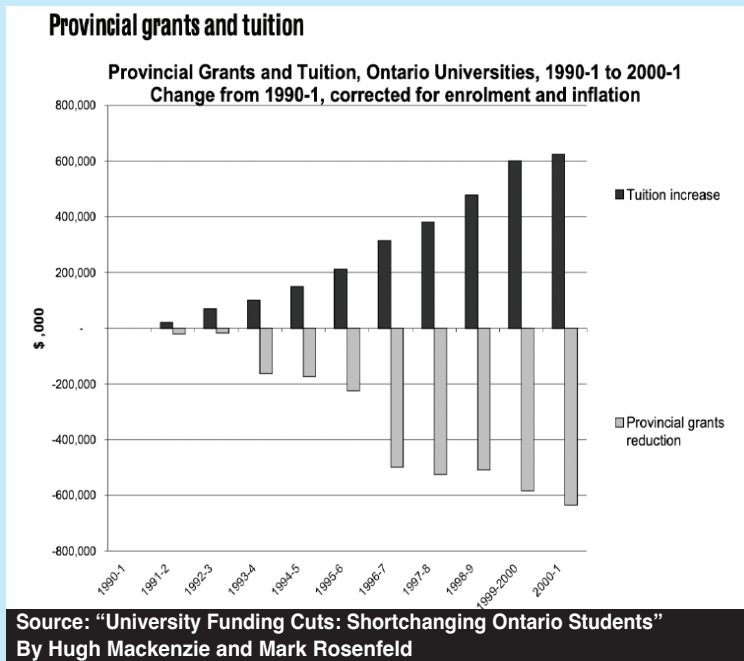
that the students at Naujawan Support Network have raised is so powerful. Good Enough to Work, Good Enough to Stay!

This is the story of the crisis of the university system. How Brian Mulroney pushed an entire country's education into a long-term crisis, the same union-busting, neoliberal politician who sent the military to the siege of Kahnésatake (known as the Oka Crisis). It is this same Mulroney that Poilievre has called "our greatest ever statesmen". Our struggles were interlinked then, and are interlinked today. This is capitalism. It is inherently prone to crisis, and when it faces the crisis, it has to try and push it into the future, or find some way to put a band-aid. The bandaid was migrant student exploitation. But the crisis always returns.

And it has returned today. The Liberal government has slashed migrant student study permits, and the universities are slipping once more into a deep budget crisis.

Within one week of the Federal government announcing their recruitment freeze, Queen's University decided that they will no longer fund Masters' research even for domestic students. This affects all of us. We should know that this crisis is an artificial scarcity. They have millions of dollars invested in the genocide of Palestinians, and no means to run a university? They can invent new and redundant positions in the upper administration, paying them \$200,000 a year, but they cannot give a Masters student funding to do their research?

The failures of the capitalist system – the recession in the 1990s and the crisis in 2008 – leads us to where we are in 2024. The same system that exploits migrant students, is also the system responsible for domestic students' debt, it is also the system that has tried to destroy the union movement, and it is also the system that stole Indigenous land and sends the military and RCMP to attack Indigenous peoples.



So, at the turn of the millennium, government funding was slashed and the universities were now made to rely on increasing tuition fees, but also turning to private donations from wealthy individuals, alumni and corporations to fund their operations.

This made post-secondary education extremely expensive for working people and families. This is also how the system made domestic students dependent on student debt.

So what do the universities do now to fund their operations?

They targeted migrant students as "cash cows". Suddenly, 'internationalization' became a buzzword. All the universities and colleges begin to draft

into the Canadian economy made up \$21.6 billion of Canada's GDP. In 2022, this figure was \$31 billion. In other words, the expenditures by international students brought more revenue into Canada's economy than from the exports of auto parts, lumber, or aircraft.

An average migrant student funnels \$30,000 a year into the Canadian economy. This is basically the money that kept many Canadian post-secondary institutions afloat.

Most of the students also come from the countries that were once colonized by the British and French Empires. So, what has happened here must really be seen as a neocolonial

Police racism and colonialism

Over the 11 days between August 29th through to September 8th, 6 Indigenous people were killed by police forces across the Canadian state.

Jack Piché, 31, of Clearwater River Dene Nation was run over by an RCMP cruiser near Buffalo Narrows, Sask. on August 29th.

15-year-old **Hoss Lightning-Saddleback** from Samson Cree Nation was shot and killed by an RCMP officer early on August 30th. He had called 911 saying he was being "followed by people who wanted to harm him."

Tammy Batemen, a mother of young children in her thirties from Roseau River Anishinaabe First Nation, was struck by a police cruiser in a Winnipeg riverside park on September 2nd near an encampment where she lived.

57-year-old **Jason West**, an Indigenous man taken from his family during the Sixties' Scoop, was shot and killed by 2 Windsor police officers on September 6th.

31-year-old **Danny Knife** from

Atahkakoop Cree Nation in northern Saskatchewan was shot and killed by RCMP officers who had responded to a 911 call about a man with a machete on September 8th.

Steven 'Iggy' Dedam, 33, was shot



by RCMP officers during a 'wellness check' on Sept. 8 at his home in Elsipogtog First Nation, about an hour north of Moncton, New Brunswick.

This outburst of police violence against Indigenous people is not an aberration but a feature of the settler colonial state of Canada. It's the norm and that is a product of the needs of colonial/capitalist powers.

Police and colonialism

The North West Mounted Police (NWMP) was formed in 1873 to assert its dominion in the west and clear the way for railways to the Pacific Ocean. They waged war against Plains Cree and Metis nations for this purpose during the Northwest Rebellion. Indigenous peoples were crowded onto reserves to allow the exploitation of natural resources and to clear land for agricultural settlement.

The RCMP was formed through merger with the Dominion Police of the eastern provinces.

The RCMP and their predecessors enforced a pass system preventing Indigenous people leaving their reserve, kidnapped Indigenous children from their families took them to the notorious Residential Schools and used extreme violence.

Today the RCMP continues this legacy with organized militarized invasions of Wet'suwet'en and Secwepemc lands in so-called BC for the building of the CGL and TMX pipelines against the wishes of the Hereditary Chiefs and Land Defenders.

Racism and police violence are built in to the system.

To end the violence and racism of the police, we must overthrow capitalism, the system that benefits at tiny minority at the expense of the majority.

Immigration: myths, misconceptions, and

by: Umang Chokshi

Anti-immigrant sentiment is growing across Europe and North America. Here in Canada, right-wing politicians in the media have been scapegoating migrants at an alarming rate for the crisis in affordability, housing, jobs, and public services—diverting much needed attention from the corporate profiteering and government cutbacks on social services that in fact underlie those issues.

As public opinion on immigration has been pushed rightward and the federal Conservatives have taken a steady and sizable lead in the polls, the Liberal government has shelved a promised and historic plan—hard fought for by the immigrant justice movement – to offer Permanent Resident status to hundreds of thousands of undocumented people. These are the most vulnerable, underpaid, and exploited workers in the country.

We have just witnessed in England where the stoking of xenophobia can take us—with racist riots unfolding in several cities in early August. Far-right mobs tried to set fire to hotels housing asylum seekers, targeted mosques, and assaulted racialized people.

Canada's Temporary Foreign Workers Programme (TFWP) is currently being panned from all quarters. On one hand, there are criticisms from the right and centre about how the program has expanded its low wage stream, bringing in more farm workers, more cooks, and more fast food workers. At the same time, a UN report released late last year called it “a breeding ground for modern slavery”.

As is evident from the current political and cultural discourse on immigration, the issue is a very emotional one, highly volatile, and very personal for many. Fear, scapegoating, false narratives, victimizing, playing the blame game, and racism only add to the misconstruing and misunderstanding of a highly nuanced subject—“immigration policy”.

Making matters more complicated, there are many different stakeholders impacted by Canada's various immigration policies – each with their own agendas, objectives, needs, and perspectives, sometimes in conflict with one another, at other times in harmony with each other.

The government favours immigration and immigrants as a way of boosting the GDP of a country and bridging the skills-labour gaps in the economy. Governments also need to maintain a certain level of population growth in order to support an aging population and the social services needed to support them—making the

taxes that immigrants contribute (and their life-long spending and entrepreneurial endeavours) important factors to consider.

The capitalists favour immigrants as a source of low-cost labour, providing them with an opportunity to attain higher profits.

Families favour immigration to maintain close family and cultural ties and relationships.

Higher educational institutions favour immigration – through international student enrolments – as a way to fund their operations. Post-secondary institutions have sought to make up lost provincial funding through gouging international students, who pay almost five times more on average in tuition than Canadian students.

The construction industry and developers favour immigrants to supply much needed labour for building desperately needed housing, and also increasing demand for housing.

Further confounding the “immigration narrative” are the different categories of immigrants—each contributing in their own ways. There are international students, temporary foreign workers and agricultural labourers, low-skilled and high-skilled trades people and professionals, refugees and asylum seekers escaping from hostile environments and life situations, and family members yearning to reunite with their loved ones.

All these factors make parsing through all the information and thinking critically an arduous and time-consuming task. Hence, we find ourselves in a situation where people tend to gravitate towards easily under-

standable narratives and explanations of the impact of various immigration policies.

The growth of right-wing politics and polarizing new leaders at the federal and provincial levels has popularized various myths around immigration, migrants, and their impact on Canadian society, culture, and economy. Separating fact from fiction and myth from reality is critical to challenging the right's attempts to scapegoat immigrants for the problems created by capitalism. Here we unpack some of those myths, and provide facts to debunk them.

MYTH #1: Immigrants are causing a housing and inflation (cost-of-living) crisis.

Everywhere we turn, we are told that an unchecked rise in immigration is causing skyrocketing home and rent prices. Researchers have consistently shown that the two drivers of high housing prices are population growth and inelastic housing markets—supply and demand. Connecting the arrival of newcomers to rising housing prices is an intuitive analysis; there are more immigrants, they are buying and renting more, causing prices to go up, and the solution is to slash the number of newcomers. Far-right politicians and their newspaper-owning billionaire backers have also been pushing this narrative.

The trouble is, this common-sense analysis is faulty. The truth is that we need more affordable, social and public housing, freezes on rental profits and increases in the supply of rental housing. The massive increase in housing and rental prices is not proportional to the increase in demand,

nor to the increase in immigration. In fact, investors and developers are able to set any price that they want—and they are doing so unchecked. Simply building new homes won't relieve this pressure on rising prices.

Here are some facts:

(1) Most newcomers are migrant workers, students, and refugee claimants. They are not typically the ones buying homes. Many of these workers—those in agriculture, fisheries, care work and more—live in employer-controlled and incredibly inhumane housing. In agriculture in particular, migrants are warehoused without their families, potable water or privacy. Many of these workers are not competing for rental housing—let alone purchasing homes. Others, like international students, tend to rent – but often in precarious, exploitative conditions. Many immigrants are also poor and like temporary migrants, they are not the ones increasing the demand for housing. They are the people facing a housing crisis.

(2) Housing prices are rising far more quickly than population growth. Even if all new population growth is caused by immigration, the argument that immigration is causing housing prices to rise still doesn't make sense. The population increase (from all sources) in the last two years was approximately 4%, but rental prices shot up an astronomical 20+%. The benchmark price to purchase a home has also increased more sharply than the population has, shooting up about 7% in the last 2 years alone. Moreover, Canada has a declining birthrate. Population replacement requires 2.1 children per woman, while Canada's

fertility rate dropped to a record low of 1.33 in 2022.

These facts amount to one thing—financialization of housing. The investor class is holding our homes ransom. They are extorting vast sums from renters and pressing those who cannot pay into homelessness. This is not a population crisis; this is a commodity bubble created by investor greed.

This process has occasionally been recognized as a problem by the government and even half-heartedly addressed – but in a way designed to scapegoat “foreigners” for the lack of affordable housing. A few years ago, the right-wing bugaboo was foreign investors purchasing Canadian housing stock. The federal government passed laws to curb foreign home-ownership. But less than 6% of homeowners in Ontario and British Columbia are non-Canadian residents, while prices have jumped by 20% in 2022.

There is also a need to reform our immigration system to prevent the exploitation of migrants. We do need a well-funded, well-regulated, public university system that doesn't rely on extortionate tuition costs paid by international students. We need more, better, and denser housing. Additionally, we need long-term solutions that could guarantee affordability for decades to come – rent control, social housing, robust tenant protections, and a public pension that Canadians can actually live on, to name just a few examples. But none of these solutions will resolve the housing crisis. This is because the immediate, causal factor of skyrocketing housing costs is the increasing share of the housing market owned by individuals and corporations whose primary concern is their quarterly profits. The only solution is to take our housing supply back from speculators, large and small. It's time to remind ourselves that our homes are for living our lives, not for generating value for shareholders.

MYTH #2: Immigrants take jobs away from Canadians and lower wages.

There are those who say immigration hurts workers born in Canada by driving down wages and taking away jobs that they would otherwise have if there was little immigration into the country. Again, the facts do not bear this out.

While low-skilled immigrants may compete in the short-term with Canadian-born workers (example: high-school and college-level students) in certain sectors and regions of the country, this effect is small and not statistically significant across the country over the long term.



Justice for migrant workers

and toxic rhetoric

Economic migrants (the largest category of immigrants) are looking for economic opportunities, means of self-sustenance, and meaningful jobs – and so tend to prefer locations where employment opportunities and job availability are higher (larger Metropolitan areas). Whether they are high- or low-skilled, migrants rarely substitute for Canadian-born workers. Instead, migrants often complement these workers or accept jobs that non-immigrant workers don't want or can't do. The mere presence of immigrants increases demand in the economy and can spur new businesses to open – creating more jobs for both immigrant and native-born populations. So where does this anxiety about migrant workers come from?

The traditional labour market model, with employers on the demand side and employees on the supply side, defines the equilibrium wage and employment at the intersection of demand and supply. Employers hire all the workers they need at this wage, and all employees who want to work at this wage can find a job. Immigration increases labour supply. In the short term, holding all else constant (such as the demand for labour and international trade), the increase in labour supply lowers the equilibrium wage and raises the equilibrium level of employment, but it is not clear who gains from the increase in employment. It is possible that some Canadian-born workers lose their jobs or drop out of the market, and that some immigrants find jobs while others remain unemployed. The outcome hinges on stringent assumptions such as full employment, no labour market segmentation, identical skills for immigrants and non-immigrant workers, and immediate access by immigrants to all jobs held by non-immigrant workers. In this short-term model, immigrants are considered perfect substitutes for non-immigrant workers, and they affect the labour supply curve as if non-immigrant workers have replicated themselves. This simple labour market model of demand and supply assumes that migrants are exactly the same workers as native-born workers, with the same skills, education, and talents, and thus, their arrival increases the supply of labour. The irrefutable prediction of this model is that the wages of all workers go down and unemployment increases for all, as the market for labour becomes saturated in the short-run.

The reality is somewhat different. When considering the pragmat-

ic labour market model and job creation mechanisms, native-born and migrant workers differ in their country-specific “human capital” (skills, experience or formal education) – such as language fluency, professional networks, and social and cultural knowledge. Initial skill differences make new immigrants imperfect substitutes for non-immigrant labour. The economics of migration tell us that a country such as Canada needs immigrants because its labour force is not large enough to meet the demand, or specialized enough to handle technological changes. Vacancies exist even under high unemployment because workers and jobs do not always match, or because unemployed workers might not want or be qualified for the jobs available. These workers may shun low-skill, repetitive jobs. Employers may then try to fill jobs by bringing in low-skilled immigrants—or by outsourcing. While the skills required for the job might

workers is that as new arrivals, they do not have access to the same jobs as those workers. In segmented labour markets, immigrants may be placed for a long time into lower tier jobs as supplements to the existing workforce. Although this benefits native-born workers, it can trap immigrants at low socio-economic levels. In addition, immigrants who are self-employed may directly create jobs, for themselves and for any workers they might hire.

MYTH #3: Immigrants are a burden on social services, healthcare, and the Canadian economy.

Are refugees (and many immigrants) a liability to Canada, bringing physical and mental health issues? The research does not bear this out.

The cost of healthcare for refugees actually amounts to only 10% of that for other Canadians. Newcomers need encouragement and assistance in accessing health services. As refugees and immigrants are carefully

screened, they in fact may be in better health than many Canadians. Are immigrants and refugees “free-loaders”, who don't pay taxes? A widespread myth has been circulating that refugees receive significantly more financial assistance than Canadians on pension. Non-status immigrants still pay Harmonized Sales Tax (HST), property taxes, contribute to the Canadian Pension Plan (CPP), and may have social insurance. Temporary Foreign Workers (TFWs), refugee claimants, and permanent residents all pay taxes but are not permitted to access many services. The amount of financial support Government-Assisted Refugees (GARs) receive (through the Refugee Assistance Program) is based on provincial so-

cial assistance rates—the minimum required to meet sustenance and accommodation costs – but this is often inadequate and limited to one year. GARs must prove they have no or insufficient income of their own (adjusted for family size variations). Privately sponsored refugees receive minimum funding guaranteed by the sponsor for up to one year after arrival, and they may be placed in temporary rent control accommodation. Refugees also typically have a significant debt burden for transportation, medical costs, etc. Are immigrants and refugees a strain on the Canadian economy and a drain on our resources? Do refugees cost Canadians too much money? Again, the research does not bear this out. Refugees work hard to find employment and to integrate into a new country despite the disadvantages they face—learning a new language and culture, dealing with loss and trauma, difficulties finding a job, family separation etc. As often happens, the low level of recognition of refugees' qualifications (15%) means that well-qualified refugees are often working at low paid jobs and thus paying lower taxes. On the other hand, many refugees start small businesses, thus creating jobs.

MYTH #4: Immigrants are more prone to crime and pose potential security challenges.

Many people who oppose immigration say that it increases crime. But does immigration really affect crime? Studying Canada—a country whose proportion of migrants has increased considerably in the last 10 years, researchers find immigration significantly impacts people's perceptions of crime but has no effect on actual crime.

Immigrants and refugees seek security, safety, protection from persecution, and peaceful living conditions (it is far more difficult to enter Canada as an immigrant or refugee than as a visitor). Immigrants and refugees undergo stringent security checks (unlike Canadians). Those regarded as “security concerns” are in fact statistically insignificant. Inadmissibility factors include political security, serious criminality, human rights violations, and falsification of entry documents. Once someone claims asylum in Canada or before they are sponsored for re-settlement in Canada, they undergo rigorous security screening by RCMP, the Canadian Border Services, and the Canadian Security Intelligence Services. They are highly likely to be excluded from the refugee process or from re-settlement processes in the event of their presenting a national security threat

or because of serious criminality, organized crime, or human rights violations.

Refugees are not statistically more dangerous than those born in Canada. In fact, a recent study found that newcomers are under-represented in prison populations, and that over the long-term, property crime tends to diminish in their vicinity. Refugees and immigrants commit fewer crimes than Canadian-born citizens, although when they do, their crimes receive a disproportionate amount of media coverage.

A major proportion of Canada's GDP growth is based on immigration. As anti-immigrant rhetoric increases, pro-immigration policies are being set aside. As immigration levels decrease (due to recent decisions and changes to immigration policies), there is a real possibility that people may face greater economic crises as the consequences of such decisions percolate and permeate throughout the Canadian economy. As this happens, it is likely that this effect will be partially blamed on inflation.

Conditions on the ground for migrants, immigrants, and workers are getting worse. There seems to be a distraction from the core issues, a misdirection, a magician's sleight of hand. As often happens during times of higher unemployment and rising inflation, one sees the anti-immigrant and racism train pull into the station. Instead of holding the people truly accountable for the immiseration of the working class and the woes of our present times (the capitalists, billionaires, speculators, bankers), it is immigrants and migrant workers that are being blamed, scapegoated, and exploited. People are being convinced that the problem is migrants and immigration, the border and illegal immigration, temporary foreign workers and refugees.

Every social movement organizing in this country must come together and put resources towards stopping the rise of anti-immigrant sentiment and racism. Repressive immigration policies don't stop newcomers from entering Canada—it just means that those who do come have even fewer rights. Real solutions—like freezing rental increases and ramping up production of public housing, would benefit everyone struggling with astronomical housing costs. They would also allow immigrants and migrants who do vital work – building and cleaning homes; growing, packing and delivering foods; and taking care of children, the sick and elderly – the security to stay in the country with dignity.



Rally in Toronto against racism and for migrant rights

be below immigrants' capabilities, immigrants are willing to accept the jobs in order to move to a country offering higher wages than their home country.

At higher skill-level jobs, vacancies can also exist in the short-run because the existing labour force might not be qualified—as could be the case, for example, of opportunities arising from rapid technological advances. Here, hiring qualified immigrant workers can fill the gap. Immigrants as consumers also increase the demand for goods and services. This higher demand in turn affects the labour market by boosting the demand for labour, leading to an increase in equilibrium employment.

Another reason why immigrants do not simply displace native-born

COVID & Capitalism: a masterful take-down of the drive for profit

by: Faline Bobier

On January 30, 2020, the World Health Organization declared the novel coronavirus outbreak a public emergency of international concern. On March 11, the WHO declared COVID-19 as a pandemic.

The articles contained in *COVID & Capitalism*, a new pamphlet written by Socialist Worker columnist John Bell, track the evolving disease and political response, from February 2020 to March 2024.

Together, they constitute a remarkable document – as journalism, historical record, and personal memoir.

For over four decades, in his much-loved column Left Jab, John Bell took on Canada's elites and the politicians who serve them. In 2018, after several years of a debilitating respiratory illness, he received a double-lung transplant. His new lungs were literally a new lease on life, and his many readers reaped the benefits of his prodigious output of writing.

In October 2023, John had a fall and broke his hip, which led to his hospitalisation. He contracted COVID in hospital, which led to a cascade of worsening health – and ultimately, to his death on March 28, 2024.

But throughout his hospitalisation, he continued to write.

Even before the pandemic was declared, and long after the WHO announced the end of COVID-19 as a global health emergency on May 5, 2023, John warned of the deadly consequences of COVID policies which left immunocompromised people at risk in hospital settings.

With the recent recurrence of COVID outbreaks in the US and Canada, beginning in the summer of 2024 and continuing today, John's warnings about the dire consequences of capitalism's encroachment on nature and drive for profit above all else are a reminder that it is dangerous to trust the words of politicians like Doug Ford, Scott Moe or Donald Trump. All throughout the height of the COVID pandemic they wanted nothing more than to claim it was either a 'hoax', over, or something we could learn to live (and die) with if we would just get on with the business of making money for the billionaires, only risking our lives and lungs in the process.

Two central themes emerge from this collection of articles: capitalism's intrinsic inhumanity and destruction, and COVID's impact on the rise of the far-right, both electorally and on the streets.

In one of the articles in this collection – Dying for dollars: capitalism is a death cult – John begins with this quote from Karl Marx: "Capitalist production, therefore, only develops the techniques and the degree of combination of the social process of production by simultaneously undermining the original sources of all wealth – the soil and the worker."

Two of John's (and Marx's) central preoccupations were the destruction of the

natural environment (including human beings themselves) and the terrible cost of the drive for profit on the lives and bodies of working class people.

COVID exacerbated and highlighted this destructive power of capitalism as a system

and John points this out repeatedly in his biting polemic. He also demonstrates to devastating effect how those at the sharp end of COVID are also those at the sharp end of capitalism: workers in typically low paid jobs in the service and manufacturing sectors and,

disproportionately, immigrants and workers of colour.

Another theme that is woven throughout is how the dismantling of our public healthcare system aided and abetted the spread and destructive power of the pandemic. Politicians like Doug Ford in Ontario and Scott Moe in Saskatchewan are in the process of gutting public healthcare by starving hospital budgets, cutting or not hiring nursing and other essential staff and then allowing the opening up of for-profit private clinics that further leech badly needed resources from our public system.

John's take-down of the long-term care (LTC) sector and the drive for profit is masterful. During the pandemic the death rates in mostly for-profit LTC facilities sky-rocketed. This is because of the conditions in those residences: no private space (people living four to a room) where the possibility of social distancing is a joke.

But John doesn't scapegoat the workers in LTC as the problem. He describes how they are also victims of the bosses' drive for profit, including greedy politicians like former Ontario Tory premier Mike Harris, who moved to privatize LTC when he was in power and who used to sit on the board of one of the most profitably privatized LTC corporations – Chartwell.

Workers in LTC facilities are often part-time and underpaid and so have to work in multiple residences – which of course, under COVID, increased the possibility of the transmission of the disease: "For-profit LTC is always looking for ways to cut costs, especially the labour of a workforce that is predominantly female, drawn from new Canadian populations, and underpaid regardless of their seniority, skills and dedication."

The articles in this collection also clearly predict and describe the way racism and division have been sewed by our governments' inability and unwillingness to face the COVID crisis with real solutions, because this would go against their system's drive to monetize even the worst humanitarian crisis.

The rhetoric of the Convoy crowd, or rather the far-right elements which are the organization behind the movement, seeks to blame immigration and to unite people in a movement of hate. This has been somewhat successful, and John explains why: "The hydra-headed crisis – declining living standards, environmental destruction, and now global pandemics – create a huge pool of anger, resentment and confusion. Unless they are posed with a healthier alternative, many will be drawn to the simplistic and toxic ideas of fascism."

John's writing is a weapon in the struggle against the rise of these right-wing racist solutions. It is also a weapon in the struggle against the horrors of the capitalist system which puts profit before human need. His sharp analysis, humour and abiding concern for working class people, the exploited and the oppressed shine through and arm us as well.

COVID & CAPITALISM



Plague diary of a Left JABber by John Bell

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Territorial Acknowledgment

As settlers, we acknowledge our occupation of lands that are the Indigenous territories of Turtle Island. Furthermore, we support all struggles for Indigenous sovereignty in whatever forms they take by the hundreds of First Nations and Inuit communities that have resided here for many thousands of years, and by Métis communities that have developed in the last hundreds of years.

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Don't let Ford undermine Grassy Narrows solidarity

by: Brian Champ

More than 8000 people participated in this year's Grassy Narrows River Run during the day on Sept 18th, an annual rally and march led by Asubpeeschoseewagong Anishinabek (commonly known as Grassy Narrows) First Nations people to demand justice for decades of mercury poisoning of their land. Hundreds of community groups mobilized people from Toronto and by bus from other places across Ontario to support their demands on provincial and federal governments, which are:

- Compensate everyone in Grassy Narrows fairly for the mercury crisis
- Respect the Grassy Narrows Indigenous Protected Area (end mining and logging plans in Grassy Narrows territory)
- Support Grassy Narrows in restoring their community and way of life from the damage that mercury has done

People of all ages participated, representing many diverse communities in a brilliant show of solidarity. Students from about 15 Toronto District School Board (TDSB) elementary, middle and high schools participated, reminiscent of the mass student climate strikes that erupted in 2019.

Chief Rudy Turtle said "These practices have to change. It's damaging our land. We want our land to remain intact because of our cultural practices, our way of life."

Grassy Narrows launched lawsuits this summer against both the Ontario and federal governments for violating Treaty 3 by failing to prevent or remediate mercury poisoning on their land. They have also filed a challenge to the Ford government's Mining Act for violating Indigenous rights protected by section 35 of the constitution. The law does not require mining prospectors to consult Indigenous peoples before staking claims on their land.

Chief Rudy Turtle said "These practices have to change. It's damaging our land. We want our land to remain intact because of our cultural practices, our way of life."

Grassy Narrows is also an integral part of

the historic Land Defense Alliance of First Nations that opposes mining developments in Treaty 9 territory (the so-called "Ring of Fire"). This alliance also includes the Ojibwe nation of Neskantaga, Kitchenuhmaykoosib Inninuwug (KI-Big Trout Lake), Ojibways of Onigaming, Muskrat Dam and Wapekeka First Nations. The alliance has also publicly denounced the proposal to dump nuclear waste on Indigenous lands.

Expanding mining and radioactive dumping on Indigenous lands are all aspects of ongoing Canadian settler colonial genocide, which Ford seeks to deepen and accelerate.

Other aspects of Canada's genocide against Indigenous peoples include:

- mass graves at former Indian Residential "Schools" documented by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and ground radar findings
- ongoing kidnapping of Indigenous children by child welfare agencies

colonial states built on attempts to kill, erase, exclude and expel the original inhabitants of the claimed lands.

To reciprocate the solidarity shown, the Palestinian Youth Movement in Toronto joined Grassy Narrows River Run this year, leading chants such as "From Turtle Island to Palestine, Occupation is a Crime". These connections, and the radicalization of large numbers of people who have participated in solidarity with Palestinians is a source of hope in a world racked by climate crisis, war, genocide, racism and growing inequality.

But the mere presence of Palestinians at an event attended by TDSB students has led to a Zionist backlash, using the familiar charge of anti-semitism against those who speak out against Israel's nearly year long genocide, a term that has been upheld by the UN general assembly and the International Court of Justice.

Under this pressure, the TDSB apologized

at Toronto City Hall in April, 2022 to protest the Russian invasion of Ukraine.

Ford said students "should be in the classroom learning about reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic — the whole shebang," but "activist teachers" instead "want to bring them down to a rally, a Palestinian rally, and it's ridiculous."

What's ridiculous is Ford characterizing Grassy Narrows River Run as a Palestinian rally, and not once acknowledging the clear and urgent demands for justice on his government. Instead, he went on to attack "activist" teachers.

"Number one, you shouldn't be teaching our kids," the premier added. "But number two, stick with your knitting — stick with teaching the kids the geography, history, math, spelling, that's what they need."

At a special meeting of the TDSB on September 25th, trustees suspended their own investigation and asked the Ministry to publish their investigation report by December 21st.

If Toronto Sun columnist John Snobelin gets his way the TDSB would be disbanded, furthering the attacks on public education in this province.

The Zionist backlash has not gone without resistance, however.

The Elementary Teachers of Toronto (ETT) responded: "once again we see an Indigenous community's issues dismissed, and their story buried. We see the vilification of links made between solidarity movements on Turtle Island and Palestine. And we see TDSB Staff and Trustees publicly weighing in before any process has actually been undertaken or completed."

A joint statement by Toronto Palestinian Families and Toronto Jewish Families expressed their concern about the investigations and the TDSB apology, calling them "clear examples of systemic anti-Palestinian racism embedded in our government institutions."

"The mere presence of Palestinians and supporters of Palestinian human rights at an event should never be grounds for an apology or investigation," they said.

While Ford's silence on upholding Indigenous rights is deafening, he clearly expressed sexism and contempt for teachers ("Stick with your knitting") and his advocacy for 3 "R's" education guidelines make one wonder whether he should be commenting on education at all. His far right dog-whistles about left wing "indoctrination" at schools aligns with the US backlash against "gender ideology" and "critical race theory".

And the Minister of Education looking to prevent any participation in any protest demonstrates the real target of their anger and fear - that people across the province might come together in a united movement of movements to bring their government down.



- ongoing missing and murdered Indigenous women, girls and two spirit people
- high levels of police violence against Indigenous people
- RCMP invasions of Indigenous land for pipelines and other destructive infrastructure

Over the past year, when protests erupted globally against the genocide of Palestinians in Gaza, many Indigenous peoples across Canada joined in support, calling for an end to the genocide and for the Canadian government to end their complicity. There was a recognition that, while there are differences between Canada and Israel, both are settler

"for any harm done" and launched an investigation.

While Doug Ford continues to disgustingly and disgracefully ignore the demands of Indigenous peoples upholding their rights, he has taken the opportunity to call these student field trips "disgusting" and "disgraceful", attacked the TDSB and the teachers involved and pushed Education Minister Jill Dunlop to state that "our government firmly believes that publicly funded schools and activities should never be used as vehicles for political protests." while launching their own investigation.

But this "firm belief" was not enforced when students from 3 Catholic schools rallied

...continued from page 8

Convoy Conservatives

All of this has opened things up for John Rustad and the BC Conservatives. His party represents the mainstreaming of far right convoy politics. Rustad was a former BC Liberal cabinet minister. He was kicked out of the opposition Liberals for being too much of a climate denier even for them. He has publicly derided vaccines. He promises to shut down safe injection sites. His platform includes the far right's attacks on trans people, promising to respect "parental rights" in schools. Most recently he pledged to undo the legislation that places the UN Declaration on the Rights Of Indigenous People into BC laws. As much as this has been ignored by the NDP since pass-



Safe supply advocates march in Victoria

ing the law, the attack on it represents more Indigenous rights being trampled to provide profits for resource companies and a general ratcheting up of the anti-Indigenous racism in this province.

Don't mourn, organize

In a few weeks BC will either have a convoy premier or a convoy leader of the opposition. In either case only a determined fight back can protect us. The protests and rallies to defend trans rights, to defend Indigenous Sovereignty and defeat planet killing resource projects, to demand rent control and public housing must start immediately. Even small actions can spark bigger movements and along the way they can win people away from the politics of despair that both leaders are peddling.

BC Election: Putting the evil back in lesser evilism

This latest iteration of an NDP provincial government always had plenty in common with their opposition party the Liberals. Now that the Liberals (re-branded as BC United) have abandoned the race, the NDP is moving closer to the right wing convoy politics of the BC Conservatives.

Liberal Policies

Shortly after becoming government in 2017 they announced that they would continue the Site C hydroelectric project that the Liberals had started. This was despite the widespread opposition by Indigenous nations and organizations and many of their own MLAs who had campaigned on the promise to cancel the expensive, unnecessary and environmentally destructive project. Then they took up the Liberals' plans for fracked gas export terminals. The Liberals had failed to get a single project moving, but the NDP brought this back to life by offering even greater tax cuts and subsidies to pad fossil fuel company profits. This of course led them to send in the racist RCMP with attack dogs and machine guns to remove Wet'suwet'en land defenders from their own land.

The Liberal cuts to emergency services were partially restored only after more than 600 peo-

ple died during the 2021 heat wave. And all of the NDP programs have been hampered by a refusal to reverse the Liberal tax cuts for corporations and the wealthy.

Conservative Policies

The NDP determination to put profits before people and the planet left them with no way of responding to the opioid crisis, the housing

crisis and the general affordability crisis. All of which helped bring the fringe alt-right BC Conservatives back from the dead.

In the last election the BC Conservatives got 2% of the vote. Now they are polling alongside the BC NDP. Some of their popularity comes from sharing the name with Poilievre's federal Conservatives, but much of it comes from the combination of the dire state of housing, health-

care and the affordability crisis combined with seven years of the NDP making right-wing policies and arguments respectable.

Premier Eby has canceled the carbon tax. It was always a right-wing policy introduced to prevent regulation to lower greenhouse gas emissions. But by canceling it without introducing any sort of just transition it just plays into the argument that working people should pay for the climate crisis created by the 1% and right now we just can't afford it.

Rather than admit that the housing crisis was created by profit driven housing and that the solution is massive public housing projects, the NDP promotes the myth that zoning and other regulations are to blame along side various schemes to subsidize home prices. Effectively abandoning the fight for affordable housing.

After consistently denying that providing a safer supply would save lives, the NDP then backed down on its partial attempt to decriminalize drugs. Instead blaming drug users for public drug use, not the lack of housing and treatment spaces. They then doubled down on the war on drugs by promising to put some drug users in involuntary care in prisons.

continued on page 7...



Whoever gets elected, we need to build the movements for a just world

International students fight Trudeau deportation plans

by Michelle Robidoux

International students in Brampton are fighting back against the Liberal government's changes to immigration policies which threaten mass deportations.

For the past month, in difficult conditions, the students and their supporters have maintained an encampment to protest this deportation threat against over 200,000 Post-Graduate Work Permit (PGWP) holders.

For years, Canada has openly marketed the international student program as a pathway to permanent residency (PR), with the slogan "Study, Explore, Work, Stay". The students, many from working class and small farming families, spent their life savings to migrate to Canada based on this promise. They paid exorbitant tuition fees and worked at exploitative jobs.

During COVID, the government was desperate for foreign workers and allowed them to work full-time, extending PGWPs. In 2021, then-immigration Minister Marco Mendicino wrote, "We don't just want you to study here, we want you to stay here."

But the Liberals did nothing to deal with a severe backlog in PR applications due to a lack of processing for two years. And they abruptly changed PR program criteria just as workers became eligible for them.

"Use and throw policy"

Now, with expiring work permits and restricted pathways to PR, international students and immigrant workers are being forced into worse conditions of exploitation.

The students aptly name this Canada's "use and throw" policy.

The combined tuition, labour and taxes of

international students contributed \$31 billion to the Canadian economy. Yet International students are being scapegoated for the lack of housing, jobs and services. In reality, it is the corporations and developers, and the governments who do their bidding, that are to blame.

The Trudeau government's attacks on international students and other migrants will not create a single unit of housing or re-open a single closed emergency room. But they are fueling racism and the far-right, weakening our ability to fight the corporations and landlords that profit off our labour.

At the September 28 rally marking one month of the encampment, Mehakdeep Singh spoke powerfully about the reality confronting inter-

national students seeking permanent resident status:

"A friend who saw my videos asked me: Why isn't your status permanent even after living there for 4-5 years? I responded, I became permanent the moment I left my sobbing parents and sisters to board the plane to come here. I became permanent when I would go to college during the day and work at night, catching sleep on the bus rides and missing my stop more times than I can count... I became permanent the moment my employer took advantage of our circumstances and refused to pay us..."

"I became permanent when I had to witness the cremations and last rites of those who taught me how to walk and speak, who named us, on

video calls."

No more Komagata Maru!

The anguish expressed at the government's callous disregard for migrant workers' lives draws on Canada's brutal history of racist mistreatment of migrants. As protesters marched in Brampton, they chanted "No more Komagata Maru!", referring to Canada blocking the entry of South-Asian immigrants on the ship Komagata Maru in 1914.

In May 2016, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau formally apologized for the incident before the House of Commons, saying: "Today – while knowing that no words can fully erase the pain and suffering experienced by the passengers – I offer a sincere apology on behalf of the government for the laws in force at the time that allowed Canada to be indifferent to the plight of the passengers of the Komagata Maru."

Shamefully, Trudeau is continuing that very same indifference today.

The students demand that the government:

- extend work permits expiring in 2024-25
- implement a fair pathway to PR
- stop Labour Market Impact Assessment (LMIA) exploitation
- provide 5-year PGWPs for all.

Labour and community support was visible at the September 28th rally – but it urgently needs to broaden as the threat of deportation looms. The labour movement and every community must stand with these students and migrant workers as a whole, and oppose Trudeau's cruel and dangerous scapegoating.

• Join the encampment at 295 Queen St. East in Brampton. Info: @Stand_for_immigrant_workers @NaujawanSupportNetwork



Mehakdeep Singh speaks at the Brampton encampment