

Immigrant and Migrant Labour Movements, Racism and

BY NANDITA SHARMA

L'auteur nous dit que le programme qui autorise le travail des non-immigrants (NIEAP), un programme de recrutement consolidé et élargi de « travailleurs émigrants » qui fonctionne sans contrat et qui permet aux employeurs privés et publics au Canada d'exploiter la vulnérabilité législative de ceux qui sont classés non-immigrants. L'auteure examine le contexte culturel dans lequel le « travailleur émigrant » a été classé et demande que le gouvernement canadien explique pourquoi il a créé une catégorie de « non-citoyens » pour classer ces travailleurs.

In today's world, where practically every national state is either importing or exporting workers, neo-liberal labour market and other social policies are being carried out in part through national immigration policies that legislate the vulnerability of growing number of (im)migrants working in nationalized labour markets. By rendering a growing number and proportion of people as "non-immigrant," non-permanent residents, the Canadian government is regulating (and exacerbating) a racialized and gendered labour market through processes of nationalization that positions "migrant workers" as a separate legal category of humans who are denied the services and protections available to those classified as "citizens" or "permanent residents."

This is especially significant for negatively racialized women who are increasingly being denied any legal access to permanent residency status in Canada. The ideological

By rendering a growing number of people as "non-immigrant," non-permanent residents, the government is regulating a racialized and gendered labour market.

positioning of non-white women in particular as non-members, indeed as *anti*-members, is legalized through "migrant worker" recruitment schemes that render these women the quintessential "foreigner" in Canada. These women live, work and pay taxes here but through a nationalized system of apartheid in which discrimination against those classified as non-citizens is legitimated, they are denied the ability to make claims against society and state. The organization of this system of apartheid has been in place since at least 1973, the early point of this latest period of globalization.

On January 1, 1973, the Canadian government introduced an expanded and consolidated "migrant worker" recruitment program under the rubric of the Non-Immigrant Employment Authorization Program (NIEAP). Prior to this, Canada historically had put in place various programs to recruit people as "migrant workers" for specific parts of the labour market, such as agricultural work. The NIEAP was "new" in that it provided an overarching frame in which to bring in people temporarily to fill certain, employer-identified "shortages" in the labour force. The NIEAP also represented a major shift in overall Canadian immigration policy, for following its introduction, the overwhelming majority of (im)migrants recruited for the Canadian labour market came to enter as "migrant workers" rather than as "landed immigrants" with permanent residency rights.

The conditions imposed by the NIEAP indentures people to employers in Canada. "Non-immigrants" on temporary employment authorizations, i.e. "migrant workers," are pre-assigned an employer, an occupation, a residential location and length of employment. Any of these pre-conditions cannot be changed without the written permission of a Canadian immigration department official. If an employee initiates change without this permission, she or he is subject to deportation. The threat of deportation also looms when an employer prematurely terminates the "contract."

Employers benefit by taking advantage of the separation of powers between federal and provincial levels of the Canadian state (AMSSA). This allows them to pay those recruited as migrant workers less than if they were "citizens" or "permanent residents" for work that has been found to be relatively unattractive. The federal government claims that the Canadian state had no jurisdiction in setting or enforcing provincial labour standards. Meanwhile their provincial counterparts claim to have no responsibility over migrant workers since the NIEAP is part of the federal immigration program.

The result is that federal-level bureaucrats often enforce the migrant workers contract on behalf of employers by ensuring the indentured employment relationship. However, provincial bureaucrats do little, if anything, to ensure the employer meets the wage rates and living and working conditions promised to "migrant workers" before they arrive in Canada. "Migrant workers" are largely made ineligible for social programs and services that citizens and

Workers in Canada the Expansion of Globalization

most permanent residents have access to, such as health care insurance, unemployment insurance (UI), social assistance and workers' compensation packages. Thus, the NIEAP also works to lessen state expenditures on workers.¹ The NIEAP thus operates as a system of indentured labour recruitment that allows both the Canadian state and employers in Canada to exploit the legislated vulnerability and lack of entitlements of those placed in the state category of non-immigrant.

Troubling the Category of "Migrant Worker"

Rather than taking a "case study" approach to understanding the phenomenon of creating "migrant workers" in the labour market in Canada, I shift the investigation onto the cultural level of category construction by examining the political economy of the "migrant worker" category. By "political economy" I mean those sets of social relations through which the commodity comes to stand in for the social processes and lived experiences of actual people. I see the category "migrant worker" acting as this "fantastic form," because it serves to objectify the people whose lives are ordered by it.

Examining the cultural level in which the category "migrant worker" is socially organized helps to explain *how* it is that the Canadian government can create a category of "non-citizens," such as "migrant workers," with relatively little outcry, even tacit support, from much of the population living and working in Canada. My site of investigation is the Canadian House of Commons and the discursive practices of parliamentarians. Specifically, I conduct a textual analysis of their debates from 1969 to 1973. Although the NIEAP was introduced at the beginning of 1973, I look at debates occurring prior to this time in order to contextualize the construction of the migrant worker category and relate it to other developments taking place.

Parliamentary debates have been chosen as the main site of investigation because they are seen as productive of both a legal and material reality. The debates are seen as a part of the state's apparatus, one particularly consequential for the social organization of knowledge. The debates provide an ideological framework for *knowing* what constitutes "legitimate" state practices in Canada. Conducting a textual analysis of parliamentary debates is not, therefore, an exercise in finding a "correct" interpretation

of events. Rather, parliamentary practice is recognized as part of a social process that produces the category of "migrant workers" as "common sensical." This understanding helps us to avoid seeing discourse as occurring *outside* of social practice. An analysis of the discursive practices organizing parliamentary debates reveals at least some part of the social relations in which these practices are embedded and which they help to organize.

My investigation begins from the starting point that people categorized as migrant workers do not enter a "neutral ideological context" when coming to Canada (Miles). Rather, the ideological practices operated by the category of "migrant worker" connect to already existing ones. This allows for migrant workers to *fit* into Canadian society in such a way as to not seriously rupture the relations of ruling. In this regard, it is important to recognize that the *space* that Canada occupies is not only territorial but also ideological (Sharma 2000b).

Part of the historical nation-building project of the Canadian state has been the ideological construction of notions of "Canadian-ness" (Anderson). Being a "Canadian citizen" has been integrally connected to the historically shaped identity of whom, or which bodies, can be inscribed as Canadian and the differential rights that are accrued to these "Canadians" and those constructed as the "non-Canadian"-Other. Canada has come to be in relation to the colonization of Indigenous peoples and their lands, the privileging of white settlers and the subordination of people immigrating from the colonized South (Creese; Bourgeault).

Within this project, women have been relegated to either the "Mother of the Race/Nation" or assigned the character of a "destructive force" that threatens the "character" of Canada depending on their relationship to processes of racialization and colonization (Valverde; Ng). The category of "Canadian citizen," like migrant worker, then, conjures up specific images of particular bodies and in so doing profoundly shapes people's relations to each other and to that complexity of social relations under capitalism.

Women have been relegated to "Mother of the Race/Nation" or assigned the character of a "destructive force" that threatens the "character" of Canada.

By troubling the category of “migrant worker” and examining how it is a feature of ongoing social relations of racism, sexism and capitalism, we are able to centre the experiences of the people captured under this state legal-bureaucratic category. In so doing, we are in a position to sketch an alternative social and moral articulation of diversity and distinguish this from ongoing relations of ruling intent on destroying actual diversity and replacing it with always-heirarchal notions of “difference” (Sharma 2000a).

Analyzing debates taking place regarding the practices of the mega-ministry of Industry, Trade and Commerce provides an important geo-political context for understanding the construction of the “migrant worker” category. In 1969, the new minister, Jean-Luc Pepin, reiterated the three priorities agreed upon by Canadian state representatives at meetings of the Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD). These were: the expansion of international trade, the simultaneous growth both in multinational corporations and the mobility of capital investments and, “relations with developing countries” (House of Common Debates, February 18, 1969: 5635-36).

The Canada Export Development Corporation (CEDC) is a good example of how Canadian state practices responded to all three priorities by enhancing aid to capital investors. The CEDC helped to restructure the global capitalist economy towards export-led growth. It was designed to financially assist private enterprises in the hopes of making “Canada” more internationally competitive. One of the tasks assigned to the CEDC was to ensure the profitability of exports from Canada, especially those exported to “developing” countries. Exports from capitalists operating in Canada were insured for up to \$750 million (later changed to \$850 million by 1973).

However, the CEDC was also designed to ensure that capitalists based in Canada also profited from the production of commodities *in* “developing” countries. In discussing this feature of the CEDC,

Otto E. Lang, speaking for the Minister of Industry, Trade and Commerce, stated:

The [Canada] Export Development Corporation will be the focal point for the government’s interest in the financing of exports and in the insurance of private investments abroad. In succession to the export Credits Insurance Corporation, it will administer new and expanded facilities for export credits, export credits insurance and guarantees, and will encourage and facilitate the provision of private

financing for export. It will be charged with responsibility for the insurance of private Canadian investment in developing countries. This entirely new facility is being added in the belief that such investment can make a meaningful contribution to our international development effort and at the same time improve the competitive position of Canadian firms in world markets, and should therefore be facilitated (House of Common Debates, April 14, 1969: 7474).

By insuring Canadian investors in the Global South for hundreds of millions of dollars against loss of profits, parliamentarians made the Canadian state liable for producing “stability” for capital investments in these countries. Thus, political and military intervention in the policies of other states, especially those in the South, was legislated as part of the work the Canadian state was authorized to perform.

The expanded scope of the CEDC is one example of how the Canadian state provided mechanisms by which global competition for investments was accomplished through increases in the mobility of capital investors. The Canadian state helped to establish the framework through which “Canada” needed to become more “competitive.” Calls for reductions in so-called non-tariff barriers, things such as higher wage levels and corporate taxes in Canada, came to be commonly heard (see Sharma 2000a: 157-58) and acted upon. Cuts in corporate tax rates did indeed follow, alerting us to the fact that current state practices in this regard are not new.

Processes of globalization such as privatization, deregulation and trade liberalization, thus, were *legislated* through the Canadian parliament. Alongside shifts in state practices supporting an export-led capitalist economy there were concomitant shifts in state ideological practices. In restructuring people’s material reality, parliamentary discursive practices, by producing a common sense of these changes, helped to abstract people’s consciousness of themselves and the world they lived in. These ideological practices worked to re-frame state practices organizing processes of globalization as necessary for what John Turner, then Minister of Finance, called “Canadian prosperity” (House of Common Debates, March 2, 1973: 1833).

The ability for parliamentary discursive practices to produce the common-sense that globalization, or “the need to be internationally competitive,” was of ultimate benefit to the Canadian nation rested on the construction of a zero-sum game between Us-Canadians and those rendered as the foreigner-Other. By conflating the interests of capitalists with those of the “imagined community” of Canadians, parliamentarians used nationalist ideologies to abstract or objectify the on-going reproduction of ruling relations. Consequently, in Canada, parliamentary practices that worked to bring about globalization with its

The common-sense that globalization was of ultimate benefit rested on the construction of a zero-sum game between Us-Canadians and the foreigner-Other.

increased competition for capital investments rested on the performance of state practices as a *nationalist* response to “foreigners.”

In the process, space itself was bifurcated into two ideologically discrete “national” and “international” (later to be called “global”) units. Consequently, there was a re-constitution of the “imagined community” of Canadians on whose behalf state power was said to be wielded and a re-organization of the place of the Canadian national state in the world.

Nationalist ideological practices were legitimized through a three-fold process. The first one presaged British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher’s campaign slogan that “there is no alternative” to becoming more internationally competitive. The second was to expand the definition of “Canadian capitalist.” The third was to problematize “foreign” workers in Othered countries. All three hinged on making common sense of the increasing competitiveness of markets for capital investment. Significantly, competition was defined as “*foreign*,” rather than *systemic* to capitalist social relations, thus making the antagonism between “Canadians” and “foreigners” appear natural.

In the early part of my study, Canada’s New Democratic Party (NDP), supported by MPs from the Quebec-based Ralliement Creditiste, were champions of what I call the “Canada for Canadian capitalists” approach (Sharma 2000a: 166-68). However, this was soon eclipsed by the notion that “all capitalists are (at least potentially) Canadians” (Sharma 2000a: 169-71). The first centred on the position that capital investments in Canada should be owned and controlled by “Canadians” lest we lose control over the political machinery of the state.

Those adhering to the “all capitalists are Canadians” view held that all capital investments made in Canada and even those investments made outside of Canada with the assistance of the Canadian state ought to be considered Canadian. The latter came to dominate. In one example, when discussing whose businesses were eligible for state-funded financial grants, a governing party MP stated, “the eligibility criteria are concerned with the nature of the firm’s business and prospects and not with the country of residence of its principal or owner” (House of Common Debates, April 1, 1970: 5878).

Such as shift constituted a movement away from Keynesian-style ideological state practices that emphasized the strengthening of “national capitalists” and the building of a “national economy” that existed in conflict with “foreign capitalists” and “foreign economies.” However, in the representation of all capital as potentially “Canadian,” the nationalist framework was not eclipsed. Instead, with the re-definition of who consisted a “Canadian capitalist,” the focus was ideologically shifted so that foreign competition became a competition between workers rather than between capitalists or even national states.

In essence, always-ideological nationalized boundaries

were eliminated for capitalists. As far as parliamentarians were concerned no capitalists could be defined as “foreign.” Other national states were judged on whether they were better or worse than Canada in attracting investment. In the organization of “globalization,” only workers in other nationalized spaces were imagined as a “foreign threat” for “Canadians.” This was especially pronounced in regard to workers in the South. Workers who had the worth of their labour devalued by colonialism, racism and sexism were cast, then, as the victimizers of “Canadians” (see Sharma 1996 for a discussion of the social process of cheapening labour power). Moreover, this shift helped to entrench the view that while markets for capital and commodities were international, markets for labour were firmly national. Re-shaping the “Canadian” labour market came to be the focus of government activities.

Together, then, changes in both Canadian public policies and the organization of a nationalized common sense of this re-organization drove “globalization.” Intensifying capitalist competition by restructuring economies in the South away from import-substitution towards export-driven models and the dismantling of the welfare state in Canada were all put together during this period. Not coincidentally perhaps corporate profits rose. It was enthusiastically reported in parliament that by the third fiscal quarter of 1973 corporate profits had risen by almost 60% from 1968 (House of Common Debates, November 2, 1973: 7476).

The antagonism between Us-Canadians and Them-foreigners was organized by simultaneously organizing “sameness” as well as “difference.” Equating capitalists’ interests with the interests of “Canadians” was one way “sameness” was re-imagined. The creation of the “problem” of “foreigners,” that debates on Industry, Trade and Commerce helped to organize, were further indicative of the social organization of “difference” and its connections to shifts in patterns of capital accumulation.

By making common-sense of the construction of those classified as “foreigners” as Our collective problem, the Canadian nation itself was reproduced. In this sense, through their discursive portrayal of themselves as representatives of “the people,” parliamentarians re-enacted the nation and through this re-enactment, legitimated the performance of state power. Indeed, the discursive practice of constructing that which was Other and foreign and that, therefore, which was Canadian was a significant aspect of how state practices were able to situate Canada as a continuing site for capital investment.

It is crucial to note that within the parliamentary debates of this histori-

The antagonism between Us-Canadians and Them-foreigners was organized by simultaneously organizing “sameness” as well as “difference.”

cal period, the “foreigners” said to be threatening Canadian prosperity did not exist *outside* of Canada alone. Rather, parliamentarians also helped to organize a “problem” of “foreigners” existing *within* the space occupied by “Canadians” and ruled over by *their* state. This was most evident in debates on immigration policy. Moreover, immigration policies were always addressed in relation to what was constructed as being in the best interests of the imagined “Canadian” community. By linking the existence of a “foreign” presence in Canada with a “weak” immigration policy and associating the presence of immigrants with the lessening of the quality of life for Canadians, a common-sense was organized that produced immigrants as foreigners residing in Canada.

Throughout my period of study, the re-casting of the problem of the foreigners-within as a problem of *immigration* was racialized. Parliamentary discursive practices related the problem of foreigners-as-immigrants to the removal in 1967 of the “preferred nationalities and races” policy which favoured Europeans and which allowed people of colour not only to enter Canada but also to enter Canada as *permanent residents*. These same parliamentary debates rendered gender largely invisible in this process, although we know that gender has been key to imagining who belonged and who did not in Canada (Iacovetta, 1993).

The following remark points to how parliamentarians produced a racialized common-sense about people from the South as being a “problem” for Canadians. MP Steven E. Paproski, in responding to Allan MacEachan, the Immigration Minister from Cape Breton and his report on immigration numbers for 1969, stated:

The Cape Breton mountain has laboured and brought forth a West Indian mouse. I would be the last person to criticize, on grounds of race or colour, an immigration policy that emphasized the bringing in of West Indian and Asiatic immigrants. But I do believe it is

legitimate to criticize a policy that concentrates on immigrants who, by reason of climatic conditions in their country of origin and by reason of their standards of skill and training, inevitably pose great problems for everyone concerned with their relocation in a radically different, highly sophisticated, industrialized, urban society such as ours (House of Common Debates, December 16, 1969: 2013).

Paproski presented a highly racialized reading of the effects of immigration policy, obviously relying on various racist theories of

European superiority. Let us remember that immigration policy at this time did *not* actively give legislative preferences to people from particular countries (as it did for people from northwestern Europe prior to 1967). However, by stating that the Minister of Immigration “*emphasized* the bringing in of West Indian and Asiatic immigrants,” Paproski presented it as if it did.

In the process, the existential constitution of the category of people named as immigrants was, itself, re-organized. It was shortly after 1967 when explicit racialized entry criteria were eliminated for people of colour that the legal terms, “immigrant” and “Canadian” were ideologically re-framed as racialized social categories. Being an “immigrant” from here on in became co-terminus with being a person of colour. Again, this process of racialization was organized by both producing “difference” and “similarity.”

In examining those who were represented as being the same as Canadians, it is clear that those organized as “similar” were those belonging to European or to other white-settler societies. During my period of study, there was never any question about whether *these* people should be welcomed (even encouraged) to immigrate to Canada. Despite the formal elimination of the “most preferred races/nationalities” criteria of Canadian immigrant recruitment policy, then, Europeans and other whites were still constituted within parliament as “preferred” people.

This was apparent in the juxtaposition of two separate questions concerning two racialized groups of people, one Scottish and the Other so-called “Gypsy” (i.e. Romani). The first case concerned two men from Scotland, James and Alex Donald, and their families, all of whom were living in Canada without legal documentation. MP G.W. Baldwin asked the Minister of Manpower and Immigration to legalize the stay of these two men and their families in Canada House of Common Debates, May 23, 1972: 2456). Bryce Mackasey, the current Minister of Manpower and Immigration, responded to this request positively. He stated, “...I can think of nothing that would give me more pleasure than nine more Scots in Canada as landed immigrants and future citizens, so I will personally intervene” (Ibid). Consequently, the Donald families were given legal authority to reside in Canada as permanent residents.

Throughout the five years of parliamentary debates I analyzed, this swift and joyful intervention by the Minister to aid undocumented (im)migrants was otherwise unheard of. Indeed, the Donald case stands in stark contrast with the following case where the people in question were presented as “Gypsies” from Europe. MP Craig Stewart asked:

... It [the question] arises from the entry into Canada in late April of a group of gypsies [sic] from Europe. As these gypsies have victimized people in rural areas of western Canada—amounts as high as \$6,000 are

Despite elimination of the “most preferred races/nationalities” criteria of policy, Europeans and other whites were still constituted as “preferred” people.

involved—will the minister order their deportation immediately so as to protect Canadian citizens. (House of Common Debates, June 26, 1973: 5059)

Robert K. Andras, Minister of Manpower and Immigration, responded by stating that while there was no proof of any wrongdoing on the part of the “Gypsies” in question, he would “certainly pay very careful attention to the representations made by the honourable member” (House of Common Debates, June 26, 1973: 5059).² The difference in both the discursive and physical treatment of the Donald families and this particular group of Romani people shows that the *immigration* of people to Canada was not *in and of itself* the problem. Rather, the “problem” was the entry and residence of *certain* peoples—people who were represented as not belonging.

Through the parliamentary debates, immigrants (read: people of colour) were discursively produced as a “national security threat.” They were consistently presented as being responsible for the existence of unemployment, violence, crime, increasing state expenditures, negative changes to the “character” of the Canadian nation and its supposed moral decline. While these discursive practices were not always distinctive to the late 1960s and early 1970s, they did involve a re-articulation of these discourses with new meanings and implications.

In this historical juncture, the production of these problems *as* caused by the immigration of people of colour created a moral panic about the *permanent presence* of people of colour in Canada, thereby legitimating increased restrictions upon them. Although women of colour were not singled out within this racialized discourse *within Parliament*, we know that historically their presence has been especially problematized. It has been their *permanence*, in particular, that has been presented as destructive of the “Canadian nation.”

By the end period of my study (1973), there was general consensus in parliament that the 1967 changes had indeed created “problems” for “Canadians” and that it was past time for a change. In announcing changes that removed certain rights for both temporary and permanent (im)migrants, the Minister of Manpower and Immigration, Robert K. Andras, gave a clear enough signal that the so-called liberalization of Canadian immigration policy in 1967 was over:

I know there are some who would say that we should have acted two or three years ago, and certainly I will say that with the benefit of hindsight. ...But I think many of us felt that the act and the regulations of 1967 had been a noble experiment, liberal with a small “l,” and certainly represented the consensus of all groups in the House at that time. I think perhaps it was typical of the Canadian concern for people of other lands which has led this country, for example into so many peacekeeping missions, some of them

under conditions which more coldly calculating people might have rejected out of hand (House of Common Debates, June 18, 1973: 4952).

One of the cornerstones to the display of taking back “control” over Our borders was the problematization of certain rights given in 1967 to those categorized as “visitors.” “Visitors,” under which legal category “non-immigrants” or “migrant workers” fell, were produced as a “problem” in so much as they had been granted in 1967 the possibility of remaining in Canada permanently. In June of 1972, legislation (Bill C-197) was brought in to eliminate the rights of visitors to apply for permanent residency status from inside Canada.

The Minister couched the newly worded legislation within the discourse of the necessity for those in the Canadian state to “control” Canada’s borders against those who would “defy” immigration policy. Interestingly, the Minister added that this was for the *benefit* of the people who might otherwise engage in migration (as it is discussed now as well). He said:

...I would also draw to the attention of honourable members the danger of the exploitation of many innocent people by unscrupulous so-called immigration counselors, who could take the substance of these decisions and convince innocent people to come to Canada, many of whom in countries we can all name and who would do anything to come to this country to get away from the circumstances in which they are presently living. (House of Common Debates June 27 1973c: 5810)

Even though those “who would do anything to come” to Canada were not specifically named, the hegemonic association of desperation and undesirable immigration to Canada with the South, i.e. “in countries we can all name,” discursively organized the “necessity” of preventing at least the majority of people of colour from obtaining permanent residency status from within Canada. Consequently, the expressed need to “restore order” to Canada’s borders was deeply racialized.

Importantly, these ideological state practices did *not* result in halting the movement of people of colour to Canada. However, it *did* rationalize, or legitimize their differential treatment once *inside* the country. This was highly significant for the organization of legitimacy of the category migrant worker. In this regard, it is important to keep in mind that parliamentary debates on trade and investment took place at the same time

State practices did *not* result in halting the movement of people of colour to Canada. However, it *did* legitimize their differential treatment once *inside* the country.

as the ones on immigration policy. Taken in conjunction, nationalist ideologies that supported capital accumulation relied upon racist ideologies to make common-sense of the negative duality between Canadians and foreigners.

Racialized parliamentary debates that organized the presence of people of colour as the collective “problem” of “Canadians” also helped to discursively construct a supposedly homogenous white Canadian nation *for* whom state practices were carried out. Indeed, racist ideologies can be seen to be a key part of *how* state practices concerning all manners of things were legitimated at this time. Seen in juxtaposition with policies designed to increase the international competitiveness of businesses in Canada, we see that while there was recognition of the non-nationalized character of capital movements, greater restrictions were erected for the cross-border migrations of people.

What was being restricted, however, was not the *entry* of people of colour but their access to certain jobs, programs and protections once inside Canada. And with the organization of the “migrant worker” category what was restricted was their access to remaining permanently in Canada and their mobility, both geographically as well as their labour market mobility. Notions of “order at the border,” then, operated not as a means of stopping the movement of people into Canada but as an *ideology* to alter existing social relations at the expense of those organized through state immigration categories as permanent “non-members” of Canadian society.

Conclusion

The decision to decline to indenture those who were classified as citizens and even those categorized as permanent residents can be seen to result from the concern for apparent state rationality (or what Foucault called “governmentality”). In order to materialize a “migrant workers” program that improved the competitive capacities of employers in Canada, parliamentarians established what Gordon (18) calls a “visible border” between those who faced the coercive powers of the state and those who, for the time being, did not. One of the key mechanisms through which the Canadian liberal democratic form of governance was able to continue to rule during the period of study was to maintain some measure of social support for those legally recognized as citizen-members while denying these same supports to those seen as foreign-Others.

This sheds light on liberalism not as a doctrine but as a *style* of governance over people who are “willing to exist as subjects” (Foucault cited in Gordon 48). In regards to the common sensical quality of the category migrant workers, this willingness was contingent upon citizens accepting the rationality of the national state system and Canada’s place in it as a “First World” state. Indeed, the notion of “citizens rights” served to ideologically re-position those

represented as citizens from being the people who were ruled over to the people who, together, the state ruled *for*.

Moreover, this liberal framework operated to illuminate only those affirmative actions of the state, such as those that created citizens or were said to protect existing citizens rights. In this regard, Carole Pateman points out that the conspicuous attention given by state practices to political freedom has worked to conceal the operation of domination. What was left invisible by a liberal democratic framework of governance, what we could not “see” or know, during the period in which the NIEAP was organized (replacing “discursively presented by parliamentarians”), was how citizenship acted as “an architect of inequality” (Fraser and Gordon 49).

Nationally based forms of citizenship, then, are not redundant within processes of globalization but integral to them. Indeed, my study shows the enduring ideological power of the “nation” in re-organizing state practices to make “common-sense” of processes of globalization. Adherence to the “nation” as the “imagined community” continues to ensure the social imaginary and institutions for what Mann (14) argues is the “extraordinary social density [that] enable[s] rulers and people actually to participate in the same society.” This study also demonstrates the need to pay more attention of “everyday,” vernacular forms of nationalism, or what Billig has called “banal nationalism,” for these are an important element in the re-organization of both the state in the Global North and contemporary processes of globalization.

Nandita Sharma teaches in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at the University of Windsor and is a founding member of the group, Open the Borders!

¹While those categorized as migrant workers are ineligible for a host of social programs, this does not stop the Canadian state from collecting taxes and premiums for these programs from them. For example, Sedef Arat-Koc (1989) shows that in the years between 1973 and 1981, those recruited to work as migrant domestic workers, mainly women from the South, *alone* paid over \$11 million into social program funds but were not eligible to these funds because of their migrant worker status.

²In a later exchange in parliament, the reader (hearer) is told that the people in question have never been convicted of any criminal activity in Canada (House of Common Debates, June 27, 1973: 5121).

References

- Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Service Agencies (AMSSA) of B.C. “Foreign Domestic Workers on Employment Authorizations and Labour Legislation in British Columbia.” Brief presented to the Minister of Labour. Vancouver, 1993.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections*

- on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism. London: Verso, 1991.
- Arat-Koc, S. "In the Privacy of Our Own Home: Foreign Domestic Workers as Solutions to the Crisis in the Domestic Sphere in Canada." *Studies in Political Economy*. 12 (Spring 1989): 33-58.
- Billig, M. *Banal Nationalism*. London: Sage. 1995.
- Bourgeault, Ron. "Race, Class and Gender: Colonial Domination of Indian Women." *Race, Class, Gender: Bonds and Barriers*. 2nd (revised) edition. Ed. J. Vorst Toronto: Between the Lines 1989.
- Creese, Gillian. "Exclusion or Solidarity? Vancouver Workers" Confront the "Oriental Problem'." *B.C. Studies* 80 (Winter 1988): 24-51.
- Foucault, Michel. "Questions of Method." *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Eds. G. Burchell, C. Gordon and P. Miller. University of Chicago Press: Chicago, 1991.
- Fraser, Nancy and Linda Gordon, "Contract Versus Charity: Why is There no Social Citizenship in the United States?" *Socialist Review* 22 (3) (July-Sept.), 1992: 45-68.
- Gordon, Colin. "Government Rationality: An Introduction." *The Foucault Effect: Studies in Governmentality*. Eds. G. Burchell, C. Gordon and P. Miller. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1991. 1-51.
- House of Commons Debates, Official Report. First Session-Twenty Eighth Parliament, Vol. iv, 1968-69 (December 3, 1968 to January 20). Ottawa: Queen's Printer for Canada, 1970.
- House of Commons Debates, Official Report. Fourth Session-Twenty Eighth Parliament, Vol. iii 1972 (May 8 to June 7). Ottawa: Queen's Printer for Canada, 1972.
- House of Commons Debates, Official Report. First Session-Twenty Ninth Parliament, Vol. ii 1973 (February 12 to March 16). Ottawa: Queen's Printer for Canada, 1973.
- House of Commons Debates, Official Report. First Session-Twenty Ninth Parliament, Vol. v 1973 (June 11 to July 18) Ottawa: Queen's Printer for Canada, 1973.
- Mann, M. *The Sources of Social Power*. Vol. 2. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1993.
- Miles, Robert. *Racism and Migrant Labour: A Critical Text*. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982.
- Ng, Roxana. *The Politics of Community Services*. Toronto: Garamond Press, 1988.
- Pateman, Carole. *The Sexual Contract*. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1988.
- Sharma, Nandita. "Cheap Myths and Bonded Lives: Freedom and Citizenship in Canadian Society." *Beyond Law* 5 (17) (December) 1996: 35-61.
- Sharma, Nandita. "The Social Organization of 'Difference' and Capitalist Restructuring in Canada: The Making of 'Migrant Workers' through the 1973 Non-Immigrant Employment Authorization Program (NIEAP)." Unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto, 2000a.
- Sharma, Nandita. "'Race,' Class and Gender and the Making of 'Difference': The Social Organization of 'Migrant Workers' in Canada." *Atlantis: A Women's Studies Journal* 24 (2) (Spring 2000b): 5-15.
- Valverde, Mariana. "When the Mother of the Race is Free: Race, Reproduction, and Sexuality in First-Wave Feminism." *Gender Conflicts: New Essays in Women's History*. Eds. F. Iacovetta and M. Valverde. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1992. 3-26.

DESI DI NARDO

My Little Brother

I never told you that I was afraid of the other
children
When they boxed you in and shouted *Four*
eyes
And sneered and scoffed until you cried
I saw you lick the blood off the side of your
mouth
Turning into the wall of the school yard
When desperation flooded your eyes
Picked on, taunted, and mocked for being
humble
You looked at me like I might have been your
mother
You prayed for me to be
But I was only two years older
And pretending to be something else
Shame on you for the expectation
I could have knocked you out for hoping
But when you followed me into my room
that night
I let you play with Ken
I played Barbie
And we went to the drive-in a plastic, red
convertible
You played with my hair while I drove
Nobody mentioned anything
Besides it was only schoolyard talk anyway

Desi Di Nardo is a novelist in Toronto. Her writing has appeared in numerous literary journals. Previously, she worked as an on-air television host and taught English in college.