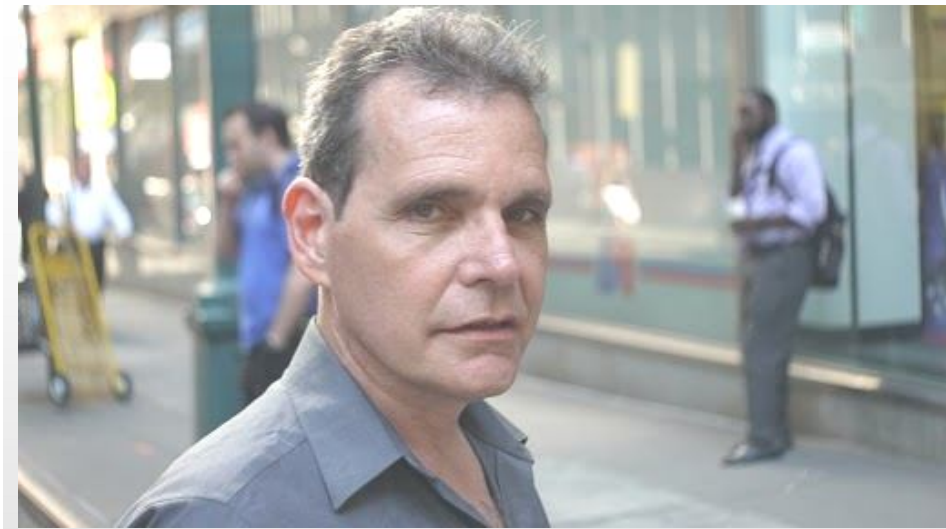




Western Centre for Research on Migration & Ethnic Relations



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Immanuel Ness, PhD, is Professor of Political Science at Brooklyn College of the City University of New York, United States. He is author of *Guest Workers and U.S. Corporate Despotism* (University of Illinois Press, 2011) and *Immigrants, Unions, and the New U.S. Labor Market* (Temple University Press, 2005), and (as editor) the *International Encyclopedia of Revolution and Protest* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2009) and *Encyclopedia of American Social Movements* (2004), among numerous peer review articles on labor and migration.

His current research and writing is on migrant worker control and cooperatives, new forms of worker organization, and urban uprisings. Since 1999, Ness has been editor of *Working USA: The Journal of Labor and Society*, a peer-review quarterly social science journal examining labor and social class in an international context. He is an organizer in the labor solidarity committee at Occupy Wall Street.

Global Capitalism and Guest Workers: Neoliberal Paradigms and Precarious Labor Migration

For about 25 years since passage of the US Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) in 1986 more and more businesses have been relying on a system of migrant labour that involves guest workers. Low wage foreign labourer temporarily authorized to work in a host country on a seasonal basis, have the knowledge and acquiescence of work and occupations, but are mostly denied of any labor rights. In the U.S. and other OECD countries, employers recruit guest workers to perform both skilled and unskilled labour in newly restructured industries. Because of the nature of their contracts, migrants face unique challenges, including indentured servitude, onerous work arrangements, withholding of wages, and lack of access to federal employment regulations governing minimum wage and hour standards. This paper examines the lowest-wage service guest workers from the Caribbean and elsewhere in the global South, focusing on key questions: Why do so many migrant workers participate in such an exploitive system? As the program expands, these new migrant guest workers inevitably form part of the subaltern underside of their respective capitalist labour markets in the U.S. and the global North as labour markets are transformed through expanding use of foreign temporary workers.

Thursday, January 12, 2012

4:00pm – SSC 5220

Refreshments 3:30pm – SSC 5230