G8 and G20 dictates for migration control: a primer

G20 countries account for almost 2/3 of the global population, but there is an enormous difference in living standards between the rich and the poor nations.

Over the last decade, an estimated 180 million people (almost 3% of the world's population) have been forced into migration, and are living outside of their birth country.

> **Migration is caused by capitalist disaster; political conflict and war; ecological destruction; poverty; and ethnic, religious and gender persecution.**

As the first world working population ages, immigration policies are crafted to compensate for the lack of workforce. Simultaneously, governments close the door on refugees.

In rich countries, temporary worker programs are used as a way to control migration, boost profits through slave-wage migrant labor, and ensure that migrant workers are always temporary.

No permanent status means no social protection, no labor standards, no benefits, and no rights. No human costs, amounts to pure profits for hosting society.

Imported workers:
The 'Temporary Foreign Worker' Program in Canada first started to bring high-skilled workers for specialized jobs - like in the high-tech industry.

Now all major Canadian industries depend on migrant labor.

Over 300,000 foreign temporary workers toil in the hotel industry, manufacturing sectors, greenhouses, farms, meat factories, fast-food restaurants, construction sites, nanny services, and the Alberta oil sands.

About 10,000 foreign workers came to help build the Olympic facilities in Vancouver in preparation for the 2010 Winter Olympics.

Important social services also depend on imported domestic servants that arrive through the Live-in Care Program, a de facto national child-care program. This also contributes to the privatization of the medical system since live-in caregivers provide for the elderly of Canada's aging population.

New 2009 regulations for Temporary Worker programs restrict migrant workers eligibility for work permits to 4 years and then they must wait for at least six years before being allowed to work in Canada again. This ensures that migrant workers are permanently temporary and can't apply for residency.

Migrant workers are fully taxed, and completely exploited. These programs are designed to legalize slavery, forcing the migrant worker to work long hours (sometimes up to 18 hours a day) for low pay, under the constant fear of deportation by their employer. They have no basic health and safety standards, and they are denied basic entitlements such as unemployment benefits and social assistance, and are denied the right to unionize.

G20 countries count on the fact that migrant labor ensures a continuous flow of capital back to the home country of the worker. This money is called remittances. In some countries, remittances are now the largest source of foreign currency, and supports families' investments in education, housing, health, and family-run businesses in the home country.

Remittances account for more money than the so-called first world aid packages provided for by governmental agencies like CIDA.

Migrant workers pay for the cost of their recruitment into the temporary worker programs, (selection agency, plane ticket, medical examines, etc) and also pay for the betterment of the living standards in their home country.

In this way, governments don't have to invest in peoples' well being. It is the migrant worker that bears all the costs of the system here and at home.

Temporary workers programs are part the global architecture to control the movement of people while protecting the free movement of capital and rich.

Recent changes in Canada's immigration regime include:
The Canadian government makes migration serve the needs of Canadian business. It is moving away from promoting citizenship, family reunification, and the universal right of asylum. Immigrants have historically been the shock absorbers for the capitalist economy.

Harper's government has given extraordinary discretionary powers to the Immigration minister and Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) officers to arbitrarily decide who can come in to Canada and who cant.

Bureaucrats will decide the fate of asylum seekers within 60 days, which doesn't give the refugee claimant enough time to get all the necessary documentation and proof ready for their claim.

Immigrants:
The immigration regime is based on a point system to select new immigrants (skilled workers) that are rated on their level of education, their profession, language proficiency, and financial status. The list of professions that people could apply for permanent

residency has been reduced to 38 professions from 351 professions. This effectively bans thousands from applying for immigration.

Refugees acceptance rates have dropped each year to half of what it was two decades ago. The obstruction of asylum seekers has been accompanied by a persistent media relations campaign that target refugees as bogus, as liars, and as criminals that are conniving to get the riches of the North.

The Conservatives have proposed bill C-11, which aims to get rid of the 'humanitarian' considerations of the refugee process all together.

Immigration Canada wants to fast-track rejections of refugee claimants from 'safe' countries. Safe' countries are nations with which Canada has trade relations. This will severely penalize minority groups, women fleeing gender violence, as well as gays and lesbians whom are targets of persecution in many countries considered 'safe'.

In the summer of 2009, **Visas** were imposed on Czech Romas and Mexicans as a means to stop migration from these countries. Meanwhile, Canadians and Quebecois freely live out the cold winters in sunny Mexico, and buy up coastal beach properties without a problem.

The Harper government has also barred people from applying for refugee status in Canada if they have gone to the United States first; this rule targets people from Haiti, Afghanistan, Iraq, Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Zimbabwe. Refugees and migrants often don't have a choice of the route they take to flee. Also, Canada has a major role in creating refugees in most of these countries.

Deportations have increased 50% over the last 10 yrs, with approximately 13,000 deportations annually. Moratoriums on deportations to Burundi, Liberia, and Rwanda have also been also lifted. Thousands of families who have lived here for years now face the threat of being uprooted from their home in Canada, dispossessed, and forced into displacement once again.

Fortress North America:
Border control is being fortified with drone planes, infrared radar along the Canadian-US border, and now armed border guards. Ottawa has adopted the role of the northern sector of the **U.S. Border Patrol** in the so-called national security agenda of **Fortress North America** that erects the walls and fences of global apartheid.

Behind migration controls lies a mixture of racism, nationalism and imperialism.

While capital and 'first world' nationals travel freely wherever they want, the people from the wrong side of the border are illegalized, criminalized and prevented from exercising their fundamental rights. They simply cease to be people; they become 'illegal immigrants', 'non-status' or 'undocumented' and 'failed asylum seekers'. When their exploited labor is no longer needed or when they stand up for their rights, they become disposable. Common struggles and entire communities are divided and rendered invisible, giving way to a culture of suspicion, surveillance and repression.

A Deportation order hides the causes of migration – the western-manufactured weapons and armed conflicts; the wars of aggression in pursuit of oil and other natural resources; the repressive regimes backed by first world "democracy-loving" governments; climate change and land grabs. These atrocities can be traced back to our capitalist economies, consumerist lifestyles and imperial interests.

We don't have to accept business as usual.
Defending the most vulnerable will forge our collective liberation.

Solidarity in struggle is our power!