

Canada Reinvents The Xenophobic Wheel



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11-22-2024~ Bikram Singh is running out of time on his post-study work visa in Canada.

Singh is one of about [70,000](#) migrants who were sold on the Canadian dream of eventually making the country their home but now face an uncertain future with their work permits set to expire by December 2024. They came from places like India, China, and the Philippines, and sold their land and belongings in their home countries, took out loans, or made other enormous commitments to get themselves to Canada.

“We came here for our future. They promise you an easy permanent residency here.” However, due to the backlog of the Canadian immigration system, it has become more difficult to secure permanent residency now compared to in the past, he says.

“We are demanding a fair chance. Now they are saying, ‘We never promised [permanent residency],’” Singh says.

Canada has a system of post-study visas for students who graduate from Canadian colleges and universities. This year, with an upcoming election in 2025, Canada’s political parties are playing with the lives of migrants by tightening the country’s immigration policies, resulting in their visas no longer being eligible for renewal—as they were during the COVID-19 pandemic. The parties have also been engaging in xenophobic campaign tactics.

Singh says, “All political parties are playing this dirty [blame] game,” where immigrants are blamed for unemployment, housing crisis, and inflation. As a result, Canadian voters “don’t know their real enemy. The ruling class of Canada diverts their anger,” says Singh, from the “Canadian imperialist capitalist system.”

More than 50 worker-activists with [Naujawan Support Network](#) (NSN) and the Post-Graduation Work Permit (PGWP) Committee have established a 24-hour outdoor encampment in Brampton, Ontario, a suburb of Toronto. As of November 19, 2024, they have been there rain or shine for more than 80 days.

They want their work visas extended for 2024 and 2025—more than [200,000](#) work permits. They are further [demanding](#) five-year work visas for all international students, a fair pathway to permanent residency, and an end to exploitation under Labor Market Impact Assessments (LMIAs).

LMIAs are documents that Canadian businesses must obtain to hire many categories of temporary workers. Through these documents, they show that no Canadian citizen or permanent resident was available for a particular job.

While this may sound harmless in theory, Singh says that, in practice, LMIAs are a way to generate money for businesses under the table while tying workers even more closely to a single employer. It’s a recipe for exploitation and illegal, “but everyone knows that this is going on,” says Singh.

LMIAs aren’t the only way that Canadian institutions have made money off migrants. Singh says colleges and universities overenrolled during the COVID-19 pandemic to make money off students taking classes from home in sending countries.

In 2024, several protests have taken place in other provinces of Canada, like those in [Manitoba](#) and [Prince Edward Island](#), besides the NSN and PGWP Committee protest.

Canada’s upcoming election is just the latest to be affected by xenophobia. In 2024, anti-immigrant politics have become prevalent across the globe, from [India to Tunisia to Donald Trump’s U.S.](#), in a year replete with major elections.

As of 2020, there were about 281 million migrants around the world comprising

[3.6 percent of the global population](#), according to the United Nations. Remittance flows, or money sent from migrants back to their home countries, amounted to \$831 billion in 2022, a figure [bigger than the economies of many nations](#).

By Saurav Sarkar

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