



Guest Workers and Resistance to U.S. Corporate Despotism (The Working Class in American History)

Immanuel Ness

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Political scientist Immanuel Ness thoroughly investigates the use of guest workers in the United States, the largest recipient of migrant labor in the world. Ness argues that the use of migrant labor is increasing in importance and represents despotic practices calculated by key U.S. business leaders in the global economy to lower labor costs and expand profits under the guise of filling a shortage of labor for substandard or scarce skilled jobs. Drawing on ethnographic field research, government data, and other sources, Ness shows how worker migration and guest worker programs weaken the power of labor in both sending and receiving countries. His in-depth case studies of the rapid expansion of technology and industrial workers from India and hospitality workers from Jamaica reveal how these programs expose guest workers to employers' abuses and class tensions in their home countries while decreasing jobs for American workers and undermining U.S. organized labor. Where other studies of labor migration focus on undocumented immigrant labor and contend immigrants fill jobs that others do not want, this is the first to truly advance understanding of the role of migrant labor in the transformation of the working class in the early twenty-first century. Questioning why global capitalists must rely on migrant workers for economic sustenance, Ness rejects the notion that temporary workers enthusiastically go to the United States for low-paying jobs. Instead, he asserts the motivations for improving living standards in the United States are greatly exaggerated by the media and details the ways organized labor ought to be protecting the interests of American and guest workers in the United States.

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