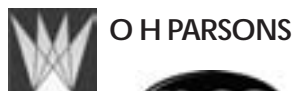


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LABOUR MIGRATION AND EMPLOYMENT RIGHTS

EDITED BY BERNARD RYAN



ABOUT THE BOOK

Migrant workers often enter the UK in the hope of finding a better life - the truth is often far from that. Migrant workers are denied social benefits and are offered very little protection in terms of employment rights while the destitution faced by unemployed migrants makes them more vulnerable to unscrupulous employers.

According to our evidence, pay is withheld, holidays refused, unlawful deductions from pay are often demanded and no pay slip provided. Yet migrant workers have no redress because their contract is often deemed 'unlawful'. Attempts by workers to organise into a union are often thwarted by employers calling in immigration authorities.

The intense exploitation faced by migrant workers highlights fundamental weaknesses in British employment law. The best way to address this is to undermine the economic advantage to employers of employing migrant workers. This should be done, not by restricting the supply of such labour but by regulating employment status, practices and protections. By strengthening migrant workers' rights, we help prevent unscrupulous employers undercutting wages and depressing sectors of the economy. This in turn will help remove some of the hostility shown to migrant workers in sections of society.



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"The political debate is too often characterised by a muscular bidding war in terms of who is tougher on immigrants. Yet these selfsame immigrants are the economic backbone of government labour market and public services policies. It is this fundamental rupture between the politics and the economics of migrant labour that this report seeks to confront."

Jon Cruddas MP

"The weaknesses in UK employment law are exposed by the plight of migrant workers. All workers - regardless of their status - should enjoy the standards of protection enshrined in international law. We cannot hope to build first class services by exploiting the most vulnerable sections of the labour market."

Professor Keith Ewing President IER

"Migrant workers in the construction industry suffer some of the worst exploitation. Our challenge is to persuade the government to ensure that gangmasters are prevented from exploiting migrant workers and undercutting our hard-won pay and conditions. This publication sets out those employment law arguments and points the way to winning for all workers in the construction industry."

Alan Ritchie General Secretary UCATT

"The right-wing press ask why migrant workers are in the country. We prefer to ask why migrant workers are employed in often dangerous conditions and exploited by unscrupulous bosses. We welcome this important piece of work from the Institute."

Tony Woodley General Secretary TGWU