

Marginalizing Migrants and People of Colour Within the Labour Movement: Dialogues on Race and Class

By [Michael Welch](#), [Abayomi Azikiwe](#), and [Chris Ramsaroop](#)

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Region: [Canada](#), [USA](#)

Theme: [GLOBAL RESEARCH NEWS HOUR](#),
[History](#), [Police State & Civil Rights](#), [Poverty](#)
& [Social Inequality](#)

"You Can't Have Capitalism Without Racism."

- Malcolm X (1964) [1]

"All animals are equal, but some animals are more equal than others."

-George Orwell, Animal Farm (1945)

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A [standard claim of union activists](#) is that they are fighting to improve the lot, not just of their union brethren, but of society as a whole. However, evidence indicates that the benefits that have been had are not equitably distributed.

According to a March 2011 report, a significant pay gap was evidenced between racialized and non-racialized Canadians, with the former earning on average 81.4 cents for every dollar earned by the latter. The same study also found the work racialized Canadians were able to attain was more likely to be insecure, low paying and temporary. Consequently, as stated in the report's findings, "poverty becomes disproportionately concentrated and reproduced among racialized group members, in some cases inter-generationally." [2]

Similarly in the United States, a June 2017 "State of the Union" report from Stanford's Center on Poverty and Inequality noted the persistence of "profound racial and ethnic inequalities that persist in many domains" including housing, employment and health. The study found as of 2010, the median income of black males was 32 percentage points lower than that of their white counterparts. One in four blacks, one in four Hispanics, and one in four Native Americans were classified as poor versus one in ten whites and one in ten Asians. The employment rate has been 11 to 15 percentage points lower for blacks than for whites consistently since the turn of the century. [3]

The rights of migrant workers in particular are particularly challenged. The Canadian Council for Refugees noted in May of 2018 that this non-resident workforce takes on tough jobs while not benefiting from basic protections enjoyed by citizens of the country. The precariousness of their status, work permits tied to a single employer, isolation, and lack of clarity about their basic rights are reasons named for migrants' unique vulnerability to abuse and exploitation.[4]

So, a rising tide of labour gains does not seem to have raised all workers equally. What is at the roots of these failures, and what remedies are possible? These and other questions are at the core of this week's Global Research News Hour radio program.

The bulk of the show is devoted to a conversation involving a speaker at the [University of Winnipeg based conference](#) marking the centenary of the 1919 Winnipeg General Strike, as well as a Winnipeg-based activist. Chris Ramsaroop and Louis Ifill joined host Michael Welch in the CKUW studio on May 11, 2019 to discuss some of the historical background behind this marginalization of people of colour within the labour force, the importance of international solidarity, the need for class based analysis in anti-racism work, and about the gains that could inform our movements.

In the last segment of the program, the noted commentator Abayomi Azikiwe provides some of the background behind the splitting of labor along racial lines in the industrial northeast of the U.S., particularly in America's automotive capital Detroit, Michigan. He also outlines some practical steps that could be taken to authentically and not cosmetically correct ongoing injustices against a racialized workforce.

Chris Ramsaroop is an activist with Justice for Migrant Workers (Toronto).

Louis Ifill is a former program coordinator for the Winnipeg-based Workers of Colour Support network.

Abayomi Azikiwe is the editor of [Pan-African News Wire](#), and has appeared as a commentator on several media outlets. He is also a frequent contributor to [Global Research](#).

(Global Research News Hour Episode 261)

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The [Global Research News Hour](#) airs every Friday at 1pm CT on [CKUW 95.9FM](#) in Winnipeg. The programme is also podcast at [globalresearch.ca](#) . Excerpts of the show have begun airing on [Rabble Radio](#) and appear as podcasts at [rabble.ca](#).

The Global Research News Hour now airs Fridays at 6pm PST, 8pm CST and 9pm EST on Alternative Current Radio ([alternativecurrentradio.com](#))

Community Radio Stations carrying the Global Research News Hour:

CHLY 101.7fm in Nanaimo, B.C - Thursdays at 1pm PT

Boston College Radio [WZBC 90.3FM NEWTONS](#) during the Truth and Justice Radio Programming slot - Sundays at 7am ET.

[Port Perry Radio](#) in Port Perry, Ontario -1 Thursdays at 1pm ET

[Burnaby Radio Station CJSF out of Simon Fraser University](#). 90.1FM to most of Greater Vancouver, from Langley to Point Grey and from the North Shore to the US Border.

It is also available on 93.9 FM cable in the communities of SFU, Burnaby, New Westminister, Coquitlam,

Port Coquitlam, Port Moody, Surrey and Delta, in British Columbia, Canada. – Tune in at its new time – Wednesdays at 4pm PT.

Radio station [CFUV 101.9FM](#) based at the University of Victoria airs the Global Research News Hour every Sunday from 7 to 8am PT.

[CORTES COMMUNITY RADIO CKTZ 89.5](#) out of Manson’s Landing, B.C airs the show Tuesday mornings at 10am Pacific time.

[Cowichan Valley Community Radio CICV 98.7 FM](#) serving the [Cowichan Lake](#) area of Vancouver Island, BC airs the program Thursdays at 6am pacific time.

Campus and community radio [CFMH 107.3fm](#) in Saint John, N.B. airs the Global Research News Hour Fridays at 10am.

Caper Radio CJBW 107.3FM in Sydney, [Cape Breton](#), Nova Scotia airs the Global Research News Hour starting Wednesday Morning from 8:00 to 9:00am. Find more details at [www.caperradio.ca](#)

RIOT RADIO, the visual radio station based out of [Durham College](#) in Oshawa, Ontario has begun airing the Global Research News Hour on an occasional basis. Tune in at [dcstudentsinc.ca/services/riot-radio/](#)

Radio Fanshawe: [Fanshawe’s 106.9 The X \(CIXX-FM\)](#) out of London, Ontario airs the Global Research News Hour Sundays at 6am with an encore at 4pm.

Los Angeles, California based [Thepowerofvoices.com](#) airs the Global Research News Hour every Monday from 6-7pm Pacific time.

Notes:

1. <https://www.socialistalternative.org/2005/07/01/you-cant-have-capitalism-without-racism-looking-back-at-malcolm-x-1925-1965/>
2. Sheila Block and Grace Edward Galabuzi (March 2011), ‘Canada’s Colour-Coded Labour Market: The gap for racialized workers’, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives and Wellesley Institute; <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/National%20Office/2011/03/Colour%20Coded%20Labour%20Market.pdf>
3. <https://news.stanford.edu/2017/06/16/report-finds-significant-racial-ethnic-disparities/>
4. <https://ccrweb.ca/en/media/migrant-worker-report-cards-2018>

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