

Milos Barutciski: "Honk if you Love Labour Rights: Reflections from a Trade Lawyer's Perspective"

Milos Barutciski discussed the influence of labour concerns on trade policies. Trade liberalization has led to a decrease in union strength but it is likely that labour will increasingly be an issue in international trade negotiations. This has led to an evolving set of alliances, where labour tends to be allied with groups such as environmentalists, social activists, and economic nationalists who are interested in international standard-setting.

Gerry Barr: "Putting the Tiger Back in the Cage"

Gerry Barr spoke of the eroding labour standards that come with trade liberalization. Labour standards in developing countries are often set by the corporation and workers who challenge these standards are often fired or disciplined. However, the rejection of the Multilateral Agreement on Investment (MAI) and the spreading Asian crisis may show that the link between globalization and declining labour standards is not inevitable. A hopeful labour activist should look to new institutions and mechanisms such as: multilateral tables of shared union alliances and employer connections; cross-border bargaining and exchange of information between local unions (such as between mining unions in British Columbia and Chile), and public advocacy of labour rights both in terms of local labour agreements and international trade agreements.

Ton Zijldwijk: "International Trade and Labour"

Zijldwijk discussed adding labour to the international trade agenda. The Uruguay round of GATT on intellectual property was the first time that domestic law was brought into the international trade arena and that set a precedent for labour. The NAFTA round also included a side agreement on labour. Now, there is the possibility of including labour clauses in international trade agreements, but the debate has just begun as to the content of such clauses.

Brian Langille: "Labour and the World Economy – New Waves"

Brian Langille discussed the possible inconsistencies and problems in the June 1998 ILO Declaration on Basic Principles and Rights of Labour. Attempting to reach an international consensus forces us to focus the agenda on core rights or classic rights, such as freedom of association. In addition, he questioned whether the ILO is starting to sound like the WTO when it states that comparative advantage of States cannot be called into question.

Recommendations for Canadian Foreign Policy

- Canada needs to support documents such as 1998 Declaration of ILO to ensure that all human beings have the right to pursue work in conditions of freedom and dignity.
- Yet, we need to ensure that labour standards are not used as protectionist measures by countries, which will then erode their value. Although the generation of employment in