

In Tiohtià:ke (Montreal) on unceded Kanien'kehá:ka [Mohawk] territory



Le Centre communautaire des femmes sud-asiatiques

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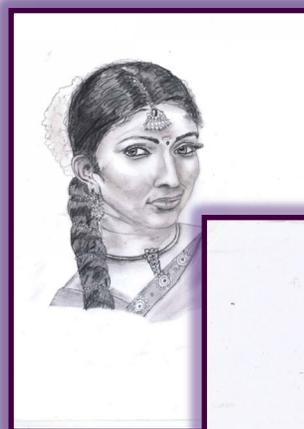
Qu'en pensez-vous? What do you think?

- Let us know your thoughts about the bulletin.
- Que pensez-vous de notre journal?
- We encourage you to send in your stories and articles for upcoming newsletters in any language by the 25th of every month to:

• sawccbulletin@gmail.com

• Écrivez -nous à

sawccbulletin@gmail.com



CENTRE UPDATE



Centre Hours/heure d'ouverture

Monday & Thursday/lundi & jeudi 9am—9pm
Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday/ mardi, mercredi & vendredi— 9am-5pm

The Centre is wheelchair accessible
Le centre est accessible aux fauteuils roulants.

Volunteers — If you are interested in helping out at the Centre, please contact Juvaria (Ext. 104 or juvaria@bellnet.ca) to coordinate a meeting!

South Asian Women's Community Centre

1035, rue Rachel est, 3ième étage, Montréal, QC H2J 2J5



Metro Mont-Royal

Executive Council Meeting: Tuesday, October 3rd at 6:00 pm. All are welcome.

SAWCC Bulletin -- submission guidelines:

SAWCC members are encouraged to send submissions to the Bulletin, to share items of interest with other members. Send submissions to: sawccbulletin@gmail.com

If using the post send to: SAWCC Bulletin, 1035 Rachel est, Montreal, Quebec, H2J 2J3

Submissions should reach by the 25th of the month.

Submissions may be original work or reprints (with permission) and can include --

art, reports, photos, information, opinion pieces, short fiction, poetry, announcements, recipes, etc.

Publication criteria are guided by SAWCC's commitment to not negatively discriminate on the basis of physical and mental ability, religion, colour, nationality, age, sexual orientation and identity, caste, and class. Publication is further guided by the feminist ethos of sis-terhood, and principles of intersectionality*, equality, equity, and transparency. As well, material that may compromise confidentiality of individuals without their consent will not be published.

SAWCC reserves the right to select, reject or edit submissions. When authorship identified, items reflect the views of the authors.

*Intersectionality -- the interconnected nature of social categorizations such as race, class, and gender as they apply to a given individual or group, that create overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.

SAWCC Reflection meeting

On August 25th, the SAWCC staff and EC met for a discussion on how we can all work better together – what’s working well, what doesn’t (what frustrates us) and how we can improve things together. The focus is on relationships, our ways of working and communicating together.

The idea is for everyone to participate; participation can include various topics including bringing forward things that have been accumulated or hasn’t been addressed and affects well-being; talking about our needs to care for ourselves and for each other in the organization (thinking in terms of self and collective care); discussing what does collective care & sisterhood mean for us as an organisation; reflecting on what is our collective responsibility towards our (collective) well-being.

Development of Fascism in India: Rana Ayyub at SAWCC

On midnight August 14/15, 1947, seventy years ago, when Britain retreated from South Asia, two countries emerged, India and Pakistan, the Partition happening with immense bloodshed and trauma -- the largest and most rapid population transfer in history; 17.9 million people left their homes; 14.5 million arrived; 3.4 million went "missing"; 1 million died.



In India today, under the current Hindu nationalist regime, minority populations are facing similar existential threats as they did 70 years ago.

Rana Ayyub is a journalist and author. She worked for India’s leading investigative magazine, Tehalka till 2013, when she resigned to protest its handling of the accusation of sexual harassment against its editor-in-chief. She went underground for eight months in 2010 posing as a filmmaker sympathetic to RSS, the parent Hindu-nationalist organization of the ruling Bhartiya Janata Party (BJP), to secretly record interviews with bureaucrats and policemen in Gujarat regarding the violence and “encounter” killings by the police following the genocide of 2002 and preceding Modi’s consolidation of power. Her book, Gujarat Files: Anatomy of a Cover Up shows how the bureaucracy and the police have been engaged in ideological policies of lawlessness.

Rana Ayyub spoke at SAWCC on August 17th, 2017, organized by CERAS, in collaboration with Garam Masala & Alliance for Pluralism in South Asia, with the support of SAWCC.

SAWCC participation - Re Festival des solidarités Vivre ensemble

Festival of solidarity: LIVING TOGETHER: September 15th and 16th in Côte-des-Neiges: Fair at Parc Jean-Brillant, corner of Descelles and Jeant-Brillant (metro Côte-des-Neiges) and panels and workshops at Centre communautaire de loisir CDN, 5347 Côte-des-Neiges. (close to Parc Jean-Brillant)

DIALOGUE AND EXCHANGE TO OPPOSE RACISM AND FIGHT FOR EQUALITY

In many western countries we have seen the rise of a wave of intolerance that stigmatizes particularly immigrants, native people and racialized minorities. The election of Donald Trump in the US, the emergence of far right parties in Europe, are all troubling indicators of such rising racism. Canada, Quebec and the City of Montreal are not immune to these worrisome phenomenas that aggravate existing problems of structural racism. In such a context, it is of utmost importance to fight all forms of racism and xenophobia, and promote the key values of equality and justice.

As part and parcel of this ongoing battle, ALTERNATIVES wishes to organize this coming September 15th and 16th in the Côte-des-Neiges neighbourhood a festival that will feature immigrant and racialized communities, and highlight their struggle against all forms of intolerance. The Festival of Solidarity : Living Together will have a double character: it will be both a festive event in the form of a fair, and a place where conferences and workshops are held on the forms of social action in our communities.

Consultation sur la discrimination systémique et le racisme au Québec

Montréal, le 14 août 2017. La *Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes* (TCRI) accueille avec intérêt la décision du Ministère de l'Immigration, de la Diversité et de l'Inclusion (MIDI) de mener une Consultation sur la discrimination systémique et le racisme au Québec avec la Commission des droits de la personne et des droits de la jeunesse (CDPDJ)

En tant regroupement de 141 organismes oeuvrant auprès des personnes réfugiées, immigrantes et sans statut à travers le Québec, la TCRI a émis depuis 1979 de nombreux avis et recherches traitant des facteurs structurels et systémiques qui contribuent aux iniquités sociales vécues par les personnes immigrantes et racisées, qui proposaient aussi des solutions concrètes et durables pour lever ces iniquités.

Par ailleurs, il est important de rappeler l'existence de nombreuses études et recherches universitaires et communautaires ayant étudié et documenté les effets de la discrimination systémique et du racisme sur l'intégration socioéconomique des personnes immigrantes et racisées et l'absence d'imputabilité des institutions et des acteurs socioéconomiques encore réticents à des changements de pratiques et à une représentation équitable d'une population de plus en plus diversifiée.

Bien que nous prenions acte de la pertinence d'une telle consultation, nous nous devons toutefois d'émettre des réserves importantes notamment quant aux délais et échéancier prévus pour cette consultation.

Considérant l'importance du sujet et la gravité des effets de la discrimination et du racisme sur la vie des personnes et sur la société plus généralement, nous ne pouvons que déplorer qu'un tel processus soit précipité. Rappelons que l'annonce de la consultation a été faite le 20 juillet et que la date limite pour le dépôt des propositions a été fixée au 18 août. En pleine période des vacances, alors que la majorité des acteurs communautaires, institutionnels et privés fonctionnent à effectifs réduits, cela laisse à peine quatre semaines aux organismes pour mobiliser des partenaires, recruter des participants, élaborer une stratégie de consultation, et produire un montage financier et calendrier d'activités.

La TCRI déplore que l'échéancier de la consultation constitue en soi un obstacle structurel à la participation de nombreux acteurs qui voudraient s'exprimer sur ces questions et demande une prolongation du délai de dépôt de projets.

Par ailleurs, la TCRI se questionne de l'absence de représentants sociaux et institutionnels de la société d'accueil à cette consultation. Nous croyons fermement qu'une discussion publique sur la discrimination et le racisme ne doit pas se limiter à une recension de cas individuels et de récits des personnes qui en sont victimes. Elle doit nécessairement inclure toutes les parties, notamment celles qui ont le pouvoir d'effectuer des changements en faveur d'une plus grande inclusion des groupes discriminés. De plus, elle doit s'appuyer sur une vision collective, et non individuelle, des enjeux et par définition, sur une analyse systémique de nos structures et institutions.

Enfin, de par leur mission et l'expertise qui en découle, la TCRI et ses membres s'attendent à être étroitement associés aux étapes du processus de consultation tels que les groupes de travail et le forum public.

English version:

The Immigration and Refugee Board (TCRI) welcomes the decision of the Department of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion (MIDI) to conduct a Consultation on Systemic Discrimination and Racism In Quebec with the Commission on Human Rights and Youth Rights (CDPDJ)

As a group of 141 organizations working with refugees, immigrants and non-status people throughout Quebec, since 1979, TCRI has published numerous opinions and research on structural and systemic factors contributing to the social inequities experienced by immigrants and racialized persons, which also proposed concrete and lasting solutions to these inequities.

It is also important to recall the existence of numerous academic and community studies and research that have studied and documented the effects of systemic discrimination and racism on the socio-economic integration of immigrants and racialized persons and the lack of accountability of institutions and socio-economic actors who are still reluctant to change practices and equitably represent an increasingly diverse population.

Although we acknowledge the relevance of such consultation, we should, however, express some important reservations, particularly with regard to the timing and timing of this consultation.

Considering the importance of the subject and the seriousness of the effects of discrimination and racism on people's lives and on society more generally, we can only deplore the fact that such a process is precipitated. The announcement of the consultation was made on 20 July and the deadline for submission of proposals was 18 August. In the middle of the holiday period, while the majority of community, institutional and private actors operate on a small scale, it leaves barely four weeks for organizations to mobilize partners, recruit participants, develop a consultation strategy and produce a financial package and schedule of activities.

TCRI deplores the fact that the timetable for the consultation itself constitutes a structural obstacle to the participation of many actors who would like to express their views on these issues and requests an extension of the deadline for submission of projects.

In addition, the TCRI questioned the absence of social and institutional representatives of the host society in this consultation. We firmly believe that a public discussion of discrimination and racism should not be limited to a review of individual cases and narratives of the victims. It must necessarily include all parties, including those with the power to make changes in favor of greater inclusion of discriminated groups. Moreover, it must be based on a collective rather than an individual view of the issues and, by definition, on a systemic analysis of our structures and institutions.

Finally, due to their mission and expertise, TCRI and its members expect to be closely involved in the stages of the consultation process, such as working groups and the public forum.

Dear Cynics, These Are the People Who Made the Victory Over Instant Triple Talaq Possible

By Mariya Salim

The Supreme Court's verdict in the triple talaq case is a victory not for any political party but for the many women who have been struggling for gender justice and demanding reforms from within.

Much has already been said and written about the judgment and more legal analyses are bound to follow. But I want to address the underlying suspicion and disenchantment which some 'progressives' have begun to feel towards those who should actually be hailed for their courage.

Social media is a very hollow space. In the wake of the historic triple talaq judgment, many friends and fellow activists have been calling the Bhartiya Muslim Mahila Andolan (BMMA) to congratulate it and its women for their years of struggle. But there are so many 'progressive' young men and women who, having had little or no interactions with women who have faced the evil of triple talaq, are not just linking the struggle of these women with vested

political interests but are also rubbishing years of their struggle on various other issues as mere hogwash. Activism on WhatsApp groups and Facebook posts was the order of the day today while we rejoiced! What a shame. This is a reply to all of them.

I joined the BMMA as a young woman activist in 2012. I joined in a voluntary capacity because it is a movement. My first memory of BMMA was Zakia Soman and Noorjehan Safia Niaz introducing me to the state convenors of the movement and telling me how it came about.



I met all of them at a convention against triple talaq in Mumbai the same year. Please note, the year was 2012. Nishat apa, a widow nearing 60, vociferously fights for Muslim women in Jaipur. She and her team are available 24 hours a day to deal with issues such as domestic violence, food security, scholarships etc which the women who trust them come to them with. Sure, there have been various court judgments – including Shamim Ara, which first declared instant triple talaq invalid – that Nishat apa could cite to immediately offer solace but for women seeking temporary redressal there is no substitute for

action on the ground. She runs a Shariah court today from her own house because she believes women who come to her believing they will get some relief cannot be turned away. Her workers visit police stations with these women and fearlessly demand action be taken against their husbands wherever there is violence or other criminal activity involved.

Nasreen, a 33-year-old activist from Hospet, Karnataka let go of all of her savings and her dreams of buying a scooter and invested the money she had saved over the years to buy three desktops to start a little computer training centre for young Muslim boys and girls in her community. She runs a small sewing centre too and has been training youth on gender, women's rights etc for over four years now. Life is not easy for a single Muslim woman like her, who is also bringing up her sister's daughter as her own, but she finds happiness in contributing to the cause of the community and is content in the little she earns to make ends meet.

I also met Safia apa from Bhopal and Khatoon Sheikh from Mumbai at this meeting. Both working with the Muslim community, linking youth with government schemes, assisting Muslim women who have been facing violence at home or have been divorced arbitrarily by their husbands, meeting municipal heads to fix issues of road construction and water, running livelihood training centres free of cost, tirelessly, day after day.

All of these women, including Noorjehan and Zakia have broken the shackles of patriarchy within their own homes, and have dared to challenge the status quo, fearlessly. So, what are they up against? Well, plenty.

Not only are they, and now I can say, we, targeted for questioning the status quo and upsetting the patriarchal clergy within the community, but our efforts are being maligned by a whispering campaign about 'hidden forces' allegedly backing us politically and financially.

As someone who is very closely working with the women in the movement – seeing the daily struggles of how to get 'chanda' (donations) from the community and buy a new sewing machine, or a second hand computer – I am left aghast. None of us identify ourselves as being part of any political party. And we are very open in this assertion of ours. Some of our critics have the audacity to call our work 'humbug' – a word someone used in a TV debate when I invited him to come and visit a BMMA livelihood centre.

Many others say the number of victims nationally is not large enough to make instant triple talaq an issue that needs immediate redressal. So do we wait for the numbers to rise instead then? Leading lawyers and activists also seem to have a problem with the BMMA and others asking for a conclusive judgement from the apex court on an issue they

deal with on a daily basis. As a lawyer friend, Saptarshi Mandal, while critiquing the triple talaq judgement very simply but beautifully put it, “May be the judgment need not be assessed for its ‘legal’ contribution at all. For lawyers, judges and law teachers are not the only audiences that judgments speak to. May by some cleric who so far had been declaring instant triple talaq to be valid (despite Shamim Ara), would stop doing so. We have to wait to see the kind of popular legal literacy this judgment creates”.

On Tuesday, we were all sitting together waiting to hear from the Supreme Court on our plea to strike down instant triple talaq. While the entire group burst into a little jig after the verdict, there were so many efforts at undermining our morale, and those of others fighting for the same cause. Our efforts were said by some to have a negative effect and help the Hindutva agenda. Sarcasm was the order of the day for others who asked if we would stand up for the widows of those lynched by gau-rakshaks. Is there really a ‘this or that’ when it comes to women’s rights? I personally am a member of BMMA and I also try and address, in my own limited capacity, issues such as beef lynchings, rapes during riots etc. Does one have to scream out loud about all the work one is doing on multiple fronts just to satisfy ignorant, doubting minds? Clearly not.

It is ridiculous to associate us with a particular political party just because they have come upfront and supported our fight, while some others did not. We want everyone, irrespective of political leanings, to support us in our fight for gender justice and reforms in Muslim personal laws from within.

We will not be deterred in our cause. I will not let false allegations and shallow uninformed opinions affect me or my trust in these women – women who are constantly struggling to make a little change in hundreds of lives in their own ways. Reform in Muslim law from within the community is the need of the day. There is a long way to go, but this judgment is definitely a step in the right direction.

DÉCLARATION DU CCFSA RELATIVE AU RACISME ANTI-MUSULMAN*- SAWCC STATEMENT ON ANTI-MUSLIM RACISM*

Fondé en 1981, le Centre communautaire des femmes sud-asiatiques (CCFSA) est un organisme de défense des droits qui offre une gamme de services et du soutien aux femmes sud-asiatiques et leur famille de la grande région de Montréal/ Tiohtià:ke tsi ionhwéntsare. Nous sommes extrêmement alarmées par la montée et la persistance du mouvement racisme anti-musulman dans notre entourage qui jusqu’à maintenant a culminé au massacre de la mosquée de la ville de Québec en janvier 2017. Les traumatismes qui en ont découlé sont encore tangibles.

Il existe du racisme systématique et du racisme de tous les jours, courant. Ces deux formes s’alimentent l’une l’autre. Il est paradoxal, mais non surprenant que l’on blâme les musulmanes pour toute forme de racisme qui leur est dirigée parce que le lot de victimes est à blâmer pour leur victimisation. Et la religion de l’islam est aussi pointée du doigt. Il serait impensable de concevoir que toute autre religion puisse s’assujettir à une diffamation si explicite. Pourtant, pour les musulmans et l’Islam, c’est maintenant la norme.

Le sentiment anti-musulman dans le monde occidental – à l’époque des croisades, ou plus tard, avec le colonialisme et l’impérialisme – bien qu’associé au pouvoir et aux ressources, a été circonscrit comme étant le résultat de différences entre les civilisations, et les musulmans ont toujours été ceux qui n’étaient pas à la hauteur. Durant la seconde moitié du 20^e siècle, la guerre froide a fait naître un Autre bien défini représenté par le communisme, mais au tournant du siècle, avec la dissolution de l’Union soviétique et l’urgence de rétablir un Autre Méchant, le rôle de l’ennemi est une fois de plus tombé sur la civilisation de l’Islam. Les événements de 9/11 ont déclenché une transformation radicale qui a instauré le climat actuel. Dans une épidémie qui s’est répandue à l’échelle de la planète, l’Islam et les musulmans sont comme par hasard devenus les boucs émissaires pour tous les fléaux. Les 20^e et 21^e siècles ont aussi connu un fort rebond dans le nombre de guerres et d’agressions impérialistes, et au Moyen-Orient, de nombreux changements de régime sont survenus. Ces conjonctures ont déclenché des forces de

résistances et des réactions. Plusieurs chercheurs et politiciens s'accordent pour dire que les guerres en Irak et en Afghanistan et les bombardements de la Libye ne sont que des moyens pour créer le chaos et un terreau fertile pour l'apparition de groupes extrémistes. La vaste majorité des victimes des attaques terroristes ont été, et sont toujours, les musulmans qui vivent dans ces pays.

Face au racisme anti-musulman, les gens de notre communauté ressentent une grande peur, pour eux-mêmes et leur famille. Et ce n'est pas dans leur imagination. Il existe bel et bien une discrimination explicite autant qu'implicite. Cette situation est intolérable et inacceptable. Il est inacceptable que les enfants ressentent de la crainte en raison du nom qu'ils portent, de leur apparence et des vêtements que porte leur famille. Il est horrifiant que l'on crache sur les femmes qui portent le hijab. Il est inadmissible qu'une femme se tienne le plus loin des rails de métro, craignant de s'y faire pousser dans un acte de violence. Qu'il s'agisse d'une vision consciente ou inconsciente, le musulman est perçu comme l'Étranger, l'Autre. De cette vision en découle une autre, concomitante, celle que la femme musulmane devrait être moins musulmane pour mieux s'intégrer. Nous soutenons qu'il est hautement problématique de dire ou de penser ceci : « Je ne suis pas raciste, mais je crois vraiment qu'elles ne devraient pas... couvrir leurs cheveux, prier avec autant d'ardeur, etc., etc. » Voilà un terrain glissant. C'est une manifestation de la vision Nous, et Eux. C'est dire en vérité : « S'ils étaient plus comme Nous, ça arrangerait les choses ».

Il est irréfléchi et inconcevable de tomber dans l'essentialisme racial en associant l'angoisse et l'insécurité des jeunes avec la « radicalisation », la violence envers les femmes avec les « crimes d'honneur », et l'abus d'enfants et de jeunes avec les « mariages forcés ». Cette logique ne fait que masquer les vrais problèmes et intensifier le sentiment de l'Étranger. De manière implicite, alors, l'angoisse et l'insécurité des jeunes, la violence envers les femmes et l'abus des jeunes deviennent spécifiques à la race. Mais nous savons que ce n'est pas le cas, et de nombreuses preuves démontrent le contraire. Seulement, quand les choses sont présentées ainsi, elles prennent de l'élan et le public devient méfiant chaque fois qu'il est question de crime « d'honneur », de mariage forcé et de radicalisation. Les populations majoritaires ne sont pas soumises à une telle surveillance et une telle répression ; elles ne sont pas confrontées à des suppositions non étayées.

Le patriarcat est au coeur de toute oppression. Nous avons lutté et continuons notre bataille pour que nous puissions exercer nos choix sans coercition dans toutes les sphères de nos vies. Nous revendiquons notre droit à vivre dans la dignité en tant qu'êtres humains. Et nous revendiquons le même droit pour nos familles et notre communauté. Nous ne changerons pas pour que les gens autour de nous se sentent mieux en notre présence. Tout le monde a le droit d'être comme il, comme elle est. Les gouvernements, les organismes publics, les médias, les éducateurs, les intellectuels et les décideurs politiques doivent tous reconnaître leur rôle dans la montée et la persistance du racisme anti-musulman. Ils ont la responsabilité morale et le devoir éthique de désamorcer le racisme et de s'y opposer, peu importe l'endroit où il sévit. Nous rejetons les mesures symboliques et les platitudes. Faire des musulmans des boucs émissaires et des sacs de boxe politique et utiliser l'islam pour semer la division et marquer de bien piètres points politiques est un jeu dangereux. L'histoire nous a montré que répandre la haine, ou y demeurer insensible, déchire éventuellement la société en entier, et les premières cibles ne sont pas les seules victimes.

[Le CCFSA est membre de la Fédération des femmes du Québec, Femmes de diverses origines, L'R des centres des femmes du Québec, La Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes et des immigrants (TCRI)]

*Bien que nous mettions l'accent sur le racisme anti-musulman, nous reconnaissons le racisme qui affecte au quotidien les personnes autochtones et racialisées, en particulier, vivant au Québec, même si chaque situation se présente avec ses spécificités.

English version:

The South Asian Women's Community Centre (SAWCC) is a service, support and advocacy organization for South Asian Women and their families in the Greater Montreal/ Tiohtià:ke tsi ionhwéntsare area, founded in 1981. We are greatly alarmed by the entrenched and growing anti-Muslim racism in our midst, which thus far has culminated in

the massacre in the mosque in Quebec City in January 2017; traumatising effects of which are ongoing.

There is systemic racism and there is commonplace, everyday racism too, and they feed off each other. Muslims are blamed for whatever racism they are subjected to, paradoxically, but not unsurprisingly, because the lot of victims is to be blamed for their victimisation. And Islam, the religion gets called out too. It would be unthinkable for any other religion to be subjected to such overt vilification. Yet for Muslims and for Islam this is now normative.

Anti-Muslim sentiment in the West, at the time of the Crusades, or later, with colonialism and imperialism, while about power and resources, has been framed in the West as civilizational difference with Muslims being the ones always falling short. In the second half of the 20th century, the Cold War created a definable Other in communism, but by the end of the century, with the break-up of the Soviet Union and the need to have an Evil Other, the civilizational enemy once again became Islam. 9/11 ushered in a sea change leading to what we are living today. In a contagion spread around the world, Islam and Muslims have become convenient scapegoats for all manner of ills. The 20th and 21st centuries have also seen a sharp upswing in wars of imperialist aggression and regime change centred in the Middle East. This has unleashed forces of resistance as well as of reaction. Many scholars and politicians agree that the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan and the bombing of Libya have only served to create chaos and breeding grounds for extremist groups, and the vast majority of victims of terrorist attacks have been, and continue to be Muslims in these countries.

As a result of anti-Muslim racism, people in our communities feel great fear for themselves and their families. And this is not imagined. There is overt and covert discrimination. This is an intolerable and unacceptable situation. When children feel afraid because of their names, how they look, how they and their families dress, this is unacceptable. When women who wear hijabs are spat on, this is shocking. When in anticipation of violence a woman stays as far from the metro rails as she can because she is afraid of being pushed onto the lines, this is intolerable. At the core is the view – conscious or unconscious – of a Muslim as Outsider, an Other. And from that flows the concomitant view that she should diminish her Muslimness in order to fit in. We contend that it is highly problematic to think or say, “I am not a racist,, but, I do think it would be good if they did not...cover their hair, pray so observantly, etc. etc.” That’s the slippery slope. That’s the Us and Them. Essentially it’s saying, “If they were more like Us things would be okay.”

Racially essentializing youth angst and insecurity always as ‘radicalization’, violence against women as ‘honour’ crimes, or child or youth abuse as ‘forced marriage’, is reckless and ill-conceived. It often misses what the actual issues may be and results in heightened Othering. Implicitly then, youth angst and insecurity, violence against women and child abuse become racially specific. But we know this isn’t so and there is ample evidence to the contrary. But when things are framed in this way, they develop a momentum and we harbour suspicions in every instance of ‘honour’ crimes, forced marriage and radicalization. Majority communities are not subjected to this kind of scrutiny and policing; outright, uninvestigated assumptions are not made in their case.

We see patriarchy at the core of all oppressions. We have struggled and continue to struggle to ensure that we enjoy choice without coercion in all aspects of our lives. We assert our right to live in dignity as human beings. And we assert the same for our families and communities. And we will not change in order to make people feel more comfortable around us. Everyone has a right to be the way they are. Governments, state agencies, the media, educators, intellectuals and policy shapers must acknowledge the role they play in generating and sustaining anti-Muslim racism. They have a moral responsibility and ethical duty to de-escalate the racism and challenge it wherever it is. We reject tokenism and platitudes. Making Muslims scapegoats and political punching bags, and using Islam as a wedge issue to score cheap political points is a dangerous game. History has shown us that sowing or ignoring hatred eventually tears an entire society apart and those originally targeted are not the only victims.

[SAWCC is a member of the Quebec Women's Federation, Femmes de diverses origines, l'R des centres des femmes du Quebec, La Table de concertation des organismes au service des personnes réfugiées et immigrantes (TCRI)]

*Even as we focus on anti-Muslim racism, we acknowledge the daily racism experienced in particular by Indigenous and racialized peoples in Quebec, even as specificities may be different.

Montreal's most linguistically diverse area– with SAWCC

Residents say they like being able to speak their native languages with others in the community



The South Asian women's community centre was having a picnic Friday in the linguistically diverse area of Côte-des-Neiges highlighted by the 2016 census. (Sean Henry/CBC)

In a small area of Côte-des-Neiges, with only 6,600 people, 48 languages are spoken in the home — making it a hotbed of cultural crossovers and the most linguistically diverse area of Montreal, according to the 2016 census.

The area is less than half a square kilometre in size and lies between Darlington Avenue, Jean-Talon Boulevard, Van Horne Avenue and Côte-des-Neiges Road. There are 48 languages spoken in the census tract, including French and English.

On its streets, in its parks and businesses, languages like Hiligaynon (from the Philippines), Tamil, Bamanankan and Fulah (from West Africa) can be heard. We spoke to people who live in the area and asked them what they found special about it.



Ambika Sivamoorthy says she speaks three-and-a-half languages: Tamil, English, Sinhala and some French.

She is a community worker at a South Asian women's community centre in the area. Language is central to what she does — she helps immigrants with language issues, such as helping them fill out forms.

"It's so dynamic, I've already seen 10 to 15 communities living in this area that I'm able to recognize," Sibamoorthy said. She comes from Sri

Lanka and said she was drawn to the area because so many Sri Lankans live there.

Member news

Indu Krishnamurthy was appointed as Executive Director at ACEM-Microcredit Montreal on June 1st 2017 after the retirement of Anne Kettenbeil, a long time ally and member of SAWCC. She has worked in various capacities within the organization for nearly 10 years.

A grassroots poverty reduction initiative rooted in Montreal since 1990, ACEM is a pioneer in Canada in the micro-credit sector with a mission to fight poverty and exclusion. ACEM provides training, financing for entrepreneurs and professional immigrants and technical support. ACEM serves people and communities underserved by mainstream commercial banks and lenders. ACEM also seeks to democratize finance through the participation of its investors, borrowers and engaged citizens, to create an inclusive and prosperous society.

www.acemcreditcommunautaire.qc.ca



Sadeqa Siddiqui Essay Writing: Why I am Feminist by Aveleigh Turner

The essay from the third winner

What is a Feminist?

A feminist can wear makeup. A feminist can wear a pretty, pink floral dress or a black t-shirt and jeans. It doesn't matter what she wears. She chooses her clothes because she likes the way she feels in them, because they make her feel good.

A feminist does not judge other women for her behavior, her choices or what she wears.

A feminist believes in equality of the sexes. He believes men and women should have the same opportunities and responsibilities. He believes in equal pay for equal work. Feminists do not believe men are the enemy or that women are superior. It's not an anti-pink, women-only club. To be a feminist is to advocate that women and men want the same, deserve the same, and should both live with the same freedoms and as joyfully as each other. A feminist tries to reduce sexism and break stereotypes, because female or male, we all come from the same place: our mother's womb. The minuscule differences between XX and XY chromosome pairs should not define our personalities or what we deserve as human beings.

Just because someone likes things that are traditionally associated with femininity – shopping, nail polish, etc. – does not make them a “bad feminist.” Equality means to be equal no matter who someone may be – man or woman, adult or child – whether they were born a tomboy, a bubbly girl or the wrong gender.

A dislike of “girly” things – to associate all manners and objects customarily feminine as portraying weakness – is called femmephobia. People may think they're being feminist by opposing and dismissing “girly” or “feminine” things but in reality they are contributing to sexism. A female is not unintellectual or inferior to a male just because pink is her favourite colour.

Feminists are not threatened by masculinity. What they want is an end to a culture of “toxic masculinity,” which creates a hierarchy and barrier between the genders, categorizing them into separate, sexist stereotypes, where men are superior and carry more authority and power. Toxic masculinity is what makes it unacceptable for men to cry, and what makes it acceptable to sexually harass and abuse women. It places men's worth in their power (in their power-over each other, and in their power-over women), it's why they are considered weak if a female is more successful.

Toxic masculinity is the equivalent of femmephobia. Both are equally harmful and contribute to misogyny – the hatred of women.

A feminist can be single, or married. She might be a homemaker, or she could have a full-time job. She might be black or caucasian, thick or thin, feminine or boyish. She might have children or she may chose not to. A feminist can be male or female, straight, gay, bisexual or transgender. A feminist believes all people are equal regardless of their sex, gender, race, religion, age, income, ethnicity, nationality, and/or physical and mental capabilities. Feminists believe that feminism will continue to create a better and fairer world.



Centre Communautaire des femmes sud-asiatiques

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36 years of sisterhood, strength, struggle and success 1981-2017

www.sawcc-ccfsa.ca

September 5,
10:30-12:00 - Session to determine

September 12,
10:30-12:00 - Arts & crafts

September 19,
10:30-12:00 - Youth protection

September 26,
10:30-12:00 - Fertility clinic

September 29 - Volunteer appreciation

5 septembre,
10:30-12:00 - Session sera déterminée

12 septembre,
10:30-12:00 - Artisanat

19 septembre,
10:30-12:00 - Protection de la jeunesse

26 septembre,
10:30-12:00 - Clinique de fertilité

29 septembre - Volunteer appreciation

September 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1	2
3	4	5  Session to determine	6	7	8	9
10	11	12  Arts & craft	13	14	15	16
17	18	19  Youth protection	20	21	22	23
24	25	26  Fertility clinic	27	28	29  Volunteer appreciation	30

Membership Renewal

Please renew your SAWCC membership to ensure you get all the mailings and can participate fully in the organization.

Changes to your information (address, phone number, etc. email, etc.)? Download the membership form from our website, insert the correct information and send it along with your membership dues.

<http://www.sawcc-ccfsa.ca/EN/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/Membership-form.pdf>

Please mail cheque to: SAWCC, 1035 Rachel est, Montréal, Qc., H2J 2J5.

Make cheque payable to: "South Asian Women's Community Centre".

Indicate in the note section: "membership".

Making a donation to SAWCC at the same time? Donations of \$20 or more will receive a tax-deductible receipt. If including a donation indicate as well the amount towards "donation".

Membership dues:

\$1-\$15 for a year, renewable each year