

In Montreal on unceded Kanien'kehá:ka [Mohawk] territory



World Elder Abuse Awareness Day 2016

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Journée internationale de sensibilisation pour contrer l'abus envers les aînés 2016

Les Vieux font des vagues dans le cadre de la campagne



Jeudi 9 juin 2016 de 11 h à 15 h
Eglise Union Unie (accès chaises roulantes)
3007 DeLisle (Métro Lionel-Groulx)

11 h – Rendez-vous à l'entrée de la station de métro Lionel-Groulx – performances publiques et marche jusqu'à l'Église Union Unie
12h à 15 h – Dîner- événements à caractère social et artistique - conférences

RECAA, Ressources ethnoculturelles contre l'abus envers les aînés, Le Groupe Herencias/Encounters Project et l'Église Union Unie travaillent de concert avec:



ACT, Ageing Communication Technology, Contactivity Centre, COPSI Centre d'orientation paralogale et sociale pour les immigrants, South Asia Women's Community Centre, Union United Church, Raging Grannies, VIES: Vieillessements, exclusions sociales, solidarité.

For more information: recaa.montreal@gmail.com tel: 514-746-5960

CENTRE UPDATE



Centre Hours/heure d'ouverture

Monday & Thursday/lundi & jeudi 9am—5pm

Monday & Thursday/lundi & jeudi 9am—9pm (as of September 7th, 2105)

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 Homa (Ext. 102 or homa@bellnet.ca) to coordinate a meeting!

Annual General Meeting

SAWCC's Annual General Meeting Day – Saturday 11th June 2016

Mark your calendar!!

(Members will have received the Annual General Meeting package in the mail already.)

A day to catch up on all that we have done this past year, meet old friends and make new ones, to appreciate ourselves, our work and what we do for each other and our communities, to learn, discuss and contribute

Program for the day:

9:30am-10:00am – light breakfast (provided)

10:00am -12 noon – discussion: “35 Years of SAWCC”; document on radicalisation

12noon -1:00pm --lunch (provided); catch up with old friends and make new ones

1:00pm-2:30pm -- Annual General Meeting

2:30pm-3:30pm – elections and announcement of new Executive Council

Next EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETING

There are not Executive Council meetings in June and July. The next meeting will be in August. The date will be announced in a future *Bulletin*.

SAWCC Bulletin – submissions 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 is 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 sisterhood, and principles of intersectionality*, equality, equity, and transparency. As well, material that may violate 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, regarded as creating overlapping and interdependent systems of discrimination or disadvantage.*

SAY/JSA UPDATE

We also have a NEW group on Facebook, check us out! Search: **South Asian Youth (SAY) Collective**

NEW: YOUNG SOUTH ASIAN WOMEN'S SUPPORT SPACE

This FREE space is for:

- South Asian women
- Ages 17-30 years old
- Peer-to-peer support
- Coming together and sharing stories, struggles and lots of tea!

E-mail the South Asian Youth (SAY) Collective at sawccyouth@gmail.com for more information about meeting times!

We meet at 2110 Mackay Ave.



South Asian Youth (SAY) Collective invites you to our first Young South Asian Women's Support Meet-up! The meeting will be held on **Friday June 3rd, 2016 from 6:00—7:30pm** at 2110 Mackay Ave.

This support space will be FREE and held for women ages 17-30 who identify as South Asian. Meet-ups will be 1.5 hours long at a time that is accessible for as many people as possible. Snacks will be provided.

Our purpose is to create a space to share our story and experiences and offer each other peer support.

If you would like to attend our support meet-ups, please e-mail sawccyouth@gmail.com

We aim to provide safe(r) spaces that are inclusive, anti-racist, sex-positive, and LGBTQ, queer and trans positive.

The South Asian Youth (SAY) Collective is starting a Dance Troupe!

Interested in connecting with South Asian women and femmes between the ages of 13 and 30? Ever thought about creating magic with bhangra, salsa and hip hop? We have! We hope to incorporate a variety of different genres!

This troupe will not have formal instructors, but will be a cool skill-sharing space where we can all have some fun.

Get in touch with us on Facebook, by email, or phone. We plan on meeting up at the end of May.

The SAY Collective can be reached on Facebook: South Asian Youth Collective

By Email: sawccyouth@gmail.com

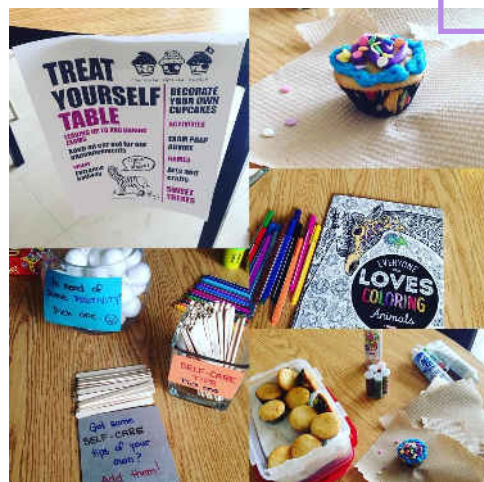
By Phone: 514-528-8812 Ext 105



The Dance Troupe's first meeting will be held in June! Get in touch with your availabilities. Email us at: sawccyouth@gmail.com OR call us at: 514-528-8812 ext 105 OR get in touch via Facebook: South Asian Youth (SAY) Collective



This month many of our groups are coming to a close. It is with excitement that we welcome the summer months but with a sadness that we say goodbye to the amazing young women we have had the good fortune to spend time with over the course of the academic year. Their commitment to each other and fierce courage to share with each other inspires us. Thank you for being a source of joy and learning.

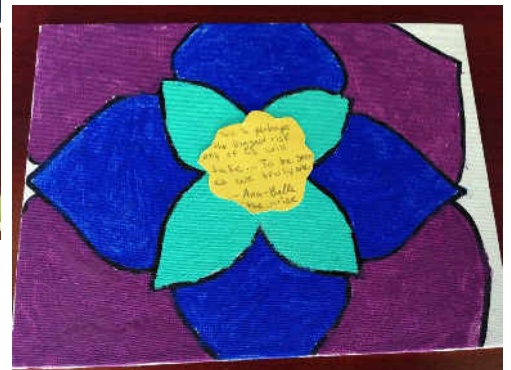
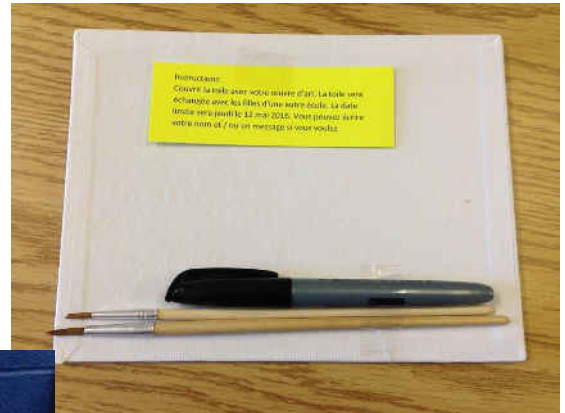


With the intention to chat with students about self-care strategies and offer a space where they could relax and chat amongst themselves while eating copious amounts of sugar—we made our way to a high school with our Treat Yourself Table. Some lovely conversations and some "SPEED"y card games ensued.

We look forward to expanding this concept and installing a Treat Yourself table at SAWCC this summer. Look out for it the next time you stop by!

Art Exchange

This month the young women in two high schools will be connecting through art. Each young woman painted a frame or canvas for a counterpart in another school. Many of them included a message on the back. We look forward to sharing more about the “unveiling” that happens in coming weeks.

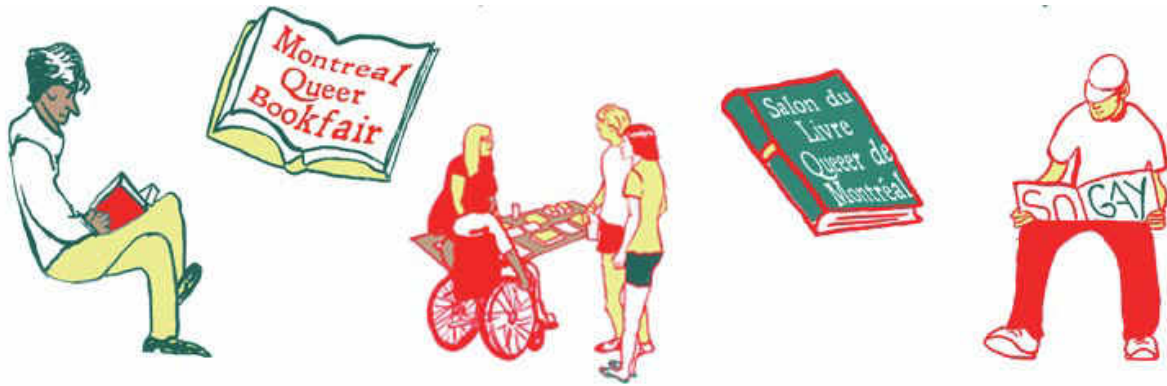


Volunteer Appreciation Day

In celebration of all the energy and love our volunteers share with us we held a Volunteer Appreciation lunch at SAWCC on Friday May 27th, 2016. Thank you to all the people who offer their support and presence at SAWCC.



Queer Between the Covers Bookfair



Saturday August 13, 2016
11am to 6pm
Centre communautaire de loisirs Sainte-Catherine d'Alexandrie
1700, Rue Amherst

Salon du livre Queer entre les couvertures
samedi le 13 août 2016
11h à 18h
Centre communautaire de loisirs Sainte-Catherine d'Alexandrie
1700, Rue Amherst

◆◆◆◆ ACCESSIBILITY INFO ◆◆◆◆

- ◆ The event is free and open to all.
 - ◆ The bookfair will be held in a wheelchair accessible space with wheelchair accessible, gender-neutral washrooms.
 - ◆ You can find detailed information about the space physical accessibility and the space location here : <http://tinyurl.com/venueaccessibility>
 - ◆ We will give out free bus/metro tickets, available upon request at the welcome table. Limited quantity, so first come first serve!
 - ◆ There will be a seating area
 - ◆ We will be offering free childcare throughout the day.
 - ◆ Free vegan food and coffee will be served.
 - ◆ We strive to make the bookfair a scent-reduced space to make it more accessible to people with chemical and fragrance sensitivities.
 - ◆◆ If you're a smoker, we ask you to smoke in the smoking area which will be 25 feet from entrance, and to wait at least five minutes after you're done before entering the space to « air out » a little bit.
 - ◆◆ We ask everyone to refrain from wearing perfume, cologne, essential oils, scented body and haircare products or other scented or chemical products to the fair.
 - ◆ For more information on our commitment to access, you can visit : <http://tinyurl.com/accessibilitycommitment>
- ***** If you have any questions or concerns during the day, we encourage you to go talk to the collective members sitting at the welcome table. Until then, you can contact us at [queerbetweenthecovers\(at\)gmail\(dot\)com](mailto:queerbetweenthecovers(at)gmail(dot)com)

A MONTH AGAINST BORDERS AND DEPORTATIONS!

Solidarity Across Borders declares June 2016 a "Month Against Deportations."

In the context of ongoing struggles for justice and dignity for all migrants, refugees and undocumented people, Solidarity Across Borders and allies are organizing actions throughout the month of June to publicly denounce the violence, racism and oppression of border controls, and their daily impact on tens of thousands of people in Montreal.

This summer we will amplify our voices as community members, lovers and fighters, with public art projects, demonstrations, community meals, and a variety of activities in fierce resistance to colonial borders and economies built on the deportation of certain people.

We invite you to join us this June, and into the future!
Not one more deportation! Down with colonial borders!

Schedule of events ::

Saturday June 4th: No Borders Block Party // 6pm // location TBA

Saturday June 11th: Picnic and soccer tournament // Jarry Park

June 25-26: Mural painting and BBQ // location TBA

+++ manif-actions! +++ and more to come!!!



Over the past decade, deeply racist and Islamophobic border controls have strengthened. These border controls fortify the "Global North" in order to manage the migration of people from the "Global South", who are only permitted entry if they can contribute to the destructive advancement of Canadian capitalism, or be exploited under it. Extending its power through imperialism and colonial occupation of Indigenous land, the Canadian state uses these border controls to assure that the majority of those who migrate to Canada live and work in precarity.

As we fight this reality, we want to celebrate the inspiring struggles that have taken place this past year against racism and exploitation, by migrants here in Montreal and around the world.

We have taken to the streets under the banner of 'Refugees Welcome' along with others across the world, as the "migrant crisis" was spotlighted within global mainstream consciousness. We know that this crisis is nothing new, although we also know that there has been a notable increase in deaths, by the thousands, this past year, as a direct result of increased border militarization. Here in Montreal, we have seen the inspiring mobilization of the Haitian community in a collective fight against deportations, following the lifting of the moratorium on deportations to Haiti and Zimbabwe, with the Non-Status Action Committee.

We have seen the Non Status Women's Collective in Montreal courageously denounce their conditions of oppression and exploitation, demanding status for all. These non-status women have spoken about living their everyday lives as if hidden under a mask, invisible, and struggling for a life of dignity, security and peace. Non status people continue to live in precarity in the shadows of our society.

As we celebrate resistance in our communities, we also want to mourn those whose lives were stolen while in the custody of immigration and border authorities.

Since the year 2000, 14 people have died in Canada Border Services Agency custody. Most recently, Francisco Javier Romero Astorga died while being detained at the Maplehurst Correctional Complex in Milton, Ontario, in March 2016.

This is part of a larger struggle against police violence and anti-Black racism, which has seen the mobilizing, in Montreal, of Montreal Nord Republic and Montreal Noir, following the death of Jean-Pierre Bony by Montreal police in April 2016.

We know that struggles against immigration controls, for justice and dignity, are fought by thousands of people in our city, in our communities, often in isolation, and we want to honour those individuals and families for whom courageous resistance is part of daily life.

In confronting and actively fighting the systemic racism inherent in Canada's exploitative immigration regime, and its oppressive foundations in capitalism and ongoing colonialism, we aspire towards strengthening our networks of solidarity and mutual aid, to counter this reality, here in Montreal.

Join us!

AIDWA statement on Trinamul attacks

ALL INDIA DEMOCRATIC WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION
NO. 2253- E, SHADI KHAMPUR, NEW RANJIT NAGAR,
NEW DELHI-110008
PH: 011-25700476, 25709565
Email : aidwacec@gmail.com

23rd May, 2016

PRESS STATEMENT

AIDWA strongly condemns the heinous attack unleashed by the winning Trinamul Congress [TMC – who just won the Assembly elections in the Indian state of West Bengal] activists on the women activists in West Bengal as part of post-poll result violence. Most of AIDWA activists are attacked and hundreds had to flee from the residence in village or city. AIDWA leader Mukta had to leave from her home in Hugli. ICDS worker Indrani Mukherjee was attacked in Bankura. Sukla Ghosh another activist had to leave her residence in Chandrokona in Paschim Medinipur. TMC workers attacked homes of Malati Murmu, who is a Panchayet Pradhan and Mitali Mukherjee, Panchayet Upapradhan in Bardhaman. Anganwadi union members were asked to leave their unions. Elected legislator Jahanara Khan's residence was also attacked. AIDWA candidate Namta Dipti Adhikary in Coochbehar has been attacked. Piali Kazi, relative of the great poet Kazi Nazrul Islam was also not spared. Cycles were distributed to school going girls as part of development schemes in the villages. Cycles were snatched from girls whose families voted against TMC. Booths where TMC was voted out are vandalized and voters threatened. Such is the jungloraaj prevailing in the state.

Severe attacks are being launched in Kolkata, North and South 24 parganas, Howrah, Hugli, Bardhaman, Bankura and elsewhere. Many offices were forcibly occupied by the TMC. Bombs are charged in many houses. Ward No 33 of Beleghta house of our Zonal committee member Rakhi Sen Sarma was totally destroyed setting fire. Many women activists were injured. Land of peasants are looted in Alipurduar with crops being cut and stolen. Extortions and fines are continuing in Jalpaiguri. In Jadavpur Assembly Constituency, where the left candidate won in all the wards, not only are the activists in the Left parties being beaten up or the CPI(M) party offices being ransacked, but whole localities are being 'punished' by daily threats from bike-wielding goons and by the water connections being destroyed. Many old people are being attacked in their houses because someone in the house is known to be a Left activist. The police are not doing enough to protect such people. The Chief Minister herself is encouraging these vindictive activities.

They have attacked the offices of Left parties together with AIDWA offices. They did not also spare offices of Congress and other opposition parties. They attacked, ransacked, set to fire the homes of left party activists, attacking women and children. Children are also not spared this time in pre, during and post-poll violence in the state. They are continuing their attacks from Cooch Bihar in the north to Kakdwip in the south. The anti socials are breaking the houses, destroying the valuable things of the citizens as well as the party. Many people including women were attacked and admitted in the hospitals. Even the police were attacked by them. Extortions and fines are continuing.

AIDWA immediately demands that such vandalism to be stopped and people in the state who campaigned as well as voted against TMC be given all protection against antisocials and lumpens unleashed by the rulers as part of their jubilation ceremony.

Malini Bhattacharya
(President)
 AIDWA

Jagmati Sangwan
(General Secretary)

CBSA disrupted by Solidarity Across Borders organizers

STATUS NOW!

STOP THE VIOLENCE!

#StopDeportations #ShutDownCBSA

Post-occupation Press Release

Over thirty (30) activists from Solidarity Across Borders occupied and disrupted the daily operations of the Canadian Border Services Agency for the entire morning.

Montréal, May 3, 2016 – From 9:00 a.m. to approximately 12:30 p.m., members and allies of Solidarity Across Borders occupied and disrupted the Montreal offices of the Canadian Border Services Agency (CBSA) to denounce the violence of the Canadian immigration system, and to demand immediate inclusive and ongoing regularization of every person who is living with documented status in Canada.

Around 9:00AM, a little over 30 activists entered the building of the CBSA at 1010 rue St-Antoine West, got past the building's security, and occupied the first floor of the offices – where countless people have over the years anxiously and fearfully awaited their deportation. Accompanied by a marching band, the activists put up banners, signs, and stickers on the walls and windows of the CBSA with the slogans like "Status Now!" and "Stop the violence." At noon, the twenty or so activists still inside organized a teach-in, which was broadcast live over the Internet, about the issues behind, and reasons for, the occupation – which, as a reminder, follows decades of actions and mobilization to try to obtain regularization for people living without status in Canada.

The goal of this occupation was to disrupt the activities of the CBSA – who are active participants in the daily violence experienced by people without status: detention, deportation, separation of families, lack of access to health care and education, among others. For the activists, the CBSA does not have the authority to determine who has the right to stay and who has to leave. In occupying this site of oppression for countless people without status, we are taking back power and affirming our solidarity with every person harmed by this system. "The violence of the immigration system is a grandmother who, in these same offices, had a heart attack and woke up at the hospital to a border services agent threatening her with deportation. It is the parents who choose not to send their children to school for fear that their children without status will be reported by school administration. It is a woman who has survived abuse not having access to support services or aid, such as shelters. This violence is happening every day, we want it to stop," stated Rosalind Wong, an activist who participated in the action.

Police from the SPVM were quick to enter the offices of the CBSA. Around 12:20PM, while the teach-in was in progress, the riot police, wearing helmets and armed with shields, started to encircle the activists. The police forcibly expelled the CUTV cameraperson from the CBSA offices before proceeding with the arrests of all of the activists inside the offices. The police then began arresting every one of the activists who remained inside. They also arrested two people who were part of the support demonstration in front of the CBSA offices. The arrests outside the CBSA building were brutal, with police forcing activists to the ground. Eighteen people were arrested, and then later release after being charged with mischief. Many of the activists were given conditions upon their release.



Today's occupation is supported by many local organizations and groups including the Fédération des femmes du Québec (FFQ), the POPIR Housing Committee, the Committee BAILS of Hochelaga-Maisonneuve, the South Asian Women's Community Centre (SAWCC), the Committee for Human Rights in Latin America (CDHAL), the Industrial Workers of the World (IWW-Montreal), the Chaotic Insurrection Ensemble marching band, Le Collectif anarchiste Emma Goldman and the Immigrant Workers Centre (IWC).

Contact : 438-933-7654

A number of testimonies and accounts are available on the Solidarity Across Borders Youtube channel which further highlight the daily violence experienced by people living without status in Canada:

Ferme agricole: traités comme des «esclaves» à Drummondville

La Presse le 16 mai 2016

<http://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/justice-et-affaires-criminelles/201605/16/01-4982026-ferme-agricole-traites-comme-des-esclaves-a-drummondville.php>

Gabrielle Duchaine



Cette année au Québec, près de 10 000 emplois agricoles saisonniers seront comblés par des travailleurs temporaires venus de l'étranger. Photo Patrick Sanfaçon, archives La Presse

Ils venaient au Canada pour « améliorer leur sort ». Ils ont plutôt été traités comme des « esclaves » et comme des « ânes ». À l'instar de plusieurs milliers de travailleurs migrants chaque année, Erik, Anibal, Luis et Juan ont débarqué au Québec au printemps 2012 la tête pleine d'ambition.

Les quatre jeunes Guatémaltèques, tous dans la vingtaine, avaient été engagés dans une ferme de fines herbes de la région de Drummondville appartenant à Abderrahman Abounouar, un résident de Laval.

C'était la première fois qu'ils y travaillaient. Ils souhaitaient aider leur famille laissée derrière.

Sur papier, le contrat était tout ce qu'il y a de correct : semaines de 40 heures à un salaire de 9,65 \$ l'heure, moins 45 \$ pour rembourser le logement qui leur était fourni. Ils avaient droit à une journée de congé hebdomadaire. C'est un tout autre sort qui les attendait.

Un jugement historique du tribunal administratif du travail, devant lequel les quatre travailleurs ont, dans un geste rarissime, porté plainte pour harcèlement psychologique, lève le voile sur des conditions se rapprochant en tous points de l'esclavage. Passeports cachés, heures impayées, travail forcé, violence physique et verbale, logement insalubre ; la liste est longue. Une des victimes en a fait une dépression. Une autre tremble encore lorsqu'elle en parle.

PEUR DE DÉNONCER

« Ce n'est pas parce qu'on est isolé ou qu'on ne parle pas la même langue qu'on n'aura pas de justice. La loi est la même pour tout le monde », martèle l'avocate Jocelyne Cotnoir de la Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail, organisme qui a représenté les migrants devant la cour.

Quels que soient les abus dont ils sont victimes, les travailleurs migrants n'ont pas l'habitude de la dénonciation, dit-elle.

«Ils sont dans une situation de vulnérabilité. Ils ont peur de se faire renvoyer dans leur pays et de ne pas pouvoir aider leur famille.» Me Jocelyne Cotnoir

Après des mois d'enfer, Erik, Anibal, Luis et Juan ont trouvé le courage de parler. « On vient ici pour améliorer notre sort, pas pour vivre dans ces conditions », a expliqué Anibal Eduardo Silva Najera à un agent de la GRC venu au secours des travailleurs à la ferme en octobre 2012 après que la patronne eut confisqué leurs passeports et menacé de ne pas leur remettre leurs billets d'avion pour les forcer à continuer à travailler une fois leur contrat terminé.

Ferme agricole: traités comme des «esclaves» à Drummondville

2 \$ L'HEURE

Pendant des mois, les quatre hommes se sont sentis traités comme des « ânes » et comme des « esclaves ». Ils ont enchaîné des semaines de 50, 60 et même 70 heures, heures pour lesquelles ils n'étaient majoritairement pas payés. Ils ont parfois été réveillés en pleine nuit ou après quelques heures de sommeil à peine et contraints de retourner emballer des herbes. Une fois, ils ont travaillé 22 heures d'affilée. Ils ont obéi « par crainte d'être expulsés du Canada », ont-ils dit au tribunal.

Cette année au Québec, près de 10 000 emplois agricoles saisonniers seront comblés par des travailleurs temporaires venus de l'étranger.

Une certaine semaine de juillet, Erik et Anibal ont chacun travaillé 78 heures. Ils n'ont reçu que 160 \$ en salaire, soit l'équivalent de 2 \$ l'heure travaillée, révèlent des documents déposés en preuve. La semaine suivante, ils ont travaillé 68 heures pour une rémunération de 53 \$.

L'employeur leur a dit que c'est « tout ce qu'ils méritaient et que c'était déjà beaucoup en comparaison du Guatemala ». Un jour, la fille du propriétaire a frappé Anibal à la tête avec un bouquet de menthe qu'elle trouvait trop petit. Une autre fois, M. Abounouar est descendu de son tracteur pour arracher un tuyau d'arrosage que Juan tenait dans ses mains. Il l'a arrosé des pieds aux genoux en lui reprochant, en espagnol, la façon dont il travaillait.

Plusieurs fois, les hommes ont été forcés de faire de la fumigation sans formation ni protection. Ils ont souffert de maux de tête. Lorsque la fumigation était mal effectuée, on les menaçait de jeter les fines herbes brûlées et de les forcer à rembourser les pertes.

PAS DE CHAUFFAGE NI D'EAU CHAUDE

Le soir, les quatre hommes allaient se coucher dans une boîte de camion posée sur des blocs de béton qui leur servait de logement.

La « maison mobile » était pourvue en électricité, mais n'avait ni chauffage, ni eau chaude, ni climatisation, ni télévision. En octobre, les travailleurs devaient faire chauffer l'eau pour se laver.

Il y avait des rats, ont raconté les victimes. Lorsqu'il pleuvait, l'eau s'infiltrait par une fenêtre. Lorsqu'il ventait, il faisait froid. Les lits étaient installés à quelques mètres les uns des autres dans une même pièce.

Un des matelas était posé à même le sol. Un des lits était juste à côté de la toilette.

Alertés par un des ressortissants, des employés du Consulat général du Guatemala ont visité les travailleurs à la ferme. Ils ont trouvé des hommes « aussi fatigués que découragés », qui n'allaient « pas bien » et qui semblaient « vivre un cauchemar ». Ce sont les employés du consulat qui ont contacté la GRC, quelques semaines plus tard, lorsque les travailleurs les ont avisés que leur patronne avait confisqué leurs passeports, les menaçant d'expulsion et de ne pas leur donner de billets d'avion s'ils refusaient de travailler un mois de plus.

Les travailleurs ont été emmenés à l'hôtel, où ils ont passé leurs 15 derniers jours au Québec.

RARE VICTOIRE

Quatre ans plus tard, le tribunal administratif du travail vient de leur accorder 6000 \$ chacun en dommages punitifs et moraux. Une autre action, celle-là pour rembourser des centaines d'heures impayées, est en marche.

Les quatre hommes continuent à passer leurs étés dans des fermes canadiennes, mais en Ontario. Ils ne sont pas revenus au Québec, sauf pour les audiences du tribunal.

La ferme d'Abderrahman Abounouar a fermé ses portes l'an dernier. L'homme n'a pas répondu à nos demandes d'entrevue. Son entreprise a été placée sur une liste noire par le Consulat général du Guatemala et par la Fondation en recrutement de main-d'oeuvre étrangère (F.E.R.M.E. Québec), qui fait affaire avec la majorité des entreprises agricoles de la province.

Age of Reconciliation: Restoring the Roles Women Traditionally Play

Institute for International Women's Rights – Manitoba held an event "Local to Global 2016 – Age of Reconciliation: Restoring the Roles Women Traditionally Play – with Ellen Gabriel", Continuing the Dialogue on Reconciliation on 27 April in Winnipeg.

Ellen Gabriel is a Kahensatake Mohawk, Turtle Clan. She gave a speech called Age of Reconciliation: Restoring the Roles Women Traditionally Play.

For video:

Local to Global 2016 with Ellen Gabriel -- Part One (25:48 mins)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pN8JleQsbk4>

Local to Global 2016 with Ellen Gabriel -- Part Two

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uMasAOOk7zo>

For a short radio interview on the same topic:

"Ellen Gabriel and restoring traditional roles Women Traditionally Play" (13:33 mins)

on CBC radio, "Unreserved", May 15, 2016, Season 2016, Episode 300249469, 07:28 minutes

Click to hear: <http://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2688582307>



Daughter-in-law or servant?

[Recognition of one kind of exploitation, though classist! -- ed]

<http://www.deccanchronicle.com/nation/current-affairs/160516/treat-daughter-in-law-as-family-not-maid-supreme-court.html>

"Treat daughter-in-law as family, not maid: Supreme Court"

16 May 2016 New Delhi

Daughter-in-law should be treated as a family member and not housemaid, and she cannot be "thrown out of her matrimonial home at any time", the Supreme Court has said, while expressing concern over instances of brides being burnt and tortured in the country.

The apex court said a bride must be respected in her matrimonial home as it "reflects the sensitivity of a civilized society." "A daughter-in-law is to be treated as a member of the family with warmth and affection and not as a stranger with respectable and ignoble indifference. She should not be treated as a house maid. No impression should be given that she can be thrown out of her matrimonial home at any time," a bench of justices K S Radhakrishnan and Dipak Misra said.

"Respect of a bride in her matrimonial home glorifies the solemnity and sanctity of marriage, reflects the sensitivity of a civilized society and eventually epitomizes her aspirations dreamt of in nuptial bliss.

"But the manner in which sometimes the bride is treated in many a home by the husband, in-law and the relatives creates a feeling of emotional numbness in society," it said.

The apex court made the observations while upholding the sentence of seven-year jail term to a man for torturing his wife, who committed suicide.

The bench said it was a matter of great concern that brides in several cases were being treated with total insensitivity, destroying their desire to live.

"It is a matter of grave concern and shame that brides are burned or otherwise their life-sparks are extinguished by torture, both physical and mental, because of demand of dowry and insatiable greed and sometimes, sans demand of dowry, because of cruelty and harassment meted out to the nascent brides, treating them with total insensitivity, destroying their desire to live and forcing them to commit suicide, a brutal self-humiliation of life," the bench said.

Yoni ki Raat (Night of the Vagina): South Asian women on sex, fear and family

Inspired by The Vagina Monologues, 10 South Asian and Indo-Caribbean women shared intimate narratives in an absorbing and revealing evening



Nadia was sitting by the pool in a bathing suit when a white boy loudly announced how hairy her legs were. She was only 11 years old. As a teenager, her family imposed absurd expectations to maintain an unnatural hairlessness through painful waxing treatments. She would ask why the boys in her community were not shamed in the same way. The Pakistani-Punjabi American woman, wearing a bright red dress and black tights, recounted her childhood at Yoni ki Raat (Night of the Vagina) on Friday with a large grin. The endless tribulations of body hair drew knowing laughs from the audience – the double-edged sword of white beauty standards and South Asian gender norms.

But the light atmosphere quickly deserted the theatre as Nadia began to describe how, despite her feminist convictions, she has internalized the compulsive need to remove her hair. Her body is now marred with ingrown hairs that she attempts to dislodge with tweezers and needles, causing further damage to her skin. With her castmates solemnly seated on either side of the stage, a teary-eyed Nadia wondered: “When am I going to stop mutilating myself? Probably never.”

The monologue set the tone for the second annual Yoni ki Raat, a transformational storytelling project performed by 10 South Asian and Indo-Caribbean women in New York City. Performers shared personal narratives on the intersections of sexuality, violence and family that manifest within each of them for two nights over the weekend at Helen Mills Theater.

Woven across overlapping contexts of whiteness, activism and cultural and religious pressures, the show spun colorful and resilient threads of truth into an intricate tapestry of lived realities that are often silenced or ignored.

Yoni ki Raat started building community through storytelling in 2015, inspired by Yoni ki Baat, the Bay Area’s South Asian take on Eve Ensler’s hugely influential play The Vagina Monologues. The show went beyond recitation, as some performers paired their stories with singing, dance, illustration and video. The four-month journey to tap into these layered, deeply rooted narratives began with a process Yumnah Syed called “story excavation”.

Yumnah Syed, a co-director and co-producer of Yoni ki Raat, delivers a meditation on her mother and the concept of unconditional love. Photograph: James Vining
 “We began the first few rehearsals by getting to know each other, getting into our bodies and pulling out stories, and then talking about them,” said Syed, who co-directed and co-produced this year’s show with Debayani Kar.

What rose to the surface were complex and contradictory emotions erupting from trauma, shame and abuse, the unfiltered experiences that resist dominant stereotypes about South Asian and Indo-Caribbean women in the American diaspora.



Yoni ki Raat (Night of the Vagina): South Asian women on sex, fear and family

"First session, I was ready to drop out," said Shubha, a Toronto native who works in criminal justice reform. "We watched a piece from last year's performance, and it was really intense and made me feel like I couldn't handle it. I went in knowing it would be difficult to share my story, but I didn't realize that what was really difficult would be hearing other people's stories." "The process of really deep self-exploration is a painful one, so we made sure everybody was being taken care of," said Syed, a domestic violence social worker. This meant checking in during group meetings and maintaining open lines of communication outside rehearsals. She and Kar also implemented a "buddy system" for performers to talk out ideas and receive one-on-one support.

Written vignettes were transformed into intimate and resonant performance art pieces through workshops with former cast members and local artists. The women of Yoni ki Raat deftly balanced all-consuming heaviness with humor in stories ranging from confronting fat-shaming from family members, to coping with sexual assault within activist circles, to understanding inherited cycles of violence, to loving and lusting unapologetically in spite of cultural expectations.

Shubha used a slideshow of playful drawings of genitals and stick figures to talk about the time her mother found sexually explicit photos of her. Through unpacking their strained relationship, Shubha discovered that how she and her mother grappled with the onslaught of male desire was more similar than she once believed.

"I never thought of the connections between my mom and me until [participating in] Yoni ki Raat," she said. "In the writing process, it really hit me – that thread of connectivity between women of different generations responding to the same inputs in very different ways. And that's a monumental thing for me to realize."

The performers were deliberate in how the show was framed, emphasising that their stories did not encompass the scope of South Asian American experiences nor did they speak for transgender or gender nonconforming individuals, who are also encouraged to audition. At the end of the sold-out shows, which were put on entirely through crowdfunding, cast and audience members were asked to stand up if they had experienced violence or knew someone who had. Almost everyone stood. Shubha acknowledged that while audiences' own life experiences and preconceived notions would inform how they perceived each story, she hoped they would walk away recognizing the multiplicity of South Asian women's struggles and passions, but also the universal complexities of humanity.

"There's a silence in the South Asian community, but that's not exclusive to the South Asian community," she said. Garima ended the cathartic night sitting in the center of the stage with her castmates pretending to be listless commuters on the subway staring at their phones or standing idly. Surrounded by people and yet alone, Garima closed her eyes and allowed herself to steep in her pain – and in doing so invited her observers to insert themselves into that comforting and familiar space of rumination without resolution.

Gurpreet Singh: Looking beyond the Komagata Maru apology

by Gurpreet Singh on May 20th, 2016

On May 18, Canada finally apologized for the *Komagata Maru* episode. The Prime Minister Justin Trudeau stood in the House of Commons to say sorry for the incident that happened more than 100 years ago. Approximately 300 people of South Asian ancestry were in attendance when Trudeau asked for forgiveness. The Japanese vessel with more than 350 passengers from India was forced to return in 1914 under discriminatory immigration laws designed to prevent permanent settlement of South Asians in Canada.

The B.C. government made an official apology in the legislature in 2008 and the same year, former prime minister Stephen Harper apologized at a public event in Surrey. By making an apology for the first time in Parliament Trudeau has fulfilled his election promise made to South Asian voters last year. So much so, the interim leader of the opposition Conservative party, Rona Ambrose, welcomed the apology that drew heavy applause from South Asians both inside the parliamentary chamber and outside. Trudeau stated that this was an injustice against Sikhs, Hindus, and Muslims who came to the shores of B.C. as British subjects for a better livelihood. India was a British colony back then whereas Canada had achieved independence, but was still under the monarchy in a constitutional sense.

Most South Asian participants came all the way from B.C. to attend the historic moment. B.C. premier Christy Clark also joined them and sat in the gallery to witness the apology. Sikh religious slogans of victory were raised by those in attendance. The leaders of the New Democrats, Bloc Québécois and Green party also made statements to welcome the apology, which was unani-

mously supported in Parliament.



Justin Trudeau mingled with Canadians of South Asian descent after issuing the apology in Parliament.

Trudeau made a special mention of the first Sikh defence minister in cabinet. Ironically, Harjit Singh Sajjan formerly headed a B.C. army regiment responsible for turning away the *Komagata Maru* ship. Trudeau said that had Sajjan's ancestors been on the ship, they too would have been forced to return. He also acknowledged the signature campaign of Prof. Mohan Singh Memorial Foundation that was started 15 years ago to pressure the Canadian government for the apology. The foundation's leader, Sahib Thind, also flew in from B.C. to receive the apology.

Also present on the occasion were Jas Toor and Raj Toor, whose maternal grandfather was aboard the ship. The Toor brothers represent the families of the descendants in B.C. They both expressed their satisfaction over the apology.

Several members of the Khalsa Diwan Society, the oldest Sikh religious body in Vancouver, were also in attendance. Notably, the Khalsa Diwan Society had helped the passengers of the ship. Harminderpal Singh, a Sikh priest at the Khalsa Diwan Society who went to Ottawa, said that the society accepts the apology and is willing to forgive Canada in accordance with the Sikh philosophy that teaches human beings to forgive those who genuinely feel remorseful.

Cutting across ideological lines, leaders from both the moderate and fundamentalist camps attended the event. Whereas Am-brose recognized the role of the Sikh community in helping the people of Fort McMurray, which was recently hit by a forest fire, the NDP leader, Thomas Mulcair, reminded everyone that racism still prevails in Canada.

Following the event, Trudeau personally greeted the visitors, many of whom were seen taking selfies with him. Later, copies of the apology were circulated among the visitors.

Ironically, later in the evening a reception was hosted at a building named after the first prime minister of Canada, the late John A. Macdonald, who had insisted on keeping Canada as a white man's country. Some said that it was a fitting thing to hold the celebration at this venue as it represents a victory for the truth.

Whereas the apology has won the hearts of most South Asians, there are several aspects that need to be looked into. The most striking feature of the apology was that it was mainly directed at the Sikh community, whereas passengers aboard the ship belonged to different faith groups. Certainly, Trudeau took special care of this on the day of apology, but the NDP leader, Mulcair, ended his speech with Sikh religious greetings, which are generally exchanged during a religious event. A day before, Clark also emphasized the presence of the Sikhs on the ship at a reception hosted by her on behalf of the people of her province. Though a majority of the ship passengers were Sikhs, it was not just a Sikh story. Gurdit Singh, who charted the vessel, clearly wrote in his biography that he had created religious space for Hindus and Muslims on the ship as he believed in people's unity. Since the British were interested in keeping the people of India divided along religious lines, they saw any movements toward unity as a threat to their power. It is for this reason that the pro-British Sikh clergy ostracized Gurdit Singh after the *Komagata Maru* incident. Despite these facts, politicians simply indulged in pandering to a dominant religious group within the South Asian community settled in Canada.

Another important aspect of the apology was that both Clark and Mulcair rightfully tried to link the past with the present. While Mulcair has been consistent on the issue of ongoing high-handedness against refugees and immigrants in Canada, Clark was somewhat selective in her approach.

Mulcair reminded the gathering that the Tamil refugees were mistreated under the previous Conservative government, which makes the history of *Komagata Maru* even more relevant today. Clark, to an extent, did a good job by bringing up anti-immigrant rhetoric across the border in the U.S. where the presumptive Republican presidential candidate, Donald Trump, has been mak-

ing offensive statements against Muslims and other immigrants. Clark said that bigotry in politics still goes on, but she never explicitly condemned the Conservatives for doing their actions in Canada.

Those who have been campaigning for apology must also reflect upon their brand of activism critically. To ask for an apology for something that happened a century ago is one thing, but there must be a real involvement in grassroots activism on issues currently challenging visible minorities and marginalized communities.

In particular, the Khalsa Diwan Society, which has a history of activism, failed to question the previous Conservative government about its anti-immigrant policies on behalf of the community. Even a right wing prime minister of India, Narendra Modi, was given a warm welcome in the Ross Street Sikh temple governed by the body in 2015.

Modi's Hindu nationalist Bhartiya Janata Party has been involved in hate politics and violence against religious minorities. Some critics also noticed the negligible presence of female community activists at the receptions hosted by Clark and the federal government. When the *Komagata Maru* arrived in Vancouver's harbour, Indian immigrants were barred from bringing families. But today when there is no such challenge, not enough female activists were seen in the forefront of these events. Overall, however, the apology is a welcome step. But it should leave everyone wondering whether it really means anything regarding the political will to eradicate systemic racism in a nation built on stolen lands of the indigenous peoples, who continue facing discrimination in Canada.

Winning the hearts of a politically strong Sikh community is one thing, but winning the trust of the original inhabitants of Canada is a herculean task. This fact also has to be acknowledged by Sikh leaders who feel indebted to Canada for giving them respect.

After all, their daily prayer ends with an appeal to god for the well-being of the entire humankind. So rather than getting carried away by the appointment of Sajjan as the first Sikh defence minister or the apology, they need to see that Canada has never been nice to its First Nations. Rather than romanticizing Canada as a utopia or heaven, there is a need to build bridges between the communities that share histories of racism and colonialism if we want to create a fair and just society.

Gurpreet Singh is a Georgia Straight contributor and a founder of Radical Desi. He's working on a book tentatively titled Canada's 9/11: Lessons from the Air India Bombings. He has a Facebook page called We Are All Untouchables!!!

Announcement:

IF YOU DO NOT WANT TO RECEIVE CALLS from SAWCC, let us know and we will take you off our phone list. Thank you!

Unwed Mothers Can Be Sole Legal Guardian, Don't Have To Reveal Father's Identity

India -- Supreme Court: Unwed Mothers Can Be Sole Legal Guardian, Don't Have To Reveal Father's Identity

<http://www.vagabomb.com/Supreme-Court-Unwed-Mothers-Can-Be-Sole-Legal-Guardian-Dont-Have-To-Reveal-Fathers-Identity/>

by Sukhmani Waraich 06 July, 2015

Mothers who are not married have never had it easy in India, and they probably won't for a long time to come. But the Supreme Court has just made their lives a little bit easier . **India's apex court has ruled that an unwed mother does not have to take consent from the biological father of the child, or reveal his identity for sole guardianship of the child** . This judgement sets aside the order of the trial court and the Delhi High Court which ruled that an unwed mother must declare the identity of the father for guardianship of the child.

While passing this landmark judgement, the Supreme Court bench headed by Justice Vikramjit Sen said that the trial court and the High Court had lost sight of the welfare of the child, which should have been top priority. The Supreme Court ruling came after a petition from a woman who is a government officer. She had said that the biological father of the child did not even know of the existence of the child and had stayed with her only for a few days. The mother of the child had petitioned saying that she did not want to disclose the identity of the child's father, as he had nothing to do with the child's upbringing.

The landmark judgement from the SC comes just a few months after the Bombay High Court was told by a lawyer for the MEA, that while applying for a child's passport, an unwed mother must explain how she conceived and if she was raped . In October 2014, the Bombay High Court was hearing a petition from a woman who wanted her stepfather's name on her passport and not her biological father's name. The bench asked the lawyer appearing for the Ministry of External Affairs what would happen in the case of an unwed mother. Citing the passport manual, the lawyer, Purnima Bhatia, replied that an unwed mother must file an affidavit declaring how she conceived. According to the lawyer, the petition must also state why she does not want to identify the biological father of her child. Later, the Centre [federal government, India] reacted by saying that this was not the view of the government and such insensitivity and any sort of gender discrimination would not be tolerated.

The Supreme Court's judgement will put an end to some of the discrimination that unwed mothers have been facing for decades. They have been relegated to the sidelines and ignored, only because they chose to bring up their child without the presence of a man. India isn't kind to mothers who are raising their children alone, but this judgement may bring some of the required change in mindsets. Single mothers face worse struggles than what most parents go through; they take every decision alone and carry the onus of raising their children all by themselves. It is demeaning to them and their children to demand to know the source of the sperm that contributed to the formation of the foetus. If the biological father had no other role in the child's life, why should anyone need to know his identity?

Our Syrian refugees find themselves facing a wall

(loose translation into English from original French, by SAWCC)

Point of view

Le soleil

Publié le 17 mai 2016 à 18h03

In early September 2015, many of us were moved and indignant at the sight of the body of the child of three, washed up on a beach in Turkey. I was. With a group of friends in Lévis, we immediately took action.

Since February 20, 2016, we have a Syrian family of seven, one of whose members, a son of 14, is still in Germany, where he had fled by sea and land. Today, three months later, as a sponsor of this family, I am equally indignant about administrative hurdles to integration. I will mention four issues where our energies are exhausted, and make us feel impotent.

In the education sector -- There is a lack of resources for francization.

Just three weeks after arrival, six family members started French courses in schools, thanks to the generous and warm hospitality of the staff of our school board. Both parents have been enrolled in a francization program of in an adult education school, but only part-time, two days a week. Financial resources for full-time studies were not available. This was our first disappointment.

Our Syrian refugees find themselves facing a wall

The two teenage girls enrolled in secondary school in their area, receiving two afternoons francisation specialization per week or more than five hours. The two teacher they have are young, committed and dedicated. The financial resources did not allow for more hours. This is the second disappointment for us, huge. What we do from Monday, May 16 to support the enthusiasm of our two daughters to learn French? This is a disaster, we panicked: their French language is critical for school enrollment in September.

I speak for myself, a nationalist since the Quiet Revolution, and so proud of my language: it's beyond indignation, shame on my Quebec, supposedly so proud of his roots, but with a confused policy!

Proposed solution: we immediately adjust without endless palaver, rigid schedules and related budget allocations.

In the health sector -- There are non-inclusion of professionals in federal special programs for refugees.

From the first days of their arrival, we had to resort to urgent dental care, and there were pressing needs for glasses for several family members, all care not covered by Medicare. Despite modest sponsorships, we, the host committee had to pay large bills. Some care is still underway, and others are expected in the short term. However, in late March, early April, we hear Prime Minister Trudeau declare the extension of the federal Interim Health Program (IFH) for refugees, specifically for essential care not covered by Medicare. But it is specified that invoices already paid by the patient will not be reimbursed.

Our third disappointment is that health professionals do not know the program and are not registered. Is it normal that we, ordinary citizens, have to go on difficult computer sites with complex formalities of this government program, to inform ourselves, one by one of the health professionals in our community and convince them to undertake the administrative procedures to register for this federal program? Why haven't professional bodies (dentists, optometrists, etc.) or structures in the Quebec health network not promptly informed the professionals concerned and thus prevented us private sponsors from incurring significant costs that we do not have to pay? It is not too late to act, the needs are still there.

In the sector driving license -- There is flagrant injustice and humiliation constituting a major barrier to access to the labor market.

The law specifies that driving licenses of the country of origin is valid for six months from the date of arrival of the refugee. During this period, the SAAQ offers an easy way for refugees, namely to pass in the Arabic language examinations to obtain the Quebec license. It is here that we have a fourth disappointment. SAAQ computers offer exams written in a language incomprehensible to Arab refugees of Syrian origin. Result: The exam becomes a lottery, the candidate experiences failure after failure. The candidate feels ridiculed, humiliated. It remains for them to follow, in French, the whole procedure for obtaining the license, including driver training courses. Significant costs of training are involved and, above all, access to the labor market may be delayed by a year or more.

Proposed solution: a moratorium on the six-month period, as the SAAQ will not be able to offer computerized examination programs in Syrian Arab. It's the least justice and respect due any refugees.

In terms of repatriation requests -- CIC's silence (Citizenship and Immigration Canada) concerning the repatriation requests of missing children in the case of families dislocated by the war in Syria is appalling.

The 14 year old son who had to flee to Europe was located in southern Germany, and the family is in communication with him. Canada announced a special procedure to enable the return to Canada of a missing family member. With our help, the father was able to deposit the demand for the repatriation of his son previously registered in the immigration application. The prerequisite is the MIDI (Quebec Ministry of Immigration, Diversity and Inclusion). As it should be, MIDI referred the case, which was directed to the Canadian visa office in Vienna. There was no acknowledgment, and we have no Canadian case number

Our Syrian refugees find themselves facing a wall

that would track its evolution.

Our fifth disappointment is the inability of the family to have the slightest indication of a realistic date of return of their son, nor any possibility of contact with the office that handles his case. One can imagine the agony and distress of parents who can plan the future of their families in Quebec and the disarray of the teenager who wants to see his family and does not know if he should rather opt for integrating German society. The family have to provide registration to school in September or-should we imagine that this teenager will not see his family in possibly four years? Forty-eight months is indeed the average duration of treatment in a folder in Vienna Canadian office, as the computer link provided in the receipt of MIDI. It is simply inhumane, while we, the sponsorship committee, have sufficient financial resources to pay the airfare of the son, if only he obtained a Canadian visa from the office in Vienna. The acceleration given to immigration formalities from November to February is expected to result in a priority for children so involved in this race to reach the target of 25 000 refugees.

The files described here illustrate the constraints to the integration of recently welcomed Syrian refugees in our society. Before making political statements about the increase in the number of refugees we welcome in the coming year, we must quickly find solutions to concrete problems experienced in the field. We must especially understand that it is people we are talking about here, with faces burdened with anxiety and hope. I also want to emphasize the incredible generosity of our community of Greater Lévis to accommodate our family. I hope you can understand the helplessness of a welcoming committee to overcome the constraints described above and the urgency to act. Each lost week has dramatic consequences in human terms. Those who are in positions of power and responsibility must act quickly.

Louis-Marie Asselin, president of hosting refugees from Saint-Joseph-de-Lévis and member of a Family Committee.

SAWCC's Annual Picnic

This year's Annual Picnic will be held at Long Sault beach on Saturday July 30th, 2016. In case of rain the picnic will be held the next day (Sunday July 31st)

Cost:

For adults \$21

For children aged 14 and under \$16

Payment deadline: Friday July 15th, 2016

For more details and to make payments please contact Juvaria at (514) 528-8812 ext 105 or Shipra at (514) 528-8812 ext 106



Gilda and Katalin Public Pressure Wins Two Month Reprieve for Lakatos Family

<http://www.solidarityacrossborders.org/en/call-for-solidarity-roma-family-facing-deportation-on-thursday>
May 9, 2016

It isn't over yet: please continue the pressure

The government has agreed to postpone the deportation of 17-year old Gilda Lakatos and her mother Katalin (Robertne) Lakatos for another two months. After Gilda and Katalin courageously spoke out publicly about their story (see details & media coverage below), countless community members and organizations responded, demanding that the Ministers of Public Safety and Immigration stop their deportation.

However, it is not yet certain that the family will be accepted; and it isn't sure that they will even get a response on their application for permanent residence on humanitarian grounds before the two months are up. It isn't over yet!

Please pass on this call out by email, website, fb and twitter, etc and invite fb friends to join the fb event. facebook #lakatos #noneistoomany

Please write a letter to Minister of Immigration John McCallum asking him to accept their humanitarian file immediately. Please send a signed copy on letterhead (organizations) or with a photocopy of ID (individuals) to Solidarity Across Borders, at solidaritesansfrontieres@gmail.com.

Here is a model:

John McCallum
Minister of Immigration
to: john.mccallum@parl.gc.ca
cc: solidaritesansfrontieres@gmail.com
RE: Support for Lakatos family, UCI 6461-5666
[letterhead]
[date]

Dear Minister McCallum,
[NAME OF ORGANIZATION] is a [brief description of your organization].
OR

I am [brief description of yourself and any relevant things about you.]

I am writing to support the application of Gilda and Robertne Lakatos and the rest of their family for permanent residence on humanitarian grounds.

The Lakatos family left Hungary in 2011 because of the racism they experienced as Roma, which lead to the suicide of Katalin's oldest son and near fatal medical neglect of her younger son, and included sexual threats and insults to the two women.

The Lakatos family has lived in Canada for five years; this is a significant length of time and they consider Canada to be their home. The ties and relationships they have constructed here are meaningful and should not be destroyed.

They should not be returned to a place they have found to be unsafe, where racism against Roma is well-documented.

Gilda should be allowed to finish her high school and continue her education as she wants. In all likelihood, she would not be able to resume her education in Hungary. For all of these reasons, I ask you to accept their file immediately. This family has suffered far too much already.

Sincerely,
[signature]
[name]

BACKGROUND

17-year old Gilda Lakatos and her mother Katalin (Robertne) Lakatos left Hungary with the rest of their family in 2011 because of the racism they experienced as Roma, which lead to the suicide of Katalin's oldest son and near fatal medical neglect of her younger son, and included sexual threats and insults to the two women.

The Lakatos family hoped to find a better life in Canada. But they arrived in the midst of former Immigration Minister Jason Kenney's racist crusade to bring the immigration system under market control, which used Roma refugees in particular as scapegoats. A study* of over 10 000 Hungarian refugee claims published last year found that racist stereotypes about Roma people had become "enshrined" in Canada's refugee determination process. The Lakatos family's refugee claim was refused and they were ordered deported in October 2015. Because Hungary is on the so-called "safe country list", the family will not be eligible for a pre-removal risk evaluation until 2018.

Determined not to return to Hungary, the family remained in Canada, joining the ranks of Canada's estimated 500,000 undocumented migrants, highly vulnerable to exploitation and abuse. When Gilda's father and brother were detained on their way to work in March 2016, and then deported, the two women turned themselves in. They were ordered deported on Thursday, May 12th, despite the difficulties the two men have had since their return to Hungary.

The family applied for permanent residence on humanitarian grounds 8 months ago. Applications on humanitarian grounds are almost never accepted after deportation.



New digital magazine: sister-hood

Info sent by Nilambri Ghai

<http://sister-hood.com/>

It is with pride and excitement that I introduce **sister-hood**, an online magazine and a series of live events. **Our purpose is to spotlight the voices of women of Muslim heritage.**

What is sister-hood?

Women of Muslim heritage are always in the news – as victims, as ‘jihadi brides’, in innumerable pieces on *hijab*. We are endlessly spoken for, and spoken about. ***It’s time we got to speak for ourselves.*** If we can’t get heard through mainstream media outlets, then it’s time to build our own. We cannot allow ourselves to be placed on the margins of debates that directly concern us. Produced by Fuuse, my own independent media and arts production company, **sister-hood** will ensure that our vital contributions to these debates are heard.

What inspired me?

In a time of trouble, I looked for inspiration from the feminist women of Muslim heritage that I had the good fortune to be surrounded by from a young age. Seeing that many other women had no such experience, no such memory, and therefore no such strength to draw on, the **sister-hood** dream was born.

Although my films and activism often uncover violence, darkness and the horrors of our world, I have always been obsessed with women heroes. Exposing oppression is only half the story. The other half is bringing attention to those who combat oppression. There are people – many people – who rise up and resist hatred, violence and fear, despite facing impossible odds. In public discourse, stories of villains and victims usually drown out tales of heroes and survivors. Abusers and oppressors dominate discussions but it’s time that those fighting back – many of whom are women – have their names acknowledged, their courage recognised.

For me, the heroes are not just the loud and fearless activists, but also the young woman who resists a forced marriage in her own house and the girl who refuses to be reduced to just her gender. Women who insist on being themselves in their own lives. The silencing of women’s voices and the lack of attention to progressive and radical ideas coming from women of Muslim heritage is something that has inspired a lot of my projects. In 2007, I launched the first iteration of **sister-hood** as an online music mixtape initiative for young female Muslim music artists, rappers and poets. It was aimed at facilitating a space for Muslim women who refused to be confined by the model of femininity as defined by orthodox men. Many in the Muslim community told us that women of Muslim heritage should not perform, sing or engage in artistic expression or be present in the public arena. As soon as the mixtape was launched, conservative religious ‘leaders’ in the UK wasted no time in condemning the initiative. This reaction convinced me that the project was worth pursuing.

In 2015, Fuuse organised a global conference in Oslo to celebrate women’s activism and creativity. This highlighted the work and opinions of some of the most important activists and artists in the world today – many of them women of Muslim origin, such as Nawal el-Saadawi, Shirin Ebadi, Mona Eltahawy, Yanar Mohammed and Hina Jilani – to show the power of women’s voices, and the vital importance of the messages they deliver. The intense response to this event reignited **sister-hood**. These creative and progressive voices of women of Muslim heritage are a desperately needed contribution to so many of our contemporary debates about politics, feminism, human rights, culture, the role of religion, leadership, life and art.

Who

sister-hood will build on the courage and creativity that became apparent through both of these projects: the potential to amplify existing voices, support new ones and bring them into conversation and solidarity with each other. **sister-hood** is for *all* women and girls of Muslim heritage, regardless of age, ethnicity or sexuality. Former Muslims, cultural Muslims, and agnostics are just as welcome to contribute and participate as the devout; all sects and denominations are welcome. The articles on sister-hood magazine will include stories, experiences and opinions about everything from the political to the personal through the eyes and words of the women.

People constantly ask me ‘Where can we find women’s resistance against social, political and religious injustice and oppression? Where is the opposition to religious extremism?’ We have always been here. We exist. There is a huge, under-recognised movement of women who have been on the frontlines of progressive change. These voices are the trouble-makers and peace-makers, activists and artists, rebels and revolutionaries who have been defending peace, justice, freedom of expression, gender equality and human rights for decades.

Purposes of sister-hood:

- to promote known and unknown women of Muslim heritage who are working for human rights, gender equality, freedom of expression, peace and social justice;
- to build solidarity, to nurture and connect a global community of women of Muslim heritage who stand for a shared vision of a more peaceful, just and inclusive world;
- to bring together voices of women of Muslim heritage across borders through our platforms: *sister-hood* magazine and convening our *sister-hood* live events.
- to show young women the feminists from Muslim heritage through-out history and into the present: women who have fought for personal rights and bodily integrity, who extended solidarity to women and other downtrodden people, and who improved their societies as scholars, artists, saints and activists.

We stand in solidarity with these women, the defenders of freedom across borders who are tirelessly struggling to build bridges over the fractured communities. They are nurturing creativity, compassion, dialogue and diversity – despite the fact that some face condemnation, harassment and death threats. We will also remember those that we have already lost, who paid the ultimate price in fighting for what they believed, and what we believe. Some of these courageous and heroic people also suffer from the rise of white supremacists across Europe as well as the consequences of the war on terror.

Finally I'd dearly like to thank my team for their tireless efforts in bringing *sister-hood* into reality – a group of women who constantly inspire me with their creativity, passion and talent: Afi Afgun, who will be the managing editor of the magazine aspect of *sister-hood*; Hyshyama Hamin, who diligently tended the flame of *sister-hood* since 2008, Mediah Ahmed, a talented writer, and my long-term collaborators, Dr. Joanne Payton and Honora Foah. I am confident that with their continued commitment, *sister-hood* will grow as a vibrant and outspoken community for progressive women of Muslim heritage.

Verizon Strike

A STRUGGLE FOR ECONOMIC SECURITY & DECENT BENEFITS

One Day Longer: The Verizon Strike Is a War of Attrition

By Shaun Richman, Jacobin

16 May 16

The Verizon strike is a war of attrition — and the future of the labor movement is at stake.

As the massive strike at Verizon enters its second month with no end in sight, the stakes — for the workers, the company, and the broader labor movement — are rising. Even mainstream media outlets like the *New York Times* have taken note, casting it as something of an epochal battle over whether the economy can tolerate good jobs that actually deliver economic security and decent benefits.

The strike began on April 13, when forty thousand Verizon landline workers, represented by the Communications Workers of America (CWA) and the International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers (IBEW), walked out after nine months of contentious and fruitless contract negotiations. The unions are fighting employer demands to make outsourcing and offshoring jobs easier, as well as cutbacks in health benefits.

Verizon isn't budging. It opened the month of May by canceling striking employees' health insurance — an action that was technically legal, but union officials say represents a departure from the past. In the meantime, unions have been helping members patch together emergency health coverage.

These days, a strike of the Verizon action's scale and duration is exceedingly rare. That's largely because the stakes for workers are so high. Strikers don't just lose their pay and benefits — they risk losing their job entirely.

When Congress passed the National Labor Relations Act in 1935, their explicit purpose was to encourage collective bargaining, restrict interference with unions' right to strike, and prohibit discrimination against workers for union activity. (They were also hoping that by providing an orderly process for union recognition, workers would stop physically occupying corporate property and disrupting commerce.)

But almost immediately after the NLRA's passage, the courts got to work gutting union rights. In 1939, the Supreme Court decided that "of course" Congress didn't mean to curtail capitalists' right to keep their businesses open, and so "of course" employers could hire new workers to permanently replace striking workers. Being replaced, they reasoned, wasn't the same as being fired or discriminated against.

In the 1980s and '90s, employers began using this legal precedent in earnest. They'd bargain unions to an impasse, dare them to go out on strike, and then replace workers with scabs. The tactic worked, successfully decertifying much of the unionized industries in the US.

Unions still have limited legal recourse. In the current dispute, the CWA has filed an unfair labor practice charge with the National Labor Relations Board over Verizon's bargaining conduct — a move that could provide strikers with a measure, but far from a guarantee, of protection against permanent replacement.

Verizon's machinations underscore workers' vulnerability. The company is placing full-page ads in newspapers seeking out "temporary full-time technicians" (it claims to have recruited "thousands" of scabs, a figure so vague that even *Fortune* magazine put it in scare quotes) and attempting to lure workers across the picket line. So far, Verizon boasts, one thousand union members have scabbed. But even if that number is accurate, it would amount to less than 3 percent of the workforce.

One of the reasons the Verizon workers are striking when few other unions are willing to take the leap is that their skills and experience are not easily replaceable. As social media sites like the Stand Up To Verizon Facebook page show with aplomb, scabs are bumbling through their repair work, with often dangerous consequences.

Verizon is willing to cope with the temporary ineptitude because it is intent on facing down the unions. With cell phones supplanting landlines and fiber-optic cables becoming a more lucrative market than Ma Bell's legacy copper wires, the company wants to quarantine the unions from its growth divisions.

To that end, Verizon has vigorously resisted union organizing attempts at its wireless division — and with much success. While the staff at a handful of wireless stores have organized, none have won a contract.

For their part, the striking unions have extended their picket lines to as many Verizon Wireless storefronts as possible. Any dent they can put in the wireless division's market share, the unions recognize, is collateral damage for Verizon.

They've also fanned out to the legal and political front. Earlier this month, the unions filed federal communications charges against Verizon for its strong-arm tactics in pushing traditional telephone customers to switch to the company's more modern (and more expensive) fiber optic system.

And they've applied carrot-and-stick pressure around the company's high-speed Fios service, which is in high demand among residential customers — and therefore popular with local politicians — but remains a lower investment priority for Verizon than its non-union wireless division.

In other activity off the picket line, union activists and supporters disrupted Verizon's May 5 shareholders meeting in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Two hundred and fifty activists protested the confab, including fifteen who engaged in civil disobedience. Union pension voters, representing \$1.3 billion in Verizon stock, also forced an ultimately unsuccessful vote on a resolution to curtail executive compensation.

To some extent, workers have benefited from striking in a presidential election year. Bernie Sanders, whose insurgent campaign received its most prominent union endorsement from the CWA, was on the picket line the first day of the strike and has been doing solidarity work ever since. Even Hillary Clinton — no doubt pressured by a surprisingly competitive primary — found a comfortable pair of shoes and joined a picket line.

The optimistic view is that this indicates the resurgence of a long-moribund labor movement.

Last year, the federal Bureau of Labor Statistics, which keeps track of "major work stoppages" (those involving more than one thousand workers), reported a 400 percent uptick in lost working hours over the previous year. The increase represented the high-water mark for strike activity over the past half-decade — and the Verizon strike alone blows that record out of the water.

Yet the strike is also a major test of whether relatively well-positioned workers can withhold their labor and win.

A common chant on picket lines is "One day longer, one day stronger." That is particularly true of a strike like this one, which is by design and circumstances a war of attrition. The company budgeted for first quarter strike-related profit losses, but admits that a protracted strike could impact the entire year's bottom line.

The striking workers, of course, face far worse privation. They don't have shareholders to underwrite their losses. They just have a strike fund (and a solidarity fund). But most workers, unionized and non-unionized, are in even direr straits.

The outcome of the Verizon workers' strike will therefore be taken as a labor bellwether — for good or ill.

South Asian Women's Community Centre
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June 7—Info session on Collective
des femmes (10:30AM)

June 11—Annual General Meeting
Breakfast & discussion (9:30AM)
AGM (1:00PM)

June 14—Info session on TD Bank
(10:30AM)

June 21—Staff only session
(10:30AM)

June 28—Info session of Department
of Youth Protection (DYP) (10:30AM)

7 juin—session d'information sur la
collective des femmes (10h30)

11 juin—Assemblée générale an-
nuelle

Petit déjeuner & discussion (9h30)
AGA (13h00)

14 juin—session d'information sur la
banque TD (10h30)

21 juin—session pour la personnel
du centre (10h30)

28 juin—session d'information sur la
Direction de la protection de la jeu-
nesse (DPJ) (10h30)

June 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
			1	2	3	4
5	6	7 	8	9	10	11 
12	13	14 	15	16	17	18
19	20	21 	22	23	24	25
26	27	28 	29	30		