

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



**Le Centre communautaire des femmes sud-asiatiques**

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**Joyeuses fêtes / Happy Holidays  
to all our members, friends & allies/  
à tous nos membres, amis et alliés**



**Year-end Party  
Sunday 11 December  
1-4pm**

**CEDA, 2515 Delisle**

(metro Lionel-Groulx)

**(Food provided)**

*All welcome!*

**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](mailto:sawccbulletin@gmail.com)

• Écrivez - nous à

[sawccbulletin@gmail.com](mailto:sawccbulletin@gmail.com)

**The Centre will remain closed from 19<sup>th</sup> December to 2<sup>nd</sup> January inclusive.  
It will re-open on Tuesday 3rd January.**

## 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.

**ANNOUNCEMENT / REMINDER—the Centre will remain closed from 19<sup>th</sup> December to 2<sup>nd</sup> January inclusive.**

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

**We welcome on board the SAWCC team as a community worker, MARIAM KHEDRI. With her background and linguistic skills, Mariam will be working predominantly with Pashto, Dari and Farsi speakers.**

**Mariam tells us:** I have a Bachelor of Science (B.Sc.) Degree from the faculty of Pharmacy, University of Kabul (Kabul-Afghanistan) and a certificate as nurse helper from the International Committee of Red Cross (ICRC) (Kabul-Afghanistan) where I served war wounded civilians for 5 years. I also have a certificate in health education from Association des Médecins du Monde (MDM) (Kabul-Afghanistan) where I worked as a pharmacist, interpreter and health educator for 9 months. Recently I graduated from the Faculty of Arts and Science at Université de Montréal, with a Bachelor's in Psychology and Sociology. In Canada, I also worked as pharmacy Chef Technician for five years prior to pursuing my higher education at the University of Montreal. I also have five years of experience as administrative assistant and I have volunteered in the Ismaili community of Quebec where I have been Vice-Chair of Women's development portfolio for a period of three years. In this capacity I've served immigrant women interested in improving their quality of life through learning current languages, vocational training, education and microenterprise. As we all know, across the world, women have always been the light and the strength in their family despite being the victims of injustice, oppression and inequality. As a woman I am happy to be in service to women from various communities at the South Asian Women's Community Centre. There's a saying: "If you are headed in the wrong direction, God allows you U-turn, but if you are headed in the right direction, each step no matter how small is getting you closer to your goal." And I believe that I am headed in the right direction because my goal is to do at least, the least of my part to serve women from my heart, because I believe the service which is given by the heart touches the hearts. Thank you.

## ***Executive Council Meeting Highlights Meeting of 28th November 2016***

- SAWCC will host an intern from Women's Studies, SNDT Women's University, Mumbai for February and March 2017. She will work with Harleen on the Youth Program
- On Sunday 20<sup>th</sup> November, SAWCC was happy to host the FFQ (Québec Women's Federation) press conference. (More on this below). It brought many people who had never been to the centre before.

**NEXT EC MEETING – Monday 30<sup>th</sup> January 2017, 6pm. All 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 25<sup>th</sup> 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 sisterhood, 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.



## REMEMBERING RAMANI – friend, colleague and sister in struggle

On 16<sup>th</sup> November SAWCC members, users and friends gathered together to remember and pay tribute to our friend, colleague, mentor and guide, Ramani. Ramani's family were there – Balendran, Haran and Nivatha. There was an official recognition and tribute from SAWCC. The family spoke, sharing personal and inspiring words and thoughts. Many of the women Ramani worked with came forward to share how she had been a source of inspiration and courage and helped them through great difficulties, instilling in them confidence. And how they have turned their lives around. One woman spoke about the absence of communalism. As a Sinhala she was touched that Ramani, a Tamil did not discriminate. Other users were too overwhelmed to speak but all were glad that we had this memorial and celebration of life. A collection of messages that had been sent to SAWCC on Ramani's death were presented to the family.

## SAWCC Joined Hundreds of Community Groups Across Québec ...



Hundreds of Quebec community groups united in province-wide protests in Québec, which culminated in demonstrations on Wednesday 9th November, to **demand that the government increase funding** to organizations including health clinics, legal clinics, food banks, community and women's centres, housing rights groups, groups working with immigrants, youth and many who are marginalized. Community organizations across Quebec withheld services, to protest funding shortfalls. The demand was for the government to reinvest in public services and social programs, and to recognize the truly important work of community groups in Quebec." More than 1000 groups participated. They included groups senior centres, tenants' rights organizations, shelters and women's organizations.



## Program in Spotlight: Girls' Club at Lavoie High School

Harleen Bhogal (SAY Coordinator)

**Youth:** *I don't even think I can call myself a girl, because I don't really do "girl" things.*

**Coordinator:** *What are "girl" things?*

**Youth:** *I don't know. I guess things all other girls like.*

**Coordinator:** *How do you know ALL girls like certain things? Could there be other girls who like what you like?*

**Youth:** *Hmm.. I guess it's not really girls, but society labels certain things as "girly".*

Running for the sixth year at Lavoie High School, the Girls Club is a space specially carved out for Lavoie girls to express themselves creatively, and critically, as well as create a place of mutual support.

This year's Girls Club started at the beginning of October and runs every Thursday during lunchtime. The girls who attend the program have been coming since last year, and the relationships and bonds created amongst the girls in this group are over one year in the making. Over the course of last year, the coordinators struggled to foster engagement amongst the girls. Trust is not gained automatically, and neither is participation. The girls' consistent feedback about what they like and don't like is what allowed us to develop a program that was specifically geared to their needs and interests. What was created was a girls' club centered on art in order for the girls to express themselves creatively without the constraints and guidelines of a structured classroom environment.

Every week, we start off by checking in with how we are feeling, as well as responding to a thought-provoking question, such as: what do we value in a friendship? Or, what inspires us? Then we proceed to our artistic creations, with constant chatter on issues that affects the girls' everyday lives.



As a coordinator, I recognize the energy that the youth put into making this a positive and supportive space for one another. In this space, mistakes are allowed, and no question or topic is off limits. The program is always buzzing, especially with music and dance as the girls create their art pieces.

This month, the girls worked on creating Positivity Jars, which will be filled with origami stars that all contain positive affirmations that they can unravel

in the New Year, thus starting 2017 with a positive outlook and an abundance of self-love. What the girls don't know yet, is that their jars will be filled with not only positive message stars that they wrote amongst themselves, but also from other youth from other schools, as well as the staff from SAWCC.

As the conversation with one of the girls pointed out, social stereotypes have led to certain activities and interests being labelled 'masculine' vs. 'feminine'. In our program, we try to be critical of these stereotypes and make space for everyone's ideas without judgement or dismissal. That being said, we also make room for femininity that is oftentimes not given value and validity in other spaces. Through weekly activities and conversation, the girls realized that being "girly" is infinite and complex, and in no way inferior. There is nothing wrong with loving glitter and singing about love, and there is also nothing wrong with playing heavy metal while we eat our lunch.



## Anger and disappointment: Quebec Native Women condemns a racist and discriminatory system

**Val-d'Or, November 18th, 2016** – Quebec Native Women (QNW) expresses disappointment, concern, and anger following the Crown prosecutor's decision to press charges in just two of the 37 files containing allegations of sexual assault of Indigenous women by police officers.



Twelve women who allege they were abused by provincial police officers signed a statement that said they felt 'betrayed, humiliated' after learning that the Crown is not expected to move forward with any charges against the officers under investigation. (Radio-Canada)

"Once again, it is made clear that the criminal justice system is ill adapted to the needs and experiences of sexual assault victims, even less so when these victims are Indigenous women", deplores Viviane Michel and she also precises that QNW believes and supports the women who reported. Their courageous acts have triggered an unprecedented wave of further reporting and solidarity, and were instrumental in breaking the silence around such injustice.

QNW also wishes to salute the unwavering strength and determination of these women who have expressed their intention to pursue their fight for justice. Together, they have opened the door to a conversation which had yet to unfold in Quebec, while shedding light on the systemic racism and discrimination deeply rooted within the Quebec justice system, notwithstanding the denial of Quebec's political leaders. As independent civil observer Fannie Lafontaine expressed in her report, "in failing to recognize systemic racism, the legal system continues to enact a type of objectivity which perpetuates an unequal social order that police officers are actually trained to uphold".

QNW recognizes that by decree, the Quebec government has expressed its intention to collaborate fully during the National inquiry on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. However, more than ever, the current crisis points to the urgent need for a specific look at the relationship between Indigenous people and the police in this province. As such, QNW demands an independent commission of public investigation in this regard.

As independent civil observer Fannie Lafontaine expressed in her report, "in failing to recognize systemic racism, the legal system continues to enact a type of objectivity which perpetuates an unequal social order that police officers are actually trained to uphold". QNW recognizes that by decree, the Quebec government has expressed its intention to collaborate fully during the National inquiry on missing and murdered Indigenous women and girls. However, more than ever, the current crisis points to the urgent need for a specific look at the relationship between Indigenous people and the police in this province. QNW therefore demands an independent investigation in this regard.

Events in Val-d'Or have shown the extent to which the rapport between Indigenous people and the police is fraught with tension and mistrust. This lack of confidence in an institution that has a duty to ensure the safety of its citizens, demonstrates the important responsibility of the government to take concrete action, in consultation with Indigenous people, to stop this violence and bring justice to victims and their families.

"Today, we ask the Quebec Government, the Sûreté du Québec, and all other police forces in the province what they intend to do to re-establish trust, to ensure the safety of the women of our Nations, and to live up to their responsibility towards reconciliation. The Government of Quebec must listen to and collaborate with Indigenous organizations and their allies, as well as commit first and foremost to enacting change in order to eliminate violence and racism within its very own institutions." – **Viviane Michel** (President, Native Women Association)

### SAWCC seeks a Tamil-speaking community worker.

**Application deadline 15th January 2017.** 25 hrs / week @ \$12 per hour

**Skills:** Excellent communication and listening skills; organizational and motivational skills; confidence in talking to people in groups and one to one basis; patience, tact and ability to earn trust; creative thinking and problem solving; ability to handle general administrative duties; can take initiative; demonstrate ability to be a team player and work as part of the team

**Requirements:** Canadian citizenship or permanent resident status; fluent in Tamil, English, and French; functional knowledge of Sinhalese an asset; have knowledge of social services in Montreal; understanding community needs and issues; motivation to provide services to all age groups

**Task and responsibilities for community worker:** responsible for phone calls and appointments with women and families who communicate mainly in Tamil and Sinhalese; responsible for offering one-on-one support, accompaniment services, translation services, support and filling out paperwork as well as offering counsel and advice regarding social services within the city. The community worker will be expected to do some administrative work. The community worker will be supported [daily] by the Centre coordinator as well as her colleagues.

**Please send your CV and a cover page, addressed to the Hiring Committee via email to [sawcc@bellnet.ca](mailto:sawcc@bellnet.ca)**

**For further information, please contact: (514) 528-8812 ext. 104**

The South Asian Women's Community Centre is dedicated to the empowerment of women. We are guided by the international *Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW)* and the *Canadian and Quebec Charters of Human Rights*. We are informed by a feminist ethos and sisterhood, and we are guided in our work by principles of intersectionality, equality, equity, and transparency.

## **QUEBEC WOMEN'S FEDERATION FEDERATION DES FEMMES DU QUEBEC needs our help**

### **SAWCC statement at FFQ Press conference – Sunday 20 November 2016 (at SAWCC)**

#### **Déclaration du SAWCC/CCFSA à la conférence de presse de la FFQ, le dimanche 20 novembre (dans les locaux du SAWCC/CCFSA)**

The South Asian Women's Community Centre, a Montreal-based organization has been functioning for the last 35 years, defending the rights of South Asian women, who are often affected or attacked from different directions, be it the charter of values or culturalizing violence against women as so-called "honour crimes". Being a member of FFQ amplified our concerns and voices in demanding justice and equality.

*Le Centre communautaire des femmes Sud-Asiatiques est une organisation basée à Montréal : depuis 35 ans, elle défend les droits des femmes Sud-Asiatiques qui sont souvent affectées ou attaquées de différents côtés, que ce soit par la charte des valeurs ou par la culturalisation de la violence envers les femmes, qualifiée de « crimes d'honneur ». Être membres de la FFQ donne un plus grand retentissement à nos préoccupations et à nos voix quand nous réclamons la justice et l'égalité.*

A member of the Fédération des femmes du Québec/Québec Women's Federation (FFQ/QWF) for over 20 years, we are deeply concerned with the situation that the Fédération is in today.

*Membres de la Fédération des femmes du Québec depuis plus de 20 ans, nous sommes profondément préoccupées par la situation actuelle de la Fédération.*

We at the South Asian Women's Community Centre value the important presence of the Fédération /Federation and our relationship with them. We are a member of the Fédération /Federation because they are the voice of all Québec women and are instrumental in highlighting concerns of minority women's organizations. They are a strong, progressive voice that emphasizes an inclusive feminism. The Fédération / Federation unifies women from all backgrounds in Québec – ethnic, economic, religious, age, ability -- in our collective struggle for intersectional gender justice. In these times where women like us, minorities, are targeted for beliefs, practices, clothing, the continued and principled stand of the Fédération /Federation on women's choice is very significant and important for us. Because, for us, feminism is about empowering women to make choices without any coercion. And that is what the Fédération /Federation has been doing. And that is what it needs to keep doing. And it must be supported.

*Au Centre communautaire des femmes Sud-Asiatiques, nous accordons une grande valeur à la présence de la Fédération et à notre relation avec elle. Nous sommes membres de la Fédération parce qu'elle est la voix de toutes les femmes du Québec et qu'elle attire l'attention sur les préoccupations des organisations de femmes des minorités. Elle est une voix forte, progressiste, qui insiste sur un féminisme inclusif. Le Fédération rassemble des femmes de tous les statuts au Québec, aussi bien ethnique, économique, religieux, d'âge ou de capacité, dans notre lutte collective pour une justice de genre intersectionnelle. Dans ces temps-ci où des femmes comme nous, minoritaires, sommes ciblées pour nos croyances, nos pratiques, nos vêtements, la position de principe constante de la Fédération sur le libre choix des femmes est extrêmement significative et importante pour nous. Parce que, pour nous, le féminisme vise à renforcer le pouvoir des femmes de faire des choix libres de toute contrainte. C'est précisément ce que la Fédération fait. C'est ce qu'elle doit pouvoir continuer à faire. Et elle doit être soutenue pour cela.*

A test of any democracy is how it treats its minorities, and the FFQ works actively to ensure that the voices of women like us, from minority communities are heard. For a vibrant, robust, democratic society, we need the non-partisan, inclusive feminist organization, the Fédération / Federation.

*Le test de toute démocratie réside dans la façon dont elle traite ses minorités, et la FFQ travaille sans relâche pour assurer que les voix des femmes comme nous, femmes de communautés minoritaires, soient entendues. Pour que notre société soit une démocratie énergique et robuste, nous avons besoin de cette organisation non-partisane, féministe et inclusive qu'est la Fédération.*

We must never betray the legacy of Madeleine Parent and other women who struggled to make Quebec inclusive and who also struggled to ensure the FFQ reflected the diversity of Quebec society, including racialized and more-recently arrived women. It should be a matter of alarm and deep shame for the governments of Québec and Canada, that the FFQ is not supported by the tax dollars that should be redistributed for the betterment of society, and allocated to those, among others, who are defending the most vulnerable in the society. We in the South Asian Women's Community Centre call on the Québec and federal governments to take immediate action for long-term sustenance of the FFQ. At this moment, we also call on all allies and friends of the FFQ to come out and support.

*Nous ne devons d'aucune façon trahir le legs de Madeleine Parent et d'autres femmes qui ont lutté pour que le Québec devienne inclusif, qui ont lutté aussi pour que la FFQ reflète la diversité de la société québécoise et qu'elle compte dans ses rangs des femmes racisées et des femmes plus récemment arrivées. Il est inquiétant et même honteux pour les gouvernements du Québec et du Canada que la FFQ ne soit pas soutenue par les dollars de nos impôts qui devraient être redistribués pour améliorer la société et alloués, notamment, à ceux et celles qui défendent les plus vulnérables de la société. Au Centre communautaire des femmes Sud-Asiatiques, nous réclamons des gouvernements québécois et canadien qu'ils agissent immédiatement pour assurer un soutien à long terme à la FFQ. Aujourd'hui, nous appelons aussi tous les alliés et amies de la FFQ à se manifester en soutien à la FFQ.*

The FFQ is asking for letters of support from individuals and organizations to be sent to the Prime Minister Trudeau, Premier Couillard, Ministers of the Status of Women (Canada and Québec) and other ministers. Suggested letters and names and addresses of ministers can be found at the FFQ site <http://www.ffq.qc.ca/> and click on : Précarité financière : divers milieux à la défense de la Fédération des femmes du Québec or go directly to : <http://www.ffq.qc.ca/2016/11/precarite-financiere-divers-milieux-a-la-defense/>

## Calling Out Xenophobia in Outremont

Diane Shea

Outremont has voted to ban places of worship on Bernard Street and as places of worship are already banned everywhere else in Outremont, our borough is now the only place in Canada with a total ban on new places of worship. Certainly not something to be proud of.

I watched in borough council meetings as members of the Hassidic community asked over and over again for dialogue instead of a referendum on places of worship. The Hassidic community wants peaceful coexistence, not conflict. The Mayor steadfastly said NO to dialogue every time. Montreal Mayor Coderre's "vivre-ensemble" is ignored by his representative in Outremont.

Over the last 10 years, Mayor Cinq-Mars of Outremont and the borough council have enacted bylaws which restrict the Hassidic community. Outremont has the most restrictive bylaw in most of the western world on the time a sukkah can stay standing during Sukkot. Outremont is the only borough in Montreal that has engaged in ticketing children's minibuses at Purim, even though the festival lasts about 24 hours once a year. Outremont has a bylaw restricting processions which targets the Hassidic community-singing accompanied by music during a procession is seen as a problem. Outremont has passed a resolution in council banning the ceremony of the burning of the bread on the private property of a member of the Hassidic community-even though the fire department stated there was no problem. This ceremony occurs for only a few hours a year. Surely this is a violation of Charter rights. The Hassidic community now performs the ceremony in Mile End- a borough that has worked to find solutions through dialogue, not bylaws. Thank you Luc Fernandez! As a historian, I find the reliance on the power of government and law to restrict minorities unacceptable. The referendum on places of worship needs to be understood in this context.

Bravo to all the citizens of Outremont, Hassidic and non-Hassidic, who have been working hard to build bridges through dialogue and friendship-Friends of Hutchison, Outremont Hassid, Citoyens pour un Outremont inclusif, Councillor Mindy Pollak and many many individuals. This referendum has succeeded in bringing even more friends on board. We will continue to work even harder to ensure dialogue and peaceful coexistence in the neighbourhood.

*(Diane is on the Executive Council of SAWCC)*

### SIXTH DECEMBER COMMEMORATION at SAWCC, Sunday 4<sup>th</sup> December 2016

As we do each year, members of SAWCC, friends and allies came together to remember the women who were murdered in the Montreal Massacre on 6<sup>th</sup> December 1989. We also took time to remember all those who have been killed since by violence perpetrated as a result of patriarchal systems that justify and encourage violence against women. We also reflected on the need to recognize that women in communities that are further disempowered due to systems of colonialism and racism are less heard of and where justice is even more remote. We remembered Milia Abrar, murdered in 1998. We remembered the Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls. And we thought about the most recent outrage that has come to light – impunity in the sexual violence perpetrated by the police against women in Val d'Or.

We then watched and discussed the documentary film "The World Before Her", which demonstrates how patriarchy morphs and finds violence ways to control women.

### VIOLA DESMOND

Viola Desmond, who was jailed for defiantly sitting in the "whites only" section of a Nova Scotia film house, will be the first Canadian woman to be featured on the country's \$10 bill. Desmond was a Black Nova Scotian businesswoman who challenged racial segregation at a film theatre in New Glasgow, Nova Scotia, in 1946. Viola's sister, Wanda Robson said she was "so proud" that her sister was chosen to be the new face of the Canadian ten dollar bill Thursday. Most Canadians are aware of Rosa Parks, who refused to give up her seat on a racially segregated bus in Alabama, but Viola Desmond's act of resistance occurred nine years earlier. However, many Canadians are still unaware of Desmond's story or that racial segregation existed throughout many parts of Canada during most of the twentieth century. On the subject of race, Canadians seem to exhibit a form of collective amnesia.

(fernwoodpublishing.ca) While those like Desmond's sister are very happy with this recognition there are others who see this as the Canadian state tokenism, with little real change in the face of systemic racism. And others who say call it 'borrowed blackness', when Desmond is identified as "Canada's Rosa Parks" is wrong.



## WOMEN TAKE TO THE STREETS against MILITARIZATION AND WAR!

Saturday 26<sup>th</sup> November, Women from diverse communities marched through downtown Montreal after hearing messages that brought life to global and local conflicts and the resistance of women here and around the world to protect the land, water, the air and our futures!

Jasmin and Amelia facilitated the assembly and calling up the speakers: Marie of Women of Diverse Origins, a member of the International Women's Alliance, spoke about the role of US imperialism and the Trudeau government in wars in several corners of the world, and the women who are on the front lines of resistance. She also paid tribute to Fidel Castro, who died the day before. Inti animated a short sketch with a giant puppet, made especially for the march, Mizgin spoke on behalf of the Committee of Kurdish Women of Montreal of the courage of the women of Kurdistan in the struggle for their survival as a people. Isabel Polanco of the Colombian People's Organization, on tour in Canada, spoke about the struggles of women farmers; The Movement Against Rape and Incest presented a skit and then acted as marshals of the demonstration with their visible aprons.

The march began with the sounds of the fanfare which gave rhythm and punctuated the slogans: No a la guerra! Resistencia! Children of Iraq, children of Palestine, It is the humanity that is assassinated! Occupation Ya Basta! Afghanistan Ya Basta! One two three four, We do not want your bloody war! Five six seven eight, organize and demonstrate! So-so-so Solidarity! With women all over the world!

A stop at Dominion Square allowed a number of other women to speak: Les mémés enragés with the Raging Grannies – sang their popular anti-war songs – always amusing and hard-hitting! Chantal of the Support Committee to the Haitian People's Court against occupation and domination, spoke of the occupation of Haiti by foreign troops allegedly bringing humanitarian aid, Marikit of Anakbayan Europe spoke of youth mobilizing as they have in each generation – concluding with a little rap; Esther Madrid from the Consulate of Venezuela brought her message of solidarity from the women of her country and Zahia el-Masri from Palestine spoke of the importance of continuing the Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions campaign against Israel for its illegal and murderous occupation of the Palestinian territories. Dolores of the South Asian Women's Center spoke of the struggles in Kashmir and the role of women in resistance to censorship and other severe repressive measures in the country; Jeanne of the proletarian feminist front concluded that to end war, it is revolution that must waged!

We took the street a last time to walk to Philips Square where the marching band and the Kurdish women ended the activities with music and a dance of solidarity!

More pictures at:

<https://wdofdo.wordpress.com/>



## Bill 62 is Islamophobia disguised as secularism

Editorial, *McGill Daily*, November 21, 2016

Quebec's National Assembly is currently debating Bill 62, "An Act to foster adherence to State religious neutrality," which would prohibit any person with their face covered from working in the public sector or receiving public services, including medical care in public hospitals and clinics. The bill is framed as protecting the government's 'religious neutrality,' but is clearly yet another instance of the rhetoric of secularism disguising discriminatory legislation, in this instance targeting Muslim women who wear the niqab. The Liberals' vocal opposition to the infamous "Quebec Charter of Values" – which proposed to prohibit public sector employees from wearing "conspicuous religious symbols" – helped them rise to power, yet they are now proposing a measure which is also clearly Islamophobic and racist. Bill 62 must not pass, and we should call it what it is: a bill that targets Muslim women and validates Islamophobic sentiments in Canada and Quebec.

Bill 62 is part of Quebec's ongoing resistance to 'reasonable accommodation,' a legal principle which mandates that adjustments be made to institutions and businesses to accommodate individuals with a proven need. While originally intended for people with disabilities, the term has since come to encompass a wide scope of accommodations, including religious ones. Businesses and services are exempt only if they can prove that providing accommodations will cause them undue financial hardship. The Quebec government has the ability to accommodate people who cover their faces at little to no extra cost; its refusal to do so demonstrates deeply entrenched xenophobia and a continuation of forced assimilation.

Bill 62 is just the provincial government's latest attempt to have all its residents conform to the dominant white Catholic culture in Quebec. In 2007, the town of Hérouxville created a "code of conduct" for potential new immigrants, which stated that "the lifestyle that [immigrants] left behind in their birth country cannot be brought here." More recently, in May 2016, Outremont's borough council banned the construction of new places of worship on certain main streets in the neighborhood. While not specifying any religious community in particular, the ban was effectively an attack on Outremont's substantial Hasidic Jewish population.

Legislation that drastically restricts the ability of religious minorities to express their faith is not only unjustifiable, but furthers intolerance and discrimination toward communities that already face these issues. Incidents of Islamophobia – particularly those targeting women – spiked dramatically in the wake of France's ban on veils which cover the face. Just this year, when several French cities banned burkinis, footage of Muslim women being publicly humiliated for their religious expression went viral.

As white supremacy becomes more explicit and mainstream, the last thing we need is more toxic legislation targeting religious minorities. We call on the Quebec government to oppose Bill 62, and to take measures to protect religious minorities and other communities experiencing heightened violence and prejudice at this time. We must stand with Muslim women, who will be directly impacted by this bill, and with all those facing institutionalized discrimination.

## OPINION

**Decriminalizing sex work —let us put an end to power relations with the police and issue a clear message that violence against sex workers will no longer be tolerated**

Sandra Wesley

Since 1995, sex workers involved in Stella have been struggling to improve the living and working conditions of sex workers, to promote their health and to uphold their human rights.

Stella addresses women, transvestites and transsexuals and ensures a constant presence in the various places of practice of sex work: streets, escort agencies, massage parlors, dancer bars and others.

Over the years, Stella has developed an important advocacy practice while campaigning against criminalizing the lives and work of sex workers.

Recently, I met, like every day at Stella, a woman who told me about her experience in the sex industry. She was a trans woman, a former escort, now in her forties, who has experienced a lot of violence in various forms and has had a very negative experience in the sex industry. She decided to do this work to try to get out of her poverty, in the absence of many other employment options.

I talked to him about the activism of our organization and the advocacy movement for sex workers. His reaction was unequivocal, with an emotional tone: "The police are the worst, we have to get them out of our lives. All sex workers know this. Violence is not inherent in our work, it is there when we have to work in a context where we are in conflict with the law.

I also know well the tone terrorized women who call us in tears, angry or shocked, when a customer was actually a policeman who lured them into a hotel room to question, verify their identity, ask intrusive questions and threaten them, or when their work environment has been invaded by a whole team of loan officers to search the place looking for condoms and other evidence that sexual services are exchanged there.

For some women, these visits result in a feeling of fear and the need to isolate themselves more to avoid reliving the experience. For others, these visits end in rape, arrest, threats or, all too often, expulsion from the country.

In a climate of criminalization and contempt for the sex industry, we become targets for violent men seeking victims.

Year after year, statistics continue to show that killings of sex workers remain unresolved much more frequently than those of other women.

For migrant sex workers who are at risk of being deported if they are in the industry, regardless of the validity of their work permit, engaging the police in the event of assault, theft or other Out of the question and their aggressors target them specifically for this reason. Laws with the explicit aim of eliminating our business force us to modify our ways of working to minimize the risks of arresting our clients and our colleagues and to preserve our sources of revenue.

When shelters for victims of domestic violence refuse to welcome and we try to redefine our relationships according to their stereotypes, when the centers for victims of sexual assault are actively working against us and trying to redefine all our interactions with our customers as a form of violence sexual, when institutions such as the Secretariat for women that are supposed to represent the interests of all women involved

Cont'd from p. 10

the development of campaigns for police anti-sex work repression under the pretext of fighting against sexual assault and when our voices are erased or discredited by groups that call themselves feminists, we live these attacks as a form of violence against us.

The sex trade movement is a feminist, anti-violence, inclusive and supportive movement with all struggles to address violence against women and marginalized people.

We are also a movement in the fight against HIV and we know that the decriminalization of sex work would reduce HIV rates in our community between 33% and 46% because only the promotion of our human rights can enable the creation of safe work environments and deconstruct the stigma.

The complete decriminalization of our work will begin the dismantling of unfair relations of power with the police and will send a clear message that violence against sex workers will no longer be tolerated in our society.

*Sandra Wesley is Executive Director of Stella, the friend of Maimie, a community group created and operated by and for sex workers in Montreal.*

[http://plus.lapresse.ca/screens/d9adced3-b6ed-41bb-97ad-8fe0d3d7ada1%7CpO\\_~4E8viul7.html](http://plus.lapresse.ca/screens/d9adced3-b6ed-41bb-97ad-8fe0d3d7ada1%7CpO_~4E8viul7.html)

[loose SAWCC translation from French original]

## Undocumented Women Speak: Trudeau Has Failed Us!

December 4, 2016 – Press release

Montréal – In November 2015, the Non-Status Women's Collective sent an open letter to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau. In their letter, they described the extreme precarity in which non-status women live and asked him to take a position on the situation of non-status people in Canada. One year later, they have still not received a response.

In the face of government indifference, non-status women are addressing the public at large to denounce the arbitrariness of Canada's immigration system and its particularly negative impact on women, determined to raise awareness about the reality of non-status women in Canada.

"We clean your homes, serve you in restaurants, work on assembly lines, produce the food you eat. We pay taxes," they wrote in an open letter to Prime Minister Trudeau. Non-status women work some of the most difficult and precarious jobs, raise their children, and contribute to the wealth of Canada, but their precarious status renders them especially vulnerable to exploitation, abuse, and fear. They contribute to society in innumerable ways but are excluded from the most basic forms of public security, denied access to health, education or social services, and many live in constant fear of arrest and deportation.

With the support of more than twenty women's rights organizations, the Non-Status Women's Collective expresses their solidarity with Indigenous, homeless, and racialized women, and victims of sexual violence as part of the twelve days of action for the elimination of violence against women. The collective demands that the Trudeau administration cease the discretionary case by case analysis of individual immigration files and offer a comprehensive regularization program for all people living in Canada without status. In demanding the regularization of all those living undocumented, they fight for the ability of all to live in dignity, respect, and with equal rights.

On Saturday, members of the Non-Status Women's Collective and their allies took to the streets in white masks and ghost costumes to denounce the invisibility in which non-status women live and to support the Collective in their struggle for the regularization of all non-status women and the more than 500,000 non-status people currently living in Canada.

*Status now!*

*Not one more deportation!*

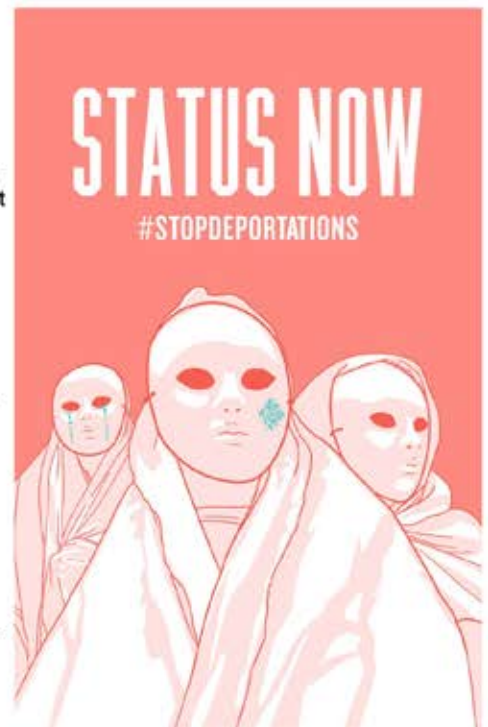
*Border violence is gendered violence!*

Jayalalitha Cont'd from p. 11

**Literacy:** literacy rate among females in Tamil Nadu is 73.8%; ranked fifteenth at an all India level. (Source: District Information System for Education, 2015-16) □ Amma Education Scheme introduced for state government to pay off education loans of students who were unemployed. □ Amma Laptop scheme—free laptops given to higher-secondary & college students government & aided educational institutions.

**Safety for women:** Tamil Nadu has the lowest crime rate against women in India—17 per 1,00,000 people, while the crime rate against children is said to be second lowest in the country.

**Welfare support:** In 2011, Jayalalitha introduced 'Thalikkum Thangam Thittam' (Gold for marriage), whereby four grams of gold and cash upto Rs. 50,000 was offered to economically-backward women who had completed their diploma/degree. Amma Grinder, Mixie & Table fan scheme was among the most popular schemes as it provided free table fans, mixers and grinders to the less-fortunate. Rs. 1,250 crore was allocated by her government. To support this scheme, she opened exclusive repair and maintenance centres. She formed self-help groups for women and provided financial aid. Tamil Nadu has 6.08 lakh self-help groups with a membership of 92 lakh women. Free mobile phones were given to self-help groups for women under the Amma Mobile initiative. In 2015, she had said that the Tamil Nadu government would provide Rs 6,000 crore loans to women through the self-help groups. She intended to form additional 10,000 self-help groups. In the previous four years, her government had distributed Rs 20,270 crore as loans to self-help groups in the state. In 2015, she announced the introduction of Amma Mobile scheme with the aim to benefit trainers at self-help groups in the state. Earlier this year, as part of her election manifesto, Jayalalitha had promised women of Tamil Nadu a 50% subsidy to buy mopeds or scooters. She was to introduce schemes to train women in driving vehicles and provide them with a subsidy to buy auto-rickshaws. <https://in.news.yahoo.com/iron-lady-feminist-jayalalitha-had-123222383.html>



## book

**A Necessary Conversation -- Daniel Rück**

<http://mtlreviewofbooks.ca/v4/reviews/indigenous-writes/>

## Indigenous Writes

A GUIDE TO FIRST NATIONS, MÉTIS & INUIT ISSUES IN CANADA

CHELSEA VOWEL



Considering the complexities and difficulties surrounding questions of Indigeneity and non-Indigeneity in Canada, few would have the expertise and courage required to write "A Guide to First Nations, Métis & Inuit Issues." But this is exactly what Métis author and educator Chelsea Vowel has done. With a law degree, an influential blog ([apihtawikosisan.com](http://apihtawikosisan.com)), experience teaching the Cree language, and frequent op-eds in national media, she is uniquely situated and qualified for the task. Her first book, *Indigenous Writes*, is a must-read for anyone who wants to understand the history and present of Indigenous-Canadian relations.

I teach a large course at the University of Ottawa introducing students to Indigenous studies and expend much energy in the course asking students to carefully examine their own place in the history and future of Canadian-Indigenous relations. *Indigenous Writes* perfectly complements this approach with a conversational style that invites the reader to rethink what they think they already know. Vowel begins the book with two chapters on the "Terminology of Relationships," in which she addresses questions of vocabulary such as Indigenous versus Aboriginal, as well as different words used to describe non-Indigenous peoples. Students are often anxious about using the right words, and by starting the book in this way Vowel opens up the conversation and invites readers to participate. The subsequent chapters summarize current issues and histories of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis peoples, and dive into hot topics including cultural appropriation, blood-quantum reasoning, authenticity, and two-spirit identities.

Some readers might be surprised to find that Vowel spends nearly twenty percent of the book debunking myths about Indigenous peoples (including the alcoholic, nomadic, free-loader, tax-free, lazy Indian myths), but this is absolutely necessary since many readers harbour these assumptions to

some degree. There are also chapters on the history of state violence (residential schools, the Sixties Scoop, Inuit relocations, etc.), as well as the continuing state violence against Indigenous peoples (unsafe drinking water, underfunded education, discrimination against Indigenous children in state care). Finally, there are chapters discussing continuing colonialism in the Canadian legal system and in legislation aimed at assimilation, chapters giving essential background to historic and modern treaties, a chapter refuting the idea that reserves themselves are the problem, and a chapter on Indigenous efforts to take control of their schools.

Many of my students, expecting a dry textbook, were pleasantly surprised by Vowel's conversational style. With chapter sub-headings like "Confused yet?" and transition sentences like "Now wait a minute, isn't jiggling an Irish thing?" Vowel succeeds in distilling extremely complex subject matter into dense chapters of just a few pages each, while still throwing in jokes and keeping it real.

*Indigenous Writes* is a timely book – it appears at a moment when many Canadians are hungry to learn more about Indigenous peoples and colonialism in Canada. Each of Vowel's short chapters can be read in a few minutes, and each one contains enough critical information to challenge harmful assumptions and facilitate understanding. This is a book for everyone – but particularly for non-Indigenous people wishing to better understand their own place in the history of violence against Indigenous peoples, and to find ways to move toward true solutions and right relationships. mRb

Chelsea Vowel, *Indigenous Writes -- A Guide to First Nations, Métis & Inuit Issues in Canada*. Highwater Press, \$26.00 paper 240pp 9781553796800

**Daniel Rück** is Assistant Professor in the Department of History and Institute for Canadian and Aboriginal Studies at the University of Ottawa. His ancestors were Germans from Central Europe, and English from Yorkshire.

### JAYALALITHA (1948-2016) & benefits for women

Jayalalitha served as the Chief Minister of the Indian state of Tamil Nadu for over fourteen years (between 1991 until her death in December 2016). Not free from controversy, including a cult of personality, this politician, was much beloved by many, who referred to her as "Amma" (mother). Below are some of the schemes and programs (clearly not unproblematic) that were put in place for women under her, and their impact. They came at a heavy price for the state, but helped women of Tamil Nadu a great deal.

#### Health care:

- Tamil Nadu tops the chart for lowest fertility rate in the country; (lower than Australia, Finland, Belgium); an average of 1.7 children per woman
- Tamil Nadu has the second best infant mortality in India—27 deaths per 1,000 live births
- Maternal mortality is 90 deaths of mothers per one lakh births, second in India.
- Cradle Baby Scheme launched in the 1990s to curb female foeticide and gender-based abortions. A mother could anonymously hand over her new-born baby to the government, which would take care of the baby or give it up for adoption
- increased maternity leave for women government employees from 6 to 9 months in 2016, and had increased the term from three to six months in 2011
- introduced a health initiative called Amma Master Health Check-up Plan for Women. Women are offered check-ups that include procedures such as Pap smear and digital mammogram; tests for Vitamin D level, bone density, and parathyroid hormone levels; and other check-ups like blood tests, sugar, thyroid, urine tests, cholesterol and liver screenings, chest x-rays, echo, and USG abdomen, etc.
- In September 2015, she launched the Amma Baby Care kit scheme with the aim to provide 16 baby care items for newborn babies and their mothers for free. The kit was valued at Rs 1,000.

**Centre Communautaire des femmes sud-asiatiques**

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35 years of sisterhood, strength, struggle and success 1981-2016

[www.sawcc-ccfsa.ca](http://www.sawcc-ccfsa.ca)

Dec. 4 — Sixth December Com-  
memoration 2-4pm

Dec. 11 — Year End Party

13<sup>th</sup> Dec — Women's security

19 Dec—3 January — Centre  
closed

30 Jan — EC meeting

4 déc — *Commémoration du six-  
ième décembre*

11 déc — fête fin de l'année

13 déc Sécurité des femmes

19 déc—3 jan — le centre est  
fermé

30 jan — Réunion du comité  
d'exécutif

**SAWCC calls out the impunity in Val d'Or and stands in solidarity with Indigenous women who spoke out against years of abuse and violence.**

**SAWCC joins the demand for an independent inquiry.**

## December 2016

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1	2	3
4 Sixth December Commemoration	5	6	7	8	9	10
11 Year- end Party	12	13	14	15	16	17
18	19	20	21	22	23	24
25	26	27	28	29	30	31