**TRANS\* MARCH** (Simcoe Pride, Barrie, Ontario, Canada

(August 4, 2016)

~Rupert Raj

INTRODUCTION

FOR THOSE OF YOU WHO MIGHT NOT KNOW ME, I’M A 64-YEAR-OLD, EURASIAN CANADIAN, PANSEXUAL TRANS MAN. I’VE BEEN AN ACTIVIST ACROSS CANADA AND THE USA FOR 45 YEARS SINCE 1971, WHEN I TRANSITIONED AT 19. I WAS ALSO A PSYCHOTHERAPIST FOR 15 YEARS, INCLUDING 13 YEARS AT SHERBOURNE HEALTH CENTRE IN TORONTO, COUNSELLING TRANSSEXUAL, TRANSGENDER, GENDERQUEER, INTERSEX, TWO-SPIRIT AND GENDER-QUESTIONING ADULTS AND GENDER NON-CONFORMING TEENAGERS AND THEIR LOVED ONES FROM 2002 INTO 2015. I ALSO OPERATED A PART-TIME PRIVATE PRACTICE *(RR CONSULTING)* FROM APRIL 2002 TO MAY 2015, AT WHICH TIME I WENT ON LONG-TERM DISABILITY INSURANCE DUE TO CHRONIC BURNOUT AND VICARIOUS TRAUMATIZATION. FOR MORE ABOUT ME AND MY WORK, CHECK OUT WIKIPEDIA AND THE CANADIAN LESBIAN & GAY ARCHIVES, AND WATCH OUT FOR MY MEMOIRS COMING OUT NEXT MARCH WITH TRANSGRESS PRESS IN SAN FRANCISCO.

HISTORY of toronto trans\* RALLIES, marches AND FLAG-RAISINGS

The first annual TRANS\* March took place in San Francisco in June 2004, followed by Canadian marches in Ottawa (2005), Toronto (2009), Vancouver (2010), Calgary (2014) and Montreal (2014). (i spoke at the pride toronto trans\* march in JULY 2012, and ALSO the toronto transgender day of remembrance IN NOVEMBER 2014). The Wikipedia article on the TRANS\* March lacks objectivity and accuracy iN ITS SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO the TWO Toronto TRANS\* Marches, OMTTING a full account of the divergent perspectives of events by members of a marginalized, fragmented community. SO, i’d like to balance this biased report by acknowledging the relative success OVER THE PAST THREE YEARS of Pride Toronto’s Trans\* Pride Team, originated by Luka Sidaravicius, Evana Ortigoza, Den Temin and others, WHO WORKED closely with the historically-cisgender Pride Toronto Board IN 2013 AND 2014 to create a sustainable Trans\* Pride March, Trans\* Community Fair and Trans\* Space as annual events in the LGBTTI2SQQAA community. AND, PRIDE TORONTO NOW HAS THREE TRANS\* BOARD MEMBERS, INCLUDING RACHEL LAUREN CLARK.

this year, ON May 17, I proudly watched Toronto Mayor John Tory raise the Canadian TRANS\* flag At Toronto City Hall on International Day Against Homophobia, TRANSphobia and Biphobia. ON June 1, I cheered as openly-gay, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne raised the Rainbow Pride flag at Queen’s Park the first day of Toronto’s Pride Month (I’ll be asking Ontario Premier Wynne, BC Premier Clark and Canadian Prime Minister Trudeau to simultaneously raise the TRANS\* flag next year). ON July 1, I marched in the TRANS\*\* Pride Toronto March, carrying the TRANS\* Coalition Project (Toronto) banner with organizational partners Toronto TRANS\* Alliance MEMBERS Stephanie Woolley, DOT AND WENDI SNOWDON, AND TRANS\* Lobby Group MEMBERS Susan Gapka, MARTINE STONEHOUSE, SHADMITH MANZO and others.

NOW, I’M SPEAKING TO YOU here TODAY AT Simcoe Pride’s TRANS\* Rally & March in Barrie, Ontario, canada urging all TRANS\* community members to “walk the talk” towards true solidarity. THIS MEANS TRANScending racism, indigeneity, classism, sexism, ageism, ableism, homophobia, biphobia, transphobia and genderphobia. and specifically, COMMITTING OUR SUPPORT, as trans and cis people of colour and as white trans and cis allies, TO TRANS\* Black Lives Matter – Toronto, WHICH executed A DIRECT ACTION (LIKE REV. MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. AND MALCOLM X DID WHEN FIGHTING FOR BLACK RIGHTS IN THE 1960S) in the way of a peaceful PROTEST AGAINST PRIDE TORONTO, DEMANDING COMPLETE SAFETY AND FULL INCLUSION. PRIDE TORONTO PRESIDENT MATHIEU Chantelois MET ALL THEIR DEMANDS except for the banning of police from pride EVENTS.

WHEN i witnessed the VICIOUS backlash AGAINST BLACK FOLKS, of OUR LOCAL queer and trans communities, i was ashamed to be a torontonian! FRIENDS, WE MUST MOVE BEYOND OUR SMALL-MINDED, MEAN-SPIRITED AGENDAS AND UNITE IN GOOD FAITH, WORKING TOGETHER TOWARDS OUR COMMON GOAL OF PEACEFUL CO-EXISTENCE WITHIN OUR DIVERSE COMMUNITIES: BLACK AND WHITE, INDIGENOUS AND NON-INDIGENOUS, OLD AND YOUNG, ABLED AND DIFFERENTLY-ABLED, QUEER AND STRAIGHT, TRANSGENDER AND CISGENDER. TAKE HEED, WE MUST STOP THE IN-FIGHTING AND COLLABORATE IN LOVING KINDNESS OR WE WILL DIE OUT LIKE THE DINOSAURS BEFORE OUR TIME. MOTHER EARTH IS URGING US, ALL CREATURES GREAT AND SMALL, TO LEARN HOW TO PLAY AND WORK TOGETHER IN HARMONY, AS INTERCONNECTED ORGANISMS WITHIN OUR ECO-SYSTEM.

NOW, I WANT TO CHANGE GEARS. given that i’LL BE RETIRING NEXT MARCH and winding down my trans activism, except for THE sELLING OF my two books (INCLUDING MY AND DAN IRVING’S 2014 BOOK*, trans activism in canada*), It’s good to know that trans advocacy is moving ahead with or without me, CARRIED ON BY OTHER TRANS CANADIANS BECAUSE there’s got to be an aFTER-LIFE FOR LONG-TIME TRANS ACTIVISTS LIKE ME WHO ARE so BURNT OUT, desperately NEEDing TO PASS ON THE BATON TO THE YOUNGER GENERATION!

recent historical trans\* rights milestones in ontario (2008-2016)

TO BRIEFLY RECAP, 2008 into 2016 were auspicious years for trans Ontarians and Canadians in terms of trans rights when several historical bills became law, mostly due to the diligent advocacy of our beloved cis ally, NEW DEMOCRATIC PARTY (ndp) mEMBER OF PROVINCIAL PARLIAMENT (MPP)cheri dinovo, and thetrans health lobby group LED BY SUSAN GAPKA. (susan, MICHELLE HOGAN, JOANNE NEVERMANN, D.s. AND co-founded the thlg in 2001, LATER JOINED BY SHADMITH MANZO, DAVINA HADER, ILSA LOVING, etc.).

**2008: Bill:** to relist gender-confirming surgery (AKA SEX-REASSIGNMENT SURGERY) FOR TRANS PEOPLE UNDER the ontario health insurance plan (OHIP), eight years after its delisting in 1998, THANKS TO SUSAN GAPKA AND THE TRANS HEALTH LOBBY GROUP.

**2012: BILL 33 (“TOBY’S ACT”):** an amendment to the ontario human rights code to protect transsexual, transgender, genderqueer, intersex and two-spirit people, crossdressers, and others whose gender identity or expression differs from their birth-assigned sex. introduced by NDP MPP CHERI DINOVO and supported by the trans lobby grouP and SUSAN GAPKA’s HUMAN RIGHTS CAMPAIGN.

[TOBY’S ACT Was tested WHEN TORONTO TRANS MAN BOYD KODAK SUED THE TORONTO POLICE SERVICE AND THE VANIER CENTRE FOR WOMEN FOR TRANSPHOBIC ABUSE IN MAY 2016. boyd WON HIS ONTARIO HUMAN RIGHTS CASE WITH the heLP of OUR CIS ALLY LAWYER SUSAN URSEL AND several EXPERT WITNESSes, including me. THE tribunal ordered the TORONTO POLICE SERVICE TO AMEND ITS GUIDELINES FOR WORKING WITH TRANS PEOPLE IN CONSULTATION WITH A COMMITTEE to be selected from the TRANS COMMUNITY.]

**2012: bill 14 (“the anti-bullying act”):** a provincial act in ontario prohibiting bullying in schools of racial and sexual minorities, THEREBY protecting transgender and cisgender people, as well as straight, queer, pansexual AND asexual students.

**2012:** **LEGISLATION** TO REMOVE THE SURGICAL PRE-REQUIREMENT OF GENDER-CONFIRMING SURGERY (AKA SEX-REASSIGNMENT SURGERY) TO LEGALLY CHANGE SEX DESIGNATION (AKA GENDER MARKER) ON AN ONTARIO BIRTH CERTIFICATE AND OTHER ONTARIO IDENTITY DOCUMENTS, PER THE ONTARIO VITAL STATISTICS ACT. INTRODUCED BY LAWYER SUSAN URSEL WITH THE SUPPORT OF THE TRANS LOBBY GROUP.

**2013: BILL 14 (“THE Accepting Schools Act”):** it became mandatory for all ontario publicly-funded schools (including catholic Schools) to support the formation of "tolerance clubs,"ESPECIALLY including **Gay-Straight ALLIANCES (GSAS)**.

recent historical trans\* rights milestones in canada (2009-2016)

**2015: bill 77 (“Affirming Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Act”):** to outlaw “reparative” OR “conversion” therapy” AND DELIST IT AS AN INSURED GOVERNMENT HEALTH SERVICE UNDER OHIP, introduced by NDP MPP CHERI DINOVO. FOLLOWING ONTARIO’S LEAD, president BARACK obama stated THAT he HOPES to ban this pathologizing THERAPY in the uSA.

**2009-2016: bill c-389, BILL C-279, bill c-204** and **bill c-16** **(TO AMEND THE CANADIAN HUMAN RIGHTS ACT AND the CRIMINAL code):**  the first three were federal bills TO PROHIBIT DISCRIMINATION ON THE GROUNDS OF “GENDER IDENTITY” only (with bill c-279 was introduced by our cis allies ndp mps bill siksay and randall garrison). and on mAY 17, 2016, **Bill C-16:** A FOurth BILL was introduced by FEDERAL Justice minister jody wilson-raybould, declaring it a “hate crime” to discriminate against transgender CanadianS BASED ON “GENDER IDENTTIY” *OR* “GENDER EXPRESSION.”

What a tragic irony that simultaneously, certain American Southern states were trying to impose a “bathroom bill” to limit the basic rights of trans people. I’m so glad to live in a democratic society – OH, CANADA! AS canadian toronto trans lobby group leader susan gapka’s slogan ASSERTS, ***“trans rights are human rights!”*** AND as AMERICAN TRANS ACTIVIST LAWYER DEAN SPADE CLAIMs, ***“Trans Resistance” [shall inevitably triumph!]***.so let’s all join the efforts of the **trans Coalition Project - TORONTO** ([transcoalition@gmail.com](mailto:transcoalition@gmail.com)) (A PARTNERSHIP OF THE TORONTO TRANS ALLIANCE LED BY STEPHANIE WOOLLEY AND THE TRANS LOBBY GROUP LED BY SUSAN GAPKA) and ALSO **TRANS EQUALITY RIGHTS IN CANADA** (<http://www.transequalitycanada.com/>) (LED BY GENDER MOSAIC LEADER AMANDA RYAN) AND LOBBY YOUR MP TO VOTE FOR BILL C-16 WHEN PARLIAMENT RECONVENES. I’M HOPING TO MEET WITH PRIME MINISTER JUSTIN TRUDEAU IN NOVEMBER TO ASK HIM FOR HIS PERSONAL SUPPORT AND ALSO TO ASK HIM HOW TO INTRODUCE A BILL TO RAISE THE CANADIAN TRANS\* FLAG ALONGSIDE THE RAINBOW FLAG NEXT YEAR ON JUNE 1, 2017.

FOLLOWING IN THE FOOTSTEPS OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS MOVEMENT AND BLACK POWER, OF WOMEN’S LIBeration AND OF GAY PRIDE, IT’S NOW OUR TIME – time FOR TRANS PEOPLE TO RISE UP AND DEMAND EQUALITY AND FREEDOM. BUT WE MUST ALSO dovetail WITH the overall goals of BLACK POWER, WOMEN’S LIB AND GAY PRIDE as an allied intersectional community fighting the common enemy of societal oppression: RACIAL, SEXUAL AND GENDER VIOLENCE. and wE MUST ALSO INCLUDE OUR INTERSEX, ASEXUAL AND INDIGENOUS SISTERS AND BROTHERS, WHO’VE HISTORICALLY NOT BEEN INVITEd into the inner circle. IN AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND, INTERSEX PEOPLE ARE EXPLICITLY INCLUDED IN LGBTTI2SQQAA ORGANIZATIONS. IN NEW ZEALAND the INDIGENOUS MAORI PEOPLE are treated as POLITICAL eqUALS, INCLUDING THEIR official maori LANGUAGE. SO FELLOW CANADIANS, LET’S INVITE *OUR* INDIGENOUS, INTERSEX AND ASEXUAL COMMUNITY MEMBERS INTO OUR CIRCLE OF “RADICAL INCUSION.” as nZ trans activist politician georgina beyer asserts, ***“the time is now!”***

i’D love to tell you OF other trans\* legal victories across canada, but MY time IS LIMITED so check out thE JUSTICE TRANS WEBSITE (<http://www.justicetrans.com/>) for tHE PROGRESS OF trans\* rights AND LEGISLATION, ACCESSIBLE FOR EACH PROVINCE/TERRITORY – AND BE SURE TO COMPLETE THE TRANSforming JUSTICE: Trans\* Legal Needs Assessment Ontario (<https://northernoriole.ca/transformingjustice.ca/welcome>).

IN memory of several recently-departed canadian trans\* activists

now, I WISH to take a brief moment to PAY TRIBUTE TO four local canadian trans\* ACTIVISTS (all friends OF MINE) who HAve recently departed us SO WE NEVER FORGET thOSE WHO PAVED THE WAY FOR US:

Jan. 10, 2012: lynne louise pellerin (MONTREAL/MONCTON) (68)…

(one of three trans women who co-founded the Association for Canadian Transsexuals in 1969/1970 - the first trans\* group in Canada)

July 3, 2012: Kyle andrew smith scanlon (TORONTO/HAMILTON) (40)

FEB. 5/9, 2014: xanthra phillippa mackay (tORONTO) (58)

APRIL 24, 2016: aiyanna maracle (OsHweken, OntariO) (65)

conclusion

IN CLOSING, I WANT TO URGE ALL OF US TO OPEN OUR HEARTS AND MINDS TO RADICAL INCLUSIVITY FOR ALL HUMAN AND ANIMAL SENTIENT BEINGS. WE MUST STRIVE TOWARDS INTEGRATING ALL OF OUR DIVERSE IDENTITIES (WHILE STILL PRESERVING EACH UNIQUE INDIVIDUAL IDENTITY) ACROSS THE CONTINUUM - THAT MULTI-HUED RAINBOW REFLECTING ALL OF MOTHER EARTH’S CHILDREN. SO I’D LIKE TO LEAVE YOU WITH THE IMAGE OF A METAPHOR FOR POSITIVE CHANGE: THE PHOENIX, A MYTHICAL MAGICAL BIRD TRANSCENDING RELIGIOUS AND CULTURAL TRADITIONS THROUGHOUT HISTORY. LIKE THE FIERY PHOENIX IN FLIGHT, SO SHALL WE (TRANS\*, GENDERQUEER, INTERSEX, ASEXUAL AND TWO-SPIRIT PEOPLE, AND OUR LOVED ONES AND ALLIES) RISE ABOVE THE ASHES OF DEFEAT AND DESPAIR, AND SOAR UPWARDS TO NEW HEIGHTS OF HOPE AND FREEDOM.

TOGETHER, WE SHALL WORK TOWARDS TRANSFORMING THE WORLD INTO A BETTER PLACE FOR ALL AND WITNESS THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF CHANGE THROUGH COMMUNITY IN ACTION: A GLOBAL COMMUNITY OF ONE MIND, ONE HEART AND ONE SPIRIT. ***“TRANS\* PRIDE! TRANS\* POWER!***

addendum: canadian trans\* RIGHTS & LEGISLATION ACROSS CANADA

**MEDICAL:**

(re)listing of GENDER-CONFIRMING SURGERY (AKA sex-reassignment surgery) as aN INSURED government health service

\*EVERY PROVINCE EXCEPT PRINCE EDWARD ISland

\*nova scotia (2014) & new brunswick (2016)

BANNING OF “REPARATIVE”/“CONVERSION” THERAPY REGARDING GENDER IDENTITY AND SEXUAL ORIENTATION, AND ITS DELISTING AS AN INSURED GOVERNMENT HEALTH SERVICE

ONLY ONTARIO (2016) SO FAR & MANITOBA HOPEFULLY SOON

**legAL:**

explicit legal protection for “GENDER IDENTITY” AND/or “GENDER EXPRESSION” in tHE human rights code

\*every province/territory except quebec, new Brunswick, Nunavut Territory & Yukon Territory (covered under other grounds)

\*MANITOBA, SASKATCHEWAN & NORTHWEST TERRITORIES (“GENDER IDENTITY” ONLY)

REMOVING PRE-REQUIREMENT OF GENDER-CONFIRMING SURGERY TO LEGALLY CHANGE SEX DESIGNATION (AKA GENDER MARKER) ON BIRTH CERTIFICATE AND OTHER IDENTITY DOCUMENTS

\*every province/territory except Quebec, new brunswick, pei, newfoundland, northwest territories, Nunavut Territory & Yukon Territory