

REVOLUTIONARY ADVOCACY



LAW UNION OF ONTARIO
50TH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE

OCT 18, 2024
ST. PAUL'S ON BLOOR, 227 BLOOR, TORONTO

OCT 19, 2024
VICTORIA COLLEGE, TORONTO



Land and Treaty Acknowledgement

This land, on the north shore of Lake Ontario and fed by the Humber, Don, and Rouge Rivers, has been a site of human history for thousands of years. Indigenous Nations, including the Anishinaabe, the Wendat, and the Haudenosaunee, have cared for and been in reciprocal relationship with this land since time immemorial. Today, the meeting place of Toronto is home to many diverse First Nations, Inuit, and Métis people from across Turtle Island – and indeed, to Indigenous people from around the world.

For those of us who are settlers who organize on this land, we recognize that our historical and current context is one of colonial violence and dispossession. We seek to be accomplices in dismantling colonialism and repairing its harms, and we celebrate and honour Indigenous sovereignty, resistance, and resurgence.

Toronto is subject to Treaty 13 with the Mississaugas of the Credit, signed by representatives of the King of England (referred to as “the Crown”; in effect, the settler colonial government), and the Williams Treaties signed by the Crown with multiple Mississaugas and Chippewa First Nations. Contrary to the colonial narrative, these treaties were not land purchases and did not grant consent for displacement and settler dominance. A [rich history of Indigenous diplomacy](#) offers alternative narratives, rooted in relationship and reciprocity, to the colonial story of conquest and ownership.

The Two Row Wampum, between the Dutch and the Haudenosaunee, with its parallel rows of white and purple beads, expresses a relationship of respect and mutuality rather than the hierarchical one the colonizers sought to impose. Settlers and Indigenous Nations must travel side by side, neither interfering with the other’s way of life. The Treaty of Niagara covenant chain, between the British and the Anishinaabe, expresses an ongoing relationship that must be tended to and renewed. Relationships between peoples need consistent nourishment, in the same way that the chain must be polished from time to time. The Dish with One Spoon wampum belt, initially between the Anishinaabe and Haudenosaunee, eloquently expresses an ethic of mutual caring and sharing for the territories around the Great Lakes. When the dish is passed around, each party takes only what they need, ensuring that there is ample abundance for all. And there are no knives at the table.

The Law Union of Ontario stands against white supremacy and colonialism, and we strive to, however imperfectly, honour our relationships with grassroots Indigenous organizations that share these goals by, for example, redistributing funds, supporting direct actions and demonstrations, and amplifying messaging and events in our communications. We aim to work in solidarity with grassroots partners like No More Silence who are caring for their communities and working to upend colonization.

We recognize that our efforts are imperfect, and that we participate in and benefit from the ongoing harm of colonization. We commit to an ongoing process of learning, accountable action, and solidarity with Indigenous-led struggles for justice, sovereignty, and decolonization.

The Law Union offers these words in humility and is committed to the process of learning and strengthening our praxis around the struggle for decolonization.

**REVOLUTIONARY ADVOCACY:
LAW UNION OF ONTARIO 50th ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE**

AGENDA

October 18, 2024

Venue: St. Paul's on Bloor, 227 Bloor St E., Toronto

See it on Google Maps: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/cm8sRjLqXcxs4hto8>

6:30 PM	REGISTRATION
7:00 PM	OPENING REMARKS <i>Vilko Zbogar</i>
7:05 PM	TRADITIONAL OPENING <i>Loretta Watetch</i>
7:10 PM	LOOKING BACK: 50 YEARS OF THE LAW UNION <i>Barbara Jackman, Alec Farquhar, Brian Iler, introduction by Mike Leitold</i>
7:30 PM	KEYNOTE: REVOLUTIONARY ADVOCACY <i>Harsha Walia and Irina Cerić, introduction by Mike Leitold</i> CPD: Keynote is accredited for 20 minutes of EDI Professionalism Content
8:45 PM	CLOSING REMARKS <i>Vilko Zbogar</i>

PRIVACY NOTICE:

To protect the privacy of Conference attendees, **unauthorized video and audio recording is not permitted.** Persons who fail to respect this request may be asked to leave.

Note: The Law Union will post recordings of the panels online following the Conference.

October 19, 2024

Venue: Alumni Hall at Victoria College, 91 Charles St W., Toronto

See it on Google Maps: <https://maps.app.goo.gl/xHNLEnHY2ZQNhabx8>

	ROOM VC-101	ROOM VC-115
9:30 AM	BREAKFAST & REGISTRATION	
10:00 AM	<p>Housing Justice Now!</p> <p><i>Jen Danch, Sharlene Henry, Kyle Warwick, & Thorncliffe Park tenants</i> Moderator: <i>Sima Atri</i></p> <p>CPD: 40 min EDI Professionalism</p>	<p>Organizing for Power: Labour Notes from the Union Movement</p> <p><i>Melissa Bayon, Simran Dhunna, & Munib Sajjad</i> Moderator: <i>Jesse Gutman</i></p> <p>CPD: 45 min EDI Professionalism</p>
11:10 AM	BREAK	
11:20 AM	<p>Policing and Protests</p> <p><i>Dalia Awwad, Jack Gemmell, Alok Mukherjee & John Sewell</i> Moderator: <i>Howard Morton</i></p> <p>CPD: 30 min EDI Professionalism</p>	<p>Voting Rights: Strategies for Revitalizing Democracy</p> <p><i>Cristine Davies, Sarah Jama, & Nicolas Rouleau</i> Moderator: <i>Mae Nam</i></p> <p>CPD: 40 min EDI Professionalism</p>
12:30 PM	LUNCH	
1:30 pm	<p>Climate Justice and Movement Lawyering: <i>Mathur</i> and Beyond</p> <p><i>Christopher Campbell Durufle, Esentsei Staats-Pangowish, & Fraser Thompson</i> Moderator: <i>Vibhu Sharma</i></p> <p>CPD: 40 min EDI Professionalism</p>	<p>Modern Slavery in Canada: Migrant Workers Fight Back!</p> <p><i>Louis Century, Taneeta Doma, Chris Ramsaroop & Visanthi Venkatesh</i> Moderator: <i>Shane Martinez</i></p> <p>CPD: 70 min EDI Professionalism</p>

	LOBBY	ROOM VC-101	ROOM VC-112
2:40 pm	NETWORKING BREAK		
2:45 pm	CONVERSATION CIRCLES Feel welcome to join guided conversations about Policing or Movement Defence during the break	MOVEMENT & MINDFULNESS <i>Vibhu Sharma, Kendall Yamagishi</i> CPD: 15 min Professionalism	STUDENT SESSION <i>Moderator: Mariam Saleh</i>

	ROOM VC-112
3:30 pm	PLENARY: Government Accountability: Challenging Canadian Complicity in Rights Abuses <i>Meaghan Daniel, Hammam Farah, Shane Martinez, James Yap,</i> <i>Moderator: Rachel Small</i> CPD: Accredited for 70 min EDI Professionalism
4:40 pm	CLOSING: Revolutionary Advocacy: The Next 50 Years <i>Vibhu Sharma, Kendall Yamagishi, & Mariam Saleh</i>
5:00 pm	END
6:00 pm	Social event at Free Times Cafe, 320 College St., Toronto

Looking Back: 50 Years of the Law Union

Friday Oct. 18, 2024, 7:00 p.m. at St. Paul's Bloor St

The Law Union of Ontario is celebrating its 50th anniversary this year. Some of the legal minds behind the formation and growth of the Law Union reflect on the meaning of revolutionary advocacy then and now, and on how the Law Union has been a force for justice over the years.

Alec Farquhar is a lawyer and currently Co-Lead, Engagement, for Inclusive Design for Employment Access – Social Innovation Laboratory and a member of the steering committee for Disability and Work Canada. He is also Coordinator of Asbestos Free Canada. Alec is a member of the executive of the OBA Workers' Compensation Section. Previously, Alec was Director of the Office of the Worker Adviser (OWA), an agency of the Ontario Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development (MLITSD) which advises and represents non-union workers in their workers' compensation and occupational health and safety claims and appeals. Alec came to the OWA from the Occupational Health Clinics for Ontario Workers where he was Managing Director, and before that from the MLITSD where he was the Director of the Occupational Health and Safety Branch. Alec has extensive experience in both workers' compensation and occupational health and safety. This includes major involvement with adjudicative tribunals and access to justice. He has a long history of working with vulnerable worker communities including immigrant workers, women and young workers. He has also worked extensively on labour/employer partnerships around dispute resolution, health and safety and employment and the employment and inclusion of workers with disabilities. Alec was an early member of the Law Union and served on the Steering Committee for a number of years including the Harris years. A graduate of Princeton University, Alec has an L.L.B. from the University of Toronto Faculty of Law.

Brian Iler was a founder at the second founding of the Law Union in 1974. He has practised law for the past fifty years, focussing on advising co-operatives, non-profits and charities. He's been the recipient of numerous awards including the Ontario Bar Association's John Hodgson Award for his leadership, development of the law and service in the charitable arena. He is a founder of the Toronto law firm Iler Campbell, Toronto Renewable Energy Co-op, SolarShare, NoJetsTO, Parks not Planes, Tapestry Community Capital and Hugh's Room Live. He developed the community bond model that was used to assist Centre for Social Innovation acquiring its properties in downtown Toronto. The model is now used by many organizations to raise funds from their communities, often with the assistance of Tapestry Community Capital.

Barbara Jackman, LLB (UofToronto), senior counsel Jackman & Associates, specializes in immigration, refugee and national security law. From the outset of her practice, she has worked with many immigrant communities to advance human rights protections for non-citizens, arguing precedent setting cases in the Supreme Court, from *Singh v MEI*, [1985] S.C.J. No. 11 which recognized that Charter rights could be claimed by non-citizens, to more recent appeals *Chhina* 2019 SCC 29, recognizing that non-citizens could access habeas corpus to challenge their detention and *Valilov v MCI* 2019 SCC 65, addressing the standard of review of administrative tribunals. She has been recognized for her work, including honorary doctorates (Law Society of Ontario 2007, Universities of Windsor 2010, Ottawa 2016, and Toronto 2023), and the Order of Canada (member 2019).

Introductory remarks by:

Vilko Zbogar is the principal of Zbogar Advocate Professional Corporation, a law practice dedicated to strategic advocacy in matters involving state and institutional misconduct, human rights including Indigenous rights, constitutional and Charter issues, representation of non-profit organizations, and other litigation and administrative law matters. He has represented numerous victims of police misconduct, and was counsel for the family of Brian Sinclair, an indigent, disabled Indigenous man who died in a Winnipeg hospital emergency room after being ignored by medical staff for 34 hours. Previously, Vilko was an associate with Orkin Barristers and with Klippensteins, where he was part of the legal team representing the estate and family of Dudley George. Vilko is the lead author of the Post-G20 Action Guide. In 2005, he received the Advocates' Society Arlene Goss Young Advocates' Award. He has served as a member of the Steering Committee of the Law Union of Ontario for many years.

Loretta Watetch is Plains Cree from the Piapot First Nation in Treaty 4 Saskatchewan. She is a grandmother of 4, and great grandmother of 1. Loretta has been with the traditions for a long time. She started to follow the sacred ways at a young age. She has been at Aboriginal Legal Services for 6yrs.

Mike Leitold is a sole practitioner criminal defence lawyer, actively involved with the Law Union of Ontario and other social justice initiatives. He attended Osgoode Hall Law School and articulated with the late Charles Roach. Originally from Nova Scotia, he lives in Toronto with his daughter.

Keynote address: REVOLUTIONARY ADVOCACY

Friday Oct. 18, 2024, 7:00 p.m. at St. Paul's Bloor St

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... how revolutionary and transformative change can emerge from grassroots people's struggles, both within the legal setting and broader community organizing. Reflecting on their decades of work with various social justice organizations and movements, Irina and Harsha will share their thoughts on the limits and opportunities provided by legal work, and how lawyers and other legal professionals can best support oppressed people's movements for justice.

Irina Cerić (she/her) is an Assistant Professor at the University of Windsor Faculty of Law and a Board Member of the Community Justice Collective. Her academic research lies in the intersection of law and social movements, with a particular focus on the regulation and criminalization of dissent by movements for social and environmental justice and Indigenous sovereignty. Irina is also a longtime community activist and legal support organizer and educator, having worked with movements in Canada and the US since the late 1990s. Prior to shifting into full-time teaching, Irina practiced criminal and clinical law in Toronto and Vancouver.

Harsha Walia is a South Asian activist and writer based in Vancouver, unceded Coast Salish Territories. She has been involved in community-based grassroots migrant justice, feminist, anti-racist, Indigenous solidarity, anti-capitalist, Palestinian liberation, and anti-imperialist movements, including No One is Illegal and Women's Memorial March Committee. She is formally trained in law, works with women in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, and is the author of *Undoing Border Imperialism* (2013).

Housing Justice Now

Saturday Oct. 19, 2024, 10:00 a.m. at Victoria College, Alumni Hall, Room VC-101

CPD: Accredited for 45 minutes of EDI Professionalism Content by the Law Society of Ontario

The housing crisis is a real and pressing issue for people. Tenants are fighting evictions and poor housing conditions through organizing and rent strikes, those who are unhoused and without adequate shelter are defending encampments where safety and community can be autonomously built, and more broadly, the struggle for social housing is being renewed and strengthened, all in a time of an acute lack of affordable housing and shelter for many in our communities. On this panel, we will come together to discuss and learn how progressive lawyers and legal workers can play a role in furthering these struggles, with representatives from various organizations working on the issues around Toronto and Ontario.

Sima Atri (moderator) is a lawyer and organizer with experience working in Toronto, and the US alongside movements fighting worker exploitation, unjust immigration systems, and state violence by police and the broader criminal legal system. In Toronto, she worked for a human rights law firm, and as Criminal Duty Counsel, before starting CJC (Community Justice Collective) at the start of the pandemic.

Jennifer Danch is a lawyer at Swadron Associates where her practice includes human rights, mental health, policing, and representing victims of sexualized violence. In 2023, she acted for the Mental Health Legal Committee as part of the amicus curiae team representing the interests of encampment residents in successful constitutional challenges against evictions in the Region of Waterloo and the City of Kingston. This past year, she represented the family of the late Attila Csanyi in a Coroner's Inquest. Attila was a young Romani man from Hamilton, Ontario who died of a drug overdose after being unlawfully evicted from a Residential Care Facility (RCF) at the beginning of the COVID-10 pandemic. The 21 jury recommendations call for enhanced tenant protections for residents living in RCFs across the province.

Sharlene Henry is the Co-Chair of the York-South Weston Tenant Union. YSWTU is a group of tenant associations that came together in their community as a way to help tenants in York South Weston. YSWTU educates, organizes and advocates for tenants. Sharlene Henry has lived in York South Weston for over 30 years. Sharlene is a mother of three young children, an auto worker by day and a community activist who believes that everyone has the right to fair and affordable housing that meets the needs of their individual family. In June of 2023, tenants at 33 King Street, where Sharlene has lived for 20 years launched a Rent Strike with over 100 tenants participating. By October 2023 the York South Weston tenant Union had four buildings on Rent Strike. Tenants in the YSWTU have become empowered to advocate for a fair and decent place to live with their loved ones.

Kyle Warwick is a lawyer at Downsview Community Legal Services. Kyle is from Vancouver and graduated from UBC in 2013 with a degree in political science. Kyle attended Osgoode Hall Law School and worked as a Division Leader in Administrative Law in 2015-2016, where he caught the 'legal clinic bug'. Throughout his time in law school, Kyle also worked at York Region Community Legal Services and West Toronto Community Legal Services. Kyle articulated at the Workers' Health and Safety Legal Clinic and now sits on the Board of

Directors for this clinic. Kyle has practiced housing law, with a focus on eviction prevention, since he was called to the bar in 2018.

Thornccliffe Tenants, Sameer Beyan and Khalil Aldroubi, are both tenants at 71, 75, and 79 Thornccliffe Park Drive and they have both been on rent strike with neighbours at the buildings since May 2023.

Please consider following the tenants on Twitter/X: @tparktenants and support their movement at <https://www.gofundme.com/f/thornccliffe-park-tenants-rent-strike-fund>

Organizing for Power: Labour Notes from the Union Movement

Saturday Oct. 19, 2024, 10:00 a.m. at Victoria College, Alumni Hall, Room VC-115

CPD: Accredited for 45 minutes of EDI Professionalism Content by the Law Society of Ontario.

Organizing for Power (O4P) is a new philosophy of labour and community organizing. Movement and revolutionary legal workers and allies should be aware of this new methodology, and consider how to provide supports.

O4P is “based on the radical notion that, to win the changes this world needs, we need to get a whole lot better at talking to – and organizing with – people who don’t already agree with us.”

It is premised on the notions that: “The world is burning, new and old conflicts are intensifying by the day, and the rich are getting richer than ever off the backs of an increasingly exploited global working class. For working people, the challenge is to use the strength of our numbers, to build majority-led disciplined structures that come together around shared goals and win the campaigns that we launch.”

This panel will feature labour and community organizers discussing how O4P is being used in Ontario and present organizing challenges in our communities. Further, a central issue in the discussion will be a consideration of the ways in which legal workers can effectively and authentically plug into these efforts.

Melisa Bayon coordinates organizing at OPSEU. She brings fifteen years of organizing experience across North America in precarious sectors such as hotels, food service, casinos, and homecare. She believes in building power by bringing people together through on-the-ground and digital organizing in local

communities. Melisa immigrated to Canada with her siblings and single mom from Argentina at a young age. Their struggles motivated her to fight for justice.

Simran Dhunna is a labour organizer who is active with the Naujawan Support Network (NSN), a Brampton-based organization of international students and immigrant workers confronting exploiters (employers, colleges, governments) through independent and collective direct action.

Jesse Gutman (moderator) is a union-side labour lawyer practicing in Toronto.

Munib Sajjad is an organizer at the OSSTF. He has a long history organizing and activism in the labour and student movements, particularly focusing on education environments.

Critical Perspectives on Police Repression of Protests

Saturday Oct. 19, 2024, 11:20 a.m. at Victoria College, Alumni Hall, Room VC-101

CPD: This panel is accredited for 30 minutes of EDI Professionalism Content with the Law Society of Ontario.

The Policing Committee will conduct a panel discussion on policing at protests and demonstrations.

A focus will be on the Toronto Police Service policing at the ongoing Gaza demonstrations and protests. The role of the Toronto Police Service Board in governing and directing its police service in terms of policy, operational guidelines informed by policy, and a prescribed mandate will be discussed. The mandate should make specific reference to the Canadian Charter of Rights, the Ontario Human Rights Code, and the Criminal Code of Canada.

Specific topics will include: the existing TPS directive which makes no mention of the Charter. The role of racial profiling, anti-Palestinian bias, the exercise of discretion based on equitable principles and the historical significance of demonstrations and protests in achieving the fundamental rights and freedoms we now enjoy.

In addition to the Gaza protests the panel will also discuss the manner in which the G20 protests and the Freedom Convoy demonstrations were policed.

Dalia Awwad is a Palestinian organizer based in Toronto. She is a member of the Legal Support Committee, a group of grassroots community organizers dedicated to supporting individuals who have faced criminalization at the hands of the state while protesting for an end to the genocide and ethnic cleansing of Palestinians in the last year.

Jack Gemmell has been a member of the Law Union since law school. He was called to the bar in 1979 and practiced criminal law for 19 years. During that time he was active in police reform primarily through Citizens Independent Review of Police Activities (CIRPA), which included pursuing complaints about the interrogation techniques used by the Toronto Hold-Up Squad. From 1998 to 2014, he was general counsel for a development stage pharmaceutical company and left it after its lead drug failed its Phase 3 clinical trials to return to his first love, criminal law and human rights. He has helped draft briefs on behalf of the Law Union on Bill C-51 (Anti-Terrorism Act, 2015) and Bill C-59 (National Security Act, 2017) and to the Tulloch Commission on Police Oversight and the SIU and on behalf of the Policing Committee to the Toronto and Peel Police Services Board on such issues as a Board's authority to make policies governing police operations such as carding, the police budget, use of force, deployment of Artificial Intelligence technologies, the routine use of the ETF to carry out searches, the de-tasking of the police in dealing with mental health crises and Board and police policies concerning the policing of protests and demonstrations, among the many issues that have arisen in policing.

Howard Morton (moderator) is a former prosecutor and Director of the Crown Law Office -Criminal, Ministry of the Attorney General, Ontario. He also was the Director of the Special Investigations Unit which investigated and laid criminal charges arising from police interactions with the public which resulted in death or serious bodily harm. In 1995 he finally realized on which side of the Law the better angels reside and converted to practise as a defence counsel which he continues. He is a member of the Policing Committee of the Law Union.

Alok Mukherjee is an author, blogger, commentator, educator, activist and public intellectual. He was, most recently, a Distinguished Visiting Professor in the Faculty of Arts at Ryerson University (re-named Toronto Metropolitan University), Toronto. He has served as Chair of the Toronto Police Services Board (2005-2015); Acting Chief Commissioner and Vice Chair of the Ontario Human Rights Commission (1992-1994); and Member of the Ontario Civilian Commission on Police Services (now called Ontario Civilian Police Commission) (1994-1997). Mukherjee is a regular contributor to the Canadian media on issues of policing, justice, anti-racism, human rights, equity and inclusion. His book, *Excessive Force: Toronto's Fight to Reform City Policing* (with Tim Harper; 2018), was shortlisted for the 2018 Donner Prize for the best book on public policy by a Canadian.

John Sewell was a member of Toronto City Council from 1969 to 1984, and was Mayor of Toronto 1979 – 80. He has engaged in politics in Toronto as a community activist, city councillor, journalist, writer, housing administrator, and social entrepreneur. He has authored a dozen books, most recently, 'How We Changed Toronto: the inside story of twelve creative, tumultuous years of civic life, 1969 to 1980', and in September 2021, 'Crisis in Canada's Policing: why change is so hard, and how we can get real reform in our police forces.' He has co-ordinated the Toronto Police Accountability Coalition for the past twenty-four years, and is a co-founder of Ban Ads for Gambling. He was awarded the Order of Canada in 2005.

Voting Rights in Canada

Saturday Oct. 19, 2024, 11:20 a.m. at Victoria College, Alumni Hall, Room VC-115

CPD: Accredited for 40 minutes of EDI Professionalism Content by the Law Society of Ontario.

A review of historical and recent Charter cases on voting rights to track the evolution of political rights of Canadians – which include broader rights of effective representation and meaningful political participation. How inclusive and participatory are they? What is the future of voting rights in Canada to create a vibrant democracy? Pressing issues in Canada include an ongoing legal challenge on the present electoral system, the pending Supreme Court’s decision on third-party spending and issues on representation of women and minorities.

Christine Davies is a partner with Goldblatt Partners LLP. She has a broad labour and civil litigation practice, which has included providing advice about election finance matters for unions and progressive organizations. Christine was counsel in the challenges to Bill 5 (City of Toronto) and Bill 307 (Ontario EFA third party political advertising).

Sarah Jama is an Independent Member of Provincial Parliament for Hamilton Centre. Jama's community work spans over a decade in Ontario and beyond, and includes running intersectional leadership, education, and civic engagement programming for youth, starting grassroots organizations for different social inequities, including food insecurity programming, and championing anti-oppression initiatives in her communities. Prior to being elected, Jama was a sessional faculty member at McMaster University, and the Executive Director at the Disability Justice Network of Ontario.

A well-known changemaker, Jama amplifies and creates spaces for young people by promoting skill building, knowledge sharing, and introductions to community organizing.

As a Member of Provincial Parliament, Sarah Jama brings her grassroots organizing experience and deeply rooted connections in community to Queen’s Park to provide platforms for disenfranchised folks who are often dismissed. She encourages them to share their experiences, suggestions, and grievances on a Provincial level.

Mae Nam (moderator), is a tenacious and empathic advocate with a special interest in workers’ rights, the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, and international human rights. Mae represents union clients and employees in matters related to labour and employment law, professional regulation, human rights, judicial review, and public interest litigation including Charter challenge applications. Mae joined Ryder Wright as an associate in 2017 and became a named partner of the firm in 2022.

Mae has appeared at all levels of court in Ontario, including the Supreme Court of Canada. In 2023, Mae was co-counsel with David Wright and Rebecca Jones on the landmark Ontario Court of Appeal decision striking down Bill 124, a law that limited wage increases to 1% for Ontario public sector and broader public sector workers for three consecutive years. Mae has also made submissions on multiple occasions before the

Supreme Court of Canada on the persuasive power of international human rights law in understanding freedom of association and the right to vote as protected by the Charter.

Prior to coming to Ryder Wright, Mae worked in-house at unions where she represented health care workers and Ontario Public Service employees for several years, after articling at a prominent union-side law firm.

While in law school, Mae won numerous scholarships and prizes in recognition of her academic achievement and advocacy in her community, including a YWCA Woman of Distinction Award. She was also a union member organizer, contributing to the successful certification of two large bargaining units of precarious workers at McGill University.

Prior to her legal studies, Mae was a community organizer with temporary foreign workers, co-founding a community and advocacy center for Philippine migrant workers and their families.

The daughter of migrant workers, Mae brings to her practice a deep seated commitment to social justice and workers' rights stemming from her lived experiences as a low wage worker and community and union organizer. She is particularly skilled in handling politically sensitive matters and prides herself in achieving creative solutions for her clients.

Nicolas Rouleau is an appellate and constitutional lawyer. He frequently argues criminal, civil, and constitutional appeals before the Supreme Court of Canada, the Court of Appeal for Ontario, other provincial courts of appeal, and the Federal Court of Appeal. He also provides advice and opinions on complex or novel legal matters. He was called to the Bar in 2007.

Other lawyers regularly seek out Nicolas to prepare and argue their appeals, their applications for leave to appeal to the Supreme Court of Canada, their constitutional motions at trial, and their judicial reviews. He is highly regarded for his clear and persuasive advocacy and writing, particularly on the most difficult cases. He reviews potential Supreme Court of Canada cases for Pro Bono Law Ontario's Supreme Court Leave to Appeal Assistance Project. In 2018-2019, he also served as the Director of Research for the Long-Term Care Homes Public Inquiry.

Prior to starting his own practice, Nicolas clerked for the Honourable Justice Marie Deschamps at the Supreme Court of Canada. He holds a Master of the Science of Law (JSM) from Stanford University and an LL.B. magna cum laude from the French Common Law Program at the University of Ottawa. He has also studied at the University of Toronto, where he is currently the co-chair of the Monday Club as well as a mentor at Massey College. He has received numerous academic scholarships, published on constitutional law and legal philosophy, and presented at several conferences. He frequently appears on Radio-Canada and CBC, and has hosted Toronto's popular interdisciplinary lecture series: The Treehouse Talks.

In addition to his Canadian legal practice, Nicolas advises the Minister Responsible for Francophone Affairs in Ontario as a member of her Provincial Advisory Committee and sits on the Board of Directors of the Canadian International Council. He previously lived for a few years in India and West Africa, where he worked on international development and taught law. He continues to consult internationally on issues of law, democracy, and development.

Climate Justice and Movement Lawyering: *Mathur* and Beyond

Saturday Oct. 19, 2024, 1:30 p.m. at Victoria College, Alumni Hall, Room VC-101

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What actions are Canadians taking and how have they organized themselves to address climate change? What are the ways in which Canadians are impacted by climate change, especially indigenous peoples and diverse populations? How are governments and courts looking at this issue? This panel explores activism, power and privilege, the value of diversity and inclusion in climate justice, impacts of international law and movements, progressive lawyering and cases at home and abroad, and interactions of Indigenous law and the Charter of Rights with climate justice.

Christopher Campbell-Durufié's work focuses on the role of international law in responding to some of the most pressing challenges of our time. He has published on the negotiation of the 2015 Paris Agreement on climate change, appeared before the Senate during the study of the *Canadian Net-Zero Emissions Accountability Act*, and supported discrimination and Indigenous rights litigation within the Inter-American system. His current book project develops a framework of state accountability to analyze the strengths, weaknesses, and gaps of the *Paris Agreement's* implementation mechanisms.

Prior to joining the Lincoln Alexander School of Law, Campbell-Durufié was a Banting Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Cambridge. He remains affiliated as Fellow of the Cambridge Centre for Environment, Energy and Natural Resource Governance (C-EENRG) and member of the [C-EENRG Research Series](#) editorial team. He completed his doctorate at the University of Toronto, during which he attended five rounds of United Nations climate negotiations and volunteered for the delegation of Burkina Faso. His research was funded, among others, by the Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation and a Joseph-Armand Bombardier Canada Graduate Scholarship.

A graduate of McGill University and the University of Notre Dame, Campbell-Durufié clerked for the former Chief Justice of the Quebec Court of Appeal (J.J. Michel Robert) and worked at the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights in Washington, D.C. and for Lawyers Without Borders Canada in Colombia. He serves on the legal committee of the [Centre québécois du droit de l'environnement](#), was a judge at the Inter-American Human Rights Moot Court Competition and provided strategic litigation training in Guatemala, Honduras, and Jamaica. His profile is part of the Human Rights Defenders exhibit at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights in Winnipeg.

Vibhu Sharma (moderator), is a Toronto based lawyer with a focus on civil litigation, public law and commercial law. Her work often includes cross-border and international law issues. She is currently involved in various projects at the Law Union of Ontario and the Canadian Lawyers for International Human Rights (CLAIHR).

Esentsei Staats Pangowish is a citizen of two great sovereign confederacies, Haudenosaunee Confederacy and Three Fires Confederacy. She made history by being the first Indigenous student to graduate with a Master of Laws degree (U Windsor). She is now pursuing her PhD at Osgoode Hall Law School.

Fraser Thompson's work focuses on climate change and opposing fossil fuel development. He has led Ecojustice's case development work and implementation of the *Mathur* litigation, a groundbreaking constitutional challenge to the Ontario government's climate change targets brought on behalf of seven youth litigants. *Mathur* is the first case to be heard on whether government contributions to the climate crisis violate rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Fraser also leads Ecojustice's work in opposing the mining, transportation and export of coal – one of the dirtiest fossil fuels. This has included representing impacted communities to stop the development of thermal coal export facility in Surrey BC, representing the Indigenous-led opposition to coal mine expansions in Alberta and BC, and law reform projects to phase out thermal coal mining, use and export.

He is passionate about infusing the law with environmental justice through litigation and law reform. Prior to becoming a lawyer, he was involved in various environmental and social justice organizations and when he's not at work he enjoys dancing, running, singing, playing and connecting with dogs and other humans, and being in nature.

Modern Slavery in Canada: Migrant Workers Fight Back

Saturday Oct. 19, 2024, 1:30 p.m. at Victoria College, Alumni Hall, Room VC-115

CPD: Accredited for 70 minutes of EDI Professionalism Content by the Law Society of Ontario.

Canada's economy relies heavily on the labour of migrant workers, especially in the agricultural sector. This workforce is comprised almost entirely of Hispanic, Black, and Indo-Caribbean workers. The United Nations Special Rapporteur on contemporary forms of slavery has reported that Canada's temporary foreign worker programs "constitute a breeding ground for contemporary forms of slavery." Migrant workers are packed in rural bunkhouses, separated from their families and tied to a single employer through a work-permit system that leaves them vulnerable to abuse. Meanwhile, they are ineligible for Employment Insurance benefits despite paying the premiums. These racialized workers make our agricultural industry viable, yet Canada treats them as disposable and unworthy of basic health and safety protections or employment standards.

The panel will discuss the efforts underway to raise public awareness and change Canada's racist policies, a proposed groundbreaking \$500 million class action is seeking redress for the victims of these policies, and the challenges with breaking Canada's 80 year addiction to racial exploitation.

Louis Century is a civil litigator at Goldblatt Partners LLP in Toronto. First and foremost, Louis is an advocate for workers. He represents employees who have lost their jobs or faced discrimination in the workplace. He also represents large groups of employees seeking unpaid overtime and other compensation in class action lawsuits. Louis frequently represents individuals seeking accountability for state misconduct. His diverse litigation practice includes Charter claims, class actions, judicial reviews and appeals, professional regulation, defamation claims and injunctions. He is counsel in *Palmer v Canada*, a proposed class action alleging Charter violations on behalf of migrant agricultural workers. Louis started his legal career as a law clerk for the Honourable Justice Richard Wagner at the Supreme Court of Canada and returned to the Court to represent the Canadian Labour Congress in a leading case on the rights of non-unionized federal employees. Louis taught Foundations of Canadian Law to law students at the University of Toronto. He is also active in the Toronto legal community and serves on the board of Pro Bono Ontario.

Taneeta Doma is an organizer with Justicia/Justice for Migrant Workers and a staff lawyer with the Migrant Farmworker Legal Clinic, which is coordinated by J4MW in collaboration with the University of Windsor Faculty of Law.

Shane Martinez (moderator), is a Toronto-based criminal defence and human rights lawyer who is active with the Canadian branch of the International Centre of Justice for Palestinians. He served as counsel on the first private prosecution of Israeli military recruitment in Canada, and has pursued complaints to the Canada Revenue Agency regarding the funneling of charitable donations to the Israeli military. Shane's work also includes defending individuals who are criminalized because of their participation in Palestine solidarity protests.

Chris Ramsaroop is working to complete his PhD at OISE/University of Toronto. His area of research examines the role of resistance by migrant farm workers in Canada. Chris is also an organizer with Justicia for Migrant Workers. He is also an instructor in the Caribbean Studies Program at the University of Toronto and Co-Director of the Migrant Farm Worker Legal Clinic at the University of Windsor, Faculty of Law. Recently he has joined the Advisory Group for the IPES (International Panel of Experts on Sustainable Food Systems -Food report on Labour, Migration & Food Systems. Justicia for Migrant Workers is a grassroots activist collective that has been organizing with migrant workers for nearly 20 years. Justicia's work is based on building long-term trust and relationships with migrant workers and includes engaging in direct actions, working with workers to resist at work, launching precedent-setting legal cases, and organizing numerous collective actions. He is also on the executive of the Asian Canadian Labour Alliance. He Previously served on the Board of the Food Chain Workers Alliance and is former Coordinator of the Community Engaged Learning Program at New College, U of T. Chris has written extensively on the issue of migrant labour. His opinion pieces have been featured in the Toronto Star, Globe and Mail, CBC, Briarpatch, Canadian Dimension, Windsor Star, Hamilton Spectator, Starbroek News, and the Jamaica Gleaner. In 2016, The Globe and Mail named Chris, one of the '53 Most Influential People in Canadian Food.'

Visanthi Vinkatesh is Associate Professor in Law, Land, and Local Economies at the University of Windsor, Faculty of Law. Her research focuses on labour migration, immigration and citizenship law, law and social movements, racialisation and discrimination, and comparative law. Her expertise lies in the interdisciplinary study of law within its political, economic, global, and historical contexts. It is informed by critical class, race, and anti-colonial scholarship and uses empirical (qualitative and quantitative), comparative, and historical methods. Her research examines how power and privilege is produced in legal doctrines and systems and also how macro-level transnational phenomena (geopolitics, world economy, migration, neocolonialism) impact material realities at the community level; and importantly, how community-level acts of resistance can help to reimagine novel legal and political formations. She has received several grants for her research

including from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Law Foundation of Ontario, and the US National Science Foundation (NSF).

Professor Venkatesh has a PhD from the Jurisprudence and Social Policy Program at University of Berkeley, where her dissertation used a comparative socio-legal approach to theorize how law is made and used by migrant workers and their advocates in several countries. She also holds a JD from the University of Toronto, an MA in Law and Diplomacy from the Fletcher School at Tufts University, and has an MS and a BS degree. She has written articles on migrant and racial justice movements, labour migration, gender violence and global law reform, coloniality of power and the Global South (including on citizenship laws in South Asia and the Dalit Radical Tradition) and legal epistemologies "from below".

With Justicia for Migrant Workers in Ontario, she administers the Migrant Farmworkers Clinic funded by the Law Foundation of Ontario, the first legal clinic for migrant farm workers in Canada, which is based on law and organising principles. She was appointed as a member of the Leadership Committee on Equitable Livelihoods in the UN Food Systems Summit (UNFSS) 2021 based on her expertise in migrant and labour rights of food system workers. She is the Chair of the Board of Directors of IAVGO, a workers compensation legal clinic that is organised as a collective.

Prior to pursuing her PhD, Vasanthi ran a sole legal practice and consultancy in Toronto specializing in refugee rights litigation with a focus on women and LGBTQ+ claimants and has also worked in a litigation firm. In addition, she has worked and continues to work with a variety of activist, grassroots, and human rights organizations globally and in Canada including the Justicia for Migrant Workers in Ontario, African-Canadian Women's Human Rights Project, Alliance for a Secular and Democratic South Asia, Occupational Health and Safety Centre in India, People Against Torture in Kenya, and Centre on Housing Rights and Evictions in Thailand.

Networking break activities

Saturday Oct. 19, 2024, 2:45 p.m.

During the afternoon networking break, feel free to network with colleagues, join an informal conversation about Policing or Movement Defence, connect with other law students and talk about the future of social justice advocacy and the Law Union, or change the pace a little and learn some movement and mindfulness techniques to make any work day feel better.

Conversation Circles (Lobby)

If you are more interested in joining informal conversations about certain topics than in networking, feel welcome to join the guided conversation circles in the lobby. Topics include:

- > Policing (led by Howard Morton - see bio at bottom of program)
- > Movement Defence (led by Mike Leitold - see bio at bottom of program)

Student Session (Room VC-112)

The session aims to provide law students with the space to connect with like-minded progressives. The Law Union is committed to supporting student activism and the session is aimed at hearing students' concerns and feedback for current and future projects.

Moderated by **Mariam Saleh** (see bio at bottom of program (Conference Committee))

Movement and Mindfulness (Room VC-101)

CPD: Accredited for 15 minutes of Professionalism Content by the Law Society of Ontario

What can you do in 30 seconds? What can you do in 5 minutes? Join Vibhu and Kendall, two legal professionals who are definitely not mental health professionals, as they lead you through simple movement exercises and mindfulness practices that you can do to make your work day feel a bit better.

Led by **Vibhu Sharma** and **Kendall Yamagishi** (see bios at bottom of program (Conference Committee))

PLENARY:

Government Accountability – Challenging Canadian Complicity in Rights Abuses at Home and Abroad

Saturday Oct. 19, 2024, 3:30 p.m. at Victoria College, Alumni Hall, Room VC-112

Presented in collaboration with CLAIHR (Canadian Lawyers for International Human Rights)

CPD: Accredited for 70 minutes of EDI Professionalism Content by the Law Society of Ontario

This panel explores Canada's complicity and accountability in relation to human rights violations that are currently ongoing at home and abroad. Key among them include issues related to Israel including the Canada-Israel arms trade, human rights violations by Canadian corporations abroad particularly in the mining industry, violations of the rights and land claims of Indigenous peoples and migrant worker rights in Canada. This panel will explore parallels and points of difference between ongoing harms and strategies to hold the government accountable and to facilitate change for the better.

Meaghan Daniel is a civil lawyer focused on state accountability, with particular expertise in police accountability, prison abolition, state violence and systemic racism facing Indigenous peoples, and constitutional issues. She is also a sessional instructor at McGill, focusing in two areas: litigation strategy in a social justice practice, and the use of Indigenous law in a settler practice. She did graduate study on Indigenous legal traditions in Nishnawbe Aski Nation, and remains committed to spending the time it takes to learn to be a Treaty partner and good relative.

Hammam Farah is a Palestinian Canadian who's lost three relatives and countless family friends in Gaza since October 2023. He hails from Gaza's small Christian community whose members have been sheltering in the churches in Gaza's north. A psychotherapist by profession, Hammam has been working with Gazan patients while trying to navigate his own experience of loss and the emotional impact of genocide. Hammam is also a longtime activist and executive director of the Elham Fund, a nonprofit that delivers medicine and cash transfers to people in Gaza. He has also initiated a lawsuit against Canadian officials responsible for arms sales to the Israeli government.

Shane Martínez is a Toronto-based criminal defence and human rights lawyer who is active with the Canadian branch of the International Centre of Justice for Palestinians. He served as counsel on the first private prosecution of Israeli military recruitment in Canada, and has pursued complaints to the Canada Revenue Agency regarding the funneling of charitable donations to the Israeli military. Shane's work also includes defending individuals who are criminalized because of their participation in Palestine solidarity protests.

Rachel Small (moderator), works as the Canada Organizer for World BEYOND War, a global grassroots organisation and network working to abolish war and the military industrial complex, and is a founding member of the Jews Say No to Genocide Coalition. A longtime organizer with the Mining Injustice Solidarity Network, she has done grassroots organizing within local and international social/environmental justice movements for nearly two decades, with a special focus on working in solidarity with communities harmed by Canadian extractive industry projects.

James Yap is a Toronto-based lawyer specializing in the human rights accountability of multinational business as well as the application of international human rights law in domestic courts. He has been plaintiff's counsel in some of the key Canadian cases in these fields, such as *Nevsun Resources Ltd. v. Araya* and *Toussaint v. Canada*. He is on the Board of Directors of Canadian Lawyers for International Human Rights (CLAHR) and the Canadian Council on International Law (CCIL). He also teaches international human rights law at Osgoode Hall Law School, and his work has been featured on CBC's *Ideas*. James holds a Juris Doctor from Osgoode Hall Law School, where he graduated with various class prizes and the Silver Medal, and a Master of Laws from Yale Law School. After completing his JD he clerked at the Supreme Court of Canada for Justice Ian Binnie.

CLOSING:

Revolutionary Advocacy: The Next 50 Years

Saturday Oct. 19, 2024, 4:40 p.m. at Victoria College, Alumni Hall, Room VC-112

Young advocates reflect on the future of social justice advocacy and the role of the Law Union of Ontario.

Vibhu Sharma, Kendall Yamagishi, & Mariam Saleh (see bios at bottom of program (Conference Committee))

Law Union of Ontario - 2024 Conference Committee

There are many Law Union of Ontario members and volunteers who have spent time to make this happen, key among them include:

Jesse Gutman is a union-side labour lawyer practicing in Toronto, Ontario.

Mike Leitold is a sole practitioner criminal defence lawyer, actively involved with the Law Union of Ontario and other social justice initiatives. He attended Osgoode Hall Law School and articulated with the late Charles Roach. Originally from Nova Scotia, he lives in Toronto with his daughter.

Howard Morton is a former prosecutor and Director of the Crown Law Office -Criminal, Ministry of the Attorney General, Ontario. He also was the Director of the Special Investigations Unit which investigated and laid criminal charges arising from police interactions with the public which resulted in death or serious bodily harm. In 1995 he finally realized on which side of the Law the better angels reside and converted to practice as a defence counsel which he continues. He is a member of the Policing Committee of the Law Union.

Mariam Saleh is a second-year Palestinian student at Lincoln Alexander School of Law. She was inspired to join the Law Union following the increased repression of Palestinian advocacy over the past year. She's currently involved with the legal clinic at Lincoln Alexander, Halton Community Legal Services, the Muslim Legal Support Centre, and Just Peace Advocates.

Vibhu Sharma is a Toronto based lawyer with a focus on civil litigation, public law and commercial law. Her work often includes cross-border and international law issues. She is currently involved in various projects at the Law Union of Ontario and the Canadian Lawyers for International Human Rights (CLAHR).

Kendall Yamagishi (she/her) is a criminal lawyer and sometimes labour lawyer from the prairies. She has been involved with the Law Union of Ontario for over a decade and originally became involved as a student through the Osgoode Hall Law Union. She likes hip-hop dance, crunchy (as opposed to flaky) potato chips, and wasting time on the internet. She does not like soft cheeses or capitalism.

Vilko Zbogar is the principal of Zbogar Advocate Professional Corporation, a law practice dedicated to strategic advocacy in matters involving state and institutional misconduct, human rights including Indigenous rights, constitutional and Charter issues, representation of non-profit organizations, and other litigation and administrative law matters. He has represented numerous victims of police misconduct, and was counsel for the family of Brian Sinclair, an indigent, disabled Indigenous man who died in a Winnipeg hospital emergency room after being ignored by medical staff for 34 hours. Previously, Vilko was an associate with Orkin Barristers and with Klippensteins, Barristers & Solicitors, where he was part of the legal team representing the estate and family members of Dudley George. Vilko is the lead author of the Post-G20 Action Guide. In 2005, he received the Advocates' Society Arlene Goss Young Advocates' Award. He has served as a member of the Steering Committee of the Law Union of Ontario for many years. Vilko received his law degree from the University of Toronto, following a Bachelor of Environmental Studies, Urban and Regional Planning, from the University of Waterloo.

SPECIAL THANKS to: all of the volunteers who have assisted with planning and running the conference; each of the panelists, moderators and organizers; Audrey Huntley; Diana Munoz; Deniz and Amy Slotek; the Steering Committee of the Law Union of Ontario; the Jur-Ed Foundation; Canadian Lawyers for International Human Rights (CLAHR); Canadian Hearing Services; the staff at St. Paul's Bloor St. and Victoria College; the Free Times Cafe; and all of our community members who have made this event special.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF [Peter Rosenthal](#), a long-time member of the Law Union of Ontario, fierce and relentless advocate for social justice, friend and mentor to many. He was sadly taken from us on May 24, 2024, but he has inspired so many, and his legacy will live on!

TO SUPPORT THE ONGOING WORK OF THE LAW UNION OF ONTARIO

Charitable donations to support Legal Education projects, including making Law Union Conferences and other events financially accessible to all, may be made to the **Jur-Ed Foundation**:

<https://www.canadahelps.org/en/charities/jur-ed-foundation/>

The Law Union also supports **No More Silence** which aims to develop an inter/national network to support the work being done by activists, academics, researchers, agencies and communities to stop the murders and disappearances of Indigenous women: <https://itstartswithus-mmiw.com/>

Volunteers are always welcome to join the Law Union of Ontario's Steering Committee (Board of Directors), Conference Committee, Policing Committee, Movement Defence Committee, and other initiatives. To get involved, contact law.union.of.ontario@gmail.com

PRIVACY NOTICE:

To protect the privacy of Conference attendees, **unauthorized video and audio recording is not permitted**. Persons who fail to respect this request may be asked to leave.

Note: The Law Union will post recordings of the panels online following the Conference.