

November 22, 2018

We Will Never Forget. We Will Always Work For Change.

December 6, 1989, is a day that will forever remain engraved in our collective memory. At the École Polytechnique in Montréal, a man shot and killed 14 women because he was opposed to equality and to feminism. That day, twenty-nine years ago, the face of misogyny reared its ugly head in spectacular fashion. It is the single most deadly event in Canadian history.

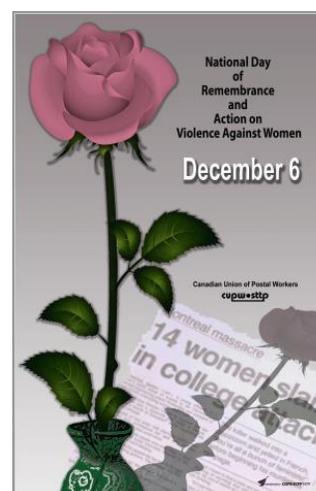
Since that tragic day, **December 6th** has been commemorated. In 1991, a private member's bill was passed unanimously in Parliament to institute the **National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women**. This day is to commemorate the victims of the Polytechnique mass shooting. But also, it serves as a reminder that violence against women, still at high levels in 2018, must be addressed. Canadian flags on all federal buildings fly at half-mast on this date. This is symbolic. What we need is more and different action.

Many things have changed over the last 29 years, but violence against women is not a thing of the past. Statistics Canada revealed in 2014 that a woman is killed by her intimate partner every six days in Canada. It is still estimated that 70% of spousal violence is not reported to the police.

The **#MeToo** movement is a clear testament to the scope and extent of continued violence against women in our society. Indigenous women are still 3.5 times more likely to experience violence than non-Indigenous women. The plea of Indigenous women for

justice is another clear example of the need to continue the struggle. There were 1,181 cases of missing or murdered Aboriginal women in Canada between 1980 and 2012, according to the RCMP. However, according to grassroots organizations and the Minister of the Status of Women, that number is closer to 4,000.

Women must be respected, treated equitably, and provided with a true sense of security. Women must be celebrated for their work, their creativity, their kindness and their care. Our society must take stock of the burden that is placed on women on a daily basis, either because they cannot achieve a work-life balance, because they are relegated to unsuitably-paid positions, because they manage not only their own vulnerabilities but often those of the men in their lives, or because they grapple with intersectional oppression. Our obligation, as trade unionists and workers, is to address these issues, and assist in dismantling the patriarchal system that is responsible for these realities. How can you help to shift our collective consciousness in order to change the culture that has allowed women to be hurt, sick, or to die as a result of an unspoken but pervasive notion that they don't really matter.



In solidarity,

Jan Simpson
1st National Vice-President

Beverly Collins
National Secretary-Treasurer

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