

OPINIONS

Helping stop violence against women

In a fatal moment 10 years ago, the lives of Canadians were changed forever. At that moment in Montreal, on December 6, 1989, the murder of 14 young women studying at l'Ecole Polytechnique left us shocked and searching for answers. We questioned how it could happen here, and why it happened at all.

At first, some said it was a random act of violence — the actions of one madman. But as the story unfolded we discovered that he had singled out women to kill. We learned that it was an extreme act of violence against women, and the motive for this attack was not unique. It was rooted in the same belief system that allows our society to blindly accept the fact that 51 percent of women in Canada have experienced an act of violence in their adult life. It is the same belief system that stands by as more than 80 women in Canada are killed by their male partners every year. It is the same belief system that looks the other way as countless children witness their father's violence against their mother and eventually grow to believe verbal and physical abuse is "normal."

We honour the leadership of women in shelters and rape crisis centres who began working to change this belief system more than 25 years ago. The Montreal massacre fuelled dialogue about violence against women. As public awareness grows, tolerance for violence decreases, and women who are being abused begin to know they are not alone. Such awareness encourages women and men to speak out against violence. December 6 has become Canada's national day of remembrance and action on violence against women. As a society,

it is extremely important that we are choosing to remember instead of trying to forget. We remember so that it may never happen again.

Since that fateful moment in Montreal, more than 5 million moments have passed. We ask you to remember that every moment can be used to make a difference. For the last six years, the Canadian Women's Foundation and the Body Shop Canada have been working together to help STOP violence against women. Thanks to the incredible support of people all across

Canada, we are helping to improve the lives of the women who survive violence, and adding our voices to the critical work to prevent violence against women.

This December 6, we ask all of you to get involved. Take a moment to remember the 14 young women in Montreal and their families. Take a moment to honour all the women who have been killed, whose stories we may not have heard. Take a moment to teach our children that no one has the right to control another person through violence or intimidation. Take a moment to make a personal pledge. Refuse to commit violence. Refuse to tolerate it or condone it. Take a moment to imagine what is possible if we all work together.

Remember that a single moment can change your life forever. Change it for the better. Learn from the past. Look to the future. Live every moment. In the name of love — STOP violence against women.

Beverly Wybrow and Margot Franssen

Hail to The Machine

The other day while I was watching TV, I was surprised to learn how much money Canada spends each year in foreign aid. For a country with such a huge debt and 1.5 million of its children living in poverty, I would say that Canada is pretty generous. What was even more surprising is that most Canadians have come to expect this type of generosity from our government and some say that we should be sending more. However, while we have begun to take this kind of generosity for granted, so have the recipient nations. We have almost developed a user/supplier relationship with these countries.

The way to help them would be to slowly cut their supply, not increase the dosage, but I leave it in the hands of our government. What I really have a problem with are radical, self-righteous Canadians who feel that because life in Canada is so good, we owe something to everyone else in the world whose lives are more difficult than ours. I am in agreement to some extent; however, not one person nor one nation can save the world from the corrupt, diseased governments, the mass epidemics and all the pollution that exist on the globe.

These anti-capitalists should feel privileged to live in Canada, the great True, North, Strong and FREE, where the only reason they are able to curse democracy is because democracy allows it. Let these same people go to China and curse Communism and see where that takes them. We all remember where it got Chinese students in 1989. Rather than pointing to the "I's" that are not dotted and the "T's" that are not crossed, let these people analyze and interpret why Russia, the very symbol of Communism, came running to Capitalism to save herself from death.

Some may argue that there are many successful Socialist countries in Western Europe, but my response is that these countries are only successful because they have introduced democracy to their Socialist governments, adopting democracy's capitalist style economies.

Meanwhile the truly Communist nations of today slowly die along with their people. Arrogant Canadians look to the so called "oligarchy of democracy" with disgust, while good old Castro lives comfortably in the presidential palace with other members of his government. He certainly has come a long

way from the days of extreme poverty — unfortunately he was not able to bring the rest of his country with him. So Canada, the Global Mother, has to invest money and resources into Cuba to compensate for the government's failure. Now, who is living in the illusion?

As a true, blue conservative and a follower of the conservative ideology, I believe that we have an obligation to try to help these nations. But many times the governments of these nations will not even help their own people, and what is our solution then? We send in Multi National Corporations to help the local economies on a domestic level. I know that many of you are gasping at the fact that I used the phrase M.N.C's in the same sentence, but you shouldn't believe everything Ad-Busters and Oxfam tell you.

Try to be an individual. The fact is, more than half of all M.N.C's are legitimate, ethical companies who truly do help the economies of these countries. That is why they are so welcome in the developing world. However, when M.N.C's do start to generate revenues, local government pockets most of it. This means that the workers see almost

none of the money, and we, being the free Canadians we, decide to protest our government for not doing enough.

Democracy may not be perfect, and I know that capitalism definitely is not perfect, but in the words of the great Churchill, "Democracy is the worst form of government except all the others that have been tried."

I even see instances, in Canada, where our civil liberties are sometimes denied, as was the case in British Columbia during the APEC summit. But in spite of all this and everything else that is wrong with our country, we are still ranked number one and have been for six years running out of more than 200. So when you've read this article I ask you to please stop, thank God, or who ever you want (thanks to our liberties as specified in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms) that you live in the most peaceful, democratic country in the world. Then go to the corner and give the Salvation Army Santa a dollar and feel good about yourself.

Arien Gough



BRAINS NEEDED

If you can contribute, come to a meeting.

THE GAZETTE

Suite 312, SUB
494 2507
Meetings at
4:30
every Monday
starting
January 10th

PHOTO OF THE WEEK



"Two dollars away from a gram, two dollars for some marijuana!"

Photo by Neil Blackie