

December 1996

## BREAK THE SILENCE . . .

### **December 6: Day of Commemoration and Action to End Violence Against Women**

December 6 marks the anniversary date of the 1989 Montreal Massacre of 14 young women at the University of Montreal's engineering school, the Polytechnique.

On this day, unions throughout Ontario and across Canada conduct ceremonies and vigils to mourn the victims of violence against women.

The OFL Women's Committee and Health & Safety Committee have developed educational material on workplace violence and work with women's organizations and community groups on an ongoing basis.

Labour activists have organized workshops for stewards to act as advocates for workers affected by domestic violence and workplace harassment.

"Through education, negotiations, anti-harassment policies and procedures, labour is committed to equality and the personal safety of all workers," said Ethel LaValley, Secretary-Treasurer, OFL. "Ending violence against women takes courage, strength and a willingness to listen, change and take action."

## **PAY EQUITY LOBBY UPDATE**

The fight to protect pay equity legislation is having an impact. The Harris government had planned to introduce legislation in the fall. They now seem to be slowing down, with legislation delayed till spring.

With the release of the Read report pay equity activists have quickly responded to protect the gains we have made over the last decade. "Looking at the Tory record on women's and workers rights, we have every

reason to worry what will happen to this Act," stated OFL Secretary-Treasurer in her meeting with Labour Minister Witmer.

The Federation and the Equal Pay Coalition have distributed 5,000 lobby kits to our members and affiliated unions across the province. Activists have been writing, calling and speaking to their local MPPs demanding that the Act not be eroded.

We must keep up the pressure and make the Harris government think twice about eroding Pay Equity. For more information or copies of the lobby kit contact Carrol Anne Sceviour at 1-800-668-9138 ext.670 or (416) 443-7670.

## **1997 CLC WOMEN'S CONFERENCE**

The CLC will be holding their 1997 women's conference on the 1st anniversary of the arrival of the Women's March Against Poverty at Parliament Hill. Women activists from across the country will come together to reflect on our experiences within the labour movement during and since we built this historic event.

The conference will examine the findings and recommendations flowing out of the CLC's Women and Work Project. The Interim Report was presented to convention delegates in May 1996. The final report will be before the CLC Executive Council in the spring.

The Women and Work Project, Anti-Racism Task Force and the Women's March Against Poverty raised important issues for trade unionists. This conference will provide a forum to develop strategies on: How can we best build the participation of women in our unions? How can we enhance the profile of labour among women across the country? How can we develop a favourable climate to promote the unionization of women who are not yet union members?

The conference will be held in Ottawa from June 15 to midday June 18, 1997. The agenda, registration forms and further details will be available early in the new year.

For more information, please contact: The Women's and Human Rights Department Canadian Labour Congress, 2841 Riverside Drive, Ottawa, Ontario, K1V 8X7 or telephone (613) 521-3400.

### ONDP 1997 WOMEN'S CALENDARS AVAILABLE

Each year the ONDP Women's Committee produces a calendar as part of their fund raising activities. The calendar features women from the NDP and labour whose dedication and hard work have helped to build our Party and our movement.

Calendars are available at a cost of \$10 each from Sandra Clifford, ONDP Women's Committee, 15 Gervais Drive, Suite 202, Don Mills, Ontario M3C 1Y8, Tel: (416) 443-7684 or 1-800-668-9138 ext. 684.

### DECEMBER 6TH POSTCARD CAMPAIGN

The CLC December 6th action for 1996 is a postcard campaign. The action builds on the anti-violence demands of the Women's March Against Poverty. The Message is "We took a Stand Against Poverty and Violence in the Lives of Women."

One postcard will be sent to the Prime Minister demanding that the federal government commit \$50 million in core funding to women's services directed against violence, and one card will be a memento for the sender. Postcards can be obtained from the CLC or OFL.

### CHILD POVERTY IN CANADA *Campaign 2000*

Since the Government of Canada declared war on child poverty in 1989, the number of poor children has increased 46%. If these numbers continue to rise, Canada will enter the new millennium with twice as many poor children as in 1989.

The target date set for the elimination of child poverty by the Government of Canada was the year 2000.

Campaign 2000 is a coalition of 18 national partners and a Canada-wide network of 31 community partners working to maintain a strong public focus on government attention to child poverty and to ensure that the initiatives adopted actually reduce and prevent child poverty.

For more information on Campaign 2000 and the 1996 Report Card on child poverty contact: (416) 922-8217 Ext.241 or <http://www.web.net/~rpopham/campaign2000>.

### ILO CHILD LABOUR UPDATE

The International Labour Organization (ILO) doctrine on child labour is clear. Child labour should be abolished. International labour standards reflect that conviction, but observance of those standards needs to be reinforced. While ratifications of child labour standards are set to increase, to date only 49 of ILO's 173 member countries have ratified the Minimum Age Convention, 1973 (No. 138). Of the 49 ratifications, only 21 are from developing countries and none are from Asia, where over half of all working children are to be found.

### ILO OBSERVATIONS & CONCLUSIONS

- Child labour affects millions of children.
- Poverty is the main cause, but not the only cause, of child labour.
- Under no circumstances is poverty an excuse for child labour.
- No single agency can solve the problem of child labour on its own.
- Child labour needs to be confronted by all social activists on all fronts.
- National policy needs to attack both the problem and its causes.

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