

GUN CONTROL IN THE MEDIA

01/12/2014

Press and media coverage of the 25th anniversary of the Polytechnique massacre

Press articles, editorials, interviews, press conferences.

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Political coverage

PETER MACKAY'S COMMENTS ON MONTREAL MASSACRE SET OFF TWITTER FUROR

CBC News, December 4, 2014

With the anniversary of the 1989 Montreal Massacre just days away, Justice Minister Peter MacKay set off a political firestorm on Tuesday afternoon when he told the House of Commons that "we may never understand ... why these women were singled out for this horrific act of violence."

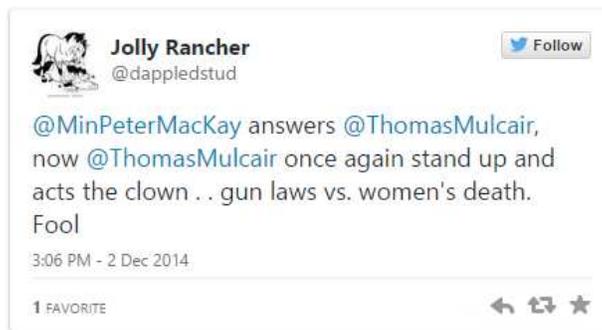
The comment prompted New Democrat Leader Tom Mulcair to make a rare mid-question period intervention to point out to the minister that, thanks to the manifesto penned by shooter Marc Lepine before the attacks, we know why these women were singled out:

"It's because they were women."

MacKay acknowledged Mulcair's point, but said it was "deeply disappointing" for Mulcair "to try to make this a partisan issue on such a day."

Speaking with reporters outside the Chamber, MacKay seemed to suggest that he had been referring to "the insanity and the level of violence" in the attacks, but refused to respond to questions on his comments.

Meanwhile, the exchange was already making the rounds on Twitter, where Mulcair's interpretation seemed to be shared by many of those tuning into to the controversy:



<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/peter-mackay-s-comments-on-Montreal-Massacre-set-off-twitter-furor-1.2858739>

Other similar articles:

- Polytechnique shooting remark sparks Peter MacKay, Tom Mulcair spat (CBC News): <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/Polytechnique-shooting-remark-sparks-peter-mackay-tom-mulcair-spat-1.2858017>
- Peter MacKay's remarks on the cause of the Polytechnique shooting draws rebuke from Tom Mulcair (National Post): <http://news.nationalpost.com/2014/12/03/peter-mackays-remarks-on-the-cause-of-the-Polytechnique-shooting-draws-rebuke-from-tom-mulcair/>

CONSERVATIVE REFORMS TO GUN-LICENSING LAWS WIDELY PANNED

The Globe and Mail, by Josh Wingrove, December 4, 2014

A quarter-century after the École Polytechnique Massacre and in the aftermath of a shooting on Parliament Hill, Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservatives are moving slowly ahead on a divisive proposed law that loosens certain gun-licensing rules – a bill that has angered advocates on both sides of the gun-control debate.

Bill C-42 was tabled in October, two weeks before the Ottawa shooting. This week, the bill prompted a heated exchange in Question Period over gun laws ahead of Saturday's 25th anniversary of the Montreal shooting that left 14 women dead. The bill has also reopened political fault lines dating back to the battle over the scuttled long-gun registry, as the Liberals and NDP oppose C-42's current wording. Amid the controversy, however, the bill is on the back burner – it's not scheduled to resume its progress until the new year, though it is still expected to pass before the next election, one government source said.

Dubbed the Common Sense Firearms Licensing Act, Bill C-42, among other things, eases rules on transporting restricted guns, changes the licensing system, limits the power of chief firearms officers, introduces a six-month amnesty for licence renewals, hands the federal cabinet power to classify guns and bans gun ownership for anyone found guilty of a domestic-violence charge.

It's a complex bill: Mr. Harper, NDP Leader Thomas Mulcair and Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau have all made misleading statements about it since its tabling.

Public Safety Minister Steven Blaney argues the bill does away with “needless paperwork that law-abiding sport shooters were previously required to complete in order to engage in their hobby.”

But the bill nonetheless has critics on both sides of the gun-control debate.

“There is nothing redeemable in the bill,” said Wendy Cukier, president of the Coalition for Gun Control. She says the relaxing of transport rules is among the “very serious measures in terms of taking the next steps in dismantling our [gun-control] legislation.”

Meanwhile, the National Firearms Association says the bill does not go far enough. The NFA opposes both licensing requirements and mandatory training. “While there are aspects of the bill that may be helpful, it's really tinkering with a failed system,” NFA president Sheldon Clare said in an interview, later suggesting the bill seems designed more as a political fundraising effort. “The Conservative bill really isn't a problem-solving bill. It's a pre-election, you know, ‘we're trying to tinker with this and give us some money’ bill.”

Currently, an authorization is required to take any restricted firearm from an owner's home to another location, such as a shooting range. Each location requires a new form, Mr. Blaney told the House of Commons. Bill C-42 would allow owners to transport those restricted guns to any approved location within the gun owner's province. The guns must be unloaded and locked in a case.

The changes ease the paperwork burden but nonetheless allow the guns to move more freely, though the bill spells out where the guns can be taken.

“Imagine if that car were broken into,” Mr. Trudeau told the House of Commons last week, suggesting it would lead to guns being found in grocery-store parking lots, though that is not among the authorized destinations. Mr. Harper stressed that drivers must also still take “the most direct route” when transporting a gun.

Mr. Harper has said the bill requires guns to be kept in a trunk, though it does not. Mr. Mulcair, meanwhile, said the bill would allow the specific gun used in the Montreal Massacre to be more easily transported – a comment made during a sharp Question Period exchange with Justice Minister Peter MacKay. Mr. Mulcair’s staff later acknowledged the transportation rule changes don’t apply to that gun, a Ruger Mini-14 semi-automatic rifle. The bill “has nothing to do with the firearm used during the tragic crime committed at Polytechnique,” argued Jean-Christophe de Le Rue, a spokesman for Mr. Blaney.

The NDP oppose the bill, with MP Randall Garrison saying during early debate that it “is still clearly a child of the gun lobby.” The Liberals like some parts of the bill, but not others, and therefore don’t support its current wording.

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/conservative-reforms-to-gun-licensing-laws-widely-panned/article21965172/>

THOMAS MULCAIR: LONG-GUN REGISTRY WILL BE REVIVED UNDER NDP GOVERNMENT

Huffington Post Politics Canada, by Joan Bryden, December 3, 2014

A New Democrat government would ensure police are able to track every firearm in Canada, but would also seek to avoid the pitfalls that made the now-defunct long-gun registry so controversial, Tom Mulcair said Wednesday.

The NDP leader disputed the Conservative government's contention that gun registration is an unfair, onerous requirement for law-abiding gun owners.

"I have nothing against seeing honest farmers and duck hunters be able to have their weapons," Mulcair said outside an NDP caucus meeting.

"But, you know, that honest hunter who goes out with his pickup truck, it's a registered pickup truck ... the trailer's registered and the 4X4 is registered. Heck, his dog is registered."

New Democrats "have confidence in the ability of farmers and duck hunters to fill out a form," he added. While farmers and hunters are entitled to own firearms, Mulcair suggested there must be strict limits.

"What kind of duck do you hunt with an assault weapon? A pterodactyl?"

There's no reason a system of tracking firearms has to go "overboard," as the Liberals did when they created the costly long-gun registry and imposed criminal penalties for failure to register, Mulcair insisted.

"I think that it is possible to provide the police with the tools to better protect the public and themselves by making sure they're able to follow every gun, and it doesn't have to be the registry as it was before," he said.

"But it does have to be a form that allows the governments, federal and provincial, to keep track of those guns. That's our bottom line."

Nevertheless, an aide later took issue with the assumption that Mulcair was saying an NDP government would reinstate some form of gun registry. A registry is not necessarily the only way to track firearms and the party is currently exploring options, the aide argued.

That careful parsing of Mulcair's comments reflects how politically explosive the notion of gun registration remains, two years after Stephen Harper's Conservative government scrapped the long-gun registry.

The registry divided the country and political party caucuses, including the NDP, along urban-rural lines. Liberal Leader Justin Trudeau reiterated Wednesday that he would not reinstate the gun registry, even in a modified form, because it's simply too divisive.

There are other ways to reduce gun violence, he said, including through the classification of restricted and prohibited firearms and through the requirements imposed on the purchase of firearms.

"Canadians are united in their desire to see less violence with guns across this country," Trudeau said. "We shouldn't be divided on the ways to do that and that's what I'm committed to doing."

The opposition leaders gave their views on the gun registry just three days before the 25th anniversary of the Massacre at Montreal's École Polytechnique, where gunman Marc Lepine killed 14 female students.

http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/12/03/thomas-mulcair-long-gun-registry-2015_n_6263410.html

Other similar article:

- NDP government would revive gun registry, without the flaws: Mulcair (Lethbridge Herald):
<http://lethbridgeherald.com/news/national-news/2014/12/03/ndp-government-would-revive-gun-registry-without-the-flaws-mulcair/>

TRUDEAU SAYS LIBERALS CAN'T SUPPORT C-42 GUN BILL

Global News, November 26, 2014

Liberal leader Justin Trudeau claims that the Liberal Party will not support the Conservative's C-42 gun bill ahead of a debate Wednesday afternoon. Trudeau adds that the Liberals have no intention of re-introducing the long gun registry.



<http://globalnews.ca/video/1693731/trudeau-says-liberals-cant-support-c-42-gun-bill>

CLASSIFIED ADS FEATURE LEPINE'S WEAPON OF CHOICE

CJAD 800 AM, by Trudie Mason, December 2, 2014

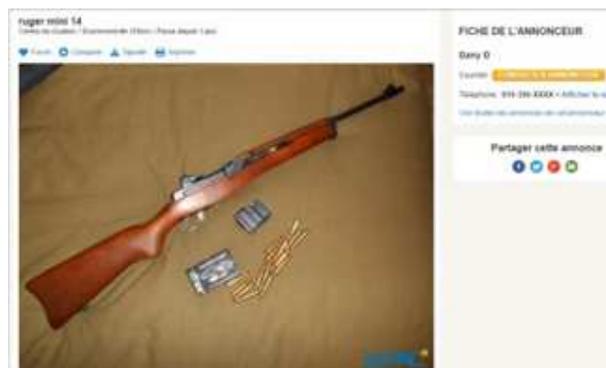
As Quebec looks back 25 years on the horror that was the Ecole Polytechnique Massacre, gun control supporters may be surprised to hear that Marc Lepine's weapon of choice is freely available on a classified ads website.

The Ruger Mini-14 - known as the poor man's assault rifle - can be purchased from any number of sellers for between \$700 and \$900 dollars on LesPAC.com.

Some websites such as Kijiji and eBay do not permit ads for the Mini-14 but the company that runs LesPAC told La Presse that it is reluctant to ban what is considered in Canada to be a legal product.

Marc Lepine shot and killed 14 young women at the Ecole Polytechnique on Dec. 6, 1989. He also wounded ten other women and four men before taking his own life.

<http://www.cjad.com/cjad-news/2014/12/02/classified-ads-feature-lepines-weapon-of-choice>



Commemorations

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE MONTREAL MASSACRE

CTV News (TV), December 2014



<http://www.ctvnews.ca/video?clipId=508258>

POLY REMEMBERS EVENT

CTV News (TV), December 7, 2014



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q2c6yACtnuA>

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF POLYTECHNIQUE MASSACRE MARKED IN MONTREAL AND ACCROSS CANADA

CTV News, December 6, 2014

Canadians are marking the 25th anniversary of the Montreal Massacre with ceremonies and vigils across the country Saturday.

It's been 25 years since Marc Lepine entered Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique and opened fire, killing 14 women. During the violent attack, Lepine was heard ranting that feminists had ruined his life.

In addition to the slain women, Lepine also wounded 13 others, before he took his own life on Dec. 6, 1989.

In Montreal, relatives of the 14 victims, as well as survivors will march in a procession through the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges Cemetery to the Mount-Royal chalet at 3 p.m. on Saturday.

A minute of silence was observed at the exact moment the tragedy took place, beginning at 5:10 p.m.



Premier Philippe Couillard, Jean Doré, who was mayor of Montreal at the time of the attack, current Mayor Denis Coderre and PQ interim leader Stephane Bedard took part in a vigil for the women, where stories from many of the survivors and witnesses were heard inside the chalet.

Former NDP MP Dawn Black, who introduced a private members' bill to mark Dec. 6 as the National Day of

Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, spoke about the unmasking of violence against women who have spoken up about it.

"We will not be silenced," she told an applauding crowd.

Couillard said the increased enrolment of women to the Polytechnique since 1989 is the greatest victory of the 14 women.

Coderre said he was touched by the event, but also troubled to see so many women who continue to be abused 25 years later.

Former premier Pauline Marois spoke after a long applause, reminding the audience that she, too, was the target of a gunman, in an assassination attempt the day she was named Quebec's first female premier.

Montreal Gazette reporter Sue Montgomery remembered being in England when she found out about the Massacre and said she "felt sick" when she found out why Lepine aimed his target at women. Earlier this year, Montgomery started the hastag #BeenRapedNeverReported to help women stand up against their abusers without fear. It generated some 8 million tweets throughout the world.

The Université de Montreal Orchestra is performing an evening benefit concert to raise funds for gun control and legal clinic Juripop.

Montreal City Hall will also be illuminated in purple tonight in support of women. The tower at the Olympic Stadium will be illuminated in red in memory of the 14 victims.

Earlier in the day, the traditional laying of white roses took place outside of the school, in front of the commemorative plaque.

Romain Gayet, the president of the students' association at Ecole Polytechnique, told CTV News Channel that his association works hard to ensure that the memory of the tragedy is preserved for younger generations.

He said that this year, the school is working with a gun-control group from Ottawa to demand tighter gun-control measures from the federal government.

In particular, the students are targeting Bill C-42, formally titled "The Common sense Firearms Act." The bill, put forward by the governing Conservatives, seeks to simplify the gun-licensing process for legal gun owners.

The bill was initially scheduled to be debated on Oct. 22, the same day lone gunman Michael Zehaf-Bibeau stormed Parliament after shooting a soldier standing guard at Ottawa's National War Memorial. Gayet said the bill is "dangerous" for gun control in Canada. He added that the association stands against facilitating the licensing process for small guns and assault rifles.

"That's a problem for sure, because those are automatic rifles and they can shoot much faster," he said.

The office of the minister of the status of women issued a news released Saturday, saying that on this day, the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, we must denounce violence against women and girls in all forms.

"Canadians are asking pointed questions about how we can end this brutish behaviour once and for all. One thing is certain: Violence against women and girls is not acceptable in our society and will not be tolerated," the statement read.

<http://Montreal.ctvnews.ca/25th-anniversary-of-Polytechnique-Massacre-marked-in-Montreal-and-across-canada-1.2135936>

VIGIL ON MOUNT ROYAL MARKS 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF POLYTECHNIQUE SHOOTING

Global News, by Ines De La Cuetara, December 7, 2014

She wasn't yet born when the École Polytechnique shooting happened.

Still, it's an event that's played a big role in her life.

"I'm currently studying engineering at Polytechnique," she explains.

"I had to remember. I had to do it."

On Saturday, Benedicte joined hundreds at a vigil at the Mount Royal Chalet to mark the 25th anniversary of the day a deranged gunman walked into her school, accused 14 women of being feminists because they wanted to be engineers, and shot them.

"I was a friend of two victims," said one woman who attended the vigil.



"But I think everyone was affected, whether you knew the victims or not. All Montrealers were affected by this horrific misogynist act."

Many politicians were also present.

"Not only to remember what happened in 1989 but at the same time that there's still a battle to do," said Denis Coderre, who took the opportunity to ask for a gun registry.

Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard publicly responded to the mayor's statement.

"We will rebuild what is missing from the gun registry," said the Premier.

Diane Dufresne and Marie Josée Lord closed the vigil with a song and 14 lights were lit up on Mount Royal, shooting straight up into the sky.

Fourteen lights in honour of the 14 victims.

Benedicte says the tragedy has only fueled her determination to become an engineer.

In fact, there are more women enrolled at Polytechnique now than ever before.

"I wanted to be an engineer so bad that I would not let anything stop me from doing so and I think those events only pushed me harder to achieve my dream," she said.

While a gunman's bullets tried to derail the goals of young women just like her, Benedicte is proof that the goals and dreams of young women continue to thrive.

<http://globalnews.ca/news/1713391/vigil-on-mount-royal-marks-25th-anniversary-of-Polytechnique-shooting/>

EVENT AT TORONTO CITY HALL REMEMBERS VICTIMS OF MONTREAL MASSACRE 25 YEARS LATER

Inside Toronto, by Mike Adler, December 5, 2014

The man who committed the Montreal Massacre is gone, but the gun he used to fatally shoot 14 female engineering students on Dec. 6, 1989 is still sold to Canadians as an unrestricted hunting rifle.

The same gun, the semi-automatic Ruger Mini-14, was also used in Norway in 2011 to kill 77 people, Wendy Cukier of the Coalition for Gun Control told an audience commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Ecole Polytechnique killings, now called The National Day for Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, at Toronto's city hall Friday, Dec. 5.

No one suggests gun control will end violence against women, but it "reduces the lethality of violent encounters," said Cukier, who said founders of the coalition in 1991 were motivated by "disbelief that something like this could happen in our country."

They also wanted to turn the tragic day a quarter century ago into a source of positive action.

It seemed to work: the number of people killed by guns in Canada has fallen by half. In 1991, 85 women were murdered with a gun in this country. Last year, it was 29.

But Cukier said the federal Conservatives have dismantled in recent years what gun control advocates built, destroying the national long gun registry and eliminating a requirement, existing since 1977, to record sales of guns in gun shops.

The vast majority of Canadians support gun control but do nothing about it, said Cukier. "You have a role to play. Please do not be bystanders."

Toronto's new mayor John Tory told the audience at Friday's ceremony he never forgot the face of a woman, "covered in bruises," he met in Whitby in 2005.

Tory, who said he was canvassing homes during a provincial byelection, asked the woman whether she was OK, and she said she was – though her words were a whisper.

Tory walked away from the house, and later regretted not taking any further action. "I don't think I did enough," the mayor said.

Tory also said he became an early participant in the White Ribbon campaign, "to draw attention to the fact that men care, and should care" about violence against women

While the total number of women murdered since 1980 has fallen, more aboriginal women are being murdered, an "an epic tragedy" partly due to "intergenerational trauma" and barriers which make First Nation women more vulnerable, said Victoria Pezzo, executive director of Toronto's Native Women's Resource Centre. "It's too easy for violence to find us."

Violence often finds sex workers too, said Akio Maroon, chairperson of Maggie's Toronto Sex Workers Action Project, who said the Conservative's Bill 36 – which was to be enacted Dec. 6 – would recriminalize sex work, "allowing the pandemic of violence against sex workers to continue."



Wendy Cukier

Staff photo/MIKE ADLER

Wendy Cukier of the Coalition for Gun Control speaks to an audience commemorating the 25th anniversary of the Ecole Polytechnique killings, now called The National Day for Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women, at Toronto's city hall Friday, Dec. 5.

The audience stood to remember sex workers, especially in Toronto, whose lives have been lost to violence.

Kristyn Wong-Tam, a downtown councillor hosting the event, asked fellow councillors to sign a letter appealing to Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne to refer the new prostitution law to an Ontario appeal court for a ruling on whether it infringes on sex workers' constitutional rights.

Wong-Tam urged attendees to keep up their anti-violence efforts.

"Hold one another, and we'll continue to do the work together," she said.

<http://www.insidetoronto.com/news-story/5184130-event-at-toronto-city-hall-remembers-victims-of-Montreal-Massacre-25-years-later/>

OTTAWA VIGIL FOR POLYTECHNIQUE VICTIMS, OTHERS WHO DIED DUE TO MALE VIOLENCE

Ottawa Citizen, by Michael Woods, December 8, 2014

Exactly 25 years after a gunman murdered 14 women at the École Polytechnique in Montreal, hundreds gathered at a downtown Ottawa vigil to remember the women, as well as other victims of male violence, and reflect on how much — or little — has changed since then.

“These women were murdered because they dared to claim their rightful place in a man’s world,” event MC Holly Johnson, a criminology professor at the University of Ottawa, told the crowd. “They were killed indiscriminately because they were women.”

Johnson said the shooting “shook us out of our complacency as a nation.” But in a common theme of the vigil, she also said there is much to be done.

“Twenty-five years later, how much has really changed? Women continue to be threatened, harassed and assaulted in public space, in private space and in cyberspace.”



Nearly 300 people attended on Saturday night at the Women’s Monument in Minto Park at Elgin and Gilmour streets, holding lit candles and flowers, which they laid at the monument at the end of the 45-minute vigil.

The vigil was organized by the Women’s Events network, a coalition of women’s organizations.

It started with an Aboriginal drum circle and featured personal stories, singing and a stirring spoken word poem by

Roua Aljied called Looking Over Her Shoulder.

Johnson said the murder of the 14 women “is a scar on the national psyche.” But she said there are still many who deny that the Massacre was an extreme manifestation of a larger problem of deeply-seeded misogyny.

“The political will for fundamental change is lacking. And because of that, amidst our mourning, we renew our commitment to work for change,” she said.

Volunteers read the names, birth years and fields of study of the 14 victims. They also read the names of some local victims of male violence, including Donna Jones, who was murdered by her husband, Marc Hutt, in 2009.

Jones’s sister, Jennifer, and brother Derek addressed the crowd about their sister, who died five years ago Saturday.

“She was a vibrant woman who loved travel, enjoyed lots of different sports, and she is missed by lots of people. She lit up the room, just like we’re lighting up with our candles tonight,” Jennifer Jones said.

Jones also said physical and emotional violence should never be tolerated by men or women.

“If you’re strong enough to stay in the relationship, you’re strong enough to make it on your own,” she said. “You cannot wish away or wash away the situation. You can’t use excuses anymore — ‘it’s just his upbringing, it’s just the money, he really loves me’ — these are just excuses we tell ourselves.

“I ask that you seek counselling, get a plan, get out,” she said. “You are not alone. There’s lots of help out there.”

Minister of Community Safety and Correctional Services Yasir Naqvi also spoke at the vigil. The Ottawa Centre MPP said the provincial government will pressure the federal government to enact stricter gun control regulations.

And Mayor Jim Watson read a proclamation declaring Dec. 6, 2014 Ecole Polytechnique day of remembrance in Ottawa.

Nathalie Vallieres, from the U of O's faculty of engineering, said the women were killed because "they had the audacity to study for careers that still today are dominated by men."

In 1989, it was an unusual choice for a woman to decide to enrol and study engineering in Canada, she said. Only 13 per cent of undergraduate engineering students were women. The Montreal Massacre sparked a renewed interest and commitment to promote women in engineering and technology.

"These exceptional 14 women wanted to make a difference in their profession and society. But sadly we will never benefit from their professional contributions," she said.

"On that day, all of their dreams and potential was taken away from them. On this day and on all days, we owe it to them to not waste ours."

<http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/ecole-Polytechnique-victims-others-who-died-due-to-male-violence-remembered-at-vigil>



LOCAL VIGIL REFLECTS ON MONTREAL MASSACRE, LOCAL ACTS OF VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN

580 CFRA News Talk Radio, by Cassie Aylward, December 6, 2014



Vigil attendees lay roses at the Ottawa Women's Monument in Minto Park.

A large group gathered in Minto Park in Centretown this evening to mark the 25th anniversary of the Montreal Massacre at l'ecole Polytechnique Saturday evening, and to remember that many Canadian women still deal with horrific violence today.

On Dec. 6, 1989, a gunman shot and killed 14 women and wounded 13 other people in a rampage he said was against feminists and feminism, which he said he blamed for troubles in his own life.

The people gathered at the Women's Monument to remember the 14 women killed at

Polytechnique, and other victims of violence against women since, including the hundreds of missing or murdered Aboriginal women, Luce Lavertu and Jagtar Gill who were killed in Ottawa in the Spring, and Donna Jones who died at the hands of her husband five years ago.

Jones' sister Jennifer spoke at the event.

"One of the things I've learned from talking to other women who've been through the same situation is that they blame themselves," she said. "They don't have to blame themselves."

Several politicians and community leaders spoke, calling on more attention to women's issues, and for tougher gun control. Ottawa Centre MPP Yasir Naqvi was one of them.

"What happened 25 years ago . . . changed all of us," he said. "It changed our individual lives in terms of how we perceive violence against women."

Despite this, some at the vigil that cases surrounding ousted CBC host Jian Ghomeshi, comedian Bill Cosby, and football player Ray Rice dominating the headlines in 2014 are indicative of a continuing social issue.

The vigil featured spoken word poems, musical performances, and the reading of the names and short biographies of the 14 women killed at Polytechnique.

<http://www.cfra.com/news/2014/12/06/local-vigil-reflects-on-Montreal-Massacre-local-acts-of-violence-against-women>

NO IMPROVEMENT 25 YEARS AFTER MONTREAL MASSACRE: PORTER

The Star, by Catherine Porter, December 6, 2014

The only thing more enraging than the murder of 14 women on a rainy day in Montreal 25 years ago is the fact that so little has changed since then.

We all thought the one redeeming thing about Marc Lépine's misogynist rampage through the École Polytechnique was the searing Parliamentary report that followed, "The War Against Women."

"I want the women," said Lépine, who was armed with a semi-automatic hunting rifle, as he entered a packed third-floor classroom on Dec. 6, 1989. He separated the female students and lined them up against the wall.

"You're all a bunch of feminists; I hate feminists," he said before shooting. By the time he'd finished his hunt through the school 20 minutes later, he had murdered 14 women and himself.

It was the biggest mass murder in a single day in Canadian history.

At first, much of the media framed Lépine's action as those of a deranged individual. But thousands of the country's women disagreed, pouring into the streets across the country to weep together and demand justice.

Even before the release of Lépine's suicide note — which spelled out his misogynistic reasoning — women across the country recognized his actions. They had seen them before. They knew them personally. They were part of the deep societal hatred and subjugation of women.

"The War Against Women" was Parliament's nod of agreement, one and a half years later. It was the title of a House subcommittee report.

"We worried the title was so provocative, people would dismiss it," recalls Dawn Black, a former NDP MP who sat on the subcommittee, which wrote the report after five months of hearing about the torture, murder, rape, poverty and struggles of women across Canada. "But we felt in the end, the reality demanded we recognize the deep and unacknowledged violence against women in our society."

The 69-page report was filled with statistics the committee dutifully collected to support the war analogy. Many are maddeningly familiar:

One in 10 women were assaulted — physically or sexually — by their partner every year.

In 1989, 48 per cent of Canadians personally knew a woman being abused by her live-in partner.

In a recent study, 80 per cent of aboriginal women in Ontario said they'd been assaulted or abused.

One in four women had been sexually assaulted, half of them before they turned 17.

The committee quoted one rape crisis worker's comparison of battered women shelters and rape crisis centres to unfunded, unrecognized Red Cross units in this war against women. Some of the 25 recommendations it made sought to bolster those facilities and to sensitize judges, Crown attorneys, police officers and others to the grave nature of the crimes.

What made the document radical, though, was its brief examination of the root causes of the war. Violence, it said, stemmed from inequality and traditional values that held men as the bosses and women as the servants.

To end the war would require no less than a complete restructuring of society, in body and soul.

The committee called for massive media campaigns, mandatory public school courses, more women in positions of power, notably in government (it called for gender-sensitivity training for MPs, ha!), and a national plan to build affordable housing "inextricably linked to wife assault," since women who

escaped their abusive husbands arrived at shelters with no money, no job prospects and no hope of paying rent. Poverty pushed many back to their abusers.

We were tragically reminded of that again this week, with the murder of Zahra Abdille and her two sons.

We still don't have a national affordable housing plan. Our members of parliament never got that training, clearly. Poverty is still "feminized," with Toronto women earning 31.3 per cent less than men on average. And the statistics for university campus rapes — cited at 15 per cent of female students in the report — are infuriatingly the same.

"The War Against Women" reads like one of those dark east coast novels. It piles on depressing detail after depressing detail. But what makes it especially disturbing is that the bulk of it could have been written yesterday.

"We are still fighting the same battles," says Mary Clancy, the former Liberal MP from Halifax who sat on the committee. "I wouldn't have thought at 66, I'd be saying 'We've made some inroads, some things improved but a whole lot hasn't.' You wonder 23 year later, what good did it do?"

After some protest from Tory MPs over the report's title, it was accepted by Parliament. A few months later, the government released its formal plan to address violence against women with a tepid title, "Living Without Fear." It included a massive education campaign and created a blue-ribbon panel to dig deeper into the subject.

But it never launched a full-scale action plan on violence against women. There was no war effort, only isolated skirmishes, notably the strengthening of sexual assault laws.

The biggest legacy of both the Massacre and Parliament's report was gun control. The ease with which Lépine had bought his Ruger Mini-14 two weeks earlier had alarmed many Canadians.

The parliamentary committee heard from Wendy Cukier, a university professor who launched Canadians for Gun Control after the Montreal Massacre with École Polytechnique student Heidi Rathjen. The statistics she provided revealed how often men killed their wives and ex-wives with hunting rifles.

"It is apparent to this committee that the presence of guns in our homes and communities puts women and children at risk," the report states.

Government tightened the licensing requirements in 1991. Then, four years later, it created the long-gun registry. Quickly, the number of suicides and homicides by hunting rifles dropped across the country.

Two years ago, the Harper government dismantled the registry.

That came six years after removing the word "equality" from the mandate of Status of Women Canada. To many of us, it felt like the gleeful stomping on the ashes of the feminist movement.

"We don't have a problem of ignorance, we have a problem of refusal," says Lee Lakeman, a veteran rape crisis centre worker who flew in from Vancouver to address the committee all those years ago.

"Here we are in a national election year, and where are the promises from any party?"

Women across the country took great hope from "The War Against Women." Such exposure, they sensed, would result in real change.

There is a similar sentiment in the country today regarding sexual assault. But, if we can take one lesson here, it's that radical change needs more ammunition than the truth.

“We only got ‘The War Against Women’ report because we created political pressure,” Lakeman says. “Women went to the street in outrage. When we stopped doing that, we lost. Women have to go back to the streets in public outrage and be ungovernable until that governance is fair.”

Feminist lawyer Pamela Cross compares Dec. 6 to Nov. 11. Both commemorate the dead. But Remembrance Day includes national newscasts, government ceremonies, pipers at cenotaphs. Do you know where your local Montreal Massacre commemoration is being held?

“There is a private members bill to make Nov. 11 a statutory holiday,” says Cross, a board member of the National Association of Women and the Law until the Conservative government cut its funding. “Why is there no call to do the same thing for Dec. 6? A lot more women die at the hands of men in this country than soldiers die at war.” (She is right, according to Brian Vallée in his book also called The War on Women. From 2000 to 2006, he writes, 44 Canadian soldiers were killed on duty while 500 Canadian women were killed by their intimate partners.)

A sad aside: Cukier was scheduled to speak as part of a Dec. 6 panel on gun control at Ryerson University, where she works. Organizers cancelled the event after non-university members reserved 150 of 200 seats in 10-person blocks. Many of them boasted of their success in silencing Cukier on the “Gun Owners of Canada” forum.

Last year, Cukier received a photograph of herself riddled with bullet holes in the mail.

“The intensity of the vitriol and the threats and harassment are very different for men who speak out on the issue,” she says. “There still is a very deeply embedded aggression against strong women in leadership roles.”

If Lépine’s actions alerted the country 25 years ago to a dark misogyny in the bones of Canadian society, we clearly haven’t broken it.

“The war is still going on,” says Clancy. “We are still an occupied country.”

http://www.thestar.com/news/insight/2014/12/06/porter_no_improvement_25_years_after_Montreal_Massacre.html#

WATERLOO REGION MARKS 25 YEARS SINCE MONTREAL MASSACRE

The Record, by Catherine Thompson, December 4, 2014



Remembering

Peter Lee, Record staff file photo

A Bluevale Collegiate Institute Chamber Choir member places a rose next to one of the candles at a vigil to commemorate the 14 female victims of the Montreal Massacre in this Dec. 6, 2012 photo taken at Wilfrid Laurier University. Services are scheduled throughout Waterloo Region beginning Friday to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the 1989 slayings at Ecole Polytechnique.

It was 25 years ago, but Mary Wells still remembers exactly where she was when she heard that an armed man had separated the men from the women at Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique, and then began gunning the women down.

Wells was a young engineer, and had just arrived home from work when she heard about the Massacre of 14 young women, bright young people her age who, like her, had dreamed of doing great things in their chosen profession.

"It hit me really hard," said Wells, whose voice still catches with emotion when she recalls the horrible events of Dec. 6, 1989. "I'm the same age as those women. They would be my age now, if they had lived."

Wells now teaches mechanical and mechatronics engineering at University of Waterloo, the largest engineering school in the country, and is associate dean of outreach, working to encourage girls and women to consider a career in engineering.

"It was a tragedy that happened to our profession," she said. "Those women would have contributed so much to our profession. We lost their intellectual contribution, their passion and their creativity."

Alison Scott wasn't even born when the horrific events unfolded in Montreal, but they still have relevance for her. Scott, 24, is doing her master's in chemical engineering at Waterloo. She said marking the Dec. 6 anniversary is important for her generation.

"This time of year, a lot of us are concerned about exams and dealing with stress. Dec. 6 is a time to realize that we are blessed to be students here, blessed to be studying engineering," to have the opportunities those women did not, to pursue their interests and ambitions, Scott said.

Scott and Wells are taking part in a special 25th anniversary commemoration of the Ecole Polytechnique Massacre on Friday at the university. Scott will be one of 14 current engineering students who will light a candle of behalf of the 14 victims, 12 of whom were studying engineering.

Scott said she wasn't really aware of the Dec. 6 Massacre before she went to university, but taking part in the memorial last year was very moving. "It was hard," she said. "It was really sad. For me, it was hearing their names, and their programs of study, and seeing their photos."

The horror of that day has spurred Canadians to act, though, Wells point out. The efforts of victims' families and others led to tighter gun control rules and the date now marks Canada's National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

It also shook up the profession, Wells said, prompting engineering schools nationwide to do more to ensure they were welcoming, inclusive, safe places for women.

Those efforts have borne fruit, Wells said. When she was in school, about 13 per cent of engineering students were women. This year, Waterloo welcomed 460 women as first-year engineering students. They make up 27 per cent of the total, the highest percentage the school has ever had. And it's a trend

seen at engineering schools across Ontario, said Wells, who chairs the Ontario Network for Women in Engineering.

Engineers design products and systems that people will use every day, and it's important for the profession to be a diverse one, and to include women, who make up half the population. "That diversity in thinking leads to great design and great creativity," she said.

<http://www.therecord.com/news-story/5182486-waterloo-region-marks-25-years-since-Montreal-Massacre/>

VIGIL IN HALIFAX, CANADA MARK 25TH ANNIVERSARY OF MONTREAL MASSACRE

Herald News, by Clare Mellor, December 7, 2014

Hannah Deloughery spent the evening of her 25th birthday on Saturday at a vigil in Halifax marking the 25th anniversary of the Montreal Massacre.

"I guess it is just been something that has been important in my life ... because it happened on the day I was born," Deloughery said.

The Ottawa native, who attends Saint Mary's University in Halifax, has rarely missed a year attending an annual vigil to remember the 14 women shot to death at Ecole Polytechnique.

On Saturday night, Deloughery walked several kilometres by herself through the pouring rain to an event at the Company House on Gottingen Street.

"My father was very active in the white ribbon campaign to end violence against women," said Deloughery, the youngest of four sisters. "It has always been a part of my family and my life. ... It has always been something that has been important to me, not just today, but to work to end violence against women and create a world that is safe for women."

The driving rain forced organizers to cancel a walk along Gottingen Street preceding the event. However, women and men of all ages packed the Company House for the "not so silent vigil," which included poetry, song, and speeches calling for an end to violence against women.

Lindsay Duncan took to the stage to recount the tragic events of Dec. 6, 1989, when Marc Lepine entered Ecole Polytechnique and killed 14 women. The day was later renamed the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

"He claimed he was fighting the feminists," Duncan said. "In under 20 minutes, he murdered 14 women."

She recounted the names of some women in this region who have been murdered or suffered violence at the hands of others, including Loretta Saunders, Paula Gallant and Rehtaeh Parsons.

"Tanya Brooks's body was found not far from here, around the corner, and if we walked down there we would see where her body was found," Duncan said. "Her murderer still goes uncharged and unknown."

More than 15 organizations, including the Dalhousie Feminist Legal Association, Bryony House and the YWCA organized or supported Saturday's event.

Activist Rhonda Doyle LeBlanc told the crowd that the work for better gun control to protect women also needs to continue.

"Given the abolition of the long-gun registry, and further weakening of controls by the current federal government, now we also need to worry about Bill C-42, which proposes to weaken controls on handguns and military weapons," she said.

Two university social-work students took to the stage Saturday to announce that they are launching a postcard campaign calling for the federal government to hold an inquiry into the disproportionate number of murdered and missing aboriginal women in Canada.

Halifax MP Megan Leslie has been asked to deliver the postcards to Ottawa.

"I will deliver those with pride and with honour," Leslie said later in an interview.

She said the idea of having a "not so silent" vigil is a good one.

“It’s us coming together and making some noise. There is singing, there is spoken word. Yes, we need to remember and, yes, we need to work toward ending violence against women, but also we need to be together ... and to be in solidarity.”

Similar ceremonies happened around the country, with a large crowd gathering outside Ecole Polytechnique to remember the victims in Montreal.

Men and women wept as they laid white roses and other flowers next to the memorial plaques outside the university. There was also be a torchlight procession through the Notre-Dame-des-Neiges cemetery in Montreal.

Lepine’s 20-minute shooting rampage at the engineering school in 1989 sparked a national gun-control debate that rages until this day.

He also wounded 13 other people — nine women and four men — before taking his own life.

Lepine ranted during the carnage that feminists had ruined his life.

<http://thechronicleherald.ca/metro/1256056-vigils-in-halifax-canada-mark-25th-anniversary-of-Montreal-Massacre>

VICTIMS OF MONTREAL MASSACRE REMEMBERED AT SYDNEY GATHERING

Cape Breton Post, by David Jala, December 6, 2014

Emily Rowe doesn't remember the day Marc Lépine killed 14 women at Montreal's École Polytechnique - she had yet to be born.

But that didn't stop the Grade 10 Sydney Academy student from attending a local event to remember the victims of the Dec. 6, 1989 slaughter that became known as the Montreal Massacre.

"It means a lot to me that people are still talking about it and I know that we can do things to stop violence against women," said Rowe, who was one of a number of students to attend the Every Woman's Centre-sponsored event at the organization's Trinity Avenue building.

The gathering began with the students lighting candles in remembrance of the victims of Lépine's murderous rampage that ended with 14 women dead, 14 other people injured and countless lives changed forever.

Candles were also lit for a dozen local women who were killed as a result of domestic violence over the past 25 years.

Those in attendance then heard from Nadine Bernard who is a family support worker for Natives living off-reserve.

"It is an important event to remember and to reflect on," said Bernard, who advocates her culture's Seven Sacred Teachings (love, respect, courage, honesty, wisdom, humility and truth).

"I believe in hope because all of what I have learned, good and bad, has helped give me some wisdom which I want to share so I can help others."

Afterwards, local singer-songwriter Alician Penney played guitar and sang a couple of moving songs

Event organizer Wanda Earhart, a support worker at the Every Woman's Centre, said it is vital to the fight against domestic violence that people do not forget tragedies such as the Montreal Massacre.

"It's important that we remember and it is always so good to see young people coming out to events like this so that they can then do positive things to stop violence against women," said Earhart.

The anniversary of the Massacre is commemorated across Canada as The National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

Lépine left a suicide note that blamed feminists for ruining his life.

The Massacre led to tougher gun control laws in Canada and raised the nation's consciousness about violence against women.

<http://www.capebretonpost.com/News/Local/2014-12-06/article-3966027/Victims-of-Montreal-Massacre-remembered-at-Sydney-gathering/1>

WE REMEMBER DECEMBER 6TH

Learning Network, December 2014

LearningNetwork

Facilitate. Educate. Collaborate.

Issue 11, December 2014



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We Remember December 6th



Reflections of a survivor...



"December 6th, 1989, Marc Lépine walked into my classroom. He separated the women from the men. He told us he was going to kill us because we were feminists. Shots rang out.

*I died. Only a few seconds, just for a moment.
Enough to feel my world collapse, my wounded body.
My beliefs, my hopes, my dreams died with lives of my classmates...
Enough to learn about solitude, fragility, loss and doubt...
I died. Only a few seconds, just for a moment...
And after all of the chaos, insanity, a sort of deep silence...*

Réflexions d'un survivant...

"Le 6 décembre 1989, Marc Lépine est entré dans ma classe. Il a séparé les hommes et les femmes. Il nous a dit qu'il nous tuait parce que nous étions féministes. Il a tiré.

*Je suis morte. Quelques secondes, pas longtemps.
Assez pour sentir mon monde s'écrouler, mon corps meurtri.
Mes croyances, mes espoirs, mes rêves évanouis avec la vie de mes consœurs...
Assez pour apprendre la solitude, la fragilité, la perte et le doute...
Je suis morte. Quelques secondes, pas longtemps...
Et après le brouhaha, la folie, une sorte de grand silence...*

http://www.vawlearningnetwork.ca/sites/learningtoendabuse.ca.vawlearningnetwork/files/Dec6_Newsletter_Final_0.pdf

B.C. WOMAN RECALLS FRIEND KILLED IN ÉCOLE POLYTECHNIQUE MASSACRE

Vancouver Sun, by Amy Smart, December 6, 2014



Students and staff at the University of the Fraser Valley in Chilliwack held a daytime candlelight vigil in honour of the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women in Canada.

École Polytechnique. Reimer would say yes, just one: Geneviève Bergeron.

Bergeron, 21, was one of 14 women fatally shot that day by Marc Lépine, who claimed to be fighting feminism.

The 25-year-old man began his 20-minute shooting rampage — with a gun he had purchased legally — by interrupting a student presentation in a second-floor classroom. He asked the men and women to move to separate sides of the room, before shouting, “You are all feminists!” at the women.

One student, Nathalie Provost, spoke up: “I said, ‘Listen, we are only women who are studying engineering. ... We were only women in engineering who wanted to live a normal life,’ ” she told media two days after the shooting. The man opened fire, then moved to other areas of the school.

Lépine, who was specifically targeting women, shot 28 people — 24 women and four men — before turning his gun on himself.

The event, remembered today on its 25th anniversary, hit close to home for Reimer, who now lives in Victoria. She attended a small Montreal fine arts high school with Bergeron, described as a bubbly girl who took as many science electives as she could.

“She had a quiet side, but once you got her going, she was very outgoing and sort of always happy and smiling,” Reimer said.

Bergeron was a second-year engineering student on scholarship when she was killed.

“When I finally found out, I had to remove myself from people,” Reimer said. “I could hold it together until someone asked me if I was OK.”

Reimer said the significance of the attack followed her through future tragedies, including the school shootings at Concordia University and Dawson College in Montreal, as well as 9/11. Although she didn’t know anyone in the Twin Towers, Reimer said the familiar emotions moved her to work with an artist on a peace project. The pair made origami cranes and shared the anti-violence story of 1,000 Cranes with children in classrooms.

Reimer, who works for the Department of National Defence, said she hopes that if people have taken anything away from the tragedy, it’s the message that violence is never the answer.

“I try to work on that with my kids,” she said. “Using violence as a solution is not acceptable.”

The Montreal Massacre — the country’s worst mass shooting — galvanized the nation to institute stricter gun control and change police responses to reports of shootings. Dec. 6 is now known as the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

But Maureen Bradley, an associate professor of writing at the University of Victoria, said that there’s obvious room for improvement.

“Things are more equal, but they’re not equal,” she said. “There are still real barriers for women and [especially] women of colour. Misogyny hasn’t been eradicated and domestic abuse hasn’t decreased.”

Incidents of domestic violence across Canada rose to 213,264 in 2009 from 164,189 in 2004, the Ending Violence Association of B.C. estimates. In August, the body of Tina Fontaine, a 15-year-old aboriginal girl from Manitoba, was found wrapped in plastic in the Red River. A man went on a killing spree near the University of California, Santa Barbara, in May, allegedly seeking retribution against women for rejecting him sexually.

Bradley was a student at Montreal’s Concordia University when the shooting occurred, and she said she was shaken by the event. The incident moved her to participate in her first demonstration — she held a candle outside École Polytechnique on Dec. 7 — and dedicate her thesis to media coverage of the event.

“God, that one moment, I think it changed my path,” she said.

Despite the work still to be done, Bradley remains optimistic.

“I’ve been in university classrooms for 25 years, and I really feel there has been a shift in attitudes. I certainly notice it in my male students, but I’d say all students: That knee-jerk anti-feminist reaction I saw in classrooms after the Montreal Massacre, I don’t see that anymore,” she said.

“In one generation, the attitude of the majority of men has shifted in what I think is a positive direction.”

<http://www.vancouversun.com/life/woman+recalls+friend+killed+%C3%89cole+Polytechnique+Massacre/10447182/story.html>

'I HEARD THE GUNMAN SAY, "I WANT THE WOMEN"': 25 YEARS LATER AND THE MONTREAL MASSACRE STILL HANGS OVER US ALL

National Post, by Peter Kuttanbrouwer, December 5, 2014

Two hours into darkness on Dec. 6, 1989, the snow fell in wet gobs on the north side of Mount Royal. The cab dropped us at the bottom of the slope, where police had closed the road. Ahead through the darkness, lights, many lights, flickering red and blue. Mingled with the fluttering snowflakes, the scene looked almost festive.

Then, there, at the mountain's top: paramedics rushing stretchers out of a modern building, ploughing through the snow to waiting ambulances. Dozens of them.

It was seven hours later, at about 2 a.m. on Dec. 7, that we learned the full scope of the horror: a gunman had killed 14 women at Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique. Only the women. Because they were women.

That Wednesday night 25 years ago, working at The Gazette in Montreal, I had a new-guy job listening to police radios, squawking intermittently with cops calling out numeric codes in French. 10-20 meant accident, 26 was a stolen car; 001 meant homicide.

Near quitting time that night, great staccato bursts of number codes. I pawed through the manual to decipher them when the black dial desk phone rang. My girlfriend at the time, who worked at The Canadian Press in the next building, came on the line.

"There's something happening at the Université de Montreal," she said. "I'm going over to have a look." Police apparently thought it might be a hostage-taking. We shared a cab.

A tall four-sided art deco tower with a domed roof dominates the university's central entrance; the Ecole Polytechnique, or engineering building, occupies a more modern six-storey complex to its east. In these days long before Columbine or other mass shootings, police did not know what to do, and surrounded the building for a long time before ever venturing in.

Lynn Moore, a Gazette reporter, walked into the building not long after police, and chronicled a scene of blood-soaked classrooms; Allen McGinnis, a photographer, persuaded two students to boost him onto the windowsill so he could shoot through a gap in the drapes, where he photographed a student slumped dead in a chair while a policeman took down a sign that read, "Bonne Année."

We learned that a man students did not know had entered the school at about 5:15 p.m., the last class on the last day of school before exams, armed with a .223-calibre Sturm Ruger and, apparently, hunting women.

"I heard the gunman say, 'I want the women,'" student François Bordeleau said. Student Roger Tiffault, 23, said the gunman shot two women in his class, including a female friend standing less than a metre from Mr. Tiffault.

I asked Mr. Tiffault why he had not been killed. He replied: "I don't know. I don't know. I don't know."

Prof. Yvon Bouchard said in his classroom the gunman shot into the ceiling when male students disobeyed his order to leave. The men filed out, the doors closed and the shooting began.

At midnight I walked uninvited into Room E310, a tiered lecture hall near the main entrance of the university.

Distraught, hollow-eyed couples stumbled in, stamping slush off their shoes, and sat silently, waiting to learn whether their children had been slain. A police officer entered and approached a couple who had just removed their fur coats. He said something and a boy standing with them burst into tears.

Later I stood in the main foyer of the university, joining a growing phalanx of reporters, which by 2 a.m. included writers from The New York Times, Los Angeles Times and Washington Post. At 2:35 a.m. Jacques Duchesneau, head of the organized crime squad of the Montreal Urban Community Police, as it was then known, addressed the media from a podium set in this cathedral-ceilinged temple of higher education. After the chaos of the night, you could have heard a pin drop as he spoke.

“We have 14 victims,” he said. “They are all women.”

We were the first to learn the awful nature of the crime. Marie-Claude Lortie, a young reporter at La Presse, stood next to me. We hugged each other. Then we continued working.

For the remainder of the week I returned to the university every day, to write follow-up articles, and to the Basilica on Mount Royal just west of the school, where candles in jars lit hundreds of steps up the mountain as thousands gathered to remember the slain.



Activists used the shooting as a rallying cry to enact a long-gun registry. That registry served only to bitterly divide Canada, and failed, even during its life span, to put a meaningful restriction on the gun the shooter used.

Far more important than the weapon used was his target: women. While this shooting remains Canada's deadliest mass slaughter, it is also the continent's most horrifying attack on women.

But if the shooter wanted to somehow, in his crazed way, protest the climb of women in Canada to equality, he failed miserably.

The conversation about the relative power of women and men in Canada is far from over, as the scandal of Jian Ghomeshi at the CBC, the assaults on aboriginal women, and many more bad moments every day in every city, remind us.

Perhaps this conversation will never end.

But the world my daughter was born into is a different one than the one I grew up in, and for that women and men both can be grateful beyond words.

My daughter is 16. She loves chemistry and physics. She speaks of studying forensic law. Like every parent, like the parents of the Polytechnique students, I only hope that she will thrive.

At her high school this week students wore white ribbons, a symbol of ending violence against women, watched a documentary in the library on the Polytechnique shooting, and exited their classrooms to watch a procession of students dressed in black carrying 14 candles in honour of the Polytechnique dead.

The candles burned in the school's office all afternoon.

<http://news.nationalpost.com/2014/12/05/i-heard-the-gunman-say-i-want-the-women-25-years-later-and-the-Montreal-Massacre-still-hangs-over-us-all/>

Editorials

EDITORIAL: OTTAWA UNDOING PROGRESS MADE IN WAKE OF POLYTECHNIQUE MASSACRE

The Star, by Wendy Cukier, December 5, 2014

It is hard to believe that 25 years have passed since the Montreal Massacre. Sadly, a quarter of a century since what should have been a pivotal moment in the history of Canadian gun control, we are hardly farther along than we were on the day of that tragic shooting.

While much progress was made in the years after the event, we are now fighting to stop the troubling undoing of those gains and even to keep the very minimal controls that were in place at the time of the Massacre.

Like many Canadians, I remember my horror and anger and disbelief as if it was yesterday. A man with a powerful semi-automatic Ruger Mini-14 walked into l'École Polytechnique de Montreal, separated the male and female students and shouted "You are all a bunch of damned feminists." He shot 27 people, killing 14 young women.

Many Canadians believe gun control has long been a core value that separates us from the U.S., but in 1989 a 16-year-old could obtain, for \$10 and with virtually no screening, a firearms acquisition certificate that allowed him to buy as many unrestricted rifles and shotguns as he wanted.

Apart from point-of-sale records, there was no information about who owned these guns and no way to trace them. Astonishingly we were selling military weapons to civilians. At that time about 3,200 people were killed in motor vehicle accidents every year. As a result, we had extensive layers of regulation and strategies to keep our roads safe. But even though more than 1,300 people were dying of gunshots annually — in murders, suicides and unintentional shootings — little was being done.

Working with the students of the Polytechnique, families of gun violence victims, women's groups, police, public health, community, labour organizations, and others, **the Coalition for Gun Control helped strengthen Canada's laws in the aftermath of the shooting.**

Former Progressive Conservative prime minister Kim Campbell introduced legislation in 1991 that reduced the risk that dangerous people would have access to guns, as did former Liberal justice minister Allan Rock in 1995. They improved screening, introduced licensing for gun owners and registration of all firearms, strengthened safe storage regulations and banned semi-automatic military weapons.

But in the years since it has been painful to watch those laws get dismantled, even as devastating gun violence persists. The repeal of registration and the elimination of the law that gun sales be recorded at the point of sale make tracing guns harder. And in 2012, with an unbelievably destructive stroke of the pen, the records on more than 5 million registered firearms were destroyed. Canada has gone from being a global leader to lagging behind the U.S. in measures to combat the illegal gun trade.

And there is more to come. Bill C-42, currently before the House of Commons, will further relax controls on handguns and make decisions about the classification of military weapons the purview of politicians rather than police.

The evidence is clear: stronger controls on firearms save lives. While the vast majority of Canadians support gun control, they have not prevented a vocal minority from hijacking the public agenda. We knew about the NRA, but none of us believed the gun lobby could exercise so much influence in Canada. Many politicians have abandoned principles to chase the votes of people who will never support them. And we have seen unprecedented political interference when the police try to enforce gun laws.

Although many features of gun control have been gutted, important measures remain intact. Gun owners still need licenses, must store their guns safely, and some military weapons are banned. The benefits of these policies, and the residual dividends of the legislation passed in the 90s, are undeniable.

Homicides in Canada are the lowest they have been in more than 25 years. Murders with rifles and shotguns have plummeted from 103 in 1991 to 31 in 2013. Murders of women with guns have fallen from 85 to 29. Suicides with firearms and robberies with firearms have dropped significantly and faster than those without guns. In 2011, less than half as many Canadians were killed with guns than in 1989. Will Ottawa insist on continuing to dismantle all the life-saving work done in the wake of the Polytechnique tragedy?

Thankfully, many are working hard to ensure that doesn't happen. Many of the groups and individuals who helped found the coalition are still fighting for stronger gun laws. The police continue to insist that the government must ban military weapons. And some of our political leaders are stepping up — doing the right thing even if it is not the easy thing to do.

Perhaps most encouraging is the emergence of the next generation of gun control activists. Generation Action is engaging young people in the issue, building their own campaigns in social media and the Twitterverse. Time is definitely on their side.

On this 25th anniversary we must remember the terrible costs of gun violence. We must remember and name the victims. We must recognize those who continue the work. We must “first mourn, then work for change.”

Wendy Cukier is co-founder and president of the Coalition for Gun Control, a professor at Ryerson University in Toronto and co-author of The Global Gun Epidemic.

http://www.thestar.com/opinion/commentary/2014/12/05/ottawa_undoing_progress_made_in_wake_of_Polytechnique_Massacre.html

EDITORIAL: IN THIS AGE OF DISPOSABLE GRIEF, WE MUST NOT FORGET

Montreal Gazette, by Jack Todd, December 5, 2014

The impressions are indelible: The cold drizzle that turned to snow. The glare of street lights on wet pavement. Feet gone cold as stone. The row of ambulances idling, waiting, exhaust wafting into the night air. Police officials dashing into the vast building that loomed over us, the horror within still a secret.

A quarter-century has passed since that night, and the emotions remain as raw as they were then and as far beyond the power of language to express. For years afterward, I chastised myself for my inability to find the words to express the agony of what happened. No matter how I phrased it, the words (those “dry and riderless” words, in Sylvia Plath’s phrase) seemed so hopelessly inadequate, mere filigree eloquence shattered on the rock of tragedy.

Eventually, I had to accept that I would never find the words I sought, that such words do not exist in any language — but I keep trying.

By sheer coincidence, I was one of the first reporters to arrive at the École Polytechnique on Dec. 6, 1989. I was in the office late in the afternoon, writing a column about crack dealers, when assignment editor Catherine Wallace began making the rounds, asking reporters to check out a report of shots fired at the Université de Montreal. I grabbed a notebook, hurried to the escalator and jumped in a taxi.

A radio crew was already there, with a print reporter or two, a television crew just arriving. We were there in time to see the wounded brought out of the building, what seemed like an endless parade of stretchers.

During the interminable wait on the hill, we ran the gamut of emotions. Oddly, the sheer number of wounded convinced us that there would not be much more in the way of bad news: if all these victims had survived, surely the killer or killers could not have hit many more. We told ourselves there would be three dead, two dead, perhaps only the killer himself.

Then someone noticed that long row of idling, empty ambulances. They were not there for decoration, something truly horrible had happened inside that building. Not long after, it became official with the announcement: “There are 14 dead — and they are all women.”

There was no delay in grasping the import of that statement. This was an engineering building, a place where female students would be a minority. The killer had sought women, hunted them down, killed them because they were women. Even then, mass killings had become all too common — but killings on this scale, triggered by misogyny? The effect was utterly devastating.

We live in an age of disposable public grief, orchestrated on television in living colour, with talking heads telling us what we’re supposed to think and feel. Shock and horror Tuesday, mourning Wednesday and we’re supposed to be over it by Thursday. The sheer repetition of the images of tragedy — falling towers, school shootings, natural disasters — numbs the senses and robs us of genuine grief.

In our 24/7 news cycle, new tragedy nudges the old off the front pages before we have even begun to comprehend what just happened.

In the wake of the shootings at the Polytechnique, some well-intentioned person brought a grief counsellor to the newsroom to talk with those involved in covering the tragedy. I refused, in part because I felt that the families of the victims were the ones in need of counselling.

On a deeper level, I felt that this should not be a disposable calamity, that the point was not to get over it. The appropriate reaction, the only possible response to such an overwhelming tragedy, was raw grief.

It should wound us to the core, because if it doesn't, we are less than human. If we don't feel that sorrow and feel it deeply, we won't act.

In the wake of the shootings there was, understandably, a search for redemption, an attempt to find a way to honour the memory of the 14 murdered women through action, to make sense of the senseless through concrete endeavours to make this a better world, a world in which a repetition of such barbarity would be unthinkable.

For me, as for countless others, that quest for redemption took the form of twin campaigns to halt violence against women and to bring about legislation for strict gun control. **On the latter front, some limited success was achieved through the Coalition for Gun Control and Bill C-19 — but by dismantling the long-gun registry, the Conservative government has undone part of that accomplishment.**

Combating domestic violence is like trying to stop a flood with a shovel. It is too pervasive, too built into the social interactions between men and women, too much a part of some ideologies to be countered with anything less than a comprehensive effort encompassing all levels of society. When the most virulent misogyny is codified in the doctrine of some of our major religions, we aren't going to stop it with columns, marches or government reports.

The federal government's Panel on Violence Against Women, established in response to the Massacre in 1991, issued its report, titled "Changing the Landscape: Ending Violence — Achieving Equality" in June of 1993, with no visible effect.

Every day, wives and girlfriends are beaten, threatened and murdered. They have acid thrown in their faces. From the National Football League to the National Hockey League to the hallowed halls of Parliament, women are subjected to sexual abuse and violence. A man as cultured and apparently sympathetic as former CBC personality Jian Ghomeshi is hit with multiple allegations of abuse and violence in his private relations with women.

There was to be, then, no redemption through political action. In truth, even successful campaigns to bring about a complete ban on guns and an end to domestic violence would not have redeemed or absolved us from the events of that horrible evening, any more than mere words would somehow render it comprehensible.

Certainly, it was necessary and important to act — but it was too much to expect that any political or social action would somehow transform a senseless Massacre into anything that made sense. The event was too overwhelming, its effects too lingering. For those of us who were there that night, it remains a living nightmare, undimmed by the passage of time.

After we had learned the extent of the tragedy, after we had gleaned all we could on the hill where the wet snow was still falling, after I had walked all the way around that dark and massive building trying to imagine what had happened inside, we somehow made our way back to the newsroom to write our stories, working on autopilot, putting aside our own feelings long enough to get the job done.

It was well past midnight by the time I had written and rewritten my column and done telephone interviews with multiple news outlets, including CBS radio. In need of several stiff drinks and a place to decompress, I made my way to our Gazette hangout in Old Montreal. There, somewhere near closing time, I finally broke down, repeating over and over a hopeless litany that still echoes down through the years: "They were so young ... they were so young ... they were so young ..."

<http://Montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/jack-todd-in-this-age-of-disposable-grief-we-must-not-forget>

EDITORIAL: POLYTECHNIQUE MASSACRE LAID BARE HIDDEN OPPRESSION OF WOMEN

CBC News, by Sean Michaels, December 3, 2014



On Dec. 6, 1989, 28 students were shot at a school in Montreal. Most of them were women. It was a tragedy that rang out, reverberated, around the world, through decades.

Events like these are chords; they comprise several notes. Nineteen minutes on a winter's day. Fifteen deaths, each one an individual human life. Matters of policing, gun control, and mental health.

But above all this is a lament that has lasted because of what it seemed to say, and still seems to say, about the trouble that exists between men and women.

Our society is made out of systems. System upon system, layers of tactic and edict and habit, new schemes and old logic. The older the system, the more power it circulates, the harder it is to dismantle. The subtler the system, the more covert its processes, the more difficult it is to even apprehend.

The École Polytechnique Massacre was a horrific crime. It was also the brutal, explicit assertion of an ideology that is usually hidden.

Marc Lépine said he was "fighting feminism." He said he wanted to stop women from "seizing [the advantages] accorded to men." He said they had ruined his life.

The oppression of women is one of our eldest systems. And it is subtle. Bizarre: here is a thing as rife as garbage and yet it is so camouflaged that a man will sometimes claim, deluded, "We have solved it."

We have not solved it.

At the end of 2014, sexism is like a colour: a faint, ubiquitous shading. Misogyny is a wraith standing by every window. Women are victims of physical, emotional, sexual and institutional violence, and often we don't believe them. Mainstream society tolerates abusers and so do many of our smaller, more fragile communities, as if taking power from the assholes might make us weaker.

Twenty-five years after Lépine's death, many men and women are still campaigning against "social justice warriors" who dare to challenge the patriarchy.

After we had learned the extent of the tragedy, after we had gleaned all we could on the hill where the wet snow was still falling, after I had walked all the way around that dark and massive building trying to imagine what had happened inside, we somehow made our way back to the newsroom to write our stories, working on autopilot, putting aside our own feelings long enough to get the job done.

'I am a witness to everything around me'

Most of us were not at the École Polytechnique that Wednesday in 1989. I was seven years old, in Ottawa. I will not pretend to know what the survivors felt or go on feeling. I was not there. I was not a witness.

But I'm a grown man now and I am a witness to everything around me. Everything I condone and abet, everything I participate in and let be. Everything I fight for, too; everyone I listen to and learn from.

Every Dec. 6 is a memorial to 14 women killed because they were women. It is an echo of what happened in Montreal, years ago. But in a smaller way it is also a lament for this year, this December, and all that has not changed.

As we mourn, as we stand in solidarity, we must also (and men especially) bear witness to the present world, our present selves, and the work that's still to do. The truest way to answer a tragedy is to render it unimaginable.

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/Montreal/Polytechnique-Massacre-laid-bare-hidden-oppression-of-women-1.2859299>

Tributes to the victims and their families

NATHALIE PROVOST, WHO WAS SHOT AT POLYTECHNIQUE, RECALLS TRAGIC DAY

Global News, by Peter Rakobowchuk, December 5, 2014



Nathalie Provost, a victim of the 1989 shooting at Ecole Polytechnique in Montreal, speaks about gun control during a news conference on Parliament Hill in Ottawa, Thursday November 24, 2011.

Nathalie Provost will never forget confronting gunman Marc Lepine just before he shot her four times during an armed assault that left 14 women dead at Montreal's Ecole Polytechnique.

Provost was an engineering student on Dec. 6, 1989, when Lepine went on a 20-minute shooting rampage that eventually sparked a national gun-control debate that continues until this day.

"It (the Massacre) is now intimately woven into the fabric of my life in a number of ways," Provost told The Canadian Press just days ahead of Saturday's 25th

anniversary of the tragedy.

The 23-year-old came face-to-face with Lepine and his 223-calibre Sturm-Ruger rifle in a classroom and she says nothing would have convinced him to change his plan to kill feminists – people he blamed for ruining his life.

"He told us he was there because we were feminists and I just replied that we were not feminists, that we were just studying in an engineering school and that he would be able to come and study with us and then he shot (opened fire)," she recalled.

Provost survived being hit with bullets in the forehead, both legs and a foot.

Asked how the horrific events of 25 years ago have changed her life, Provost said she believes they've made her more sensitive and more in touch with her own vulnerability.

"I realized when I was very young that I was not invincible, that I could die quite quickly," she said of the chilling events.

"I remember when I saw the eyes of one of my classmates. She closed her eyes and I knew she was dead. I remember this image. It's clear in my memory."

Lepine took his own life after a 20-minute barrage of bullets that also wounded 13 other people – nine women and four men.

While the date of Dec. 6 brings back painful memories, Provost also recalls "marvellous" ones.

One of her children started to walk on Dec. 6 and she learned she was pregnant with her third child on the 10th anniversary of Polytechnique.

"For me it was a victory of life," she said.

Yet it took her years to come to terms with what had happened before she could move on.

"The first five years were the longest, maybe, and I was still fighting inside myself with everything around: what happened with feminism, with violence, with the fact that it happened to me," she said.

“After five years I was ready to have my kids and that was a new world that opened to me and Polytechnique faded away a little bit – (but) it never disappears.”

Even today, the sound of a pot cover crashing to the floor brings back memories of the shootings.

“It upsets me because the noise awakens in me a memory of the firearm of Marc Lepine – and I become very upset and aggressive,” she said.

The tragedy also took a toll on relatives of victims.

Jim Edward, whose sister Anne-Marie was killed, said it took 10 years to overcome his grief.

“Eight years of therapy and then being able to forgive the killer and the 10th year – it was a big step in moving on in my grieving process,” Edward said in an interview at his Montreal home.

“I became a Christian in my 10th year, so maybe that had something to do with it.”

His 45-year-old wife Claire said his efforts trying to cope with Polytechnique had an impact well beyond the family.

“Some people I know, after what happened, didn’t even want to be close to him because he was carrying too much pain,” she said.

It also struck at the heart of Luka, their nine-year-old son, “whom I caught several times crying because he wanted to meet his aunt.”

On a positive note, her husband noted that 25 years after the mass murder, Canadian society is much more aware of the proliferation of guns.

“There is a greater awareness with regards to guns, there’s a greater awareness with regards to feminism and women’s rights,” he said.

Edward, now 48, has joined other gun control supporters fighting the Conservative government’s controversial Bill C-42.

The proposed legislation was supposed to be debated Oct. 22 – the day gunman Michael Zehaf-Bibeau stormed Parliament – but has been pushed to the sidelines.

The bill is aimed at overhauling Canada’s gun-licensing rules, making it easier for legal owners to transport their weapons.

Edward is worried any relaxing of controls on legal guns will fuel the illegal market and allow easier access to military-style assault rifles.

“Canada has a great tradition of hunting and fishing and whatnot, but military-style assault rifles have no business in any hunter’s hands,” he said.

Edward said the type of rifle used by Justin Bourque to kill three RCMP officers in Moncton, N.B., last June can strike someone a kilometre away.

“I mean who needs that kind of gun in Canada,” he added. “It’s definitely not the hunters.”

Heidi Rathjen, who survived Polytechnique and became a resolute gun-control advocate, warned in an interview there could be a repeat of such violence.



“Absolutely! Today, if we’re talking about Massacres, killing many people rapidly, there are weapons on the market today that didn’t exist in 1989 . . . weapons of war designed to pierce light-armoured vehicles and there are sniper rifles that can shoot up to two kilometres,” she said.

“You can buy them on the Internet. I find ads on the Internet all the time.”

Rathjen blamed the abolition of the long-gun registry in 2012 for the difficulty in knowing how many assault-type weapons are now available.

She said about seven million guns were circulating in Canada in 2012 before the Conservative government scrapped the registry – mostly hunting rifles and shotguns.

“But that list is getting old because the new weapons coming on the market are not being classified as restricted or prohibited,” she said.

“It’s very difficult to be here 25 years later and to see that most of our gains are being destroyed by the current government.”

Rathjen praised Quebec, which has gone to court to protect data from the federal gun registry.

“The only silver lining is what the government of Quebec is doing, which is showing their solidarity with the families of the victims.”

Provost, meanwhile, remembers all the positives she gained from attending the engineering school.

“I am a real engineer, I like to solve problems, I’m curious, I like to understand the way things work and Polytechnique helped me to structure my mind, my way of thinking, my way of looking at problems.”

<http://globalnews.ca/news/1710154/woman-shot-at-Polytechnique-recalls-events/>

25 YEARS AFTER ÉCOLE POLYTECHNIQUE BLOODBATH, HUSBAND STILL FIGHTS FOR GUN CONTROL

Toronto Sun, by Camille Laurin-Desjardins, November 30, 2014



Jean-Francois Larrivee's wife, Maryse Laganriere, was gunned down at Ecole Polytechnique 25 years ago. (QMI Agency)

It's been almost 25 years since Jean-Francois Larrivee saw his wife walk towards the doors of Ecole Polytechnique for the last time.

Maryse Laganriere was 25 years old the day Marc Lepine came to the school with a gun and killed 14 women.

Maryse, who worked in the financial services department, was the only non-student among them.

It was in that school where she met Larrivee in 1986 while he studied electrical

engineering.

"I had to pay for my semester. It was \$164 at the time," recalled Larrivee with a smile. "It was the first time I saw her. She was so beautiful."

The two married in 1989.

"We were happy, we were trying to have a baby," he said.

All these years later, the pain of losing Maryse is still fresh. Larrivee never remarried or had children after losing her.

For years he went to the cemetery every Dec. 6 to lay flowers at Maryse's grave with her mother.

This year, he will take part in the 25th anniversary commemorations, including an upcoming benefit concert. But the most important commemoration is his ongoing battle to maintain the federal gun registry in Quebec, despite Ottawa's wishes, so that "Maryse has not died in vain."

"We won a lot with laws that were passed in 1991 and 1995," Larrivee said. "A lot of what we won disappeared in April 2012 when the federal government destroyed the long-gun registry in Canada. That's 7.1 million weapons we completely lost track of."

Larrivee has campaigned with others against Bill C-42, which is currently in its second reading in the House of Commons. The Conservative bill includes measures that weaken control over the transportation of handguns and the handing out of possession licences.

"All the work we did for 25 years is a tribute to Maryse and the 13 other victims," he said. "If (we stop this bill), it will be the only positive thing to come out of all this. It will be a balm on my wound."

<http://www.torontosun.com/2014/11/30/25-years-after-ecole-Polytechnique-bloodbath-husband-still-fights-for-gun-control>

POLYTECHNIQUE SHOOTING 25TH ANNIVERSARY COMMEMORATED IN MONTREAL

CBC News, December 6, 2014

Fourteen beams of light shot out into the night sky over Montreal on Saturday, one for each of the 14 victims of the École Polytechnique Massacre that happened 25 years ago.

On Dec. 6, 1989, 14 women were killed at Montreal's École Polytechnique by a gunman professing to hate feminists and the place women took in society.

The gunman targeted women at Polytechnique because it was an engineering school, and he didn't like that women were pursuing powerful jobs that previously had been almost exclusively held by men.

"They want to keep the advantages of women [e.g. cheaper insurance, extended maternity leave preceded by a preventative leave, etc.] while seizing for themselves those of men," the killer's suicide note read.

He entered Polytechnique on Dec. 6, 1989, with a Ruger Mini-14 semi-automatic rifle. He stalked the halls, entered classrooms and separated the men from the women.

By the time he turned the gun on himself, he had killed 14 women and had wounded 14 others — 10 of them women.

Victims honoured at touching ceremony

Dozens of Montrealers and notable Quebecers assembled at the summit of Montreal's Mount Royal for a two-hour ceremony to mark the 25th anniversary of the Massacre.



Former Quebec Premier Pauline Marois, left, Montreal Mayor Denis Coderre and Quebec Premier Philippe Couillard, right, observe a moment of silence during a ceremony on Mount Royal to mark the 25th anniversary of the Polytechnique massacre Saturday, Dec. 6, 2014 in Montreal. (Ryan Remiorz/CP)

Hosted by journalists Pierre Bruneau and Anne-Marie Dussault, the event featured short speeches by Premier Philippe Couillard and Mayor Denis Coderre, as well as several ministers and members of the National Assembly, **gun control advocates Wendy Cukier and Heidi Rathjen**, former federal politicians Dawn Black and Martin Cauchon, journalists, the director of the Montreal police, survivors of the shooting and many others.

Those who spoke, spoke of violence against women, misogyny, feminism and gun control. Some recounted their memories of the events of

Dec. 6, 1989 and the conversation that unfolded in their aftermath.

Bruneau called the events that took place that night "impossible to forget."

"We were shocked, we were confused. How we could have possibly had such a tragedy here in Canada?" asked Kim Campbell, former prime minister of Canada.

Jean Doré, the mayor of Montreal in 1989, spoke to the crowd via video.

"Twenty-five years later, why do we have to continue to commemorate this event? It's because equality between women and men has still not yet been achieved," Doré said.

Dawn Black of the NDP in 1991 introduced a private member's bill asking that Dec. 6 become the National Day of Remembrance and Action on Violence Against Women.

She said she came up against a lot of resistance from her male colleagues in the House of Commons, but with the support of the other female MPs and of a few men, they were able to get the bill passed.

"In the violence, in the hatred, in the furor, all Canadians were exposed to reality of violence against women in its extreme," Black said of Dec. 6, adding that "violence against women is still with us in all of its ugly forms."

Polytechnique an 'extraordinary place'

Saturday morning, students gathered at a commemorative plaque on the campus, where they laid white roses and lit small lit candles in memory of the victims.

Michèle Thibodeau-DeGuire, one of the first women to ever study at École Polytechnique, laid flowers at the site early Saturday afternoon, along with other members of the university and larger community.

She has had a lengthy career as a civil engineer, and is the chairwoman of École Polytechnique's board of directors.

Despite the tragedy that happened on Dec. 6, 1989, women should still feel more comfortable than ever to take their place in society, said Thibodeau-DeGuire.

Since the shooting, the number of women attending the school has only increased, she said, and Polytechnique continues to be a safe place to study engineering.

She said the shooting — a senseless act — shouldn't be the event that defines the school.

"It's an extraordinary place," Thibodeau-DeGuire said.

She encouraged women thinking about studying engineering to "take their place" in society.

"It's a career in which women can be independent. She can have a rewarding career," Thibodeau-DeGuire said.

Community remembers Dec. 6

On Saturday morning, a group of about 40 students gathered at the commemorative plaque at Polytechnique to say a few words and light candles in the victims' honour.

The event was organized by the women's branch of the student association ASSÉ.

As morning turned into afternoon, hundreds of others stopped by the plaque and at Place-du-6-décembre, a park dedicated to the victims of the Massacre near Polytechnique.

Some of those in attendance held up signs with the names and ages of the victims, while many others wore the white ribbon — a symbol of support to end violence against women.

Véronique Latulippe travelled from Granby, Que., to participate in the 25th anniversary events.

She works at Centre Entr'Elles, a women's support centre and network that works closely with victims of violence.

"It's still a taboo subject," Latulippe said.

"Women still have a hard time to denounce it, to leave their homes. We're here to continue to say it's not tolerable, it's zero-tolerance."

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/Montreal/Polytechnique-shooting-25th-anniversary-commemorated-in-Montreal-1.2863096>

SURVIVORS OF POLYTECHNIQUE TRAGEDY DECRY CANADA'S GUN LAWS

Montreal Gazette, by Marian Scott, December 1, 2014

Days before the 25th anniversary of the Polytechnique Massacre, survivors of Canada's worst shooting rampage called for the restoration of gun control measures to prevent such tragedies in future.

"Our gun control laws are weaker today than they were at the time of the Massacre," said Heidi Rathjen, a 1990 Polytechnique graduate who hid with other students of the engineering school when gunman Marc Lépine killed 14 young women on Dec. 6, 1989.

Rathjen, who co-founded the Coalition for Gun Control in 1991 with Ryerson University professor Wendy Cukier, was among the speakers at a news conference Friday by PolyRemembers, (polysesouvient.ca) a group of family members of the victims and Polytechnique graduates.

The Quebec order of engineers, Polytechnique Montreal, École de technologie supérieure and associations representing engineering students joined the group in decrying the Stephen Harper government's dismantling of gun laws, including the federal long-gun registry.

Events commemorating the tragedy will begin Saturday at 2 p.m. with a solemn ceremony at the Place du 6 décembre 1989 at the corner of Decelles Ave. and Queen Mary Rd. Flags at the Polytechnique will fly at half-mast.

At 3 p.m., a torchlight procession will wend its way to the chalet on Mount Royal, escorted by the Montreal Police cavalry.

A vigil at the chalet, hosted by broadcasters Anne-Marie Dussault and Pierre Bruneau, and featuring family members, graduates, politicians and performers, will begin at 4:30 p.m.

At 7:30 p.m., the Université de Montreal's orchestra, directed by Jean-François Rivest, with the McGill University Chorus, Schulich School Singers and the Université de Montreal's Atelier d'opéra et du chœur, will perform a memorial concert in the Salle Claude Champagne, 220 Vincent d'Indy Ave.

Works will include Johannes Brahms's German Requiem and excerpts from Johann Sebastian Bach's St. Matthew's Passion. The concert will be broadcast by Radio Canada's radio network.

<http://Montrealgazette.com/news/local-news/survivors-of-Polytechnique-tragedy-decry-canadas-gun-laws>

TORIES INSULT VICTIMS OF MASSACRE

Winnipeg Free Press, by Shannon Sampert, December 4, 2014

These are the names of the 14 women killed by Marc Lépine, 25 years ago on Dec. 6. It's important to remember their names and to understand why their deaths still resonate for many Canadian women. This year, it seems that it's even more important to talk about Geneviève, Hélène, Nathalie, Barbara, Anne-Marie, Maud, Maryse, Maryse, Anne-Marie, Sonia, Michèle, Annie, Annie and Barbara. Because for some reason, Justice Minister Peter MacKay seems to have forgotten why they were killed and this country's commitment to them.

In the House on Tuesday, the topic of the Montreal Massacre came up, to which MacKay said: "And while we may never understand what occurred, why this happened, why these women were singled out for this horrific act of violence, we have to stand together."

Excuse me?

It's appalling that MacKay could be so ignorant. And so out of touch.

So as a public service, I'm providing the minister with a quick history lesson.

Lépine walked into Montreal's École Polytechnique, separated the women from the men, and began shooting. In Canada's worst mass shooting, he killed 14 women and wounded four men and 10 women. His suicide note talked about how he decided to send the feminists who had ruined his life to their maker. And dear minister, this is what we call misogyny, a hatred of women or in Lépine's case, a hatred of feminist women.

So why this happened is obvious and hardly a matter for debate.

Perhaps it's not that surprising MacKay hasn't figured these things out. After all, he hasn't come across as particularly well-informed on the topic on many things that affect women. Recall earlier this year, he penned a poorly thought-out email about women being too busy being mothers to be judges, explaining that is the reason for the low number of women sitting on federally appointed benches. His party has been criticized for cancelling a proposed national daycare program and for restricting pay-equity complaints.

More galling is his party's stance on gun control. As a woman, it's hard to watch the promises made to Canadians in the wake of the Montreal Massacre to toughen up gun control erode under this current government.

Heidi Rathjen was a survivor of the Montreal Massacre and has been an advocate for gun control ever since. As Rathjen says, "Over the years, the Harper government has systematically ignored the voices of gun victims and their families as well as women's groups dedicated to fighting violence against women while they dismantled our gun-control laws. While the Harper government accuses supporters of gun control of politicizing a Massacre, Prime Minister Stephen Harper himself didn't hesitate to call the murder of Cpl. Nathan Cirillo a terrorist act, on the same day of the shooting, linking it to his government's new anti-terrorism legislation. The hypocrisy is breathtaking."

The government's latest bill aimed at easing restrictions around the transportation of firearms is working its way through the Commons. It's a bill that has sparked some controversy, with gun-control advocates and gun enthusiasts both seemingly unhappy with the legislation.

For Rathjen, the Conservatives aren't telling the whole story: "The problem with this legislation is that the government has wrapped it up in all these positive terms, like common-sense measures, cutting red tape and safe and simple policies and so people do not understand what the measures actually do. For example, the bill will eliminate controls on the transportation of handguns which existed since the

1960s, will make assault weapons more available for ordinary citizens, will exempt half a million gun owners from the same screening that all new gun owners are subject to, and will take away provincial discretion in applying the law according to local public-safety needs and priorities."

And this is not the first time gun-control laws have been weakened. First, the gun registry was eliminated, then according to Rathjen, "they discreetly eliminated the obligation to verify the validity of a buyer's permit when selling a long gun. Next, they eliminated sales records for unrestricted weapons at point of sale, which existed long before the Montreal Massacre and which is the law across the United States. That's how they were able to identify Marc Lépine, who had shot himself in the face."

In Canada, Rathjen says, we're now left with nearly six million unrestricted weapons, including not only hunting guns but many military assault weapons.

Talk about an insult to the memory of 14 young women who died in the Montreal Massacre.

And talk about an insult to all the other victims of gun violence-- both men and women-- who followed afterwards.

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/opinion/analysis/tories-insult-victims--of-Massacre-284715411.html>

POLYTECHNIQUE: FOUR WOMEN LINKED TOGETHER

Edmonton Journal, December 6, 2014



A discussion by four women on how their lives became linked by the tragedy of the 1989 École Polytechnique massacre. Speakers are Nathalie Provost, survivor of the École Polytechnique Massacre; Heidi Rathjen, survivor of the École Polytechnique Massacre and co-founder of the Coalition for Gun Control; Jocelyne Dallaire Légaré, who managed funeral arrangement for victims of the École Polytechnique Massacre; and Michèle Thibodeau-DeGuire, who was the Polytechnique's PR director in 1989. Video shot on November 27, 2014 at the École Polytechnique. (Dario Ayala & Phil Carpenter / Montreal Gazette)

A discussion by four women on how their lives became linked by the tragedy of the 1989 École Polytechnique Massacre. Speakers are Nathalie Provost, survivor of the École Polytechnique Massacre; **Heidi Rathjen, survivor of the École Polytechnique Massacre and co-founder of the Coalition for Gun Control**; Jocelyne Dallaire Légaré, who managed funeral arrangement for victims of the École Polytechnique Massacre; and Michèle Thibodeau-DeGuire, who was the Polytechnique's PR director in 1989. Video shot on November 27, 2014 at the École Polytechnique.

MONTREAL MASSACRE: A SURVIVOR'S LEGACY

O Canada, by Marc Kielburger and Craig Kielburger, November 25, 2014

Death threats don't stop Heidi Rathjen. "One time, there were gun shots on my answering machine, and another time I received a photo of myself with a bullet hole through it," she says.

Rathjen is an accidental activist — a survivor who emerged as one of Canada's most vocal and longest-acting advocates for gun control in the aftermath of the Montreal Massacre. And she calmly accepts that sparking fierce debate and "making enemies" comes with the divisive territory that is her life's work.

She wanted to become an engineer and was once cynical about an individual's ability to influence government policy and laws before her life took an unexpected turn 25 years ago. On Dec. 6, 1989, a gunman walked into Rathjen's school, L'École Polytechnique de Montreal, and started shooting women. Fourteen female students and staff were killed in a tragic mix of gun violence and misogyny that became known as the Montreal Massacre and sent shock waves across the country.

"I was in a room thinking about final exams when a student came in and said, 'There's someone out there with a gun. I remember thinking, 'Bullets in our school? This is impossible.' Then we started hearing gun shots, then cries and screams and then silence, silence."

Rathjen was in that room for 45 minutes until police came and let students out. Later, she huddled around a TV with classmates watching what they had survived unfold.

Grief morphed into fierce determination for change.

While she isn't well-known outside Quebec, Rathjen organized a national petition on stricter gun control laws, gathering more than half a million supporters across the country — all before social media and online advocacy was born. Rathjen was there in 1990 when the petition was presented to then Justice Minister Kim Campbell, who promised action.

It was an early victory for a young activist who has since learned to rally after setbacks, keeping the memory of the Massacred women front of mind in her quest to make society safer from gun violence.

Eager to resume a sense of normalcy, Rathjen graduated and started work as an engineer — only to be drawn back to the cause later in 1990 when the gun control bill championed by Campbell didn't have enough support in the House of Commons to be enacted into law.

The news came just a few days after the first anniversary of Dec. 6. "It was a slap in the face to the victims," says Rathjen. "My head wasn't in my work. It was on gun control. It became my mission."

Rathjen left engineering behind to become the executive director of the Quebec-based Coalition for Gun Control. The breakthrough she was fighting for came on Dec. 5, 2005. Bill C-68 included mandatory registration of all firearms, a ban on short-barrelled and small-calibre handguns and gave the government the ability to prohibit people from using any firearms that were not reasonably used for hunting.

"This was a legacy that would save lives," says Rathjen.

She has since started working for the Quebec Coalition for Tobacco Control (a cause the activist also believes saves lives) and leads a small group of École Polytechnique survivors that works on gun control. Poly Remembers was set up five years ago when the federal government started to talk about abolishing the long-gun registry, a move the group doesn't support.

Rathjen has seen enough governments come and go and changes to Canadian gun laws to believe she may never rest on this issue. Next week, Ottawa is set to resume debate on proposed changes to federal

gun legislation (known as Bill C-42) that were announced in the summer. Rathjen will be watching, eager to be the voice of the 14 women who died 25 years ago.

“I have a duty towards future generations and I want there to be a legacy of safe gun control,” she says. “I feel good gun control is like good public health care — it’s a fundamental Canadian value that we need to uphold.”

“On December 6th it’s not enough to just remember. We also need to act.”

<http://o.canada.com/news/politics-and-the-nation/crime-and-justice/a-survivors-legacy>

25 YEARS AFTER POLYTECHNIQUE, GUN CONTROL MOVEMENT HAS LOST STEAM

Montreal Gazette, by Marian Scott, December 5, 2014

When members of a Pointe-Claire family fled their home last month during a domestic dispute, police consulted Quebec's gun registry to see whether the father, who was still holed up inside the house, owned any firearms.

A quick check showed the man owned half-a-dozen rifles – allowing police to take appropriate precautions before successfully negotiating with him to give himself up peacefully.

But the ability of police to make such checks is hanging by a thread. In the next few months, the Supreme Court of Canada is expected to rule on Quebec's bid to save records on an estimated 1.6 million firearms in the province.

Outrage over the killing of 14 young women in the 1989 Polytechnique Massacre spurred Canadian politicians to tighten access to firearms and start keeping track of legally acquired weapons.

In 1995, Jean Chrétien's Liberal government passed Bill C-68, requiring gun-owners to register all firearms by 2003. It also introduced a new gun-licensing system and stiffer penalties for serious crimes involving firearms.

But most of the gains for gun control in the 1990s and 2000s have been lost under Prime Minister Stephen Harper's Conservative government, family members and classmates of those who died said on the eve of the 25th anniversary of the tragedy.

"The current government has abolished or weakened most of the measures that were won following six years of mobilization from coast to coast," said Heidi Rathjen, co-ordinator of PolyRemembers, a group of Polytechnique graduates and family members of the victims set up five years ago to oppose the dismantling of the registry.

She noted the registry and other gun-control measures are supported by Canadian Association of Chiefs of Police, Canadian Police Association, groups fighting domestic violence and suicide-prevention organizations.

In 1991, Rathjen, a 1990 graduate of the engineering school who hid with other students during the shooting rampage, co-founded the Coalition for Gun Control with Ryerson University professor Wendy Cukier.

"The Montreal Massacre was incredibly important in re-framing the debate about gun control," said R. Blake Brown, an associate professor of history at Saint Mary's University in Halifax and author of *Arming and Disarming: A History of Gun Control in Canada* (University of Toronto Press, 2012).

"It really did change gun control into a women's issue in a way that it really hadn't been before 1989," he said.

The tragedy drew a link in the public's mind between firearms and violence against women – boosting support for measures like background checks, a waiting period for getting a gun-acquisition certificate and restrictions on assault weapons, Brown said.



Gun control activist Heidi Rathjen speaks during a news conference in Montreal, Friday, November 28, 2014.

"I think it was because of the horrific nature of the episode, because of the targeting of women and because of the obviously anti-feminist, anti-woman position that the shooter took," he said.

"Canada had had some mass shootings, but nothing on the scale of Montreal," he added. "I think it just struck a lot of Canadians in a way that other shootings hadn't."

The Coalition for Gun Control says gun violence is a factor in many domestic-abuse cases, causing some women to stay in abusive situations out of fear of being shot by their partner.

In 2010, 99,000 Canadians were victims of family violence and an additional 102,500 were victimized by their spouse or dating partner, according to Statistics Canada.

In the 2006 shooting at Dawson College, where gunman Kimveer Gill killed student Anastasia De Sousa and injured 19 others, the gun registry allowed police to trace his weapon from the licence-plate number of the car he drove.

But despite stricter gun laws adopted after the 1989 Massacre, Canada never banned the Ruger Mini-14 semi-automatic rifle used in the Polytechnique shooting, and subsequently used by Anders Behring Breivik in Norway to kill 69 people in 2011.

As memories of the Polytechnique Massacre faded, Canada's political climate on gun control began to change, Brown said.

Opponents of gun control were successful in turning public opinion against the gun registry by shifting the debate away from public safety, he said.

"The people who hated (the registry) managed to flip that issue and make it into a financial one," promoting the idea that the registry "costs a lot of money and people aren't sure of its effectiveness," he said.

The gun lobby is "very well organized," Brown said. "It's rural but it's also largely white and largely male."

Support for the gun registry was also eroded by a scathing report in 2002 by Canada's auditor-general that projected that its total cost, originally budgeted at \$2 million annually, would balloon to a total of more than \$1 billion by April 2006.

Now, the Quebec data are all that remain of the federal long-gun registry, abolished by the Conservative government in 2012. The Quebec information is temporarily protected by an injunction, pending the outcome of the Supreme Court's decision on whether to turn it over to the province or destroy it.

Gun-control advocates say the Conservative government's Bill C-42, tabled this fall to overhaul gun licensing rules, will further weaken public safety by loosening restrictions on military weapons and handguns and creating a grace period for expired licences.

"Firearm owners have been a very solid base for the Conservatives. But once the registry's gone, they need some things to encourage that bloc of voters to keep showing up," Brown said.

A quarter-century after the Polytechnique tragedy, its power as a symbol for gun control has weakened "because political parties, for their own self-interest, aren't really willing to talk about it and encourage keeping or strengthening gun controls by invoking this episode," Brown said.

"After 25 years, people forget the horror of the incident."

A DAUGHTER'S SPIRIT, A MOTHER'S GRIEF

Maclean's, by Suzanne Laplante Edward, December 5, 2014

On the 25th anniversary of the tragedy at Montreal's École Polytechnique—which claimed the lives of 14 female students—Suzanne Laplante Edward writes in *Chatelaine* about the events of the worst day of her life: December 6, 1989.

5:15 p.m. I'm getting dinner ready and listening to classical music when Radio-Canada suddenly interrupts the program. "A man armed with a gun has entered the École Polytechnique. We will get back to you as soon as possible with further details." I'm stunned. Things like this just don't happen here in Quebec. School shootings are an American phenomenon. My daughter, Anne-Marie, is a student at Poly, but I know that if she finds herself in the face of danger, she will find a hiding spot somewhere. She's so athletic, so intuitive.

At that precise moment, Anne-Marie has finished a chemistry lab with a male student friend of hers, and the two are getting ready to grab a bite at the cafeteria on the ground floor of the engineering school. A few minutes later, Radio-Canada interrupts the music again: "Four people are reportedly wounded at Poly. No deaths have been confirmed so far. Urgences-santé and the Montreal Police are arriving on site."

Meanwhile, the gunman is roaming the building from one floor to the next. He has already fired a shot through the glass window of the school's accounting department, killing one female employee. He enters a classroom on the second floor and kills six students.

Anne-Marie is lined up in the cafeteria. In seven minutes, she will be dead. I grab the phone to call my husband in the car. "Jim, a crazy sniper is inside Poly; he's shooting students." Long silence. Then: "There's no point in worrying," he says. "You know her, she will find a way to protect herself. She may not even be there...."

To this day I still don't understand why we are not afraid for her. I hang up. The phone rings at once. It's our son, Jimmy.

"Mom, did you hear about Poly? Don't worry, Anne-Marie told me she'd be at Mont Habitant tonight to train with the Université de Montreal ski team."

I phone Anne-Marie's roommate. Yes, he's heard about the shooter. No, Anne-Marie is not there. Her skis? They are in her bedroom. The practice has been postponed until tomorrow. My heart sinks a notch.

5:20 p.m. Jim arrives home, picks up his newspaper and does not seem overly worried ... I think he's trying to keep me calm. The truth is that we don't believe that she is in danger. Still, we're edgy. We switch on the TV. "The police have surrounded the school," the reporter says. "There could more than one killer, maybe two or three."

5:22 p.m. The gunman enters the cafeteria. Four shots ring out. A young woman collapses and dies in her chair. Hysteria sets in. Students jostle toward the exit, people scream, people huddle under the tables. The gunman smiles and slowly continues his hunt for women. Why should he rush, does he not hold in his hand the ultimate weapon, a gun? Seeing that the exit is blocked, Anne-Marie and a girlfriend take refuge behind some partitions in the corner of the room where nobody ever goes. That vision of her scrambling towards her possible salvation will haunt me for months.

The gunman eyes the two running women and their long hair. Hair of damnation. He slowly makes his way toward them behind the partitions. He points his weapon in Anne-Marie's face. She dares to speak to him.

"Why are you doing this? What did we do to you?"

"You've taken my place in this university. Engineering school is for men. For men."

He aims at Anne-Marie's friend. A bullet in her face. Another one goes into my daughter's right arm. Then a third just below her heart. Finally, a fourth, to be sure. (The two of them were eventually found later that night, hugging, comforting each other in death. How long did they survive their ordeal? What did they say to each other?) The devil disguised as a man goes back up to the third floor and enters Room 311, a materials engineering class where two female students are doing an oral presentation.

"Get out! I said get out!" he shouts at the young men. The students hesitate. He threatens them with his gun. "Leave! I have a score to settle with the girls!" He is yelling now and the students have no choice but to withdraw. The two students who were presenting try to sneak out with the men. The gunman shoots them in the back. They will succumb to their wounds.

The gunman walks between the rows and fires at women. A student is killed; several others are wounded. One of the injured students is howling. The gunman moves toward her and ... click. No more ammunition.

He abandons the gun, takes a dagger from his belt and stabs her to death. But the resistance offered by the flesh brings him to his senses. "Oh, shit! What have I done?" He reloads his gun and fires a bullet into his head.

Meanwhile, at our home, we eat our dinner in blissful ignorance. I wonder today if this refusal to believe is a survival instinct. We eat our lasagna, picking at our food a little uneasily. Why is Anne-Marie not calling? Our son calls us back: "I am taking a taxi. I'm going to check if Anne-Marie's car is there."

When he arrives on the scene, he is met with patrol cars, flashing lights, ambulances. He approaches the officer in charge: "We have no word from my sister, Anne-Marie Edward. She's a student here. Is she on the injury list?" The answer is negative; he heads home, relieved. The idea that she might be dead doesn't even enter his mind.

I am glued to the television set when Bernard Derome, a host for Radio-Canada, breaks the news that two more bodies have been uncovered: "They are telling us that the 14 casualties are all women."

For 25 years, Suzanne Laplante Edward has fought for stricter gun control laws in Canada. She has advocated relentlessly for the Canadian Firearms Registry, now abolished in all provinces but Québec, where it is presently under review at the Supreme Court level.

Find the rest of her story of Dec. 6, 1989, at www.chatelaine.ca

<http://www.macleans.ca/news/canada/a-daughters-spirit-a-mothers-grief/>

Other relevant media coverage (in French)

DES SEMI-AUTOMATIQUES SIMILAIRES À CELUI DE LÉPINE TOUJOURS ACCESSIBLES

La Presse, par Philippe Teisceira-Lessard, le 2 décembre 2014

Vingt-cinq ans après la tuerie de Polytechnique, des carabines Ruger Mini-14, l'arme utilisée par Marc Lépine pour assassiner 14 jeunes femmes, sont toujours offertes sur un site québécois de petites annonces.

Le Ruger Mini-14, un fusil classifié comme «sans restriction» par les autorités canadiennes, se vend entre 700 et 900\$ à Pierrefonds, Nicolet ou Saint-Bruno, selon le populaire site LesPAC.com.

Surnommée «le fusil d'assaut du pauvre», l'arme est passée à l'histoire après avoir été utilisée dans le Massacre de Polytechnique et de l'île norvégienne d'Utoya, en 2011 (69 morts).

Suzanne Moquin, grande patronne du site LesPAC.com, a souligné que son site ne peut vendre que les armes «sans restriction».

Des concurrents comme Kijiji.com et eBay.com les bannissent complètement, mais LesPAC ne veut pas interdire la vente de produits considérés comme légaux.

«Si la législation devait être modifiée, on s'assurerait d'être conformes, a expliqué Mme Moquin. Ce n'est pas à nous de juger si la vente devrait être permise ou pas.»

Au cours des trois dernières semaines, cinq Ruger Mini-14 ont été mis en vente sur LesPAC.com.

Permis non obligatoire

Pire: selon des associations policières et le responsable ontarien des armes à feu, depuis 2012, n'importe quel propriétaire de Ruger Mini-14 qui se trouve hors du Québec peut vendre son arme sans vérifier si l'acheteur détient un permis.

Cet assouplissement législatif avait fait peu de vagues lorsqu'il a été voté il y a deux ans, dans l'ombre de l'abolition du registre des armes d'épaule.

«C'est irresponsable! a dénoncé Chris Wyatt, qui délivre les permis d'armes pour l'Ontario. Je n'ai jamais rencontré un policier qui pensait que c'est une bonne idée. C'est ainsi que des criminels et des personnes souffrant de maladie mentale peuvent obtenir une arme étant donné qu'ils ne pourraient jamais avoir de permis.»

Son ancien collègue Guy Asselin, qui a occupé le même poste au Québec avant de prendre sa retraite, opine. Ça «amoindrit le contrôle des armes à feu au Canada, a-t-il dit. C'est la tangente qui est prise actuellement.»

Les syndicats de police inquiets

Les deux hommes joignent ainsi leur voix aux associations policières préoccupées par cet assouplissement alors qu'«il est encore tôt» pour en évaluer les conséquences.

La même loi qui a aboli le registre des armes d'épaule en 2012 supprimait aussi l'obligation pour un vendeur privé d'armes à feu non restreintes de vérifier le permis de l'acheteur avant de conclure une

transaction entre particuliers. Le vendeur doit simplement n'avoir «aucun motif de croire» que l'acheteur n'est pas autorisé à acheter une arme.

L'application de cet article est suspendue au Québec le temps que les tribunaux décident de l'avenir des données québécoises du registre. La Cour suprême a entendu la cause et devrait rendre sa décision sous peu.

«Auparavant, le régime d'enregistrements couvrait aussi les ventes entre particuliers. Pour nous, c'est bien important», a souligné Pierre Veilleux, président de l'Association des policiers provinciaux du Québec, le syndicat de la Sûreté du Québec. L'enregistrement rendait essentielle la présentation du permis ainsi que la vérification de sa validité auprès des autorités.

Son collègue André Girard représente les membres de la Gendarmerie royale du Canada (GRC) au Québec. «L'achat des armes à feu doit être contrôlé», a-t-il affirmé.

Les vieilles habitudes semblent toutefois demeurer: les cinq vendeurs d'armes à feu de l'Est ontarien interrogés par *La Presse* ont tous indiqué qu'ils exigeaient de voir un permis avant de conclure une transaction.

Une arme controversée

Les associations de victimes et les militants pour le contrôle des armes à feu, pour leur part, militent pour faire carrément changer la réglementation, afin de limiter l'accès au Ruger Mini-14. Ce fusil est un semi-automatique, ce qui signifie qu'il suffit d'appuyer sur la détente pour le recharger et tirer.

«Nous avons toujours plaidé que ce fusil devrait être classifié comme une arme restreinte ou prohibée-et pas pour des raisons symboliques», a fait valoir Wendy Cukier, présidente de la Coalition pour le contrôle des armes. «Un seul fusil entre les mains d'une personne dangereuse peut causer une tragédie. Les risques associés à un fusil comme le Ruger Mini-14 sont substantiels.»

Suzanne Laplante Edward a perdu sa fille Anne-Marie dans la tuerie de Polytechnique. «C'est une arme pour tuer du monde. Ce n'est pas une arme pour tuer des chevreuils», a-t-elle confié à *La Presse*.

Sturm, Ruger&Co, qui fabrique le Ruger Mini-14, décrit son arme comme étant parfaite «sur la ferme, au ranch, au fond des bois ou pour se défendre ».

Le Ruger Mini-14

1. La crosse

L'entreprise Sturm, Ruger & Co. commercialise ce fusil en plusieurs modèles. Certains ont l'air de fusils de chasse avec une crosse de bois verni, alors que d'autres ressemblent à s'y méprendre à un fusil d'assaut. Hans Anders Breivik s'était procuré un Ruger Mini-14 complètement noir pour tuer 69 personnes dans l'île norvégienne d'Utoya, en juillet 2011.

2. La gachette

Le Ruger Mini-14 est une carabine semi-automatique, ce qui signifie que l'utilisateur n'a qu'à appuyer sur la détente pour tirer, sans avoir à faire d'autres manoeuvres pour recharger. Contrairement à un fusil automatique (mitrailleur), on ne peut tenir la détente enfoncée pour tirer une série de balles. Chaque pression provoque le tir d'une balle.

3. Le magasin

Pour conserver son statut d'arme non restreinte, le Ruger Mini-14 doit être équipé d'un magasin de seulement cinq balles. Les militants pour le contrôle des armes craignent toutefois de voir des

propriétaires de ce fusil utiliser des chargeurs de plus grande capacité afin de pouvoir tirer une succession de 20 ou 30 balles sans devoir recharger. Ces chargeurs sont interdits au Canada.

4. Long canon

Le Ruger Mini-14 est une arme longue. La grande majorité des armes longues « sont des armes à feu sans restriction », selon la GRC, et ce semi-automatique ne fait pas exception à la règle. En contrepartie, la totalité des armes de poing- comme les pistolets- sont des armes restreintes ou prohibées. Elles sont considérées comme plus faciles à dissimuler et à utiliser pour commettre un crime.

Armes à feu: retour sur la législation canadienne

La législation canadienne en matière d'armes à feu est particulièrement complexe et a subi plusieurs chamboulements au fil des années. Petit guide en trois phases pour illustrer les règles qui se sont successivement appliquées aux propriétaires canadiens de fusils.

Mettre fin au Far West

Avant le registre (1977 - 1995)

> En 1977, Ottawa impose pour la première fois l'obtention d'un certificat pour tous les propriétaires d'armes à feu, y compris les armes conçues pour la chasse. Jusque-là, seules les armes de poing (pistolets, revolvers) nécessitaient un tel document.

> À partir de l'entrée en vigueur du permis obligatoire, des vérifications portant sur les antécédents criminels et psychiatriques violents permettent aux autorités d'écarter les personnes qui pourraient s'avérer dangereuses. Les provinces peuvent aussi exiger des futurs propriétaires qu'ils suivent un cours de sécurité.

> Toujours en 1977, le gouvernement place des restrictions très serrées à l'obtention d'armes automatiques en en faisant des armes prohibées. Quinze ans plus tard, il imposera un délai minimal d'un mois entre la demande de permis et la délivrance de celui-ci, ainsi que des cours obligatoires.

Le grand inventaire

Pendant le registre (1995 - 2012)

> Révolution dans le monde des armes à feu au Canada: chaque arme présente sur le territoire devra être inventoriée et inscrite dans un registre accessible aux autorités. La mesure touche autant les fusils de chasse que les armes de poing. Les propriétaires ont quelques années pour se conformer à cette obligation.

> La mise en place du registre des armes d'épaule donnera lieu à un véritable scandale, la GRC elle-même admettant que le programme aura coûté plus de 500 fois la somme initialement prévue.

> La loi qui crée le registre prévoit aussi la nomination d'un contrôleur des armes dans chaque province, un policier qui aura la responsabilité de délivrer et de révoquer les permis d'armes à feu.

> Ottawa augmente aussi de façon substantielle les peines prévues pour ceux qui violeraient les lois canadiennes sur les armes à feu.

Soulager les chasseurs

Après le registre (2012- Aujourd'hui)

> Le gouvernement conservateur de Stephen Harper abolit le registre des armes d'épaule, mais maintient l'obligation pour les propriétaires et utilisateurs d'armes d'obtenir un permis. Sur ce plan, le gouvernement revient ainsi à la situation qui prévalait avant 1995.

> «La volonté du Parlement et des Canadiens est claire: nous ne voulons aucune forme de l'inutile et coûteux registre des armes d'épaule», plaidait en 2012 Vic Toews, alors ministre de la Sécurité publique de Stephen Harper. «Notre gouvernement conservateur va continuer à lutter contre toute mesure qui cible inutilement les honnêtes chasseurs, agriculteurs et tireurs sportifs.»

> Les militants pour le contrôle des armes sont inquiets de voir le gouvernement assouplir l'obligation pour les commerces d'armes à feu de tenir un registre de l'identité des personnes qui y ont acheté un fusil. Ils en ont aussi contre l'abolition de l'obligation pour le vendeur d'une arme non restreinte de vérifier le permis de l'acheteur lors d'une transaction de particulier à particulier.

<http://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/201412/01/01-4824299-des-semi-automatiques-similaires-a-celui-de-lepine-toujours-accessibles.php>

PAULINE MAROIS S'ENGAGE POUR POLYTECHNIQUE

La Presse, par Philippe Teisceira-Lessard, le 19 novembre 2014

Marc Lépine n'était pas qu'un fou: c'est la misogynie et l'inégalité entre les sexes qui ont permis au tireur de Polytechnique de croire qu'il avait le droit de tuer 14 femmes le 6 décembre 1989, croit Pauline Marois.

L'ex-première ministre sera présidente d'honneur du spectacle commémoratif du 25e anniversaire de la tragédie aux côtés de trois autres femmes politiques, a appris *La Presse*.

La seule élue à avoir dirigé le Québec a décidé de faire de la violence contre les femmes la première cause de sa carrière postpolitique. Pour elle, la solution passe principalement par la poursuite du combat pour l'égalité entre les sexes et le contrôle des armes.



L'ex-première ministre Pauline Marois sera présidente d'honneur des célébrations du 25e anniversaire de la tragédie de Polytechnique aux côtés de Liza Frulla, Nathalie Roy et Manon Massé. Sur la photo, madame Marois est entourée de Marc-Antoine Cloutier et de Julien David Pelletier, de la Clinique juridique Juripop, qui a organisé l'événement.

L'attentat du Métropolis

Largement absente des écrans radars depuis avril, Pauline Marois évoque l'attentat du Métropolis pour expliquer - au moins en partie - son implication.

«Je ne veux pas faire de rapprochements qui seraient inexacts, mais j'ai vécu moi-même un attentat, a-t-elle confié. Mon engagement politique était attaqué, mais je crois que le fait que je sois une femme jouait aussi.»

Richard Bain et Marc Lépine «sont le fruit de nos sociétés», a évalué l'ex-politicienne. «Il peut y avoir des problèmes de santé mentale, il ne faut pas le nier. Mais reste que pour passer à un acte aussi violent, moi je crois qu'il y a profondément quelque chose dans l'inconscient: le fait qu'on puisse s'attaquer aux femmes.»

Mme Marois refuse donc de classer ces attentats comme les actes de simples fous agissant sans contexte. «Je ne suis pas de cette école», a tranché Mme Marois. Ces actes s'inscrivent «dans quelque chose de plus large».

Le 6 décembre prochain, Mme Marois participera à une vigile sur le mont Royal, avant de prononcer une allocution sur la scène du Théâtre Outremont. Sous la direction de Lorraine Pintal, 14 artistes y dédieront 14 chansons aux 14 victimes de la tuerie. Robert Charlebois et Daniel Bélanger participeront notamment à l'événement ouvert au public.

Le spectacle servira à financer les activités de la Coalition pour le contrôle des armes.

Liza Frulla, Nathalie Roy et Manon Massé seront aussi présidentes d'honneur du spectacle. «Je vois encore les cercueils tous alignés. C'était probablement les funérailles les plus tristes que j'ai vécues, s'est souvenue Mme Frulla en entrevue téléphonique. Vingt-cinq ans plus tard, c'est tout ça qui vient me chercher.»

La clinique juridique Juripop organise l'événement. «Il nous fallait une femme qui incarne bien le message que l'on veut porter, qui est un message d'égalité, de lutte contre la discrimination et la violence», s'est réjoui Marc-Antoine Cloutier, cofondateur de l'organisme. «Mme Marois est une femme politique qui n'a pas d'égale au Québec.»

Contrôle des armes

Pauline Marois était députée de l'opposition en décembre 1989, au moment de la tragédie.

«Je siégeais à l'Assemblée nationale et je me souviens très bien que Louise Harel présidait une commission parlementaire. Elle avait suspendu la commission en disant qu'un événement très grave était arrivé», s'est-elle souvenue.

«On n'arrivait pas à croire que ça ait pu se passer et que ça puisse être des femmes qui soient attaquées. Parce que c'était essentiellement ça, l'attaque de ce jeune homme [Lépine].»

Rapidement après le drame de Polytechnique, le débat public s'est engagé sur le sujet du contrôle des armes à feu. Vingt-cinq ans plus tard, le triste anniversaire est «un moment privilégié» pour remettre cet enjeu sous les projecteurs, croit Pauline Marois.

Le «gouvernement idéologique» à Ottawa n'a pas le droit de priver le Québec de la partie du Registre des armes à feu qui touche son territoire, a-t-elle plaidé. Mme Marois s'est aussi inquiétée du dernier projet de loi conservateur en la matière, qui retire aux politiciens des responsabilités quant à la classification des armes à feu.

<http://www.lapresse.ca/actualites/201411/18/01-4820348-pauline-marois-sengage-pour-Polytechnique.php>

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<http://ici.radio-canada.ca/tele/tout-le-monde-en-parle/2014-2015/segments/entrevue/590/nathalie-provost-michele-thibodeau-deguire>