



THE **CAF** COMITÉ  
ACTION FÉMINISTE | FEMINIST  
ACTION COMMITTEE

# Minute

*The minute before*

BE INFORMED IN A FEW MINUTES

**SPECIAL MARCH 8<sup>TH</sup>**

## International Women's Day The True Origins of March 8<sup>th</sup>

International Women's Day has its roots in various demonstrations regularly held in North America and Europe for close to one hundred years. Two events are considered to be the founders of this day recognized and celebrated in many countries: the Woman's Day (United States, February 1909) and the Women's Day (Europe, March 1911)—two demonstrations where women and men took to the streets to demand voting rights for women.

In 1913 and 1914, other demonstrations happened elsewhere in the world, namely in Europe and Russia, where women bonded together to protest the Great War and express their solidarity towards other women.

Later, in 1917, Russian women demonstrated for bread and to get their husbands back from the war. This event took place on a 'March 8<sup>th</sup>,' according to the modern Gregorian calendar. That is why, in 1921, Lenin, then president of Russia, proclaimed March 8<sup>th</sup> "Women's Day" in commemoration of the events that took place in 1917.

It was finally in 1977 that the United Nations Organization (UN) passed a resolution inviting all the countries of the world to devote a day to celebrating women's rights and international peace. March 8<sup>th</sup> thus officially became a day devoted to the recognition of women's rights celebrated in many countries and on many continents.

Ref.: The true origins of March 8<sup>th</sup> – International Women's Day, Conseil du statut de la femme, January 2008 ([www.csf.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.csf.gouv.qc.ca)).

*Wait just a minute*



## United, Mobilized and Dedicated to Move Forward!

This year, the poster illustrating the theme selected makes the latter very clear. It shows women confidently marching in tight formation. Against winds and the tides, they are determined not to let themselves be taken advantage of and not to give up. In short, not to lose any of the gains won at great cost. They are determined to stand up to menacing winds. Winds that take the form of conservative legislation and cuts in grants to advocacy groups. Winds that bring about laws, programs and measures that do not make it possible to block the rise of poverty, violence, job insecurity, hyper sexualisation, antifeminism, fundamentalism and

discrimination. This decidedly right-wing and particularly menacing trend is then impossible to block within the context of economic and financial crisis, armed conflicts and climactic degradation—not to mention the pervasive difficulty in reconciling work and family life.

This right-wing trend also takes the form of often fierce and sometimes scornful attacks. Union and social movements are attacked on all sides and at every opportunity, and forums do a good job of discrediting them. Discrediting movements that gave workers the means to improve their working conditions and women the chance to aspire to the same rights and opportunities as men, thanks to unionism and feminism. Let's stay united and mobilized in the face of such attempts at discreditation and assert our pride in being feminists and unionized!

If we stick together, we will persevere in our actions and mobilization, we will move forward instead of losing ground, we will pursue our advance towards true equality in all areas of life. To find out more about right-wing policies that have already had a tangible impact, get the pamphlet produced by the Intersyndicale des femmes from your executive or look it up on the APTS Website: [www.aptsq.com](http://www.aptsq.com).

## One more minute

### First Issue of a Newsletter Entirely Devoted to the Activities of the Feminist Action Committee

The members of the Feminist Action Committee are very happy to present the first issue of *The CAF Minute*, a newsletter exclusively devoted to the current affairs of the Feminist Action Committee (comité d'action féministe, or CAF), published three times a year. Now that time has become such a precious commodity, the Committee wants to quickly inform you of the issues affecting women, actions undertaken here and elsewhere to advance the situation of women, and the resources available to explore other topics or other aspects of an issue that affect women.

Entirely dedicated to International Women's Day taking place on March 8<sup>th</sup>, 2009, this is a very special issue. The sections that structure this first issue are recurrent: "One more minute", "www.minute", "Hold on a minute", "The minute before" and "Wait just a minute". In "One more minute", we will be presenting the APTS's initiatives and successes at both the local and provincial levels. We really want to be part of and remain in the action.

The APTS Feminist Action Committee is just starting out. Created after the May 2008 Congress, it began its work last October and received the mandate to foster members' support for issues associated with women's working conditions and health, and to support their participation in activities proposed by APTS.

The first APTS Feminist Action Committee is composed of:

From left to right : **Caroline Letarte-Simoneau**, director and political respondent; **Janick Legault**, physiotherapist, CSSS de Thérèse-De Blainville; **Anne-Marie Viger**, Dietetics Technician, CSSS Institut universitaire de gériatrie de Sherbrooke; **Guylaine Michel**, Human Relations Officer, CSSS du Rocher-Percé; **Linda Riverin**, Director and Political Respondent; **Élaine Giroux**, Coordinator; **Maria Piazza**, 3<sup>rd</sup> Vice-President and **Lyne Chayer**, Human Relations Officer, CSSS des Collines.



## www.minute

### Learn More About the Feminist Movement

To test your knowledge of feminism and the women's movement, and to learn more, Relais-femmes has developed and made available online an interactive and user-friendly distance training course: [www.relais-femmes.qc.ca/FADAFEM/index.html](http://www.relais-femmes.qc.ca/FADAFEM/index.html) [French only].

In order to be well informed and understand the scope of issues that concern women, we invite you to consult the Fédération des femmes du Québec's (FFQ) Website and join this organization. The FFQ is, without question, the most representative organization in Quebec and the one most comprehensively devoted to equal rights for women. The cost of membership is low but it supports the FFQ in its actions, gives it more political clout, and allows members to follow the issues taken on by the organization: [www.ffq.qc.ca](http://www.ffq.qc.ca).

## Hold on a minute

### Bill C-484. Take II? A Return to the "Criminalization" of Abortion

Twenty years ago, following a long debate on foetal rights, the Supreme Court decriminalized abortion. But in 2008, the Harper government reopened the issue. MP Ken Epp tabled the Private Bill C-484 titled the Unborn Victims of Crime Act. Not fooled by its apparent good intentions and seemingly laudable nature, and also understanding that this bill opened the door to recriminalizing abortion by giving rights back to foetuses, many people rose up against this bill, particularly during the Canadian mobilization that took place last September 28<sup>th</sup>.

Unfortunately, a proposal voted in at the Conservative Party's Convention in November 2008 makes us concerned that this debate will again be brought forward. This resolution by the Conservative Party is not a bill as such, but it clearly asserts its members' will to reopen other such issues. Stand up to such threats and let's take part—now more than ever!—in any demonstrations where we can once again declare loud and clear that it is not up to the Church, the Conservative Party or conscientious objectors to dictate what is right for women's bodies and their lives.

#### Head Office :

1111, Saint-Charles Street West,  
Suite 1050, Longueuil, Qc., J4K 5G4  
Tel.: 450 670-2411 or 1 866 521-2411  
Fax: 450 679-0107

#### Quebec City Office :

1305, Lebourgneuf Blvd.,  
Suite 200, Quebec City, Qc., G2K 2E4  
Tel.: 418 622-2541 or 1 800 463-4617  
Fax: 418 622-0274

[info@aptsq.com](mailto:info@aptsq.com)  
[www.aptsq.com](http://www.aptsq.com)