

Don't Believe the Hike

A Prairie Struggle Organization Communiqué on the Québec student strike #1

Prairie Struggle

2013

In the past decades we have been seeing a trend, a political direction in both Saskatchewan, and all of Canada that can be characterized by a race to the bottom, where workers and families have been expected to swallow cuts to public funding of services so that the richest among us can continue to profit from the products and services our labour creates. Even in the past five years we have seen cuts to Statistics Canada, the Status of Women, funding for Environmental groups, Healthcare, programs for First Nations, Community Justice Programs ... and the list goes on and on. Included in this list is are consistent attacks on unionism, assembly, and free speech as well increased fees for our so-called public institutions, including education. This trend is not inclusive to only Conservative Party views but also all party views that hold capitalism as a “correct” way of managing our livelihoods. The bottom of the barrel mentality ironically resembles the end of a barrel logic where the interest of a well off few are paramount over the well being of the collective. Forces beyond an “uncontrollable” market are at work in this country and it is now time we realize this. Politicians and big business have been chipping away piece by piece any social progress for the benefit of endless profit.

It is these conditions that have been inspiring, and continue to inspire the current student general strike that has been occurring in the Province of Quebec for over four months now against market logic where all are subject to the rule of profit. Engaged in their recent battle to halt tuition increases, and to fight for accessible education, the student union movement profoundly understands that to defeat the interest of a ruling class that possesses media, law making and law enforcement establishments, it must equip itself with the tools necessary in order to fight on equal terrain. “Combative unionism” integrates the necessary elements needed to do so, the focus of which is a radically democratic means of organizing, combativeness and class solidarity.

The Quebec student general strike didn't just materialize because people in Quebec always supported it. It was something that was built, and something that became the realizable solution to the problems created by classism, and other oppressions. Only after experiencing how government uses privilege to benefit the rich, and justify cuts to social programs under the pretext that these social programs are not sustainable, when in fact it is using these cuts to social programs to benefit big business that is not sustainable to both the economy, and the environment, did people support the need for unlimited general strike.

This realization is something that big business, politicians and other elites have known for decades. As a class, they have come together across borders to pay workers as little as possible for our work, increase the amount of money we have to pay for basic services, to exploit the environment that many of our livelihoods depend on, to keep us divided and self-interested, and perhaps most ingenious of all, to keep us from learning about these relationships.

Our position is that those of us on the losing side of this relationship—those of us who are one incident away from defaulting on our mortgage, those of us who struggle to find adequate childcare, those of us who work so much but are paid so little, those of us who cannot afford education, those of us who are discriminated against because of appearance—need to come to the same realization that we will never win this rat race. Only after realizing that we have nothing in common with our lands lords, bosses, law makers and police officers, will we be able to organize on effective bases, the same bases as our comrades in Quebec are using to rally to there cause.

Solidarity with the Quebec student strike!
Our class united against our oppressors!
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Retrieved on July 8, 2014 from web.archive.org

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