

## The popular roots of the Quebec Student Strike

PETER MARIN

Early on the student strike in Quebec adopted the slogan “it is a student strike, and a popular struggle” (in French, “la grève est étudiante, la lutte est populaire”). Over the course of this unprecedented strike, the slogan has become a reality, as people from all sectors of society have joined the students in opposition to the neoliberal government of Jean Charest and his Liberal party. As this is written, neighbourhood committees are forming in Montreal and daily protests, including the now famous casseroles (pots and pans) protests, are occurring across Quebec – including small towns and regions not known for their militancy. The legitimacy of the government and its police force is being called into question as tens of thousands defy its “special law 78”, which criminalizes spontaneous protests among other measures. The student strike has indeed become a popular struggle. While no one could have predicted that the student strike would spill across

society, this development is not entirely without a foundation in recent struggles. And this foundation is best exemplified by the Coalition Opposée à la Tarification et Privatisation des Services Publics (in English, the Coalition Against User Fees and the Privatization of Public Services). Founded in the spring of 2010 in response to the austerity budget of the Charest government, the Coalition consists of 137 member-groups, including community organizations (e.g. anti-poverty, health, housing), student unions, feminist groups and various union locals and district labour councils. The community groups are one of the two driving forces of the Coalition. These groups, whose members are most sharply affected by austerity, have a history of militancy unlike anywhere else in Canada. Nicolas Phebus, who works for the Front d’action populaire en réaménagement urbain (FRAPRU), a housing group and member of the Coalition, described it as “Quebec having dozens of OCAPs”.

The student unions, led by the syndicalist Association pour une solidarité syndicale étudiante or ASSÉ (the leading student federation of the strike movement), has been the second main driving force of the Coalition. These groups, whose members are most sharply affected by austerity, have a history of militancy unlike anywhere else in Canada. Nicolas Phebus, who works for the Front d’action populaire en réaménagement urbain (FRAPRU), a housing group and member of the Coalition, described it as “Quebec having dozens of OCAPs”.

After the Coalition realized that the union movement was not serious about organizing for a social strike modeled on the Ontario Days of Action - “it became clear this was a pipe dream” says Phebus - the Coalition decided on a strategy of escalating disruptive direct actions, including numerous aggressive occupations of MPPs offices. The painted

occupations of MPPs offices. The painted

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# Organized Labour at the Precipice

## The Missed Opportunities of CUPE 3902

WAI KIAT TANG

In the 2011-2012 academic year, CUPE 3902 – a trade union local that represents tutorial assistants, sessional lecturers, invigilators and lab assistants at the University of Toronto (UofT) – had generated a high level of mobilization and engagement amongst its membership, relative to the much more cordial experience of the last bargaining period. This could partly be attributed to a general feeling of dissatisfaction amongst the more active layers of the membership seeking solutions against rocketing costs of living expenses in Toronto, as well as ballooning tutorial sizes and diminishing educational spaces that mock the “world-class” mantra that the UofT administration promotes in their efforts to attract private investment from business elites and the broader public at large.

This bargaining period was burdened by the narratives that have followed the 2008 capitalist crisis: business and political elites working to shift the burden of the great recession onto the broader working class through an austerity agenda that attacks our public services, and an accompanying ideological offensive against organized labour. These narratives have been directed towards the broader realm of working people – namely the majority of the working class that do not work in unionized workplaces. This narrative asks working people why they should be sympathetic to trade unions, who are portrayed as “entitled” bodies whose only interest



lies in advancing the material benefits of their own membership, while sacrificing and “taking hostage” the broader public interest at large.

The fact that this narrative has been so persuasive to non-unionized working people should pose questions for progressives seeking a militant labour movement that fights against the bosses and its political elites. Is there any truth to this picture?

To answer this, we need to examine the labour movement in its North American context. Historically, the North American Labour Movement, as ‘represented’ by its leading labour bodies in the American Federation of

Labor (AFL) and Canada’s Trade Union Congress (TUC) generally submitted to a “Business Unionist” mentality that sought to downplay political challenges to capitalism and the bosses. Instead, labour leaders worked at carving a larger piece of the pie for its membership – ignoring the broader question of class struggle against capitalism. It is from these origins that we can mark the broad contrast between North American and European labour. While this summary is somewhat overly-simplistic, it does at least help contextualize the ruling class narrative that villainizes organized

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May Day reports  
(centrefold)



The G20:  
two years  
later

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labour as comprised of selfish, greedy workers who share no interests with the broader working class.

In a university setting the narrative follows a similar vein. For many undergrads, it's not clear why working class youth should support organized labour on our campuses – especially if this support potentially comes at the cost of our education, in the event of a work stoppage. The natural reaction of the majority of students is “what’s in it for me?”

This was one of the most positive aspects of the CUPE 3902 bargaining proposals, such as demands for hard-caps to tutorial sizes and labs – intended to facilitate spaces of deeper critical discussion not possible in large lecture halls. For me, this marks the need for labour to connect its demands with the broader interests of the community as a means of creating organic relationships that strengthen the class struggle supposedly championed by the left.

In the end our union accepted a contract that failed to offer what many would say were modest economic demands – namely wage increases tied to inflation and the guaranteed funding package granted to graduate students.

Our union also backed down from our demands for hard tutorial caps, accepting instead the establishment of joint admin-union working groups to “study” the tutorial size question with regards to quality of education. It’s not clear if these working groups will have any teeth or whether they will simply serve as another release valve to hold back the question of quality of education for another few years. This concession amounted to a major missed opportunity to bridge closer relations and positive impressions between the academic workers and the students who will eventually move into the workforce. For many students, their first concrete exposure to labour struggles will come in their classroom – as was the case when my elementary school teachers went on strike for better working and teaching conditions against the austerity agenda of the Harris government in 1997.

The fact is that if we want to win as an organized labour movement, we have to champion the aspirations and demands of our fellow workers and students. Furthermore, the fight over this issue was an opportunity to confront the powers that be over

fundamental questions governing how the education system is run. What are schools for? Who do they belong to? Are education institutions merely a factory shop to mold new workers into the workforce, or are they fundamentally public goods that seeks to educate and produce critical-thinking members of society?

If the progressive goals for free and better education are going to have substance, organized labour must play a more active and militant role in articulating these aims at the picket line. Rather than contributing to the progressive labour movement, CUPE 3902’s failure to take up this fight can only contribute to the cynicism that working people rightly feel towards business unionism. Organized labour sits at a precipice, with a looming threat of continued irrelevance and disdain from the public at large. If we want to counter this, we must smash the business unionist mentality that’s been ingrained in the North American labour tradition and embrace a social progressive unionism that is more community-centered in its demands – one that fights, ultimately, under the battle cry of “all for all”. ★

## Racist march shut down in London

### LONDON ANTI-FASCISTS

On March 24 2012 in the city of London, Ontario, neo-nazis from all over the province attempted to gather for a rally at City Hall for the expressed purpose of re-establishing a Blood and Honour chapter in Eastern Canada. A similar rally was held in Edmonton to celebrate so-called “white pride.”

Blood and Honour is an organization with chapters all over the world. Wherever the group has established a foothold, it holds a track record of extreme violence towards immigrants, queer communities and local left-wing organizers. In Canada there are active chapters in Edmonton, Calgary and Vancouver, and in these cities Blood and Honour members have been involved in numerous violent attacks. Several of their members have been arrested and convicted of crimes ranging from assault to murder.

London has long been a hub for fascist organizing. The last cause Emma Goldman was involved in before her death was an attempt to prevent the deportation of an Italian immigrant to fascist Italy in 1939 for his anti-fascist and anti-racist organizing in London. Thus, although London has been known as a far-right centre in Eastern Canada, local community members have also long been organizing against the fascists and racists.

More recently, militant anti-racist organizing has largely been associated with the Anti-Racist Action Network, or ARA. In London the formation of a local ARA chapter was the response to the establishment of a few neo-nazi groups in the city during the late 90s, the proclamation of a European Pride parade by the London mayor (who rejected the Gay Pride parade) and a spate of violent attacks on minorities.

In its first incarnation, ARA London was a strong group of 20 active members who could be found in local bars in which neo-nazis would attack people. Using various tactics, the ARA local was responsible for disbanding most of the hate-based groups in London, letting them know that even if elected officials and police would not stand up to hatred, residents of the local community would.

Over the last few years, however, there has been a slight resurgence of neo-nazi activity in London. This push has included open call-outs for boneheads

to move back to London and help re-establish the city as a base for far-right organizing in Ontario. Although organizers have called several rallies and attempted to organize events, attendance has never materialized. The first of these recent efforts was an attempt to heckle and attack the London Gay Pride parade, in 2010. When the boneheads got word that regional anarchists and local community members had mobilized to confront them, they hastily canceled their plans. While at present there is no regional organizing body akin to ARA to speak of, anarchists and other anti-fascists have frequently shown themselves to be ready and willing to mobilize and confront the racists as the need arises.

In March 2011, through an article in the London Free Press (LFP), anarchists in London got news of a thirty-strong Combat 18 rally set to take place at City Hall. Despite having just a day to mobilize, local anarchists managed to amass around forty people to confront the neo-nazis. On the day of the proposed rally, only two prominent boneheads showed up, carrying anti-fluoridation signs. Seeing how massively the neo-nazis were outnumbered, the LFP asked, incredulously, why we had gathered such an overwhelming force – perhaps ignorant of the fact that it was their reporting that had provided the impetus for us to do so.

At noon on Saturday March 24, about 100 anarchists and anti-racist activists converged on Victoria Park in downtown London to confront the rally Blood and Honour had called. Once the group had assembled, it marched out of Victoria Park and to the supposed rally-point (Wellington and York) to shut Blood and Honour down before they had a chance to show their faces. Upon arrival the neo-nazis were nowhere to be seen - but luckily the police inadvertently revealed their position after

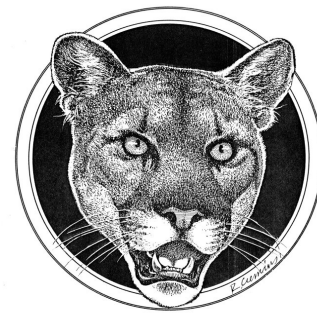


they chased and detained one of the anti-racist scouts close to an underground parking garage connected to Citi Plaza (a downtown mall/office building complex). Immediately following the arrest both exits were blocked off by contingents of anti-racists while a smaller group headed into the garage to confront the boneheads. After a brief scuffle initiated by a Blood and Honour member, a car containing Max Heinz (the local bonehead “leader”) and four other neo-nazis attempted to retreat out of the garage, but not before the vehicle and its occupants received a thorough thrashing from the awaiting anti-fascists. The garage was then laid to siege for two hours while police protected the remaining white supremacists within – until they fled with their tails between their legs.

Although the action was a success in confronting and shutting down Blood and Honour’s planned rally, should they decide to pop their heads back up in the future, engaging in a broader campaign of community mobilization as part of efforts to confront them will be necessary in the long term. By more broadly mobilizing community groups and members to stand alongside militant anti-racists, we will clearly demonstrate to far-right groups that they are not welcome in our city.

In the weeks following the rally,

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## about common cause anarchist organization

Common Cause is an Ontario wide anarchist organization with members and branches active in several cities across the province. Our goal is to build a strong voice for anarchism within community and labour struggles. We believe that the anarchist principles of self organization, direct democracy and direct action are the tools needed to defeat the attacks and obstacles facing our class and provide building blocks for creating a new society. To find out more about us please get in touch:

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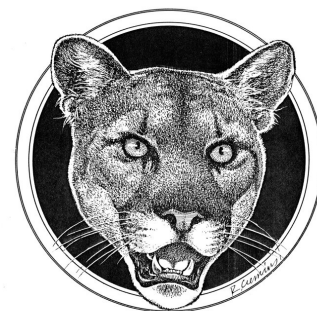
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# The battle of Victoriaville

J. GAGNON

On May 4th, in an attempt to curtail the protests that were sure to occur, a strategy convention of the Liberal Party of Quebec was moved from its planned site in Montreal to Victoriaville – a small town of less than 50,000 people located about 160 km north-east of the city. As buses from around the province flooded the Walmart parking lot that was to serve as our meeting spot, there was a celebratory feeling in the air. Walmart had closed for the day – presumably out of fear of a spontaneous action – with the main effect being that they lost out on sales of lemon juice, vinegar, bandannas and water bottles. After the arrival of approximately 4000-5000 people, the crowd of students, workers and family members marched and sang their way to the front of the hotel, where the Quebec Liberals were preparing to begin their weekend-long convention.

We arrived at a building lined with small metal barricades. A handful of Victoriaville police dressed in windbreakers stood between us and the front doors of the building. The crowd hesitated for a moment – many shocked by the lack of police protection, some wondering whether it was a trap – before swiftly toppling the barricades one by one and filling the space in front of the hotel with protesters, chanting and waving flags. Right on cue, a line of Sûreté du Québec (SQ) riot cops spilled out from either side of the hotel dressed in full riot gear and with weapons in hand. Within minutes they had launched CS canisters at the crowd and the air filled with the noxious gas.

The chemical gas used in Victoriaville was unlike normal tear gas. It hung in the air thick and visible; it was not meant to disperse the crowd but to debilitate it. Many unmasked protesters fell to their knees, tears streaming down their face, unable to breathe, while others immediately began to vomit. It was at this point that the families pulled to the back of the crowd. The line of riot cops began to confront the crowd, forcing the protesters up a hill and into an open field, next to a small home with a vegetable garden. Once backed up into this field, the crowd did not disperse, but stood facing the police line, chanting but not immediately sure of how to proceed. From this point on, the riot police shot tear gas canisters in to the crowd almost non-stop for the next three hours. Unmasked protesters in the front, who were debilitated by this gas, were dragged out of harm's way by masked protesters. And protesters, both masked and unmasked, began grabbing the gas canisters landing at their feet – or hitting their bodies – and throwing them back in the direction of the riot cops, in order to help maintain our position without asphyxiating.

The riot police then began to shoot plastic bullets towards the crowd: hard green projectiles the length of my palm. For the next hour, we watched on guard for any laser sights crossing the face, head or chest of those around us – a signal that someone was about to be shot. As protesters were hit one by one with these plastic projectiles, and the area became ever more engulfed by the chemical gas, the scene was transformed from a protest into a war zone. A young man standing next to me, engaged in a discussion about finding a safe spot to move to, was shot directly in the face with a plastic bullet. As blood streamed from his collapsed eye socket and riot police blocked the ambulance trying to

enter the area, it became clear that this student was going to lose his eye. Together we ran up a hill to where we thought medics might be, and instead found another student lying motionless on the ground.

His head was slumped to one side, exposing a gaping wound at the base of his skull. He had been shot in the back of the head with a plastic bullet; his skull was fractured and he would remain in a coma for many days. These attacks were occurring at short range, facilitated by laser sights. The police were aiming for our heads and the protesters became increasingly aware that someone could die that day. And yet despite the intense panic of the situation, there was a collective, unspoken effort made to avoid trampling the nearby vegetable garden, which sat undisturbed in the midst of this

battle.

Closer to the hotel, an injured protester lay dazed and semi-conscious on the ground as a foolish, lone riot cop tried to arrest them; a group of people ran over immediately to help their wounded comrade. A police vehicle then stepped on its gas and drove directly at the crowd, trying to run them over as they knelt on the ground. A collective cry of outrage was released by the crowd and the vehicle was swarmed, its windows smashed. It appeared that the police were no longer trying to disperse the crowd, but were trying to kill us.

With the mounting number of serious injuries that the students had sustained, many would have expected the protesters to flee the scene. Instead, these injuries only increased our dedication to maintain our ground; we would not run from the

state violence, and we would not allow our comrades' injuries to be in vain. We were there to show resistance, and that is what occurred. From the fields of Victoriaville to the streets of Montreal, something has become clear: people aren't afraid anymore. As a masked SQ riot cop raised his plastic bullet gun to shoot me at point-blank range, an unmasked, unprotected protester threw down his Fleur-de-lys flag and ran in front of me with his hands in the air: "What are you going to do? Kill me?", he screamed at the police. Protesters ran in front of us both, protecting us with blankets and bringing us to safety behind a barricade. An older local woman was held up there, handing out these blankets to the protesters. She told us to stay strong and to continue our fight against "the fascist police." ★



## >> RACIST MARCH continued from page 2

there was a large outcry from local liberal activists complaining about our violations of the neo-nazis' right to freedom of speech and assembly. However, this action was never about free speech; it was about the safety of the socially marginalized individuals that Blood and Honour will inevitably attack if they are able to gain a foothold in London and are allowed to

operate freely. These same liberal critics have been largely silent in the past few weeks, as news of assaults on immigrants in Edmonton and murders (carried out with the assistance of police) in Poland have surfaced and spread through social media. These attacks – attributed to members of more established Blood and Honour chapters – offer salient examples

of what these people are capable of, if given the chance to exert their "rights".

As anarchists and concerned community members, it is important to use direct action to shut down their rallies, their organizing and recruitment efforts before they become an active threat. Stand up, fight back! ★

# PRAIRIE STRUGGLE



**ANARCHIST COMMUNIST ORGANIZATION OF THE PRAIRIES**

### MICK SWEETMAN

Prairie Struggle, a new anarchist-communist organization, has been founded in western Canada. Based in Regina, Saskatchewan the new organization launched at the Saskatoon anarchist book fair on May 5, after five months of organizing and political discussion by anarchists in that city.

Noting problems of scant resources of anarchists in the west who remain isolated locally without a common organization, the founders of Prairie Struggle aim to expand their organization across the region.

"Funds, resources and experience

are in short supply which leads to most of us in the long run burning out quick. This is a situation that is a barrier to building towards revolution, and especially to envisioning a better world based along anarchist lines. We believe that the west of Canada would benefit greatly from some form of anarchist organization that spreads beyond the local sphere...We may be few in our respective cities but we would be stronger under the same roof."

As part of their strategy they have published a theoretical magazine called, *Prairie Struggle*, that is modelled on the *Northeastern Anarchist* magazine previously published by NEFAC. The new publication contains a mix of reprints and original articles such as "Reflections on labour's 'victory"

in challenging essential Service legislation" and "A critical look at our history and the organizational wall we face in the north west."

The introduction to their magazine ends with "We believe that revolution in the west is possible, but only if we can escape the confines of our geographical prison. The time is ripe to organize a unified anarchist movement." ★

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# MAY DAY

## Hamilton

After a brief hiatus, the Steel City was once again home to large scale May Day demonstrations and celebrations. In previous years the 1st of May has been marked by street festivals and labour demonstrations, often organized by coalitions of labour and community groups. This year two simultaneous marches took to the streets taking aim at austerity measures. A march through downtown ending in a block party was organized by the May 1st Committee, while United Steel Workers 1005 hosted their own march the industrial area of the East End, followed by a BBQ.

Prior to May 1st the M1 Committee was involved in helping organize or promote a number of lead up events during the last week of April. These events included a Critical Mass bike ride, a music and spoken word show, a 'History of May Day' educational event and an outdoor movie screening. As for May Day itself, a festive and disruptive street march would start in Beasley Park and snake it's way through the core with the intention to "reclaim the streets from the monotonous, capitalist grind".

Approximately 120 people who had gathered in the park would join in on the march, while childcare and activities were provided for families who preferred to hang out in Beasley. By 3PM the unpermitted march made its way to the north exit of Beasley Park and hit the streets, ignoring the cops who attempted to block the way. Once the crowd reached the central intersection of King and James a sound system was unveiled, making for a high energy, festive atmosphere as the march occupied all four lanes of the downtown street – with the police struggling to keep up. As the party passed by MacMaster's downtown campus, a speech from the militant student organization CLASSE was read, while red streamers thrown from the crowd redecorated the building in solidarity with the ongoing Quebec student strike.

Once the march wound down, participants made their way back to Beasley park for a community block party. A free BBQ and other food was provided, along with games, music and free literature.



HAMILTON - Protesters redecorate MacMaster



HAMILTON



KITCHENER



LONDON

## Kitchener

For the first time since 2006, this year Kitchener hosted its own May Day celebration. The day included both lessons from the city's past and also a very strong showing from local community groups. May Day in Kitchener was not about starting anew, or coming together for just one day out of the year; instead, there was a strong emphasis on building a sense of continuation in our collective struggles.

The day began in Victoria Park, where people gathered for a free community meal, a legal workshop, a soccer game and a radical choir rehearsal. Across the park, the police horses were also gathering – despite the fact that nobody had invited them. Before setting off to march, a vigil was led by local group Poverty Makes Us Sick, highlighting capitalism's continued attack on our bodies. The region has experienced numerous work-related deaths and accidents in recent years, including the death of ten temporary foreign workers from Peru, killed in a vehicle accident this past February. A member of Common Cause KW called the marchers attention to the memory of the Haymarket massacre and another individual came forward to add his father's name to the list of workers killed on the job. The vigil ended in a moment of silence.

At 5pm a crowd of 125 people set off to march behind a banner proclaiming "INTERNATIONAL WORKERS DAY" and "CAPITALISM DIVIDES, MAYDAY UNITES." The march began by heading up towards the Cedar Hill neighbourhood, an area facing rapid gentrification, home to low income rates, bad landlords, and high density population – but also an area with a strong working class tradition and a strong sense of community. Taking the march through this residential zone (also the city's oldest) set a great vibe for the march and local residents were tipped off to the day's events through a community letter which organizers had delivered days before. Chants for affordable housing rang out in the streets, and as the march wound out of the neighbourhood, a busy intersection was briefly occupied where a member of the Spot Collective (a local group working with downtown youth), spoke of past actions that had led to the building of a subsidized housing complex in the area.

The next stop was Kitchener's new Mega Courthouse – a monstrosity of a building that came with a \$766 million dollar price tag. It was only fitting that the song "The walls will all fall down" be performed. Led by local musician Richard Garvey, the marchers sang along (thanks to the earlier choir practice and nifty song/chant books provided) to make for a powerful moment. This was followed by the blocking of another intersection – this time the busy intersection of Victoria and Duke. Here a member of Poverty Make Us Sick highlighted how trendy cupcake shops serve as clear markers of gentrification, catering to newly arrived students, professionals and urban elites and encroaching on traditional downtown communities (the shop being referenced was located across the street from a local community soup kitchen).

The next stop on the route was easy, as TD Bank decided to shut down before the marchers even arrived. I guess they will never know if the plan was to stop by or not, either way, the flows of capital were stopped with little effort and the march continued to City Hall where four banners were dropped. The largest read "Stop The Cuts, Status For All," alongside a banner reading "Vive Les Études Libres." – a nod of solidarity to the Quebec student movement. At this point another member of Poverty Makes Us Sick delivered a passionate speech about economic injustice and how it has played out provincially. From there the marchers headed over to shame and expose some local "pay-day" loan sharks; a Common Cause KW member

# IN ONTARIO



posted a community notice on their doors, while a community member gave a speech demanding local alternatives to exploitative loan schemes. Once again, an intersection was blocked for this action, as more onlookers cheered on and joined the march. After one more action (where the Spot Collective briefly occupied the entrance to a local and despised condo development office and model home), the march ended up at Speaker's Corner, where the crowd was treated to music from The Black Wood Two and Richard Garvey. A message from CLASSE was read out, followed by a speech about the history of the Chilean miner's strike and that country's current student movement. Finally, a speech was given by a member of the Alliance Against Poverty (AAP), who threw in a great rendition of the song 'Joe Hill.' An open mic was offered to finish off the day, with a local professor speaking on the possibility of an upcoming struggle at one of our local Universities.

May Day in Kitchener was a great success and hopefully the tradition takes hold in our community, and next year's event is even better. Normally, this is where we would state that those who attended need to keep active for the rest of the year, but we feel that those who participated in the day's events have been organizing around these issues for quite some time already, and May Day served as a nice way to highlight and appreciate these struggles, as well as to hopefully get others involved. Although union participation was pretty sparse at the event, this points to an area of potential growth for next year's May Day.

## London

About 60 people gathered at Victoria Park, in downtown London for this year's May Day festivities. Speeches were made about neoliberal attacks on workers, Occupy London, immigration reform and women's rights. After the speeches were done, the assembled activists took to the streets for a brief yet spirited march through the downtown core. While it was a definite improvement that London held a May Day rally this year, overall the event itself was resoundingly mediocre. Although we do not wish to denigrate the speakers and organizers, and the effort that went into planning and promoting the event, the day did not push any boundaries. While this year's events were undoubtedly a step up from previous years, overall it still appeared as simply yet another Occupy London rally without much support or interest from the broader public. For Mayday to be a success in London, we need to come up with something more creative to engage the public and draw in rank and file trade union members. We really need to step up our organizing through militant affinity groups and radical street actions if we want to garner more interest.

## Toronto

This year's Toronto May Day festivities were a joint effort of No One Is Illegal (NOII), The May 1st Movement (M1M) and Occupy Toronto. That level of cooperation in and of itself was a major improvement on May Days past, which have often been marked by an unfortunate level of factionalism. Over the past several years, disagreements between NOII and M1M (a coalition of socialist and anti-imperialist organizations of varying stripes, many of whom work within established immigrant communities) have led to two separate marches, dividing activists along social and political lines. Occupy Toronto, as the local manifestation of the



TORONTO

North American "Occupy May Day" campaign, added a new element to the mix – infusing our city's May Day celebrations with a much needed sense that activists in Toronto are indeed part of a larger movement of working class resistance, and offering the two groups an impetus to bridge their differences in order to organize collectively.

The day itself was full of creative actions and events. Beginning at 11am, a human chess board was set up at Nathan Phillips Square, with participants demonstrating through street theatre how pawns can work collectively to take action against their (seemingly) more powerful masters.

At noon, Occupy Gardens – an offshoot project of Occupy Toronto – held a picnic and planted a vegetable garden in Queen's Park. Organizers highlighted the need for food security, and spoke of the inherent injustice of the current world food system.

At 2pm, a coordinated high-school walkout was planned, in solidarity with the Quebec student strike. This event had been hastily organized in the two weeks leading up to May Day, with outreach primarily centred around six high-schools in and around the downtown core and supplemented by a social-media driven online campaign. While there had been a considerable deal of enthusiasm demonstrated by receptive students during several days of mass flyering on and around high-school campuses, the results of the walkout were difficult to quantify – with no more than a couple dozen students making the trek to join the larger demonstration called for Queens Park at 3pm. Exactly what number of students opted to walk out but not attend the larger demonstration, to skip class and go home, or to ignore the walk-out entirely, is uncertain. Those who did arrive to join the larger demonstration, however, were extremely enthusiastic and militant participants in the day's events.

At 4pm, the main May Day march began to assemble in front of Nathan Phillips Square. The crowd soon swelled to approximately 1500 people. After several speeches and a delicious meal prepared by Food Not Bombs, the march set off west on Queen Street. The primary message of the event was a call to respect Indigenous sovereignty, and the march was accordingly led by Indigenous Elders and the region's ceremonial Eagle Staff Bearer. The other main messages of the march, as included in its call out, were to demonstrate "that no one is illegal, for international workers solidarity, to defend and expand public services, to stop prison expansion and corporate bail-outs, to end imperialist wars and aggression, to build people's power, and to move beyond capitalism." This list of demands, reminiscent of the pluralism of the anti-globalization movement and similar to the organizational framework of the Toronto Community Mobilization Network (TCMN) that

helped coordinate the resistance to the 2010 Toronto G20 Summit, was used in place of the call for a world-wide general strike that emerged from the broader Occupy Movement. This tactical approach points to a particular strength of the activist left in Toronto, but also to one of its weaknesses. Toronto is a city with an institutionalized network of community organizations that are able to consistently mobilize their supporters around respective issues, and who are effective at collaborating together around shared projects and one-off events. On the other hand, this dynamic also contributes to a tendency to pay lip service to causes, while fostering an unconscious avoidance of the long-term strategic organizing necessary to achieve social change.

The march itself was lively, with a large anti-capitalist block that included a sizable anarchist contingent. Organized labour did not participate en masse, though there was a spattering of flags denoting various union locals spread throughout the crowd. While the OFL had added its name to the list of endorsing organizations, they had not mobilized their membership – having instead thrown their muscle behind a large parade on April 21st that they had full organizational control over. Even without their numbers, the march grew to perhaps 3000 people at its height. After several speaking stops and blocked intersections, the march reached its final destination, Alexandra Park – where a cultural event and concert continued on until approximately 9pm.

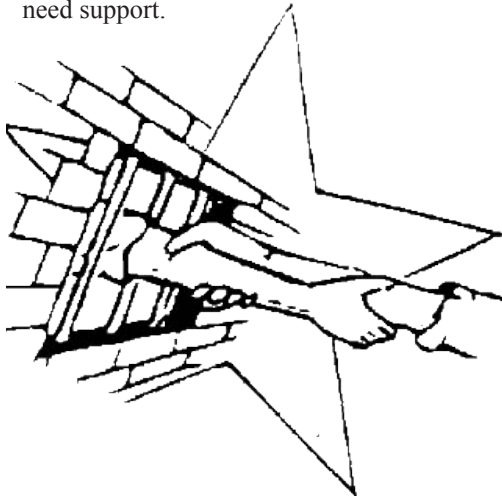
As the cultural event drew to a close, Occupy Toronto led a crowd of protesters south on Bathurst to "occupy the heart of the beast". The first target of Occupy Toronto's new strategy of 24 hour roaming occupations, the previously undisclosed location turned out to be Simcoe Park, a site in the financial district that lies adjacent to the CBC and the Metro Convention Centre - where the annual Barrick Gold AGM was set to take place the following day. Once the crowd arrived at their new occupation site, they were immediately surrounded by mounted police and told that they were forbidden to assemble structures of any kind. Three protest chaplains from Occupy Toronto put this dictate to the test by attempting to assemble a tent they had brought with them. They were promptly arrested, contributing to a tense standoff that eased once the occupiers refused to disperse and the cops backed down. The occupation stayed throughout the night and for the better part of the next day, leaving only after they all pitched in to clean the park.★

# The G20: Two years later

GUELPH ANARCHIST  
BLACK CROSS

Here in Southern Ontario, anarchists and anti-authoritarian rebels are re-discovering the strength of our networks and recovering from the shock of state repression. Over the course of the past two years, dozens of comrades have been forced through the courts, strict bail conditions, and prison sentences for organizing or attending protests during the G20 summit in Toronto in June 2010. This article gives updates about comrades still facing serious repression and who need our continued support. We will share some thoughts on how the affects of the G20 are playing out in our current climate of struggle.

The following list of defendants still facing charges from the G20 is not complete. The people listed here are in contact with ABC or are comfortable with being public about their cases. There are others still facing serious charges and possible jail time who we don't have listed here. Keep checking the Guelph ABC website for updates and information on people who need support.



## G20 Main Conspiracy Group

[www.conspiretoresist.wordpress.com](http://www.conspiretoresist.wordpress.com)  
(G20 main conspiracy group)  
[www.boredbutnotbroken.tao.ca](http://www.boredbutnotbroken.tao.ca)  
(Mandy Hiscocks' Prison Blog)

Twenty-one people were charged with being part of the G20 main conspiracy group. The crown alleged that there were upwards of fifty other co-conspirators who were never indicted. These charges stemmed from a one and a half year infiltration operation undertaken by OPP officers Bindo Showan and Brenda Carey. By the time the case reached its preliminary hearing, charges were dropped against three defendants and one defendant received a suspended sentence in a non-cooperating plea resolution negotiated independently.

In November 2011, the remaining seventeen co-defendants came to a plea resolution in which eleven people's charges were withdrawn, and six people pled guilty to Counselling with various prison sentences. Erik Lankin, Peter Hopperton, and Adam Lewis have all been released following 3-5 months of jail time. Mandy Hiscocks and Leah Henderson are currently serving jail sentences. Alex Hundert will begin to serve his jail sentence in June 2012.

## Mandy Hiscocks

Mandy was sentenced to 16 months in jail. She is expecting to serve about 11 months and to be released in December 2012. In recent years, Mandy has focused on Indigenous solidarity, environmental justice, strategies for developing healthy anarchist communities, and being a good ally. She would love to be kept in the loop so she can continue this work while in jail.

## Leah Henderson

Leah was sentenced to 10 months in jail. She is expecting to serve about 6.5 months and to be released in July 2012. Leah is a community organizer who has been active for the past decade in struggles for justice within apartheid Canada. She has been involved in the environmental movement; in supporting Indigenous communities in the struggle for sovereignty and self-determination; and in the fight for justice for women, queer and trans, low-income, disabled, and racialized people.

You can send them mail to the following address:

Amanda Hiscocks / Leah Henderson  
Vanier Centre for Women  
P.O. Box 1040  
655 Martin Street  
Milton, Ontario  
L9T 5E6 Canada

## Alex Hundert

Alex will be sentenced to 13.5 months in jail. He is expected to serve about 8 months, beginning in June 2012. Alex is a founding member of AW@L, a direct action group based out of Kitchener-Waterloo. He does Indigenous solidarity organizing and works with land defense struggles, including at Grassy Narrows First Nation and with allies at Six Nations. Check the Guelph ABC website for his mailing address when he begins serving jail time.

## Robin Henry

Robin was convicted of two counts of Mischief Over \$5000 and one count of Masked with Intent for breaking windows at a Starbucks and Bell store. Robin served nine months under strict bail conditions before his sentencing. In March 2011, Robin was sentenced to one year of house arrest, followed by two years probation, a \$5000 fine and 300 community service hours. Robin is currently serving his sentence in London, Ontario.

## Ryan Rainville

On December 5, 2011 Ryan Rainville received a conditional sentence of four months under house arrest, followed by four months of curfew and then one year of probation. He spent about 100 days in jail awaiting bail. Ryan pled guilty to a Breach of Peace, and three counts of Mischief Over \$5000 for using a red and black flag and a hammer to destroy Toronto Police cruisers during the G20 riot. Ryan fought and won a trial where he contested charges of Assault Police with a Weapon and Obstruction of Justice.

## Girr Rowley

See Guelph ABC's statement: "In the Face of the Courts"

Girr was arrested in November 2010 for his alleged participation in the black bloc action. Girr pled guilty to one count of Mischief Under \$5000, one count of Masked with Intent and one count of Public Endangerment. He was convicted on February 3, 2012 and is currently serving a six month sentence. He is expecting to be released in June 2012.

You can send him mail to the following address:

Greg Noltie-Rowley  
Maplehurst Complex  
PO Box 10  
661 Martin St.  
Milton, ON  
L9T 2Y3

## Kelly Pflug-Back

Kelly has been presented in the media as the "ring leader" of the black bloc action. She spent two months in pre-trial custody, before being released to house arrest with her parents. Kelly currently has a curfew and a lengthy non-association list which includes upwards of 100 people.

Kelly was facing multiple counts of Mischief Over \$5000, Conspiracy, Obstruction of Justice, Assault Police with a Weapon, and Intimidation of a Justice System Participant. Kelly has had some of these charges dropped, but she is currently still facing seven counts of Mischief Over \$5000. Kelly has pled guilty and is awaiting sentencing at the end of May 2012. The crown is looking for upwards of 2 years. Check the Guelph ABC website for information on her sentence.

## George John Horton Norabuena

George is facing nine charges for allegedly participating in the black bloc. George was originally charged with Assault Police Officer, Intimidation of a Peace Officer, Obstruction of Justice, Masked with Intent, Weapons Dangerous, Possession of Stolen Property under \$5000, and three counts of Mischief Under \$5000. George pled guilty to three counts of Attempted Mischief Under \$5000 and one count of Masked with Intent. The crown dropped the Possession of Stolen Property and Weapons Dangerous charges. George went to trial for the remaining charges of Assault Police Officer, Intimidation of a Peace Officer and Obstruction of Justice. On May 15, he was found guilty of Assault Police Officer and Intimidation of a Police Officer. He was found not guilty of Obstruction of Justice. George will be sentenced in August for the Assault and Intimidation charges, as well as multiple counts of Mischief. The crown is seeking nine months in prison for George.

## Jae Muzzin

Jae was arrested for breaking two windows at the Toronto Police Headquarters during the G20. He pled guilty to two counts of Mischief Over \$5000 and Common Nuisance. Jae took a plea deal and was sentenced to an intermittent sentence of 60 days, which he served on 10 consecutive weekends. Jae was also ordered to pay restitution of \$2,500.

## Julian Ichim

Julian was one of the first defendants of the G20 Main Conspiracy Group whose charges were dropped, but in the fall of 2011, he was arrested again and charged with six counts of Disobeying a Court Order. These charges were laid because of a number of posts on his blog about his personal experiences with undercover officers, Brenda Carey and Bindo Showan. He is taking these charges to trial.

## Dan Keller

Dan was arrested on August 25, 2011 by the OPP Anti-Racketing Branch. He is charged with one count of Defamatory Libel and one count of Counselling for allegedly posting information on an activist website, [www.peaceculture.org](http://www.peaceculture.org) about the identity and whereabouts of G20 undercover operative Bindo Showan. Dan is taking these charges to trial.

Guelph Anarchist Black Cross is collecting and raising money to cover things like: sending letters and reading materials; transportation costs for friends, family and supporters to visit jail; canteen

and collect calls for those incarcerated; rent money for when they get out; storage for people's belongings; and more. The money that ABC is fundraising is to facilitate everyday and immediate needs of comrades facing jail time and their support networks. Our 2012 fundraising goal is \$3000. For information on how to donate, visit our website at <http://guelphabc.noblogs.org>

## Where We're At Now

Although the wave of repression that followed the G20 strained our communities and our organizing, we have also gained important experience about how to navigate the legal system and how to support each other through the courts and prison. The significant resources that the State has used to infiltrate, prosecute and imprison anarchists shows that they perceive us as a threat, even though we often view our influence on broader society as only marginal. We have learned of the consequences of struggle, and now we are in a place where our strength through repression can propel and inform our strategies and tactics. Our bonds have grown stronger by persevering through this together.

Guelph ABC had a small amount of infrastructure set up to support prisoners before all this went down, and now our abilities have been expanded and strengthened. Through directly supporting comrades in the court process, on strict bail conditions and in prison, we have established more contacts and concrete relationships.

To be in struggle means to support our prisoners. By having each other's backs through these hard times, we have more resolve to continue organizing against the State and Capitalism. People coming out of jail or harsh bail conditions need supportive friends to find continued inspiration. Throughout the past two years, we've learned the importance of taking care of each other, especially when we're in this fight against the system for the long haul. How the hell are any of us going to take struggle seriously if we don't support each other and prisoners?

The State's planned mass expansion of the Prison Industrial Complex makes the likelihood of being imprisoned even more of a reality, and the struggle against prison more relevant for anyone who exists in conflict with the State and Capital. The Crime Bill, the new proposed laws criminalizing masks at protests, and other efforts by the State will only increase the tensions between us and those in power. It would be useful to prepare for prison to be a reality for anarchists in the coming years. The State's tactics of repression are no longer abstract for anarchists in Southern Ontario. These collective experiences have been extremely difficult, scarring and traumatizing for many, but we are resilient. It's inspiring that we've come through it with dignity and even more determination.

ONLINE:  
[GUELPHABC.NOBLOGS.ORG](http://GUELPHABC.NOBLOGS.ORG)



# End the Prison Industrial Complex (EPIC) fights prison expansion

## MEMBERS OF EPIC

In recent years, the Conservatives have forced sweeping changes on the way that criminal law and prisons function in Canada. Even though crime rates continue to fall, the Tories have pushed through legislation like the so-called Truth in Sentencing Act that increases minimum prison sentences and criminalizes minor offences. At the same time, they've initiated major new prison construction to hold the growing number of prisoners their laws will create. They've also shut down many of the already limited programs and services offered to inmates (including the popular prison farm program formally run out of the Frontenac Institution prison in Kingston, Ontario).

Their agenda means the criminalization of communities of colour, immigrants, queer folks, drug users, and poor people. As they attack marginalized people, the Conservatives funnel public money into the private hands of the prison industrial complex.

End the Prison Industrial Complex (EPIC) is an abolitionist organization that does research, educational campaigns, and demonstrations against prisons in Kingston. Since 2010, EPIC has been fighting the Conservative government's prison expansion agenda. Our region has the highest density of prisons in Canada; the Kingston area is at the forefront of the Conservative push toward a system of privatized, American-style superprisons.

Most recently, the federal government has announced that the Kingston Penitentiary – the oldest active prison in Canada – is going to be closed. The official line is that the Penitentiary is out of date and needs to be shut down. As abolitionists, we don't mind seeing prisons closed. The closure of the Kingston Penitentiary, however, is not a way of shrinking the prison industrial complex, but a way of justifying the prison expansion that has already triggered resistance and public outcry.

## Blueprints for Prison Expansion

In March 2012, the U.S.-based leaks website Cryptome published blueprints for new federal prison units being built across Canada. We have reviewed and analysed the blueprints to try to understand their goals and plans.

Our analysis has revealed troubling facts and suggests that – not surprisingly – the government lied to the public about the nature of and justification for these projects. We focused on two virtually identical buildings to be constructed at Collins Bay (medium security) and Millhaven (maximum security). Officially, each building will contain 96 prisoners. But we found the following major concerns:

## Double-bunking

Double-bunking is the practice of holding two prisoners in a small cell designed for one – a practice that is becoming more and more common. The Conservatives claim behind the construction of new prisons is that



more space is needed to accommodate prisoners without the use of double-bunking. Double-bunking is widely acknowledged, even by the government itself, to be a dangerous practice which increases the risk of violence within prisons and which is psychologically harmful to prisoners.

However, the blueprints clearly show that these new prisons are designed to use double-bunking. A typical cell is shown with two bunks, with details specified for mounting hardware into the walls. Floor plans for furniture in the common area depict seating for twice as many prisoners as cells; that is, the eating areas are also designed with double-bunking in mind.

## Construction, not just expansion

Government statements about these projects have implied that the construction is minor, and the term "prison expansion" suggests that a new wing or two is being built. But entirely new buildings are being constructed, each with two stories, and each story with four wings containing twelve double-bunked cells. With this in mind, the total occupancy for

each building will be 192 prisoners, not 96, as publicly stated. The two buildings together will hold almost 400 prisoners, which means that the new construction is something akin to building an entirely new prison.

## Prisons within prisons

These blueprints depict buildings with maximum-security level security, in which the prisoners in each range are separated both from prisoners in other ranges and from the general population. These buildings are prisons within prisons – they permit a high level of prisoner isolation and the use of maximum security prisons within medium-security institutions (like Collins Bay). This approach will allow the Conservative government to bring in super-prisons through the back door, without any public consultation or transparency.

Regardless of whether or not the government's initial intent is to put only one prisoner in each cell, Conservative legislation like the Truth in Sentencing Act will create an increase in prison population that will make double-bunking in these new buildings inevitable.

## Resistance

People in Kingston and across the country have been fighting back against the Tory prison agenda. Part of EPIC's work is to expose prison profiteers – private contractors who get rich off of prison expansion. You can find a list of prison profiteers on our website, along with the contracts they've been awarded and how much money they've made.

Stopping prison expansion is a big job, but we can start small. You can organize local demonstrations where you live, and put pressure on contractors to reject profit from prison expansion. You can get in touch with us and other organizers to strategize. And you can get in touch with prisoners and prisoner groups to learn first-hand what is going on.

A noise demo – a raucous demonstration outside a prison – is a great way to show opposition to prisons and solidarity with prisoners. This May Day a successful noise demo was held outside the walls of Collins Bay, with noisemakers and fireworks visible to the prisoners.

Learn more and get in touch by visiting [endthepic.wordpress.com](http://endthepic.wordpress.com). There you can find a link to the prison blueprints and read our zine *Superprisons in Canada: What They Are, How To Stop Them*. ★



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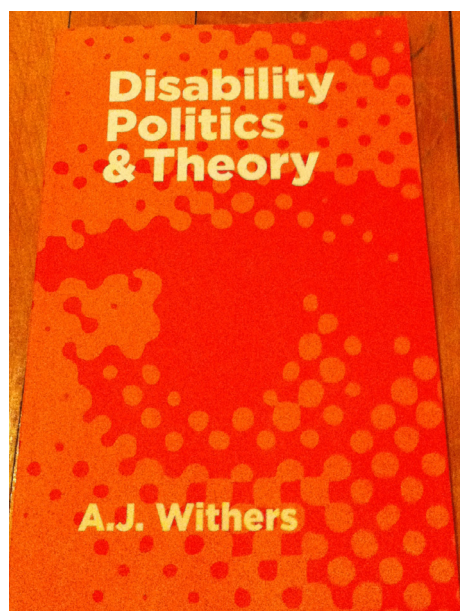
# Review: Disability Politics and Theory

KARINE WEHLM

“(D)isability falls somewhere in a constellation. Like the constellation in the sky, disability is in constant flux and appears different depending on the positioning of the onlooker.”(p.99)

*Disability Politics and Theory* is an excellent new book that critically examines the key models of disability that have shaped how disability and disabled people have been viewed in North America throughout the capitalist era and to this current day. The book’s author, AJ Withers applies an intersectional and anti-capitalist analysis on these models and suggests an alternative model, the radical model of disability, as a analytical tool to move the disabled people’s movement forward. Withers’ arguments stem from an understanding that multiple oppressions are intertwined with one another and cannot be dealt with separately. The author also argues that capitalism is inherently problematic since, among other things, it assigns individual self-worth and value based on whether one can work for a wage (and so produce profits for someone else). Withers ends with a call for both non-disabled people’s movements and the disabled people’s movement to organize inclusively for social justice and radical access.

The book begins by explaining the Eugenic model, the Medical model and the Charity model – all of which individualize disability and emphasize the necessity to cure, reduce or eliminate disability, rather than focusing efforts on improving disabled people’s conditions by reducing barriers and giving them power back over their lives. These models all stem from the belief that the problems posed by disability are inherent to disabled individuals themselves, rather than products of the negative reaction of society to human diversity. Withers goes on to explain how these models are still widely applied today: the Medical model still being the dominant mainstream model for dealing with disability and the Eugenic model still



**Disability Politics & Theory**  
AJ Withers ~ Fernwood Publishing

operating, for example, in the field of genetic research on reproduction.

The author goes on to explain the importance of the Disability Rights movement model and the Social model, while maintaining a critical analysis of both. The Disability Rights movement views disabled people as a minority. This movement fights to end discrimination towards disabled people and to help them become accepted in the current society; the Social model, on the other hand, demands a change in society itself. This model heralded an important shift in thinking about disability and was a response to the individualization of disability posed by the earlier models. The Social model separates impairment, which is part of an individual’s characteristics, from disability, which is “the oppression that people with impairment face” (p. 86.). For example, for a person using a wheelchair to move around town, their impairment could be the fact that their legs are paralysed while their disability could be their inability to access a building because of stairs. In the Social model, a person is only disabled

if the environment and society is not accessible or adapted to their needs. It is the environment and society that needs to change and not the person with the impairment. Disability is therefore a social construct and not inherent to the disabled person.

Withers finishes by explaining an alternative model, the Radical model of disability, which tries to address both the oppression of disabled people and disabled minds and bodies while intersecting with other forms of oppression. By choosing to speak in terms of minds and bodies, the author means who and what we are: we are physical, mental, intellectual, sensory bodies and minds. We have different ages, life experiences, cultures, languages, skin colours, genders, sexuality and class backgrounds. The radical model rejects the binary of impairment and disability in the Social model and sees impairment as also a social construct, because of the fact that impairment too has different meanings depending on the society we live in. To take the same example as before, a person unable to use their legs would be in an entirely different situation if we lived in an environment where there were no stairs. In this case, the meaning assigned to this particular physical fact would be something different. Withers chooses to talk about minds and bodies as a much more inclusive and non-oppressive way of discussing our difficulties, because we all have our challenges, disabled and non-disabled people alike. Using the words minds and bodies is an attempt to move away from categorical labels and towards a terminology that includes us all.

Withers also proposes an alternative to universal accessibility. Although universal accessibility is already much more inclusive than just adding a ramp to a building, because it tries to address in a comprehensive way all accessibility needs relating to the physical environment, it only addresses the physical aspect of the environment.

Radical access, instead, articulates a broad accessibility analysis that is inclusive of other oppressions, such as the inability to afford a ride on the bus – even though it can be accessed using a wheelchair.

One thing that caught my attention in this book is how Withers dismantles the myth of independence. Being independent means that someone can do a task by themselves, without needing the help of anyone. Withers instead argues that we are all interdependent – after all, very few of us make our own clothes or grow our own food. It is simply that certain dependencies have been normalized, while others have been marginalized. I would also add that we should aim at being autonomous rather than this ideal of being independent, which means being able to make our own choices in our lives. This includes choosing to have help or not. Very few people can say they are truly autonomous because of the way our society grants control and power to a few. Only real social change, including the abolishment of capitalism, hierarchy and the fight against all forms of oppression will make this possible for everyone.

*Disability Politics and Theory* is an easy-to-read book giving a thorough analysis of the key concepts and models of disability. It is an eye-opener on disability and it should be read by anybody seeking to move this society towards social justice. This book is urging us to fight to create the changes we want, because they won’t be handed to us. “We must work in solidarity with other marginalized groups, and we must get past our differences and fight for justice, dignity, equality and access.” (p.120) ★

## >> STUDENTS continued from page 1

red handprint emerged as the symbol of the Coalition after members began dipping their hands in red paint and leaving hand prints on the walls of MPPs offices.

The Coalition has also turned to blockading government offices, such as the Hydro Quebec headquarters, and most recently they shut down the Montreal Stock Exchange (as the student strike was underway). The now infamous Victoriaville protests outside the Liberal party’s convention, where police nearly killed protesters using plastic bullets, was also organized by the Coalition. This strategy of escalating economic disruption was later adopted by ASSÉ, and has been effectively employed during the current strike.

According to Phebus, the Coalition’s members – especially the community and feminist groups and some rank-and-file public sector workers – have undergone a real radicalization over the past two years in the course of these actions, and this has continued during the course of the student strike. “We are seeing in Quebec a reinvention of social action” says Phebus. “Direct action has gone from a catchphrase to a mass practice of economic disruption. It is on the agenda in a real way and there is a feeling that it can be done. We have moved from having social organizations or institutions to where we now have a true social movement.”

This new-found militancy can also be seen in the demands raised by the Coalition, which has moved from making defensive demands (e.g. stop the cuts) to discussing bold ideas such as free education,



new social housing, and the abolition of welfare – and its replacement with a guaranteed income. “What were once seen as radical demands now appear as a matter of political choice” says Phebus.

Having never been corporatist (focused only on the interests of its own members), ASSÉ and by extension the student movement as a whole, is now on the receiving end of solidarity from other social sectors. That the Quebec government “has not been able to isolate ASSÉ, in good part because of its work [in the Coalition]”. And, according to Phebus, it is likely that even after the student strike, the social uprising sparked by the student movement will continue – with the Coalition on the frontlines. “The government’s next attack will come in the form of a raise in hydro rates directly targeting the Coalition’s community base.” ★

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