

« A strike is not an end, but a means of

**pressure.** » Relax, bro! The strike is desired in and of itself, not to obtain some abstract gains. Encounters, intensities, and shared stories are the power of a strike, much more than any fantastical demands. Striking is a moment of affirmation, the constitution of a force, and not a quest for recognition.

« What do you propose, then? » Let's stop acting like some

master plan is going to come, and its program will save us from the “shipwreck of the university”. As if the correct analysis of the situation will give us the right direction to go and assure us of victory.

The possibility of losing a battle shouldn't keep us from connecting with each other, of being attentive to the presences that substantiate this strike, the ways of living it, living *in it*, and all the common destinies they beckon. It is from these *shared presences* that we can find ourselves, that we can try something else, become something else, and hold on to it with enough force that we can win once again. It is from here that we begin to ask *how* we think about our presence in the strike and we can elaborate a strategy together.

We have no “social project” to declare. There is no “project” which would solve the ambient malaise all around us. We don't want to construct the ideal society, but instead to experiment and organize practices, ways of being present, being-there, for real.

The student-strike is nothing but a pretext for *striking*.

Montréal, february 2012 faire-greve.blogspot.com

# STRIKING



At precise moments, there are certain phrases that return again and again. What is it that brings these words to our lips? In every social movement we hear their repetition, and we can already hear their echo in the noise of the strike that is coming. With the effectiveness of the flash of advertising, these slogans and formulas can only suspend, every time, the questions they pose and which they can never answer. What do we hear *behind* these slogans? Whether uttered by a colleague or an auntie, recorded in a demo, police statement, media report, or an activist flyer, there is always the same cynical incredulity. The same crisis of meaning cuts through so many subjectivities of our era: students, employees, teachers, and rectors, as much as dropouts.

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Does anyone believe in these ready-made phrases anyway? To tell the truth, these alibis attest to nothing other than our absence to the situation. When will we stop acting *as if*?

*As if* it was only a question of fees and not a question of our lives that are at stake at every moment?

**« It isn't democratic! »** *As if* any practical decisions have to be constrained to voting or consensus, as if everything else is necessarily authoritarian or worse, reactionary. The democratic dogma aims to create a feeling of adhesion, a fiction of unity that nobody can deny or put in question. By legitimizing the democratic process we avoid the need to get involved and take a stand. Conflict is sublimated within democratic processes. What everyone knows secretly is that this process is often nothing more than a way to shut up those who raise their voices, and who question such 'unity'. Those who do not want to reduce a strike solely to student politics. What is involved *within* the strike always becomes a balance of power between tendencies that can never be reduced to any GA mandate.

**« But we don't want to alienate people. »** As if Uncle Bob was really going to get up off the couch. What's the purpose of gaining support from a majority that has condemned itself to silence anyway? Public opinion is CTV. It is the invisible hand behind the police. Come on, we won't play indignant and lick the boots of the polls just before they kick our ass (like they'll do anyway). They will always feel the strike has lasted too long. We won't get anything by swallowing the fiction of the People united for the Cause.

**« University is the bastion of critical thought. It's sacred. »** Let's stop acting as if university was some kind of sanctuary. Calls to "save education" are still calls to the State to save a society we don't want anymore. There can be no choice between an autonomous and a free-market university: it isn't the university that has to be saved; it is a way of being in it, that has to be rethought, knowing its limits. A way that cracks its walls, and makes it something more than an organ of reproduction.

**« The strike is not a vacation. »** Give me a break! A strike is supposed to be the opposite of work: a production stoppage, an interruption of function. There are always those who will wish to mobilize us, to increase their numbers, and who ask for obedience and unity around their program, but who oppose our multiple ways of striking and the conflict it implies. Striking is a way of making retreat an offensive act, and not some kind of passive entertainment. The strength of a strike depends on what circulates through it, which also means letting go of the catechism of the good activist. We won't accept a choice between the seriousness of the struggle and the overflows of joy it creates. We won't pretend we have to be bored to fight; politics does not have to be dull to be powerful, in fact it's just the opposite. It is just a matter of knowing how to articulate it.

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