

## Reflecting on the CUPE 3903 Strike

In our longest meeting of the year, the *Problématique* Editorial Collective vigorously debated whether to publish the following two articles. For one, the CUPE 3903 strike was two years ago. More importantly, the union is just now in April of 2011 emerging from an over-year long period of administration by CUPE National, having lost its local autonomy due to financial concerns and concerns about the union atmosphere in the wake of the strike. Finally, the union is entering another round of collective bargaining later this year, so it is of paramount importance that the transition from administration by CUPE National occurs somewhat smoothly.

With these things in mind, our publication of the following analyses is either incredibly timely or incredibly untimely. Our hope is of course the former, that the two articles published here will provide a basis for reflection and dialogue rather than mere finger-pointing. If the dynamics of the last strike taught us anything, it is that radical, bottom-up democracy is a difficult and precarious process. But if we don't take the time to learn from experiences like those of the strike, the struggle for radical democracy will remain ever more elusive.

Furthermore, although written independently, these two articles nonetheless form an interesting juxtaposition of two examples of practice-oriented theory – they present opposing perspectives on the divisions that emerged during the strike using different theoretical starting points. While they represent opposing experiences, we by no means want to suggest that they reflect the only experiences of the strike. After all, both are written by what Jason Harman's article calls "activist" members in the union, and obviously do not speak about all of the experiences of rank-and-file members. Nevertheless, we feel it is important to archive some of the prominent debates and perspectives that emerged from the strike to help us figure out a way forward now, as we emerge from administration, and contribute to a record which may be of value to future union members.

- The *Problématique* Editorial Collective