



STOPPING A BULLDOZER: CAT & THE EMC LOCKOUT

ALEX BALCH

There was little to celebrate this New Years Eve for workers at the Electro-Motive Canada (EMC) plant in London, Ontario. As midnight struck, the factory's 465 employees found themselves locked out of their workplace and forced in a labour dispute with one of the largest industrial equipment manufacturers in the world – Caterpillar Inc (CAT).

Making matters worse for the workers represented by Canadian Auto Workers (CAW) local 27, is the fact that CAT - like most industry-leading conglomerates - is notoriously brutal. This brutality has built the company a reputation as a strident enemy of organized labour. Its rise to prominence in the corporate world owes much to the ruthless manner in which it has historically employed union-busting tactics and cost-cutting measures. Beginning in 1992, United Auto Workers (UAW) members in Decatur, IL fought a bitter six-year strike with

CAT. The company's threats to hire a permanent replacement workforce eventually pushed a frightened UAW leadership into accepting humiliating concessions. The betrayal of Skilled Trades Unions – whose members crossed picket lines to service industrial machinery operated by scabs - left workers in the community thoroughly disillusioned and their union local broken. This is CAT's legacy in the United States.

After acquiring the London EMC plant as part of their \$890 million dollar purchase of US-based Electro-Motive Diesel (EMD) in 2010, CAT introduced a new contract that would cut workers' wages in half (from \$34.00 to \$16.50) and drastically reduce their pensions and benefits. In justifying the massive rollbacks, CAT cited their concerns that the EMC plant's workforce wasn't "sufficiently flexible and cost-competitive in the global marketplace."

Originally based out of the midwest, CAT's US factories have largely shifted to the country's southern states – to places where "union" is often seen as a dirty word. In October the company opened a new locomotive plant in Muncie, IN – heightening fears that they intend to close the London plant and move the jobs south of

the border. Internationally, CAT has factories located in 21 countries, with an increasing amount of its production over the past decade shifting to Russia – where labour costs are much more "flexible".

Needless to say, this frugality doesn't extend up CAT's corporate ladder. Occupy London – who cooperated closely with CAW 27 during the occupation of the city's downtown Victoria Park – hit the nail on the head in their callout for an international Day of Action against CAT on January 21:

Caterpillar CEO, Douglas R. Oberhelman, makes over \$5,000 an hour, before bonuses are even added to his salary. We [...] insist that Mr. Oberhelman take a 55% reduction in wages before he asks over 90,000 of his workers to accept a sub-standard wage while the company enjoys record profits.

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CUPE'S winter of discontent

BRUCE DARDEN

While the Occupy movement has dominated the airwaves and discussions this fall, the winter is shaping up to be a series of cold picket lines for public sector workers and anti-austerity activists. In Toronto, three major CUPE locals are facing the prospect of being locked out or forced into strikes. Whereas Occupy Toronto influenced many people into re-examining how the State is subservient to business, these union struggles may be able to demonstrate that the State conceives of *itself* as a business.

Most people are aware that Mayor Rob Ford has picked a fight with city workers. Unions representing both inside workers (CUPE 79) and outside workers (CUPE 416) are being pressured into accepting deals that would include massive job losses, a reduction of wages, and significant rollbacks of benefits. This re-structuring—cough, destruction, cough—will not only affect the current workers of the city of Toronto, but also the future workers that provide the city's essential services in years to come: including, but not limited to, water, child-care, park maintenance, and homeless shelters. These proposed layoffs - along with the cuts contained in the 2012 city budget – would not only cut to the bones the conditions that affect them as workers, but would negatively affect the quality of living of those Torontonians that rely



on these services. Any reduction in city of Toronto workers will necessarily increase wait times and reduce service levels. Whether this translates into longer lines at the ODSP office, less ice-time for your daughter's hockey team or your neighbourhood park sitting longer in disrepair, these new union contracts will affect the lives of all Torontonians.

What most people are not aware of is that the University of Toronto (UofT) is also preparing for their own labour dispute with student academic workers at UofT and contract academic workers at St. Mike University (CUPE 3902 bargaining units one and four, respectively). The UofT administration would like to push these workers into a more precarious financial position and further erode their working conditions. Just as the workplace conditions being imposed on city workers will affect

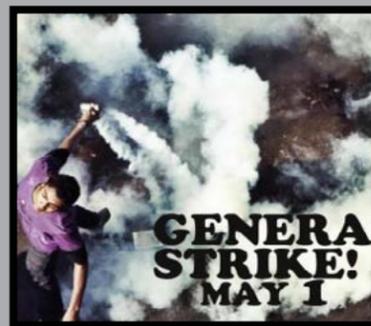
Torontonians, workplace conditions (such as tutorial size) not only affect academic workers, but also the students that these workers teach.

What CUPE's leadership does not seem to understand is that this struggle is not about negotiating for contracts for their members. It is not about negotiating contracts at all. CUPE's struggle is a fight against the State. This is why these three labour disputes not only affect their members, but the entire community of Toronto. If CUPE continues preparing as if this were just another round of bargaining, then it is bound to lose. And we all are bound to lose with them.

It is important to note that within the context of this fight three of the four major public sectors are under attack: education, physical services, and social services. Only healthcare—

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the fourth major public sector—is not currently under threat; we can safely assume that in the upcoming Liberal provincial budget, however, austerity measures will be extended to this sector as well.

Losing these struggles for social services would be a killing blow against the working class by the agents of austerity. These labour contracts and the 2012 city budget will be upheld as templates for imposing devastating cuts across all of Ontario and, soon after that, all of Canada. Public sector workers in Toronto need to fight, not only against the imposition of unfair contracts, but

We created the office buildings, garbage trucks, and water system over many years and with the help of many hands.

against austerity cuts themselves. If these service cuts keep going through, then soon there will not be enough money in the budgets for city workers to even

hope to negotiate for the removal of layoffs and a reduction of standard of living from their new contracts.

One way the State will try to push through this program of austerity is by attempting to divide us into ‘users’ and ‘providers’ of services, thereby isolating the unions from the community at large. The simplest way of counteracting this logic is to point out that the ‘providers’ are also ‘users’ of these services; we all depend on the production of social sector workers – whether we use public services now, have used them in the past or plan to use them in the future. This unity is expressed by the fact that there are

many unionists actively struggling within community groups (like Stop the Cuts) as workers, but also as neighbours.

This logic extends in both directions, once we realize that the ‘users’ are actually part of the ‘providers’ as well. The services’ infrastructure is owned (for a lack of a better word) by the people of Toronto — not by city council or the mayor. We created the office buildings, garbage trucks, and water system over many years and with the help of many hands. The ideas, practices, and objects that make up social sector industries were created in a system of interdependence: they were the inventions and creations of workers spanning countless generations and across the entire world.

As well, these social services are part of the ‘wages’ of all workers. This means that my employer can get away with paying me less, since they know that the State will provide me with healthcare, unemployment insurance, and clean water (to name only a few examples). When City Council votes to increase bus fares or to add another service charge to public pools, does your boss give you a raise to cover the difference? No, but you still have to take transit to work and find a place to spend the plus 35 degree days in the summer.

Occupy Toronto has brought the idea of the general assembly

back into public consciousness. That is not to say that they haven’t been happening in Toronto for some time; the University of Toronto General Assembly, the Greater Toronto Workers’ Assembly, and the mass meetings of Stop the Cuts all precede the Occupy movement. In December of 2011, rank-and-file workers in the suburbs of Toronto have been participating in community-labour assemblies such as the Solidarity Assembly for PALEA workers at Pearson Airport and the Public Service Assembly held in the municipality of Peel.

In all of these cases the general assembly expresses itself slightly differently: with varying gestures, manners, and desires. What is the same is the method of having workers and neighbours talk to each other directly, as members of the working class—without the hierarchies or mediations found within unions and community associations that often divide workers and community members from each other. We need to cultivate a stronger fightback against austerity cuts and union busting by developing new bonds between community groups and rank-and-file unionists. We don’t just need new models of talking to each other – we also need new models of collective action. The general assembly provides us with a space to resurrect established, but forgotten, methods of collective action (such as the General Strike) and a place to invent new techniques that we can try out for the first time. Struggle changes everything . . . and we got a lot to change these days.



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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Science cannot make people immortal (at least, not yet), and all >>>continued on page 7

Tensions and tactics in the struggle against Rob Ford

In the lead up to the vote on Toronto's 2012 City Budget, tactical disagreements surfaced between two different groups organizing around proposed cuts to city services: the Toronto Stop the Cuts network and the Respect Toronto coalition. Despite these tensions, the two sides agreed to hold a shared rally on the first day of the budget proceedings. In the lead up to the rally, Megan Kinch of the Toronto Media Co-op spoke with John Clarke, long-time OCAP organizer and a member of the Toronto Stop the Cuts network.

Kinch: So, how long has Stop the Cuts been planning this rally for?

Clarke: We’ve had this planned now for weeks and weeks and had lined up a whole range of different speakers, performers... it’s been going on for quite some time.

Kinch: I saw people handing out flyers in my neighborhood for this rally a while ago.

Clarke: Yes, the rally was planned. A whole outreach operation was well underway.

Kinch: I know that they called a separate labour rally, “Respect Toronto” and the flyer even says “stop the cuts” on it. Is it true that they didn’t consult you guys at all before doing that?

Clarke: Well the history of it is that the Stop the Cuts rally had actually been significantly supported by sections of the labour movement. CUPE Ontario had endorsed, the Public Service Alliance of Canada had endorsed. We had called the thing, really, because we hadn’t had any reason to believe that there was going to be any kind of a rally. We specifically asked Respect [Toronto] and nothing had been announced. But it seems like some of these plans are developed somewhere else and then brought to meetings.

And so we just suddenly discovered that there is in fact going to be a rally and we were told that the only place that plans could be drawn up

for it is at the Respect Toronto meetings. And if we want to be part of this, we have to go to these meetings. Some level of involvement by Stop the Cuts was apparently going to be approved... but what now has emerged is that it really comes down to the disagreement that exists between Stop the Cuts and the Toronto and District Labour Council – which essentially is around a tactical question of “what is the best way to Stop these Cuts”? The perspective that is apparently being advanced by them is a lobbying strategy. The idea that what is required is quiet, respectable pressure that Margaret Atwood and the editorial board of the Toronto Star would think was acceptable and that will supposedly win over this ‘mushy middle’ of councillors so that the cuts will not go through. I don’t think that strategy has worked out, I don’t think there’s any indication that it is working out.

And in any event, as far as we’re concerned what’s happening now, this round of cuts, is only municipally the first instalment – Ford has acknowledged that there’s more coming next year. But moreover, it’s part of a whole international agenda of austerity. It doesn’t come down to Rob Ford; this is happening in the United Kingdom, this is happening internationally... and its going to be relentless. And we’re going to have to build a movement to stop it—which means it’s going to have to be powerful enough, disruptive enough, threatening enough that it can stop them from proceeding with their agenda. And I think to the immediate leadership of Toronto Labour Council, that position is anathema. As far as they’re concerned, respectability is the watchword. But we don’t accept that the tactics of a movement of working-class resistance can be based on what the liberal wing of the ruling class thinks is acceptable... that’s preposterous. If the deer bases itself on the wishes of the wolf pack they’re going to be in big trouble.

Kinch: I can hardly believe that their strategy, especially after Occupy Toronto showed that at least illegally camping is supported by broad masses of people in Toronto.

Clarke: There’s no question that their strategy is delusional... politically delusional.

Kinch: And its not just about Ford either. I think we have to think more long-term and be building organizations that can actually fight, because appealing to the ‘mushy middle’ and getting library cuts cancelled... that’s not going to handle the fights that’s going to come whether or not we get rid of Ford.

Clarke: Trade union functionaries who are advancing this perspective owe the organization that they’re part of – and their own function – to the militant struggles of the past. If the workers at General Motors or Ford had tried to organize on the basis of these sorts of tactics, they would have gotten nowhere. People had to actually struggle for these rights, for these unions... for these social programs. People had to actually fight



JOINT STC/RESPECT TORONTO RALLY, JAN 17, 2012

for them. They don’t understand the history of Ford/Windsor 1945 and Vallyfield Quebec 1946 and the “On to Ottawa” march that led to the gains that are now under attack. But as a movement we’re going to have to re-discover that. And we’re not looking to tell the Labour Council or anybody else that we have the franchise on social mobilization. But what we are going to have to do is – over the objections of some labour leaders – we’re gonna have to start building a movement that can actually resist.

Kinch: There’s been a bit of a model proposed coming out of the more syndicalist people in Occupy of holding labour and community assemblies instead of just rallies... of having more People’s Assembly-type decision making bodies.

Clarke: I think that’s begun to emerge as something that has some real possibilities, in terms of actually involving people as more than just rally fodder, but [encouraging them to] actually be part of the discussion and part of the debate that’s going on. And the signs are quite encouraging. There was an assembly organized [in December] at the airport, with large numbers of trade unionists participating. So that does point us in a good direction.

Kinch: It seems like the labour movement is trapped in this excessive legalism. We kind of saw this at Occupy where they’d back us to the point of eviction at which point there was a bit of conflict of interest with some people ready to do some more civil-disobedience. But also labour leaders are not necessarily at a point where they can legally advocate for civil disobedience, which is an interesting position for community groups... because to what extent do you want to take direction from labour and to what extent are they constrained by the legalities.

Clarke: Well, we all face legal constraints. I think the problem is that we’re dealing with a kind of a hangover from the post second world war years. At that time there was really a deal worked out in society, where “we’ll give you incremental improvements and concessions, in return for you agreeing to keep the struggle compartmentalized, legalized, [and] regulated.” And the other side has revoked the deal and we’re still playing by the rules of a dead deal. And we’re getting hammered as a result, and I think that has to change. I think community organizations can give something of a boost in that direction. But on the other hand it has

to be workers, workplaces, that have to actually exert their power as well, because we’re not going to be able to do it just on the basis of communities. I think a community mobilization in the end is a police problem – the level of a police problem. It requires workers actually taking mass action and job-related action to use the real power of the working class.

Kinch: And unions not stopping them. Sometimes unions actually act against the interests of workers.

Clarke: Yeah. I don’t have a personal grudge against [Labour Council President] John Cartwright – but I think the truth is that the perspective that he’s advancing has actually become a political impediment. Whatever his intentions... he may have the best intentions, but it’s a political impediment. And so what it’s going to require is that we go deeper into the rank-and-file and actually find allies there. City workers in Toronto must be coming to the conclusion that going [to City Hall] and sitting in the gallery and watching these people vote to destroy their jobs and lives and the union is not a productive strategy. People must be beginning to realize.

Kinch: At Occupy labour leaders were perfectly happy to make a speech but they weren’t able or interested in mobilizing their membership, and I think we’re at the end of great speeches and at a time where we need to mobilize rank-and-file members.

Clarke: Yes. And labour leaders can and must adapt to that changed situation, because the unions must adapt to that changed situation or stand aside and allow others who are not so conservative in their views to come forward. That’s the new reality. Since 2008 it’s clear that we are no longer dealing with neoliberalism in the classic sense. If we go on with this approach of passivity and respectability and restraint in the face of these attacks, we’re not just going to face gradual losses of what we’ve won in the past, we’re going to face catastrophic defeats... and there’s one coming up in Toronto right now. It’s on the horizon. We’re either going to mobilize to stop this or we’re going to watch terrible, terrible defeats.

[This interview originally appeared in the Toronto Media Co-op]

Oh So Sensitive...

MUHAMMAD SHOYEB ADNAN

All living beings perceive their surroundings with the help of bodily senses; they savor light, smell, taste, touch and sound - just like us. But we humans consider ourselves different, and superior too, because we are intelligent. We also have sentiments deep within the realms of our mind. We appreciate beauty, morality, art and many other intangibles.

We are such delicate creatures indeed, for our sentiments are soft, intricate like fragile flower petals. It is a damn pity that we were kicked out from heaven some aeons ago; now we are stranded into this hellish pit called the earth, where debauchery and defilement runs amok, bleeding and bruising our precious sentiments. We are constantly squealing and shrinking from pain, running into corners all the time. Much of this is due to the existence of one particular sentiment called ‘religious sentiment’. It is not only the touchiest one, but it is also the one that defines us most.

The term “religious sentiment” has been hanging around the great tree of human history for quite some time, but it wasn’t until recently that this particular sentiment has bloated and manifested itself into a great boil. In the mass media, the term “religious sentiment” is typically mentioned in relation to it being “wounded”, “hurt”, and, in many cases, leading to a “spontaneous combustion”.

People scream when they’re



hurt. They throw tantrums, create a lot of drama, and occasionally ruin. Eventually they get bandaged, stitched, pillied, and try to forget the whole thing. However, a mauled religious sentiment cannot be addressed with any such remedy. A surgeon cannot open somebody up, take their religious sentiment out, pat it with opium powder and put it back. A doctor cannot prescribe a pill to heal a suffering religious sentiment. They have also proven themselves immune to anti-depressants and psychotherapy.

Religious sentiment is not like artistic sentiment. It will not result in a group of fellow beings sulking into a corner, smoking vegetables. It is not like political sentiment either, which can lead people into protest against oppression. It is not like moral sentiment, giving people a reason to strive for peace and humanity.

While all other human sentiments tend to lead us to something positive, like the creation of literary or musical masterpieces, a better political system, or the establishment of international conventions on human rights, religious sentiment often leads to something else – the urge to utterly destroy anybody who opposes it. And one of the prime nemeses of religious sentiment is science.

At the very beginning of human history, human beings learned a set of predictable principles in order

to survive. This capacity, combined with our habitual curiosity, culminated into a solid scientific discipline that provided us a deeper understanding into the working processes of nature. In our caveman era, we also came up with mythological explanations of things, which had more to do with peace of mind than survival itself. If we had depended upon Allah, Christ, Odin, or Osiris to protect us from weather and carnivorous animals, then we would have gone extinct a long, long time ago.

But our ancestors, apart from survival, needed a decent dose of entertainment and mysticism. Just like we enjoy reading Lord of the Rings and Hitchhiker’s Guide to the Galaxy today, I can totally imagine a thirteenth-century Arab herder of camels telling stories of Allah and Abraham while enjoying a nice bonfire.

There are many reasons why people initially took these stories seriously. Every human being has a profound desire to be immortal, which is just an extension of the survival desire itself. This often exists alongside a perceived need for an omnipotent authority – one that can exact divine justice on all the wrongs committed in the universe.

Science cannot make people immortal (at least, not yet), and all

OCCUPY EVERYTHING



Organizing to occupy inside occupy toronto

BRANDON GRAY

For forty days this past autumn, approximately 500 people, mostly youth, maintained a protest camp in St. James Park, a couple blocks from the third largest stock exchange in North America. As part of the global 'Occupy' movement against economic inequality, the park was a base in which a political dialogue could happen using direct action and non-hierarchical decision-making.

I had intently followed the Tunisian uprising, watched the battles for Tahrir Square and paid close attention to the Spanish Indignados as the wave of revolt headed westward and finally reached Wall Street. Through facebook I signed up for the logistics and outreach committees nearly two weeks before the occupation, hoping that one area of work would compliment the other. The first logistics meetings were awkwardly tense because nobody knew each other, a proper meeting structure was absent, and almost everyone there was new to activism. However the people showing up to meetings were working very hard to make the occupation a success and had diverse backgrounds to draw on. We soon had a long list of needed items, beginning with the big stuff: generators and toilets. I thought that the best relationship to have with the unions was one in which all materiel support would be welcomed but any members taking part would do so just like everyone else at occupy.

I was hand-billing at U of T campus before heading down to Berczy Park for the second planning assembly, when a man walked up to me to ask me about Occupy. It turned out he had participated in the early protests that evolved into the Egyptian uprising. He helped me get our flyers out to people before we headed down to the assembly together, discussing how to build a movement here based on the specific tactics they had used in Egypt. It was very exciting: revolutionaries were finding each other and sharing experiences and advice, integrating the nodes of this world struggle.

On October 15, as the crowd swelled to over 3000, we collectively ratified the logistics committee's proposal

to occupy St. James Park and began to march there from King and Bay. Our march was adorned with plenty of corporate media and filled the entire street, seeming to grow as we moved along. Our first General Assembly (GA) was massive. The press scrum at the front of this GA was dense and a bit too pushy; they created a barrier between the people giving announcements and helping to facilitate and the thousands of people taking part in the meeting, and they ignored our requests to make room for those participating in the assembly. With that many people using the "people's" mic", it took three echoes for a few words to make it out to those on the outer rim of the meeting. It was awkward getting used to speaking in such a way, but luckily my announcement for logistics was short and simple. The rest of that first day I spent directing people to committee tents and taking requests for needed supplies while a festive mood began to take over the park.

Having a protest camp worked well as a base. Marches and actions were able to happen every day, and sometimes twice a day, in addition to the GAs held at noon and 6pm. The most exciting protests were those that made decisions on the move and used direct action tactics to make demands. My favourite example

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was a sit-in at King and Bay, in which it was proposed and agreed that we would block the streetcars until the TTC executives stopped blocking Wheel-Trans service to St. James Park. An amendment to move our sit-in a couple blocks to Yonge and Dundas was adopted so that transit riders could transfer from their blocked streetcars to the subway. Seeing news helicopters circling overhead broadcasting to a huge screen in the square gave someone a great idea. They proposed we form '99%' in the intersection to send a message to those watching at home. The crowd produced chalk to make an outline and we all sat on these lines, proving we could self-organize on the spot and successfully carry out somewhat complicated actions. As the weeks

went on, there was a decrease in the frequency of actions but large protests still occurred, usually on Saturdays, with sizable union mobilizations and public engagement through our outreach street teams. We crashed a Bay Street meeting by the Minister of Labour, marched in solidarity with the call from Occupy Oakland for a general strike, shut down the major banks on Bay Street with a massive union solidarity rally, organized twin snake marches of several thousand people that ended at City Hall to demand mayor Ford's eviction, and carried out many other exciting actions while we held our protest camp.

In the first couple weeks, a long time activist and I trained over one hundred people in de-escalation tactics and the general policies we would use to keep everyone safe. One of the main challenges we faced was how to handle conflicts involving addiction and mental health. It fell to the marshals to develop practical policies that would remove the conflict without ostracizing or criminalizing those involved. Supporters visiting the park were sometimes verbally abused and intimidated by a small number of individuals suffering episodes of severe mental illness which the existing government services had utterly failed to treat. It was a serious problem undermining our support and credibility with no immediate remedies in sight. We worked out a policy whereby marshals would pool information on the individual in question, identify a friend of theirs, and bring them in to work with the marshal with whom they shared the best rapport. These two people, along with a mental health professional or street nurse, would communicate and work with the individual in question to try and get them real help. The rest of the marshals avoided getting involved unless there was violence.

To supplement this process, reliable marshals either living on the streets or with the relevant experience formed a 'street team' that would work with the local homeless population - many of whom they knew personally - to find common ground and avoid conflicts. It was through this team and those they worked with that we would regularly hear that homeless, and/or people suffering from mental health or substance abuse problems were being sent to the park, or dropped off by police after being detained or arrested. The reasoning was that they would cause disruptions, violence, and prove that we could not handle the park without the police. Consistent with these reports was the refusal by the officers maintaining a 24/7 perimeter around the park to hear complaints of assault made by those seeking police protection. In one case, an occupier asking to report a crime was told to "fuck off" by one officer.

After a month of occupying the park, the mayor was finally ready to send the police in to remove us. Contingency planning took over the park's usual economic and social conversations and the beginnings of an anti-eviction strategy formed. Occupiers would choose

from one of three colour-coded teams to designate the risk level they had accepted. Green was for those who would leave or seek sanctuary beside the church as the eviction began, orange for those that would stay in the park but reserved the option to leave, and red was for those who would engage in non-violent direct actions to protect certain areas of the park and who would refuse to leave. Marshals would have scouts on radios watching for large police movements outside the park, while a couple of us with air horns would signal when an eviction was imminent. I also carried a phone donated by a union that held all the numbers we had collected for our 'phone tree', which we would use to send mass texts to mobilize our supporters on short notice. We would then prioritize escorting 'green liners' to the area beside the church or out of the park and help coordinate getting 'red liners' to where they needed to be. Unfortunately the injunction our legal supporters

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filed, when put into place, prevented us from expanding or otherwise altering the camp. It also stretched out the period of eviction, so that supporters who were on standby to rush to the park during eviction were left in

limbo for over a week. Naturally, to impartially ascertain whether our right to protest trumped the rights of local condo residents to use the entire park as their dog's toilet, the government had Ontario Supreme Court judge Brown, a Christian fundamentalist Bay Street lawyer, make the ruling on whether we should be evicted. Needless to say, Brown ruled in favour of the dogs, declaring that "Canada has not chosen anarchism." We were prepared for an eviction to come right after Judge Brown's ruling. At around 2pm, when about a dozen officers entered the park to serve fresh eviction notices, the air horn alarm prematurely went off and we sprung into action. With 'green liners' out of the park and all the largest tents, save for the library yurt, with plenty of 'red liners' assigned to them, I made it a priority to beef up the defence of the library - especially since in New York, the police had seized Occupy Wall Street's library and burnt all the books. Luckily I had bought a couple of thick chains and some locks the day before and had proposed to an anarchist friend and fellow marshal that we chain ourselves to the door of the library and hold out as long as possible. With help from our comrades, a barricade of scrap wood and shipping pallets festooned with black flags and anarchist slogans was quickly erected around us while the corporate press buzzed around videotaping and snapping photos.

Another anarchist set to work barricading the large gazebo in the centre of the park, while another barricade went up around the First Nations' fire. Massive union rallies

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Lessons From Tahrir

23 year old filmmaking student NADIM EATEH was born in Cairo, Egypt and moved to Toronto in his early life. After making it onto the Toronto Police's "top 40 wanted list" for his alleged role in the fiery G20 protests, he spent the last spring and summer in Cairo, Athens, and Madrid, participating and documenting the revolutionary movements there before becoming a part of Occupy Toronto.

34 year old architect ALI MIKKAWA was active in the Cairo protests, where he helped organise demonstrations and volunteered with the set up of the sit-in in Tahrir.

Nadim and Ali spoke with Linchpin separately. Both interviews are available in their entirety at <http://linchpin.ca>.

What were the first protests or meetings that got you involved with events in Egypt?

Ali: I got involved with the Kefaya protests that started seven years ago. This movement was the first to take to the streets to protest the long rule of Mubarak and it stands for "Enough". The movement started to gain momentum slowly but surely... and I really got engaged later when [former IAEA head] Mohammed El Baradei returned to Egypt. From that point onwards I was more active campaigning for his One Million Signature campaign to change the constitution.

The Kefaya movement used to announce their protests in opposition newspapers and through word of mouth. Their protests were small in number and [the participants] were usually beaten up and some jailed. It was very difficult to communicate using phones, and the advent of Facebook was yet to come. There were several dissident bloggers and activists that were active on the Internet and promoted the movement - though

they didn't organize anything online, as this would have been easily intercepted and quelled.

Facebook was instrumental for the Khaled Said Movement and the 6th of April, who started to take to the streets in organized and peaceful fashion... devising ways of protest that were legal and difficult to stop. For example, they used to stand five meters apart wearing black and turning their backs to the streets in a sign of protest. The police would know the place of the event... but since it was silent and organized in such an unconventional manner, they would do little to intervene. Then, of course, [came] the call for Jan 25 and the revolution inspired by Tunisia.

Nadim: I went back [in] May of 2011... so everything had pretty much died down there. It wasn't really focused much on the actual revolution, but the things that not many people were focusing on - which is the post-revolution, that liquid state, that liquid area we don't usually talk about.

During the occupation of Tahrir Square, were there meetings between different working groups - such as security - or how were things decided?

Ali: Not really. Order seemed to emerge out of this diverse and spontaneous group of people. We did have some meetings. Groups formed and communicated and tried to get in touch with each other... but to have an overarching control of the whole camp was impossible, and we really never tried to achieve this. You have to remember that there was no top-down leadership of this movement. That was the beauty of it and... I am sad to say, is also a great setback to the Egyptian Revolution over all.

Report from Occupy Hamilton

VIKKI GAGE

Like most larger Canadian cities, Hamilton joined the Occupy Movement on October 15th with a rally downtown. That Saturday, and every following Saturday continuing well into December, occupiers met in Gore Park to show their support for the burgeoning international movement. At these rallies, generally a few dozen in size, participants displayed signs, played music, gave speeches and held General Assemblies.

Beyond our rallies, Occupy Hamilton activities have included a "March on the Banks" on November 12 - where a large crowd met at City Hall, marched around the downtown core and briefly occupied the lobby of Stelco Tower outside the TD and RBC banks. Participants have also carried our banner to events organized by Occupy Toronto and to other local protests (such as those organized against the Wheat Board) - in addition to reaching out to a wide number of local groups and unions. Our day-to-day activities have involved a dizzying

array of meetings, both of the General Assembly (once or twice a week) and numerous committees, evolving toward the more recent adoption of a group constitution formalizing rules and procedures.

Though Occupy Hamilton didn't hold a permanent occupation downtown, students at Hamilton's McMaster University began a full-time presence in the school's Student Centre under the banner of Occupy McMaster in order to create a community space for students to discuss issues.

Since a brief holiday hiatus, our General Assembly has re-formed and plan to continue our work well into the new year. First on the agenda is solidarity with London's locked out Electro-Motive (Caterpillar) workforce and opposition to plans for privatized health care. By reaching out across issues that affect our communities, Occupy Hamilton is hoping to connect people and struggles and to forge a broader and stronger movement in our city and beyond.



YOUTH OF TAHIR

Nadim: The major difference was that at Occupy we went out to create these committees. What happened in Egypt was there was a more fluid kind of way these committees would break out. For example... the camels. When they came in during the Camel Battle, [the protesters] created... actually, throughout the revolution, they created a small hospital where volunteer doctors and nurses would be working - and it was just spur of the moment. They'd say "okay, we need a place away from the battle... we need to do it over here." The vendors all around, who would sell food and stuff like that... they just came in thinking there'd be money. Like "there's a ton of money right there", which is smart... like two Egyptian pounds and you'd get this thing of kusheri. You'd feed these people and you'd be there and we'd have these revolutionary sentiments and stuff, it was just so sporadic - yet it seemed to work. And these marshals that would come up - they were just people that wanted to volunteer... to make sure they were on the front lines. And the people that would fight against the cops and the camels were also people that were just there ready to go... so it was a very fluid kind of thing.

How did you deal with the police and baltagiya ('thugs')?

Ali: We used to arrest the thugs, after much fighting and stone throwing, bind them, check their ID and detain them in a location inside the square [the metro underground entrances]. In most cases we handed over the thugs to the army. The police were non-existent in the streets since January 28.

Nadim: That's the thing... most of the protests weren't really backed by the military or by the police, so what happened was various revolutionary groups would actually create their own perimeters during large protests - which would generally be every Friday - just to keep the momentum of the revolution going. We'd actually have a couple of different checkpoints throughout it all. So as you're walking into Tahrir there'd be a check[point] - just to, like, check your passport, or whatever ID you had. And at the next one you get patted down. And then once you get within the actual square and you want to get through to that "green" area - and if they were occupying at the time - then you'd also need your ID and most likely someone to say that you are okay... that you're not a cop or baltagiya. And that's the only way you could actually get through to the occupation site.

What was the most amazing thing you witnessed during your time in Tahrir?

Ali: The day of the Camel Battle, as it has come to be known. That day you saw a real battle... with many casualties. Men, women... and in some cases children... [they] were all so organized! They created pipelines of stones that were first dismantled from the pavement, broken down and carried into the battlefield [even] as people were being carried out injured, and in many cases dead. The field hospitals did a brave job tending to the thousand or so injured that night. It was amazing how the people stood their ground in the face of guns, snipers and thugs with molotov cocktails and swords! I saw people paying the price of freedom that night... and I won't ever forget it!

Nadim: There was this one moment where the police, who had been pretty much away the entire time, they had pulled a cab driver over, arrested him, beat him on the street, took him to the police station, tortured and killed him. I was around the corner at a conference, videotaping people talking about the Arab Spring... pretty much people from Spain and England - just making contacts - and I heard about this. So what to I do? I instantly go around the corner and this entire thing was up in flames and there's tear gas being thrown, rocks being thrown ...

Like... a building?

Nadim: Yeah... it was the police station, they just destroyed it! How unbelievable is that? When you can have no more fear whatsoever... to be like, "fuck it, let's destroy this police station." I still remember this one moment, I was kind of nervous... this is my first like real battle y'know? I'm walking up and there's this one guy who just looked at me in awe, confused as hell, he's just like "why are you scared? We just went through a revolution. You should not be scared anymore." So he helped me with my tripod and took me over to the (laughing) ... it was unbelievable! The power that the people had in them. And you could see it in their eyes.

What do you think are the main tasks of the Egyptian revolution at this point?

>> CONTINUED on page 7



ARIAL VIEW OF OCCUPYTORONTO ENCAMPMENT

Which way forward for the 99%?

Build Power & Show Power through Mass Participatory Bold Action

There have been a wave of repressive attacks on, and evictions of, various Occupy camp sites throughout North America - including Zucotti (Liberty) Park, where the movement originated. But even before the evictions and repression escalated to the current levels, questions were being asked, such as “what’s the way forward for the movement?” Already there have been examples to follow: the Oakland General Strike, Occupy Foreclosures, and other actions. These actions show that, fundamentally, all of the strategic questions revolve around the question of power. The power of the 99% vs. the power of the 1%

Although the 99% holds enormous power - in that society is built and maintained through our labour - we do not frequently exercise this collective power in our own interests. Too often we fight amongst and scapegoat each other through the prisms of racism, patriarchy, xenophobia, occupational elitism, nationalism, heterosexism, and other forms of division, oppression and prejudice. This allows the 1% to maintain control; their power rests on different segments of the 99% actively oppressing and working against other segments of the 99%. The result is that many segments of the 99% - people of colour, women, GLBTQ, immigrants, those with less formal educational credentials, those in less socially respected occupations, the unemployed, the homeless, and others - deal with overlapping forms of oppression and societal prejudice; all of us remain divided amongst each other, and the 1% continue to increase their power and wealth.

The current state of the economy has hit all of us hard - and those facing overlapping prejudices and oppressions, harder than others. There are too many people out of work; our pay hasn’t kept up with inflation; our social services continue to be cut; our influence on government has eroded and our civil liberties have been attacked. This has been going on while the elites of this country have captured an increasing share of wealth; they have enjoyed the largest tax cuts; they have attacked our social services, our unions and our community organizations; and have consolidated, to an even greater degree, their power over politics.

The camp occupations built the movement and brought global attention to the variety of concerns of the 99%. They inspired many; provided a sense of hope and solidarity; brought economic justice and the problems of power inequality back into the spotlight of public conversation; highlighted the need for cultures, societies and institutions of direct democracy; served as spaces of convergence for sharing ideas and planning action; and in some camps, they provided a temporary space for those who needed a home and a community where folks could face less harassment than they normally faced. The camp occupations have served a fundamental role in the movement - but it’s time to move beyond them.

We need to develop the movement beyond the camp, because the majority of the 99% can’t camp out

in a city centre. The majority of the 99% have obligations and vulnerabilities that prevent them from such time-consuming, geographically-specific action, including: work, school, responsibilities in caring for children or other dependents, particular health needs, etc. So in order for us to truly exercise our power as the 99% and to truly be participatory, we need to find ways in which all of us can participate, and be valued, in whatever capacity and with whatever time we have to contribute. We need our action to be as participatory, diverse and widespread as possible. We must boldly show and build our collective power.

Show Power

To show our power, on May 1st, 2012, we will be organizing for such a mass participatory and bold collective action: a one-day general strike, mass boycott, student strike/walk-out and mass day of action. Where a strike is not possible, we will be organizing people to call in sick, or to take a personal day, as part of a coordinated “sick-out”. Students will be encouraged to walk-out of their schools (or not show up in the first place). In the community, we will be holding a mass boycott and refusing to make any purchases on that day.

This action will necessarily be a symbolic show of power, because any decrease in economic activity that day will likely be compensated for by purchases and extra work activity the days before and after May 1st. But it will be symbolic in the way a cannon shot across the bow of a ship is symbolic: it doesn’t do any damage; but it warns our opponent that

The camp occupations have served a fundamental role in the movement; but it’s time to move beyond them.

we are willing and able to damage their boat if necessary. And perhaps just as important as the day itself, the massive organizing and outreach efforts in the months leading up to May 1st will allow us the opportunity to talk to our co-workers, families, neighbors, communities, and friends about the issues of the 99%, the source of our power, the need for us to stand up to the attacks we are facing, the need to confront the various oppressions that keep most of us down in one way or another (some of us in more ways than one) and all of us divided, and the need for us to stand in solidarity with each other to fight for our collective interests - which are structurally, and therefore inherently, against the interests of the 1%. We can build our collective consciousness, capacity, and confidence through this process and come out stronger because of it.

Build Power

In addition to showing our power on May 1st, we need to build bases of popular, bottom-up, collective, anti-oppressive and anti-hierarchical power in our workplaces, communities, and schools. So we will be doing a variety of workshops, building a variety of organizing campaigns, and engaging a variety of actions on the local level to contribute to the building of such collective power. Some of the workshops, campaigns and actions that we will develop and engage in include: organizing new unions, becoming more active in participatory unions; making our unions more participatory; occupying foreclosures; building tenant unions; blocking evictions; preventing foreclosures and creating solidarity networks - to name a few. We will not



be co-opted by electoral parties, or hierarchical organizations looking to use the movement to serve their interest while diffusing our power. Instead we will organize, educate, and agitate where we are at to build power with each other and to fight directly for our interests: the interests of popular power against the interests of elite power. All of us must contribute for this effort to be effective; but, to the greatest degree possible, those contributions must be collective in nature - because our true power is in our solidarity with each other.

We will not be co-opted by electoral parties, or hierarchical organizations looking to use the movement to serve their interest while diffusing our power.

Through this effort we will look to offer real solutions to issues of immediate concern through direct collective action from the bottom-up. The goal is to continue the ongoing shift within the movement from mobilizing to organizing. Mobilizing is necessary, but it is not enough. We can’t just call people out to engage in action. We need to build the networks, organizations and campaigns that provide the opportunities for an ever greater number of people to participate in the decision-making processes and functioning of the autonomous popular organizations we are creating. We must discourage and isolate egotistical, self-serving and movement-killing tendencies we encounter while encouraging and developing collective, liberatory and movement-building tendencies.

Our participatory, bottom-up networks, organizations and campaigns will be the way through which we build

>> OCCUPY TO continued from page 4

filled the park each night while those of us chained to the front of the library - we had grown to four, with three others inside the library itself - did a constant succession of interviews with the press. We also received well wishes from hundreds of supporters, many of whom told us they were visiting the occupation for the first time after seeing us on the news. Alas, the police played their cards well, delaying the actual physical eviction for two days in hopes that our numbers would wane. The weather was certainly on their side, with freezing rain throughout the second night taking its toll on even the most dedicated defenders. Eventually I was arrested, along with ten others, and quickly released with only a trespassing charge.

Nearly all the Occupy cities have been evicted from their parks. For our part, Occupy Toronto has consistently maintained our GAs outside City Hall every night at 7pm. We have carried out several actions since the eviction, including a climate justice march, an

our power and make small gains in the medium term. But they will also serve as the basis for a new world that we are building towards. This new world in our hearts that we are building and showing, within the shell of the old one that we are confronting, is one in which people share power with, not over, each other; it’s where workers themselves democratically control their workplaces; where everyone can find meaningful, socially-useful and balanced work that is carried out in comfortable

conditions; it’s where those who aren’t able to work (or who have already put in their share) are taken care of by society; where we abolish rulers over us and instead societies directly decide for themselves how to live, develop and grow; it’s where our environments are healthy, beautiful and sustainable; where we all have the

educational and social opportunities to develop and contribute our full capacities to our families and societies; it’s where people can live in nice homes and safe communities, get their health needs fully taken care of, eat healthy and well, and not have to stress out about how they will meet their needs or the needs of their families; where we all have the time and resources to enjoy life. We, the 99%, will build our power and show our power until we’ve occupied our workplaces, our communities, our schools, our lives, our world... until we’ve occupied everything!

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anti-prison march to the Don Jail in opposition to Harper’s omnibus crime bill, and a shared GA with Occupy Buffalo on the “Rainbow Bridge” US-Canada border crossing - to name a few. Shortly after the eviction we attempted to squat a city building with about 80 occupiers, but found it unexpectedly locked despite reports to the contrary. A smaller group from the food team held a large basement on Queen Street, but were evicted about eight hours after going public. Since the police are not allowing anyone to sleep in parks, regardless of whether they are part of Occupy, our priority has been getting our homeless occupiers out of the cold by scouting out abandoned buildings and getting them blankets to stay warm. We are now focused on getting our GAs inside for the winter. We have learned a lot and are eager get back what we had in St. James Park. With such huge economic battles ahead, whether it’s in squats or parks come springtime, there will be more occupations to come.

>> RELIGION continued from page 2

the political and judicial systems in the world have not been able to satisfy the levels of justice and protection people crave. Therefore, people often feel the need to believe in the existence of an entity that guarantees all these things. And of course, there have always been people who have exploited societies by providing a ready-made religion as a means of empowering themselves. Muhammad, for example, became a prophet by plaguing his own people with blind faith, fear, greed and unconditional submission.

In the past few hundred years, science had progressed a great deal. We now know for certain that the universe was not created by Yahweh in seven days, or out of Allah’s behind, or from one of the four mouths of Brahma - but from a gradual process that took billions and billions of years.

The entire world is now running on the cogwheels of science, not on some blind faith. We cannot produce grain from blind faith. It does not empower us to manufacture computers, space shuttles or life-saving medications. We require the logical application of mathematics, physics, chemistry, and life sciences to live the quality of life that we desire.

And so, if faith in Allah, Christ, or any other divinity is completely worthless, then why are so many people still ensnared in it?

It’s because blind faith promises us a happy afterlife - one in which we will enjoy immortality and absolute justice. This blind faith, empowered by false hope and expectations, provides religious followers with a strong “sense” of collective identity, thereby dividing them into isolated communities. This “sense” is the mother of religious sentiment.

When religious people are faced with science and reason, their whole belief system - including the prospect of divine immortality, absolute justice and the rest of the package - falls apart. This can make them feel as though their very

Operation Spectacle

BRYAN DOHERTY

The ridiculous shitshow that was Canadian policing in 2011 was pinched off nicely on Dec 13 with “Project Marvel.” The anti-gang investigation (so named due to the tendency of those being investigated to name themselves after Marvel comic book characters) culminated in the coordinated serving of search and arrest warrants across the country. What started as an investigation into a Toronto-area shooting apparently ballooned into a months-long countrywide investigation Toronto Police Services really wanted us to know about. Press conferences, interviews, photo-ops - all intended to let us know how much safer we all were, going in to the holidays, because of Project Marvel. While the gangs being investigated may have been big comic book fans, Toronto Police Services were apparently working off of action movie scripts.

The 67 simultaneous pre-dawn raids to apprehend the leaders of a criminal organization that has spread its tentacles nationally sounds impressive, right? It conjures images of a vast sophisticated criminal conspiracy spanning the country: a conspiracy that was delivered a potentially fatal blow by the coordinated efforts of more than 900 police officers in dozens of agencies and services over a period of seven months. You can’t help but feel fearful of such a vast and dangerous criminal conspiracy

existence is in jeopardy.

This was not the case in the early times. When our cave-dwelling ancestors were making fire from stones and twigs, they didn’t see any apparent conflict between that and divine entities. Now we know the laws of thermodynamics, and we are quite certain that there’s no God involved in the process. Similarly, we possess firm knowledge on a wide array of natural principles, and it has become evident that since Allah or Jesus does not have any hand in anything whatsoever, they do not exist. We have come to that point where the mere existence of cellphones, television, particle accelerators and intergalactic telescopes automatically rejects the notion of God. In other words, science is speaking for itself.

These days, the only way to keep one’s religious sentiment unharmed is to abandon human society and raise future generations in utter darkness. But because most people don’t want to do this - largely because they are addicted to the luxuries science provides for them - their religious sentiments are constantly taking a beating.

Ironically enough, it is not only science that hurts religious sentiment; religious sentiments are also often getting hurt by each other. A Christian is appalled when they see millions of people on TV performing the Hajj, while some Muslims get enraged every time they see Jews walking around in their neighbourhoods.

Seeing as religious division is a serious global problem, one might wonder what the illustrious machinery of the state is doing about these matters.

Human beings are not born with religious sentiment. After a child is born, they are inducted into the religious circle of their family. From that moment onwards, various other influences - such as friends, relatives, school, the media

taking place all around us. But fear not, citizen. The courageous efforts of those police officers risking it all to bring these kingpins to justice have once again saved us from certain doom! Or, maybe not.

Let’s start with this terrifying “national criminal network” taken down in the raids. 10 of the 60 arrests are juveniles, including the 14-year-old alleged “ringleader” of the “Young Buck Killaz.” A raid conducted in Surrey B.C saw the RCMP take into custody another one of these super-villains. A 24-year-old Surrey man was arrested after being found in possession of “a small amount of drugs and money.” That’s right, federal police located a 24 year old with a small amount of drugs in British Columbia! A Calgary man was charged with possession of a weapon - bear repellent. But surely the most harrowing take down for police was the arrest of a 93-year-old Toronto woman. While the “show and tell” press conferences - which displayed the confiscated weapons and money - may seem substantial, only 7 of the 27 firearms were from the 60+ raids. As well, reporters that were present pointed out that some of the other items on display were from entirely unconnected cases.

Project Marvel may have been an action flick for the cops but it was a horror show for the Hamilton household of Pamela Markland and her six children. Heavily

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and society at large - continue injecting religious sentiment into the child. These elements do not act alone - they belong to the larger machinery of the state itself. The state acts like a sentinel, safeguarding religious sentiment and stunting a child’s creativity and sensibility by encouraging the gradual adaptation of another blind belief: nationalism.

And if a religion is a state religion, then all the religious sentiments form a collective mass and give birth to fundamentalism. A child born into a fundamentalist society grows up tightly bound to fear, greed and subordination. Although that person can grow to achieve higher education, religious sentiment will still control the very basis of their belief system.

If religious belief is regarded as a core personality trait, then religious sentiment is the shield that surrounds it. It protects

>> TAHIR continued from page 4

Ali: To keep [up] the pressure in the streets and keep the revolution alive. The Supreme Council of the Armed Forces, better known as SCAF, have all but killed popular support over the past ten months. They are arresting activists [over 12,000 Egyptians are detained under military tribunals] and have been involved in killing thousands since they came to power, using internationally-banned gas against protesters... and using live ammunition and bird shots. They have detained and beaten many journalists and stopped many shows that are critical of them on private TV. They have proven to the revolutionary forces in Egypt that Mubarak is still in power, though vicariously through them. We are preparing for January 25 2012. We are having street presentations of the SCAF lies and crimes against Egyptians broadcast in every street in Egypt. The show is on in London, UK, too. We call it Kazeboun [“Liars”] and we show the footage of all the shootings, fire-starting, etc.

Nadim: I don’t want to by any means belittle Egypt’s revolution. It was an unbelievable feat and they risked their lives and they still risk their lives. They are going out there - you know how we put the legal number on us? They would put their name, their phone number, their address, their family name... in case they died and had to be recognized. That’s a huge thing, that’s unbelievable. That took courage. But at the same time their dictatorship was clear. Their oppressor... they could point their finger at a face and say “you are the problem” and they also had a solution for it: western style democracy. Over here what are we doing? We are pointing our finger at a system. At corporations... at the market. We can’t blame just Harper, we can’t blame just Ford - it’s the entire system. So how do we bring that all together? What we’re asking for has never been done before. We’re asking for what... real democracy? When have we ever seen real democracy before? So while we’re fighting for it, we’re also creating it which is making this... I don’t know... this ‘cycle’... of where we’re going. We really don’t know until we continue moving and fighting for it, right?

What advice do you have for the Occupy movement? What lessons does the Egyptian Revolution offer folks in North America?

Ali: I believe that the Occupy movement needs to get the people informed and educated on the issues they are

the inner religious belief, and violently repels any form of outside change and criticism. In the modern world, this is especially true for fundamentalist countries, where the religious sentiments of the populace are carefully nurtured. Although most religions are passed on as a set of peaceful principles, all fundamentalist countries are fraught with violence, corruption, rape and strongly guarded religious sentiments that almost verge on madness.

Right now, we are standing at a point in history where we must employ all our resources and judgment into the pursuit of knowledge. The world and its ecosystem are in decay, and the human race is rapidly running out of time. Every species on this earth has evolved to survive; now it is time for humans to shed off our sentiments towards religion and focus on our collective welfare and common good.

protesting against. Our movement grew when the general public, who are otherwise apathetic, joined us. To do this you need to work hard to make your case as relevant and widespread as possible.... easier said than done. But I guess the [lesson to] take away here is [the importance of] hard work, dedication and being creative in spreading your message.

Nadim: I think at this point we can’t take any more lessons. Each country has kind of made their own way. They started off with the occupation, then went on... and I think that’s what we need to see with the evolution of Occupy Toronto, or Occupy Canada. It was necessary, absolutely necessary. Like... I never would have met you beforehand, and a lot of people wouldn’t have met each other. They were all either in different groups, or fighting different battles... but once we got there we realized that the system is the problem. Or people might have known that beforehand, but finally got to meet people who feel the same way. So... not only did that happen in Toronto, but it happened all over the world, and we’re now connected with all these people. So we have just created a united front against a failing system - some people would say [a system that is] destined to fail. But since the eviction occurred I think we really need to figure out what Canada’s movement will be. Now... in my opinion, I’m watching the European crisis very closely, because I know as soon as that first domino falls, that’s it - we’re waiting six months until depression. So once we see that happening, I think we really need to ensure that we’re organized enough to focus the anger of the people... rather than rioting in the streets like we saw in the 30’s with the Great Depression - to focus it in a productive way. I think that’s what happened in London. Those riots, although very socially and politically inclined... there was no focusing of that energy. And if they had been able to focus it, there would have been a full-blown revolution. I fully believe it. The cops couldn’t stop it for what... like three days? That’s unheard of. So I think the main thing is to ensure that our organization is out there, that people know about us... that we’re still working. We’re still going, but I think occupying again might be going backwards. We need to really push it further - and I think it can only happen fluidly.

Building Resistance at the University of Toronto

AUGUST SKIES

On November 29, the over 4400 students and post-doctoral fellows working as teaching assistants and course instructors at the University of Toronto (UofT) concluded a historic strike vote. These members of CUPE 3902 voted in record numbers and led to one of the strongest strike votes in the history of university sector unions in Canada, with 91% of members supporting a strike mandate. Our contract expired on April 30, 2011 and our local has now been in the process of contract negotiations for over six months. Throughout this period, the Administration has refused to discuss almost all of our most important concerns. Their opening proposal in July was to remove the only legal guarantee of our funding package from our collective agreement – the equivalent of removing your salary from your contract. We were told, simply, to trust them.

The state of relations between the students and workers who make up this university and the Administration who controls it is far from one of trust. Over the past few years, we have seen worsening workplace and study conditions. Our pay has stagnated while our tuition has

increased. The tutorials we teach have increased in size to the extent that there are now over 100 tutorials at UofT with over 100 students and some of us are forced to teach in rooms without enough seats for everyone. In the past two years, the Administration has begun to introduce hundreds of hours of non-thesis related work into many of our funding packages – for which we get no extra pay. Last year, the Administration suddenly and unilaterally revoked a grant that used to provide non-funded upper year students who are not taking courses to pay a decreased tuition. We are in a worse place now than we were three years ago.

For the first four years of our PhDs, we are guaranteed funding of \$15,000 after tuition. Most PhDs however, take six and half years to complete – so the majority of PhD students spend one-third of their degree with no guaranteed funding, while paying between \$8000 (for domestic students) and \$18000 (for international students) in tuition... with these rates increasing every year. During this time, many have little to no work opportunities within the university. The 25% of our membership comprised of international

students often cannot seek off campus employment or loans. Without work or funding, these students face deportation. The Administration has offered us nothing to address these concerns.

Though many universities in Canada have tutorial caps, there is no limit to the size of tutorials or labs at UofT. We have seen a steady rise in tutorial size over the past five years to the point where there are now engineering tutorials of over 550 students. Many of us feel we can't possibly meet the educational needs of our students under these conditions. Despite this, the Administration has told us that they see no problem with tutorials of these sizes. They have told us that the students will simply, "adjust their expectations." This is unacceptable and we will fight for the quality of education of our undergraduate students.

In this same period of time, undergraduates have experienced tuition increases of up to 40% through the institution of flat fees; kitchen workers have seen an increase in split shifts, stagnating pay and poor, sometimes abusive, treatment from their bosses; and every member of the UofT community has been subject to increased political

repression. The Administration has passed a space-booking policy that allows them to deny rooms or charge large fees for events they find politically unpalatable. They have gone as far as to send plainclothes police to events and days later send campus groups bills for up to \$440 for police they didn't want and didn't even know were there. This is often larger than the entire annual budget of a campus group. During the G20, a mass arrest in the Graduate Student Union building was initiated by campus police.

It was because of this that a group of staff, students and faculty formed the UofT General Assembly. We support a worker and student controlled university – not one where our decisions are made by a governing council populated with government appointees, CEOs and top Administration. On January 26, the UofT General Assembly will once again be coming together so that we can collectively decide the way forward for our university. With CUPE 3902's unprecedented 91% strike vote behind us, UofT workers and students are heading into this winter in a position to enact real change.



>> CAT continued from page 1

Of course, the idea that a CEO of a Fortune 100 company would ever institute a voluntary pay cut – of any size, let alone one that amounted to millions of dollars annually – is anathema to capitalist self-interest. Under his stewardship, in 2010 the company posted annual sales and revenue of over \$42.5 billion (a whopping 31% increase over the previous year's total); why would he listen to the insistence of a group of activists who are in no position to hurt him or the company he represents economically?

And that's the point. You cannot argue with corporations like CAT through acts of moral persuasion, or lofty rhetoric. Like the bulldozers they manufacture and sell to the IDF to demolish homes in Occupied Palestine, CAT is unmoved by the pesky sentimentalism of human emotion.

Let's be honest. The workers at the EMC factory are in serious trouble. While it is

important to keep up morale and to show solidarity with our working-class brothers and sisters, we cannot have any illusions that this fight will be won through marches, rallies and speeches. If the workers at EMC have any chance of coming out of this dispute with any semblance of victory, it will come from speaking to CAT in the only language they understand – economic disruption.

That means coordinating a broad-based and international campaign against CAT and its many subsidiary corporations that makes real connections to other stakeholders in their corporate empire; it means maintaining hard and militant picket lines that scabs and those who may try to transport machinery out of the factory cannot cross; it means supporting the workers on those lines should they choose to employ direct action tactics... and it means being prepared to deal with the consequences.

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armed police stormed her home at approximately 5:30 a.m., while she and her family were still asleep. After kicking in the door, police lobbed a flash bang grenade at her and her 9-year-old autistic son. They pointed guns at and handcuffed her children (aged 8 to 21) while ransacking their home. No arrests were made, no property confiscated and no charges were laid. Pamela Markland's family was left with no front door, a home in ruins and no understanding of the reasoning behind the police attack. This police action has left the family traumatized and unable to return to their home.

The Jane-Finch community is where this investigation got its start. As members of a heavily racialized working class neighbourhood, Jane-Finch residents live with many struggles and fears, and crime is certainly among them. Beyond crime, the struggle against poverty, displacement, unemployment, lack of services, and police violence is constant. It's irrefutable that a victory in the latter struggles often cause the former to virtually disappear. If a defeat of criminal activity and the horizontal violence it produces is what we're after, we have to defeat the top-down violence of a system

that is criminal in itself. The police and politicians praising these paramilitary shock and awe tactics pretend they are responding to the concerns of community members that feel afraid and under threat. They respond to those fears with terror, followed by occupation. Kicking down doors, tearing apart homes, attacking youth and the elderly? This is their idea of help? Then, after the dust settles from their hunting excursion into working class neighbourhoods, police provide 'heightened police presence' to 'maintain good order.' All this means is police stalking through neighbourhoods harassing whomever, whenever they like, as though it's a service to the community that should be met with appreciation. When police routinely get away with harassment, illegal search or arrest, assault, and murder in neighbourhoods just like Jane-Finch, for many, "heightened police presence" does not reduce fear - it induces it.

For our cities and neighbourhoods to feel and be safer we need to struggle to make them safer. We need to struggle against racism, exploitation, poverty, violence, and crime. This includes a struggle against the police brutality and impunity that protects the very conditions that give rise to crime in our communities in the first place.

