

CARRÉ ROUGE [RED SQUARE]

ABOUT THE STUDENT STRIKE AND 2012 PROTESTS IN QUÉBEC

The 2012 student strike against rising tuition fees in Québec has turned into one of the largest social movements of in Québec and Canadian history. With the adoption of the special Law 78 by the provincial Liberal government, it has also become a popular struggle for the right to assembly, freedom of expression and freedom of conscience (Media Co-op). The "Maple Spring" movement and demonstrations resonate with other international movements against globalization and neoliberal politics (Occupy Wall Street, etc.).

THE HIKE

Since the 1960's, the education system in Québec has aimed to increase the general population's **education level** and to favor **accessibility**.

In 2007, the provincial government decided to increase tuition fees by **30%** over a period of 5 years.

In 2011, the government announced a new financial framework for higher education institutions which involves a reduction of governmental funding, another hike of **75%** over 5 years, the need to rely more on private funding sources and a greater **commercialization** of research.

Between 2007 and 2017, tuition fees will have increased by **143%**.

Following the confirmation of this budgetary plan, colleges and universities students mobilized on the base of their growing concerns about schooling accessibility. Several **organizations** joined the movement in **solidarity**, some groups emerging from this specific conflict, such as "Teachers against the hike", the "Angry and Supportive Mothers", the "Lawyers and Jurists against the hike", etc.

THE DEMONSTRATIONS

On March 22nd, a **large and peaceful demonstration** took place in the streets of Montreal, bringing together more than 200 000 people.

The **22nd day** of each following month up until now, a very diverse crowd of thousands of protesters has marched in the streets linking a large spectrum of sociopolitical and environmental issues to those related to education.

April 24th marked the beginning of a series of **daily night demonstrations** in Montreal (more than 100).

May 3rd was the first of few nude demonstrations "**maNUfestations**" where the student body **undressed** in front of power to walk the streets.

Many cases of **police brutality, violence and arrests** have been documented but the phenomenon was downplayed by the mass media.

On May 29th, more than **3,000 arrests** and **111 complaints** related to police brutality had been filed.

This leaflet has been prepared by Alexandre Huot and Louise Lachapelle in addition to: *WASTE : Conflict, Resistance and the Disquieted Space of Ethics Red Square, "Maple Spring" (the 2012 protests in Québec) and Other "Cultural Housebreaking"*

7th Annual International Interdisciplinary Conference, «Riot, Revolt, Revolution», CAPPE Centre for Applied Philosophy, Politics and Ethics, Brighton University

THE STRIKE

Students against the hike started wearing the "**carré rouge**" [red square], a symbol adopted since 2005 by the student movement.

On February 13 2012, a first student union voted an **unlimited general strike**; many other unions soon made the same choice.

The number of students on strike peaked at **72%** on March 22nd (approx. **304 242 people**).

Daily picket lines forced the interruption of classes in many colleges and university faculties.

After a minority of students against the strike distanced themselves from their unions and claimed their legal rights to access their classes by obtaining legal **injunctions** (individually or in small groups), tension increased on some picket lines and campus. This situation sometimes led to **confrontation, intimidation, violence and arrests** involving school administrators, police, student organizations on strike, teachers and supporters, individuals or groups in favor or against the strike.

BILL 78

On May 18, this controversial special bill was adopted in an extraordinary session of the National Assembly of Québec with the aim of putting an end to the conflict, suspending the semester and establishing the conditions in which it would be completed.

The Commission on Human Rights and Youth Rights of Québec stated that several provisions of Law 78 "**directly or indirectly infringe the rights and freedoms guaranteed by the Charter of Rights and Freedom**" (freedom of expression, freedom of assembly and association, freedom of conscience). Administrative, civil and criminal measures apply in case of infringement.

In response to this law, a growing number of groups and citizens across the province started gathering daily with their pots and pans, inspired by the **cacerolazo** of Chile and Argentina, and noisily walked the streets.

At the present, thousands of students are still on **strike** as school starts back in most of the concerned institutions. There is still some **tension, increased surveillance and police presence** within some of these universities and colleges.

September 4th was **election day in Québec**. The student movement and the 2012 social protests definitely played a role in the change of government that has resulted.

Information is largely based on the paper *Commentaires sur la loi permettant aux étudiants de recevoir l'enseignement dispensé par les établissements de niveau postsecondaire qu'ils fréquentent* [Comments on the act to enable students to receive instruction from the postsecondary institutions they attend] (SQ 2012, chapter 12), prepared by the Commission of Human Rights and Youth Rights (Québec) in July 2012.

Available online in French: http://www.cdpcj.qc.ca/publications/Documents/commentaires_PL_78.pdf

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ACTIVISTS' INITIATIVES AND ART INTERVENTIONS

Archicontre - Architecture students' initiatives, Université de Montréal
<http://archicontre.blogspot.ca/>

Le Cadre rouge [Red Frame] - Demonstration photos blog
<http://cadrerouge.wordpress.com/>

École de la Montagne Rouge [Red Mountain School] - Design students' initiatives, Université du Québec à Montréal
<http://ecolemontagnerouge.com/>

iRedSquare
Fund raising T-shirt sale for the benefits of Juripop, a non-for-profit legal organization advocating for the accessibility of justice for all. Juripop is supporting students.
<http://www.iredsquare.ca/>
<http://www.juripop.org/medias/nouvelles/le-debut-de-la-bataille-judiciaire-sur-la-constitutionalite-de-la-loi-speciale-vient-de-commencer/>

Arrêtez-moi quelqu'un [Somebody, Arrest me!] - Collective Web Intervention in Protest against Bill 78
<http://www.arretezmoiquelquun.com/>

Collectif Maille à Part tricot+activisme [Collective Knitting and Activism] - Street Art Interventions
<http://mailleapart.blogspot.ca/>

Fahrenheit 514 - Humorous animation movie on the student protest and social conflict
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jt2U_gTf0nl&feature=player_embedded#!

ROUGE² - Interactive Web Site, Blog and Film Archive
<http://rouge.onf.ca/>

Selection of student and activists (teachers, artists, etc.) web videos interventions
<http://www.radio-canada.ca/sujet/Droits-scolaire/2012/04/02/001-videos-etudiants-greve.shtml>

ICONES OF THE CONFLICT

Anarchopanda
<https://www.facebook.com/Anarchopanda>

Banane rebelle
<http://www.facebook.com/bananerebelle>

Anonymous Operation Quebec
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6IHEEp9sWU>

Rabbit Crew
<https://www.facebook.com/LapinCrew>

STUDENTS OR PROFS BASED INFORMATION HUBS, COMMUNITY AND INDEPENDENT MEDIA

Bloquons la Hausse [Let's block the hike] CLASSE, Coalition of the main student associations ASSÉ
<http://www.bloquonslahausse.com/>
<http://www.stopthehike.ca>

La Boîte rouge [The Red Box] - Student Movement Media
<http://boiterouge.net/>

The Media Co-op - Local Independent News
<http://www.mediacoop.ca/greve>

Rabble.ca - Non-for-profit organization supporting independent journalism
<http://rabble.ca/issues/education>
http://rabble.ca/search/apachesolr_search/student%20quebec

1625\$ ça ne passe pas [1625\$ it can't go through] - FECQ and FEUQ, other main student associations
<http://1625canepassepas.ca/>

Concordia University Television (CUTV)
<http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL006D14E20E5A3734&feature=plcp>

Profs contre la hausse [Teachers against the hike] - Blog, Agenda, Links and Archives
<http://profscontrelahausse.org>

Translating the printemps érable [Translating Maple Spring]
<http://www.quebecprotest.com/>



EXPRESS YOUR SUPPORT to the protest against Bill 78

Bill 78 : <http://www.assnat.qc.ca/en/travaux-parlementaires/projets-loi/projet-loi-78-39-2.html>

Add your signature to the *Professors' Manifesto for the protection of democracy and the right of student protest* : <http://manifestegreveetudiante.blogspot.ca/2012/08/ManifestoInEnglish.html>