

# CUTE MAGAZINE

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## DIVIDED OUR SALARIES FALL

TRANSLATION BY PAOLO MIRIELLO

On November 10th, nearly twenty thousand students in social work, education, arts education, nursing, fashion merchandising, special education answered the CUTE's call and went on strike during their courses and internships in light of Global Interns' Day. Many actions were carried out: demonstrations, banner drops, popular education workshops, city-wide visibility...

## PAID INTERNSHIPS ARE GOOD FOR EVERYONE!

In doing so, the students of Sherbrooke, Gatineau, Rimouski, Montreal and Moncton in New-Brunswick joined their voices with interns from Bruxelles, Madrid, Paris, Belgrade, Geneva and numerous cities in Morocco. On the same day, nearly seventy signee organizations in Mexico, the United-States and Canada announced their new slogan “Enough! Stop the exploitation of interns!” to show their support towards the campaign for paid internships for all<sup>1</sup>. It didn’t take long until even the minister responsible for Higher Education, H  l  ne David, to take back what she had said last spring: after being categorically opposed

to paid internships as of last may<sup>2</sup>, only three days passed after the November 10 strike before she announced she would “study the issue”<sup>3</sup>. To which students from Sherbrooke, Trois-Rivières, Montreal and Gatineau dutifully reminded her - as well as every other political party that had considered compensating a single internship in education: if one day of striking is enough to make the minister change her mind, we will not hesitate to do so again<sup>4</sup>.

Interns in education are not the only ones with a number of unpaid internships. Many other programs are just the same, in universities and colleges alike. For example, at the Cégep du Vieux-Montréal, interns training for a degree in social work must accomplish 800 hours of internships :

*We are cheap labour! They exhaust us and make us vulnerable to burn-outs before we even leave the classroom. The austerity measures affecting services in care sectors have a direct impact on workers, but also on interns.<sup>5</sup>*

1. Since then, other organizations have signed the declaration. It isn't too late to invite your group, union or student association to join the movement: <http://www.globalinternsday.org/the-declaration/>  
You can also read it on the last page of this edition of CUTE magazine.

2. Cloutier, Patricia. (4 mai 2017). « David ferme la porte aux stages rémunérés », Le Soleil, <https://www.lesoleil.com/actualite/education/david-ferme-la-porte-aux-stages-remunereres-416aa7b-1c44878f152313d16a-31fabbe>

3. Bellerose, Patrick. (14 novembre 2017). « Futurs enseignants: Québec étudie la possibilité de stages rémunérés », *Journal de Québec*, <http://www.journaldequebec.com/2017/11/14/futurs-enseignants-quebec-etudie-la-possibilite-de-stages-remuneres>

4. Texte collectif. (16 novembre 2017). « L'effet d'un jour de grève des stagiaires », HuffPost Québec, [http://quebec.huffingtonpost.ca/mircea-adamo/leffet-dun-jour-de greve-des-stagiaires\\_a\\_23279892/](http://quebec.huffingtonpost.ca/mircea-adamo/leffet-dun-jour-de greve-des-stagiaires_a_23279892/)

5. Speech given by Kim Chauvette, student and intern training for a degree in social work, during an assembly for paid internships in Montreal, on International Interns' Day.



In nursing, at the Collège de Maisonneuve, all six internships add up to 1035 hours of volunteer work:

*I am asked to be responsible for the care I give, I am told that I am responsible for my patients, legally responsible, just the same as a nurse. I am told that I must do this because I feel a calling, that I must be a volunteer, because I am not a nurse, I am a student...*<sup>6</sup>

6. Speech given by Kaëlla Stapels, student and intern training for a degree in nursing, during an assembly for paid internships in Montreal, on International Interns' Day.

7. The United Committees for Student Work, whose magazine you are currently reading.

8. Gouvernement du Canada (14 décembre 2017). En route vers le Sommet du G7 de 2018 dans Charlevoix, <http://www.international.gc.ca/g7/index.aspx?lang=fra>

At the same time, many obligatory internships in college and university programs traditionally dominated by men are paid, and many of them are even paid more than 15\$ an hour. No one should be left behind!

### **TO GET THERE, WE MUST ORGANIZE!**

The struggle carries on for interns. During the last semester, regional coalitions comprised of student associations, political groups, regional and union committees favorable to paid internships for all met in Sherbrooke and Montreal. Activities in other regions have been announced for the winter semester of 2018. The coalitions will most notably be working to spread the word about paid internships on Tuesday, February 20th, during the Global Intern Strike, a worldwide call to mobilization for interns. Contact your regional coalition or local CUTE for more info!

For the CUTE<sup>7</sup>, paid internships for all represent the first victory for the recognition and remuneration of all student work. Indeed, internships are the most visible part of student work, but there is still a long way to go until all students are paid and given decent studying conditions.

### **WHAT KIND OF WORKING CONDITIONS FOR THE “JOBS OF THE FUTURE”?**

On June 8th and 9th of this year, the cities of Quebec and La Malbaie will host an important meeting between the leaders of

the world's seven most powerful economies. Heads of state from the United States, Japan, Germany, France, the United Kingdom, Italy and Canada will reunite to discuss their preoccupations with regards to the economy and “public security”. Among the five announced themes, one of them directly touches on the CUTE's demands: “Preparing ourselves for the future of work”<sup>8</sup>, jobs which nobody will want. We stand before a labour market that has become more flexible, precarious, globalized and where the proportion of unpaid work continues to rise. And these G7 countries are the ones responsible: they actively structured the liberalization of markets during the 1990s, which consequently put local workers in direct competition with those from Mexico and Asia. This competition allowed big businesses to accumulate record profits by relocating parts of their production or by dealing with subcontractors operating in countries where labour and environmental standards are less rigorous and where salaries are lower.

When jobs are rare, people go back to school more often, in hopes of improving their living conditions. For example, the 2007 crisis led to a 10% increase in enrollment between Autumn 2006 and Autumn 2009 at the Université de Montréal. And for the government, unpaid internships have become a way to reduce a part of their expenses in education by obtaining cheap replacement labour for its' public institutions. On top of that, by adding internships in the established curriculum, which is the case for co-operative programs (alternate periods of academic study and work), it is now possible to structure endemic unemployment. The unemployed are therefore split into subcategories: unpaid interns, job hunters, last resort social welfare beneficiaries, hiding those who are unemployed in prolonged training programs and trivializing atypical forms of work.

The impacts of this worldwide competition among workers has generated much greater consequences for countries of the

global South: wars, the looting of natural resources, extractivism, slavery and the rise to power of authoritarian regimes. In this way, women and men, hoping to obtain safety and sufficient funds to live, migrate towards the global North, and more and more of them do this through State-sponsored temporary work programs: housework, agricultural work, fast-food work in the distant regions outside the greater urban centers. Their numbers multiply as they take on precarious work, and they live the daily experiences of racism and discrimination as they look for work, housing, daycare centers, etc. In fact, many of them end up accepting work for which they are overqualified based on the training they received in their country of origin, or return to school, waiting for their qualifications to be recognized or in hopes of acquiring new skills through training programs. This is especially prevalent among women training for trades or professions that impose unpaid internships, such as healthcare or early childhood education<sup>9</sup>.

### ON TOWARDS THE G7!

The explosion of unpaid work is the consequence, less visible but just as direct, of policies designed to stimulate economic competition. Even if these governments have established free-trade agreements facilitating international direct foreign investments, they now use the rhetoric of economic competition on a global scale in order to justify major measures to help businesses. In Quebec, this appears in the form of policies designed to “keep jobs here”: skilled workers for cheap, public

subsidies, unpaid internships and training adapted to specific jobs. And it is not only countries, but also provinces, cities, schools and boroughs that bend the knee, offering more and more for employers.

In this way, in the context of tight budgets within public institutions, such as healthcare or education, as well as that of decreasing production costs in the private sector, many people are forced to accept unpaid or underpaid jobs in order to accumulate the experience required to get a job or a promotion. But these offers of employment, just like the internships, rarely lead to well-paid jobs. Instead, they are a form of atypical work which is becoming more and more widespread.

The resistance against the G7 Summit is an opportunity to seize for protesting against the rise of inequalities, at home and abroad, and to be heard all over the world. The discussions which will be held at the summit will involve political elites and produce lasting consequences. Whether we are student interns or salaried employees, we try to convince ourselves that each contract is an “opportunity” to invest in ourselves, to the benefit of our teachers, employers and the administrations we work for. The struggles carried out by the student movement or by women’s groups, unions and grassroots organizations would benefit from attacking the structures which reproduce discrimination and social exclusion, which deliver cheap and easily exploitable labour into the hands of employers... that is why it seems necessary to us that we should step back and take into account the role that we have as individuals in the worldwide

9. Belley, Bourdon et Simard. (Automne 2017). « L'école qui te remet à ta place », CUTE Magazine, <https://dissident.es/lecole-qui-te-remet-a-ta-place/>

FOR MORE INFO:

**TRAVAILTUDIANT.ORG**  
**DISSIDENT.ES**

economy. Let us use this stepping stone to build new solidarities and raise awareness about the upcoming stages of our struggle! We must take advantage of the G7 to call for a worldwide interns strike.

SEXUAL VIOLENCE

## THE TEXTBOOK CASE OF NO ONE IN PARTICULAR

BY KATHERINE C-P

TRANSLATION BY PAOLO MIRIELLO

All information which could lead to the identification of this story's protagonists have been modified given that, even though this story is about no one, it would seem as though we should keep ourselves from harming anybody's reputation.

### CLOSED MEETINGS AND PROCEDURES

A desk.

A ton of binders and filing cabinets.

Two women.

*"You know that the accusations you are bringing forward are very grave and that we cannot begin procedures if you are incapable of proving the veracity of your allegations."*

The person we will call Melanie tightens her grip on the orange envelope which contains all the information she deemed necessary to prepare herself for this meeting. You can tell by the crumpled edges that she had been hanging on to it for quite some time already. She is sweating, but doesn't take off her coat. The guidance counselor seated across the desk busied herself while she spoke those words. She arranges the papers which she carefully lays on a pile of folders and ends up slowly crossing her fingers while looking at the young 22-year old woman.

The obvious sympathy that Marlena had for her no longer seemed to hold. The formal tone of voice she had adopted instead of her usual friendliness had rapidly established the singular character of this meeting. Still, she dared to bring up Bertha and Haryana. Those who had, just like her, given up a year early.

*"You know that I cannot provide information on other students' files", Marlena cut her off.*

*"But..." Melanie tried.*

*"If you would really like to mobilize the other girls which 'you claim' were also victims of harassment so they might testify in your case, it will be up to you to reach out to them. In the event that you should choose to carry on with the complaint you are depositing today, you will have to start by meeting the general director and M. Bachand to clarify the situation. I will give you a list of resources that could help you along the way.*

*Afterwards..."*

## AND THE SILENCE PERSISTS

“No fucking way I’d go meet him! And with the general director on top of that!” exclaimed the young woman as she grabbed the black Russian she had just been served at the bar of the downtown hotel where she works as a cook. Having just finished her work shift, her shirt completely flared and ringed with two large halos, a heap of hair and netting framing her half-shaved head, she would not be the first to have given up on her complaint ahead of the difficult tasks of following the procedures required by the institutional channels of denunciation. A 1995 study reported by the Public health expertise and reference centre (Institut national de la santé publique du Québec, or INSPQ) indicates that only 10% to 20% of workplace sexual harassment victims denounce what happened to them to a supervisor or a person in a position of authority.<sup>1</sup>

Recently, the Inquiry into sexuality, security and interactions in university spaces (Enquête sur la sexualité, la sécurité et les interactions en milieu universitaire, or ESSIMU) lead in 2016 by Manon Bergeron, professor at the Department of sexology at UQÀM and Sandrine Ricci, co-investigator and lecturer at the Institute of feminist research and studies (Institut de recherche et d’études féministes, or IREF) found that the culture of silence that surrounds sexual harassment in academia remains unaddressed. Indeed, only 9.6% of respondents having experienced sexual violence have filed a complaint against their aggressors to their university boards.<sup>2</sup>

## BEYOND A COMMON DEFINITION, A MUTUAL UNDERSTANDING

The notion of sexual harassment has evolved over the past fifty years. Today, the phenomenon is legally recognized and its’ definition is much more precise than it was at the time. According to code of law 81.18 from the Labour Code, psychological, physical or sexual harassment consists in “any vexatious behaviour in the form of repeated and hostile or unwanted conduct, verbal comments, actions or gestures” which answers the four following criteria: undesired, affecting a person’s dignity and/or psychological or physical integrity and ultimately results in a harmful work environment, in this case the school or internship environment.<sup>3</sup>

Despite all of this, the main reason invoked by the participants of the ESSIMU study to explain their silence was revealed to be that, when they choose to deposit a complaint, they do not perceive the entire nature or gravity of the acts perpetrated against them.

*“He asked me to come into his office to discuss an absence without cause. I did realize something was up. At the time, I wasn’t certain. You know, some people just don’t have the same personal space as you... it’s normal for them to be two inches away from your face.”*

On top of that, with the 2005 education reform which removed courses on personal and social training from the curriculum, academic institutions have quietly rid themselves of their roles and responsibilities in providing sexual education for youth.

1. Fitzgerald, L. et Swan, S. (1995). Why didn't she just report him? The Psychological and Legal Implications of Women's Responses to Sexual Harassment. *Journal of social Issues*, 51 (1), 117-138

2. Bergeron, M., Hébert, M., Ricci, S., Goyer, M.-F., Duhamel, N., Kurtzman, L., Auclair, I., Clennett-Sirois, L., Daigneault, I., Damant, D., Demers, S., Dion, J., Lavoie, F., Paquette, G. et S. Parent (2016). *Violences sexuelles en milieu universitaire au Québec: Rapport de recherche de l'enquête ESSIMU*. Montréal. Université du Québec à Montréal.

3. CNESST, Guide interprétation et jurisprudence: <https://goo.gl/TzbV9q> It should be noted here - and I will get back to this - that academic institutions have drawn upon this definition, but are not subjected to it. Each establishment therefore possesses its' own procedures and denouncement channels.



"Let us not be invisible - women, forward!"

4. "L'éducation sexuelle obligatoire à l'école dès septembre", Radio-Canada, 13 décembre 2017 : <https://goo.gl/XWSNBo>

5. Ministère de l'Éducation et de l'Enseignement supérieur du Québec. Le harcèlement sexuel en milieu scolaire : implantation d'une politique : voir, prévenir, contrer : <https://goo.gl/az8GTU>

6. In total, a little more than a quarter of respondents (25.7%) have witnessed or been confided with situations of sexual violence in academia.

7. Commission des normes du travail, Le harcèlement sexuel au travail : <https://goo.gl/Pkx9dp>

8. Victimes d'inconduites sexuelles : Québec débloque 1 million pour affronter l'"ouragan social", La Presse+, 20 octobre 2017 : <https://goo.gl/3fFbfJ>

Until very recently<sup>4</sup>, all we had to this effect was a guide intended for teachers: Sexual harassment in academia - Implementation of our policy - Seeing, preventing, counteracting<sup>5</sup>.

Is it then surprising to hear young women like Melanie minimise the violence done against her?

### **SILENT, WITH EYES WIDE OPEN**

The recent cases of sexual harassment denunciations in the québécois cultural sector, most notably those of Gilbert Rozon and of Éric Salvail, demonstrate the expediency with which institutions rid themselves of their employees once the silence is broken. Rattled by our own surprise, we bear witness, we fill the public stage with our empathy for victims by calling out loud and clear, no less rattled, the silence that entraps them.

This hypocrisy is something that Melanie calls out as well.

*"This asshole has been doing that for years!" she tells me.*

Her eyes fall upon the black line at the bottom of her glass as she swirls the ice within. Bertha and Haryana were already relating how Anita had let go of her course little by little, to never return.

Talking about sexual violence in academia implies asking questions about the power relations that structure our work relations within institutions of education. An important part of these situations, nearly a third (30.3%) to be precise, occurs within the context of a hierarchical relationship, a fact which is probably not indifferent to the muffled murmurs that cover them up<sup>6</sup>. On top of that, it appears as though individuals who identify as women or as members of gender minorities as well as disabled and foreign students are more likely to be affected by sexual violence, while it is a vast majority of men that we find on the aggressors' side. It is therefore impossible for us to discount

the feminist perspective and an intersectional framework if we truly seek to fight back against the culture of violence in which students are immersed and which constantly trivializes, reinforces and maintains pre-existing power relations, most notably those between teachers and students.

### **BUT WHY DIDN'T YOU SAY ANYTHING?**

What Melanie bemoans the most is the burden of proof. The burden of shedding light on violence that is not hers. It is written that "in all cases, the victim will have the burden of demonstrating the violation of their dignity or of their psychological or physical integrity"<sup>7</sup>.

Melanie is, in the eyes of the law, responsible for the violence done to her.

*"So, did you quit the program?" I asked her, rather stupidly.*

She took a drag from her cigarette, hesitated. The glow of an old lightbulb danced on her face while she dipped the tip of her foot in a puddle in front of the anonymous front door of a building in the Old Port.

*"The girls, they're all willing to talk to me about it, but not to go to court... I know that I should", she told me, feeling a bit guilty.*

Far from wanting to add unto the responsibilities already weighing down on her, I knew she wasn't wrong. The amplitude of recent denunciations from the #MeToo movement had already pushed the government of Quebec into attributing an extra million dollars to the organizations dedicated to helping victims of sexual assault and harassment<sup>8</sup>.

*"However, I still have a good job, I make good money... I don't want to get into it."*

Melanie is a part of those 29.8% of people who have suffered sexual violence in the

context of their training and that, silent, would rather not think about it and move on.

In total, 3430 of the 9284 respondents of the ESSIMU inquiry for a total of 36.9% reported that they had been victim to a form of sexual violence. Whether they were dealing with an insistent thesis supervisor, a teacher with a lengthy reach or an internship supervisor needy for attention, the students find themselves vulnerable and isolated when dealing with the Institution and its' mechanisms it offers to handle sexual violence. Since they are not recognized as workers, they cannot benefit from the same judiciary or economic leverage that workers have<sup>9</sup>. As for teachers, they can count on the support of their union to defend their position in front of the institution. While a university is a social space for both groups, the importance of defending their jobs seems to be greater than the importance of ensuring that students stay in school. During internships, the situation is just as problematic. The hierarchy and the ambiguous status of interns accentuate their vulnerability to harassment<sup>10</sup>. Often times, the intern is under the authority of a single person in the organization, who has the role of supervising their training and of endorsing their achievements. The student consequently finds himself to be dependent of this person, who should not be displeased so as to avoid compromising their academic progress.

As long as the difference between the status attributed to workers and students persists, the mechanisms of complaints and the concertation tables put in place in academic institutions will continue to be insufficient and inefficient. Students would have more control over their study conditions if they were recognized as colleagues working in the context of a job.

It is in this perspective that we demand a student wage as a political strategy that would help modify the power relations within academic institutions by ensuring that students would not only have control over their working conditions, but also have legal leverage with which they could mobilize and organize collectively against sexual assault.

**We must organize as workers!**

9. In France, labour standards were modified in 2013 to extend the protections given to workers so that they would include interns.

10. For more information (french source) : Paroles de stagiaires, les victimes les plus fragiles du harcèlement sexuel au travail, Huffpost France, 10 novembre 2017: <https://goo.gl/yC6unc>

# THE CREAM OF THE CROP HAS GONE SOUR

BY SANDRINE BELLEY, ALICE BRASSARD ET ARIANE LANCTÔT

TRANSLATION BY TOON HUISKES AND PAOLO MIRIELLO

When we ask teachers and heads of programs that provide internships why they require us to put in so much time and energy, we most often hear that it's because the jobs that might follow ask nothing less than the cream of the crop. We hear the same kinds of arguments used to justify that those programs also be full time.

As insolently elitist as those assertions are, they are but the tip of the meritocratic iceberg that reigns over both internships and school work. Who is this "cream of the crop" that is so praised? As expected, they are young and childless, financially supported by relatives - which allows them to dedicate a majority of their time to studying without also holding down a job, - and also mostly white. Finally, they are also neurotypical, healthy and have a fully functional life. So, what about the success rates of all those that do not conform to those stringent criteria? This meritocracy drowns itself in an ableism where no one has the same chance of obtaining a diploma, or rather, not at the same cost.

## WHAT IS ABLEISM?

Ableism is a social system that excludes people with differing bodies or ways of functioning<sup>1</sup>. Within this perspective, people without a disability, called able-bodied (or neurotypical), are considered "normal", which means that it is up to disabled people to adapt to the constraints of society. Within this frame, being disabled is either viewed as a tragedy that leads to an unsatisfying life (one that might even be considered not worth living), or as a challenge that one has to overcome by themselves.

## ABLEISM, CAPITALISM, AND PRODUCTION.

The ableist argumentations we find in schools, at internships or in workspaces are

intrinsically linked to the expectations of productivity imposed by the capitalist system. Indeed, under capitalism, the worth of an individual is determined by their ability to produce. People living with a disability must also submit to these requirements if they want to make a place for themselves in both the academic and professional worlds. They have to continuously adapt to obstacles they encounter on a daily basis: for many, the mental or physical toll makes it impossible to carry on. The people that do persist have to bear a hidden burden to make themselves appealing on the job market, in order to make their labour usable. This invisible burden may consist of following treatments, taking medications that often have side effects, and dedicating all of their remaining personal time to resting so that they can function during paid or unpaid work hours.

And despite all these efforts, many will never be able conform to the expectations of their employers. Think, amongst others, about all those who will spend their lives doing unpaid or underpaid integration internships, because of some mental health or intellectual deficiency for example, without ever being able to fully integrate the workforce. In this case, we can truly see that ableism is used to justify the exploitation of people living with a disability, under the pretext that they can not meet the productivity standards set for them.

Being paid or not is not the only determining factor of those standards of productivity. Indeed, the entirety of student work, though unpaid, is subject to the same expectations that weigh on the entirety of the job market in terms of productivity. Certainly, the workload and the deadlines at school often don't pair well with situations of disability. If there are certain accommodations available, receiving them is a lengthy process and the burden of proof is often put onto the person with the disability.

1. Fougeryollas states that a disability is actually a social construct. Indeed, there exists a physical or mental difference, but it is the interaction between the environment and individual factors that create the disability, all of which are in constant mutation. Fougeryollas, Patrick & Roy, Kathia (1996). « Regard sur la notion de rôles sociaux. Réflexion conceptuelle sur les rôles en lien avec la problématique du processus de production du handicap ». *Service social*, 45(3), <https://www.erudit.org/en/journals/ss/1996-v45-n3-ss3523/706736ar.pdf>



### **Recognition in all environments (schools, internships, work)**

The process of gaining recognition of a disability is exhausting and complex. And, unfortunately, in a majority of cases, the results are unjust or at least insufficient. The first step is to always obtain a diagnosis from a recognised professional. This means a battery of tests by people who are certified, who will judge of the gravity of the challenges faced and whether or not a certified report is warranted. Quebec's healthcare system is headache inducing ; it is slow and complex, which prevents a lot of people from obtaining a diagnosis. For students, the process is very difficult both mentally and physically, and forces them to include a multitude of meetings into their already heavy workload. At no point in this process

is the student's judgment with regards to their own limitations and needs taken into account. If the problem is considered non-handicapping, their chances of receiving support disappear. Many find themselves in a position where it is no longer possible for them to continue studying, let alone work. What becomes of them?

Mental and physical disabilities are not like a terrible cold that can go away after a couple of days of sleep, four tylenols and a lot of water: they are permanent and handicapping. When we refuse to recognize this and to ensure the conditions required to remedy to it, we promote an ableist system directed by a capitalist hegemony that marginalizes these individuals.

And even when we offer certain arrangements, they are often times insufficient. At school, we authorize students having obtained a diagnosis to keep their status as full time students while diminishing their academic workload, while also establishing an intervention plan during exam periods as well as helping them with note-taking in class. On the surface, everything seems fine when this kind of support is offered. However, it is quite the contrary. Even if the student has access to the benefits offered to full-time students, such as loans and bursaries as well as student discounts, the academic institution itself does not consider them to be full time students, which robs them of certain possibilities for studying, since many programs are not accessible to those wishing to complete their studies part time. Once again, we are subjected to elitist “cream of the crop” discourse. So it won’t be you, student with bodily or functional differences, because everybody knows you wouldn’t be capable of producing enough or accomplishing the required tasks, that you will cost more to society because of the days off you will need because of your disability, and especially that you do not have a place in certain fields, because you aren’t part of the cream. By reducing the amount of courses you take per semester, we prolong your academic journey over many more semesters, and we extend the delay before you arrive on the labour market, which creates further expenses. Loans and bursaries are not gifts; on top of being hardly accessible, debts accumulate at an exponential rate.

*I am a young student with an anxiety disorder and a panic disorder. I cannot take a full course load, which lengthens my academic path. Currently, due to loans and bursaries, I am over \$13 000 in debt. My situation isn’t great, I have a college diploma in social sciences as well as a single university semester as an independent student.*

The arduously acquired accommodations at school are not systematically applied

to internship settings. These are, in fact, independent of schools. Internships happen in workplaces where students must follow a plan that cannot be modified with regards to courses that must be taken simultaneously and minimum required hours of internship work during the same semester, for example. Therefore, the choice of training courses are once again limited for those with disabilities because of the lack of recognition and flexibility within internship programs and settings.

Ultimately, once they arrive on the labour market, it is much more difficult to find a job with a flexible schedule in their desired field. Access to work spaces are another big issue for individuals with a physical disability. The weight is once again on the shoulders of people with functional differences who must endlessly explain their health conditions (when they are not apparent). Often times, they will be told that someone more apt will do the job, and that unfortunately they do not meet the requirements of the position. This lack of openness and recognition perpetuates the isolation of people with functional differences and prevents them from fully integrating into the workforce.

### **WHY SHOULD THEY BE RECOGNIZED AS WORKERS?**

Just like the labour market, it is essential that internships settings should be adapted to the diverse realities of students. To do this, internships should have full legal recognition as work so that interns could benefit from the same protections that salaried workers have when they have disabilities. The Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms stipulates that an employer has the responsibility to accommodate the working conditions of a disabled employee, barring “undue hardship”<sup>2</sup>. However, it is important to mention that the notion of “disability” is not defined in the Charter. In view of this, the concept is subject to interpretation<sup>3</sup>. The accommodations that can be offered to an employee include gradual returns to work, assignment to a new position, leave in case

2. “Undue hardships” include, for example, the costs of accommodation. These costs can be covered by the collective bargaining agreements negotiated by unions.

3. Leduc, D. (2005). L’obligation d’accommodement en milieu de travail, [En ligne], [http://www.portailrh.org/votre\\_emploi/fiche\\_la\\_presse.aspx?f=24670](http://www.portailrh.org/votre_emploi/fiche_la_presse.aspx?f=24670), (consulté le 27 décembre 2017).

of medical appointments, etc. In theory, the employer has the obligation to analyse their employee's situation under penalty of being sentenced to pay damages and accommodate the disabled person.

Insomuch as it seems necessary that internships should fully be considered as work, and that the legislation should treat it as such, the workplace is a space that also has many gray areas with regards to worker protection. For example, the Labour norms, equity, health and safety commission (Commission des normes, de l'équité, de la santé et de la sécurité du travail or CNESST) does not specifically address ableism or discrimination based on a disability. The capitalist model largely participates in making the labour market a place of inequality: it contributes to the exploitation of a large number of workers, to the revenue gap between the rich and the poor, and to the fact that pay equity has not yet been attained. That is why we must reflect on a conception of work that is more inclusive and equitable, where invisible work is recognized.

As for the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms, it remains that filing a complaint is a long and tedious process that is strictly individual. We once again put the weight of fighting for rights on the shoulders of those who are disabled. For many, it is a process which is too difficult to handle when their daily lives are already full of obstacles that they need to overcome in order to survive. In this way, they find themselves without real control over their lives.

In the end, adapting internship settings to the situations of interns with functional limitations or mental health disorders begins with a recognition of their efforts as work and a recognition of the invisible labour they carry out on a daily basis in order to render their labour available to their fields.

#### **PUTTING AN END TO COMPETITION**

We are aware that the Labour Code does not entirely protect disabled workers. Indeed,

undue hardships are often brought up as a reason to exclude people with disabilities from the labour market. Nevertheless, we consider these protections to represent an interesting avenue to fight for recognition of disabled students' rights.

Ableism, from school to internships, is clearly part of a dynamic by which we are expected to perform just as well with lesser means. Does a failing grade determine incompatibility with a given field? Or is it rather unrealistic to impose such high requirements on those who start way behind the starting line with an extra weight on their shoulders? In a society in which work is highly valued, can we put an end to ableist discrimination towards workers (students, interns and professionals alike)? If we recognize that a desirable variety of physicalities and functionalities exists in society, it is essential to adapt schools and the workplace to this diversity in order to break the ableist order of society. No longer should we expect these individuals to put their physical and mental health at risk in order to fulfill requirements which are ever more oriented towards capitalist productivity, we should instead adapt their workplaces to their reality!

# CARE IS FOR OTHERS

BY KAËLLA STAPELS

TRANSLATION BY PAOLO MIRIELO

I aspire to join one of the most gratifying trades there is, a job where I take care of people in every aspect of their life and where I make sure they can live in the best way possible. I've chosen a trade, not a calling. I've chosen to help others, but not at my expense. I study in nursing and I work to study since I do not qualify for loans and bursaries and because my parents cannot contribute financially to my studies. Not only do I work to study, but I take on debt to study, given that finding a work-study balance is hard when my school and internship hours keep me from working as much as I should. I never stop. The concept of a weekend no longer exists for me. On weekdays, I go to school, I have my internships. In the evenings, I study, I do my homework, I prepare for my courses and internships. On weekends I work night shifts, day shifts, evening shifts, on rotation and always according to the hospital's needs. After my work shift, I study more, I prepare for my courses more and I start over, endlessly.

In this neverending hustle, I have to find time for my daily tasks like anybody else would, having to clean, do laundry, go out for errands, make lunches, do dishes, deal with my landlord, call my bank and my insurance company, all of that on a budget calculated down to the penny. Things add up during these endless weeks: sleep deprivation, malnutrition and stress. Stress, because my budget is already tight enough when my tuition fees come up, along with my winter electricity bills, the pile of books that will cost me three months worth of rent and my bus fare for the semester. Stress, because I need to decide what I won't be capable of paying this month: Internet, my credit card, my driver's license? My internships represent over 1000 hours of unpaid work and are required for my training. More than 1000 hours where I do not study, but work. I work, yet I am not paid. I can say that I work because I accomplish the same

tasks as the nursing staff. I am also legally responsible for my patients and for the care that I give, just the same as any other nurse, given that I am a professional. I am there for over 8 hours a day, and I must remain smiling, comprehensive, efficient, precise, impeccable. I am required to be just as good as the regular staff. And yet, I am not a nurse, I am a student. I am not protected by labour standards. There is no consideration for the fact that I work to go to school, that I live under the poverty line and that I am accumulating a financial as well as a sleep debt which are both growing day by day. I am told that I need to deal with it, that my internship will prepare me, that my working conditions won't be much different than my current conditions as an intern. I am told that lack of sleep on top of psychological and work overloads await me.

During our internships, just like at work, we must arrive 30 minutes ahead of and leave 30 minutes after our shift, which is already 8 hours long, so that continuity of care is assured for our patients. An extra hour every day. Everyone is under pressure. If an error occurs, I am just as responsible as the nurses. I may be expunged, even if I am just a student. I may be sued, even though I am in training. I am treated like a nurse from a legal standpoint, and I am asked to be a nurse from a professional point of view. I am told to be irreproachable, even though I am learning. I do the same tasks as the hospital staff, the vital signs, the hygienic care, the medication, the checkups, educating beneficiaries and much more. I have access to the same insufficient resources, the same dysfunctional spaces where one-patient rooms are transformed into two-patient rooms, where each act of care requires moving an entire set of equipment. An environment where everyone is caught up in the gymnastics of doing more with less. I am subjected to the same conditions, the same cuts that I am told are just the tip of

the iceberg. They are trying to force students into a defective mold instead of changing it.

The solution does not reside in more budget cuts to a system which is already choking from having to tighten its belt. I work and I study in fields that are crying out for help, accustomed to seeing their budgets amputated year after year. In these fields, many take it upon themselves to deal with these burdens. We tell ourselves that beneficiaries should not be the ones having to pay, to suffer for these budget cuts, as we suffer blow after blow. As a woman, a student, a worker, a recipient and giver of care, as a citizen, I speak out in opposition to this oppression. I am opposed to this endless austerity. I advocate for the women in every field, for the student parents, for those who take on debt, for those who go back to school for a better future, for those who work two jobs during their studies just to get by.

I am often asked why I carry on, why I'm an activist, why I chose the nursing trade. I have

chosen to discuss the issues, the problems, the solutions, to get involved and to go on strike. I have chosen to refuse working for free, to refuse working without better rights and better working conditions. I am doing it to make a difference, be it for the beneficiaries, the students, the workers, the parents, and I believe that by choosing to give wages for interns, we can all make a difference.





"Top to bottom:" "Angry interns", "Solidarity with interns", "Exploitation is not a vocation"

1. A long version of this text will be published in 2018 under the Éditions Remue-ménage in a collective work entitled *Travail invisible des femmes au Québec : un état de la situation*, under the direction of Louise Toupin and Camille Robert.

2. The wage gap between men and women was more than 20% in 2016. The gap was higher among racialized workers, according to the Institut de recherche et d'informations socioéconomiques (IRIS) : <http://iris-recherche.qc.ca/publications/egalite-salariale>

Some left-wing students and teachers are opposed to the idea of students being paid a wage to study. According to them, remunerating students would imply a commodification of knowledge and educational establishments. By this logic, though, shouldn't we be asking faculty why they don't give up their salary? Who would work without being paid? Non-recognition of the value of student work strengthens the hierarchical relationship between student and teacher while perpetuating student exploitation at the expense of the least privileged.

Gaining a wage for students is only the beginning<sup>1</sup>. Those who claim that this wage would decrease the time we can be free of commodity relations are operating from a pretty elitist understanding of freedom. We already know that capitalism relies on exploiting the unpaid work of millions of workers. Paying us for what we are already doing without pay can liberate hours otherwise dedicated to wage labour. This includes a job done before, after or while studying. A wage for students would help reduce people being stuck in interpersonal

relationships due to financial dependence. Moreover, remuneration of unpaid work can reduce financial indebtedness of women and racialized persons, who are disproportionately represented among the ranks of those working for free. Their refund of a loan would also be longer considering the type of jobs available after their degrees<sup>2</sup>.

Definitely, the choice of an academic discipline doesn't allow one to consider being free from commodified relations. Whether we study Foucault and Marx or learn how to treat a patient, the field of studies and transmitted knowledge doesn't have an intrinsic emancipatory potential. It's mostly what we do with that knowledge and how we stand in regards to ideological doctrines transmitted by an educational establishment that has such potential. In order to learn, a student must do more than just attend or excel in his classes; the essentials of work and the burden of emancipation is the responsibility of the student. Consequently, when we present school as an emancipatory space, we join the (neo)liberal discourse that advocates personal development, ambition and fulfillment. However, this discourse

disregards the simple quenching of needs. It's a mistake to put forward such views which maintain educational establishment and, at the same time, the relations of exploitation that exist.

However, just like the feminist movement that occurred internationally in the 70s, - which focused the struggle for the emancipation of women around access to the labour market instead of recognition of the value of domestic work -, a choice has been made by the dominant fringe of the student movement in Quebec. They focused exclusively on a discourse against the commodification of education by mandatory tuition fees while casting aside the criticism about the role of reproducing the workforce - and therefore capitalism - in educational establishments. This choice helped reinforce, through claims for free education, an idealization of education, thus reducing the recent student struggles to resist against the latest neoliberal reform. When not supporting paid internships, and, more largely, a wage for students the student movement and faculties put the burden of striving against the commodification of education on those who possess less power: students.

There is no benefit for students in keeping education in its' actual form. However, there is a lot to gain from this for educational establishments and employers. Therefore, it is necessary to reduce the amount of unpaid work in all spheres of life: if there is indeed "something irrepressible in desires that will always make them overflow structures that contain them"<sup>3</sup>, pleasure, inherent in the desire to learn, is smothered by student work conditions that eliminate all possibilities of emancipation. It is by recognizing the student condition for what it is, studded with misery, that we can begin to organize the transformation of education and the actual order of society<sup>4</sup>. Claiming a salary while studying somehow becomes the expression

of a radical desire, exposing a totalizing range that it's impossible to reduce to a simple reformist struggle.

The actual working conditions in traditionally feminine fields suggest that a salary will not be enough to recognize all the unpaid work that is done while studying, nor will it end the inherent power dynamics and violence, nor will it allow us to overthrow the process of commodification of education. However, it constitutes a symbolic as well as material first step towards the recognition of reproductive work, allowing us to organize the necessary struggle for the amelioration of student's working conditions and the abolition of unpaid work.

From a practical point of view, the CUTE's wages for students campaign offers a considerable opportunity to develop and apply an analytical grid on the appropriation and depreciation of the students' reproductive work - whether or not they are interns - that can be transferred to all spheres of life. Consequently, it is a premise completely different from previous students strikes, a strike initiated by women and invisibilized persons of the student movement. A strike based on a feminist analysis that allows linking the conditions of students and the conditions of all invisible workers. The next strike will be a women's strike or will not be. And, the next women's strike will be an interns' strike!

3. (Our translation) Morgane Merteuil. Pour un féminisme de la totalité, June 17, 2017, available online: <http://inter-zones.org/article/pour-un-feminisme-de-la-totalite>

4. We are largely inspired by the reasoning of Morgane Merteuil whom approaches this opposition between desire and alienation in order to think about emancipation of sex workers. C.f. Merteuil, M. Pour un féminisme de la totalité, June 17, 2017, <http://inter-zones.org/article/pour-un-feminisme-de-la-totalite>

## LONG-DISTANCE INTERNSHIPS

BY CATHERINE DUVAL GUÉVIN

TRANSLATION BY ANIKA L'HEUREUX

The current campaigns for paid internships, for the most part, portray interns as a rather homogeneous group that experiences a reality specific to big cities. In some regions, however, there are aspects that add to or differ from this ideal. This article will discuss the reality of student teachers at the Université du Québec à Rimouski (UQAR). Being an intern myself, I have not had the opportunity to survey interns from other rural universities, but the challenges caused by travel distance and cohort size are undoubtedly similar.

### BUSINESS TRIPS AT THE EXPENSE OF THE STUDENT

At the UQAR, student teachers in primary and preschool education mainly come from the Lower Saint-Lawrence, the North Shore, Gaspesia and the Magdalen Islands. A large proportion of undergraduate students wish to do their last two internships, which are longer and involve a significant amount of personal investment, outside of Rimouski. In that way, they would increase their chances of obtaining a job within their hometown's school board. Thus, they travel a lot by car as part of their internship, whether it is to attend the five seminars that are given at the UQAR or to go to their internship from home.

The demand for financial support is enormous compared to the limited bursaries that are granted by the program to pay the students' costs for travel. This year, a seventy kilometer trip between the internship's location and their personal residence was not enough for a student to have access to the bursary, nor the fifty kilometers round trip of another student from my cohort. Only six people will be eligible this year thanks to a trip totaling more than eighty kilometers per day. These five hundred dollars will barely

cover the transportation costs of these interns for the period from September to December. Since the fourth internship lasts seventeen weeks and the workload makes it near impossible to be in paid employment at the same time, it is not surprising to see that many students decide to go into debt to complete this long semester. A large price to pay to be able to do the internship in a rural area.

### PLACES WHERE INTERNSHIPS ARE REMOVED

At the UQAR, it is now impossible to do an internship in the Magdalen Islands unless we find at least five other students from our cohort to accompany us. This year is also the last in which the city of Fermont will host interns. The North Shore is also likely to be withdrawn from the list of internship destinations as the University considers that these places are too remote and expensive, not to mention that there are not enough requests. I see that we now form small cohorts at the UQAR, reaching about thirty students a year. Although I understand that they sought to save money by subjecting interns to certain areas, it is impossible for me to ignore how these restrictions are hurting students as well as remote schools.

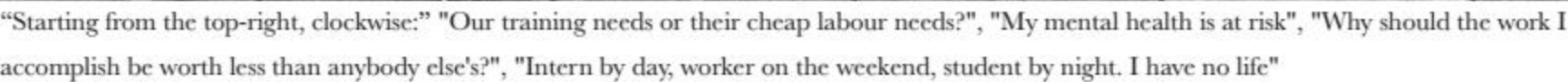
My colleagues and I agree unanimously: we love small schools from remote areas. Firstly because they make it possible to get quickly known by school principals and thus carve out a place of choice for ourselves on the lists of replacements and contracts. But also because it is possible to integrate quickly and fully into a team that is often small, but oh so united.

In another perspective, the arrival of future teachers in these often isolated schools acts as a bridge between the new academic research

which would be added to the base salary for internships.

Finally, the government wants to promote rural areas, make them more attractive and encourage the youth to settle there. Having myself recently moved to the Lower Saint-Lawrence, I think it is by living and doing my internships here that I took an interest in this beautiful region.

After all, the interns' fight remains pretty much the same everywhere in Quebec: having access to paid internships. Interns will be asked to hold full-time positions while being students, to not have another job and, most importantly, to pay tuition fees. Although travel expenses mainly affect students from rural areas, an intern may have to travel long distances to get to the school where they are doing their internship while living in an urban center. I believe, however, that if we want to promote and support the beautiful regions of Quebec by making them attractive for future workers, it has to be achieved, once again, through education.



# GETTING CREDIT WHERE CREDIT IS DUE, OR WHEN TO STOP ACTING YOUR WAGE

BY PIERRE LUC JUNET ET FÉLIX DUMAS-LAVOIE

TRANSLATION BY ANIKA L'HEUREUX

Over the past several years, indebtedness has become a new common signifier. The state is indebted; workers are as well. The use of the term “debt”, like a media metronome, determines the pace of discussions about the future of taxpayers: the debt is so massive that we would not be able to eventually pay it off. The question then arises on the value of the work done and on who benefits from it. Economic life is regulated by the credit borrowed from banks and international financial institutions. Students are no exception; this is yet another way to prepare them for work recognised as such, besides familiarizing them with systematic indebtedness. The criticism of student indebtedness is the complementary pole to the demand for a student wage made by the United Committees on Student Work (Comités Unitaires sur le Travail Étudiant): we cannot reclaim the one without requiring the abolition of the other. Claiming a student salary is the first step to fundamentally reconsidering the resulting economic and social order, thus bringing criticism to the social distinction made between productive and reproductive labour<sup>1</sup>.

## PSYCHOLOGY OF INDEBTEDNESS

Debt is a concept almost as old as the hills<sup>2</sup>. With war being the primary driving force behind civilization, throughout the ages creditors financed warlike enterprises, just like the old systems of religious justice are built around the capacity or not to honour a debt. The indebted person is an immoral being, though this trait of morality is inseparable from the submissive bond which unites the individual to the authorities. Whoever holds the purse strings ensures social control as long as there is a system of values and beliefs that justifies

the domination. If the logic of indebtedness was historically an instrument of discipline, by which social institutions seem to stand like pillars fixed in eternity, its massification is symptomatic of an extension of social control. The individual is no longer locked up in prison-schools which, as Foucault mentioned, looked almost exactly like barracks, factories and hospitals. We live in the era of generalized indebtedness, in which we are nothing but “coded figures - deformable and transformable”<sup>3</sup>.

Indebtedness weighs heavily on students' minds as well as those of workers. It limits their ability to grow through choices motivated not by their own interests, but rather by those of creditors: we “choose” a career based on income, which will be used to repay debts; we live on credit to pay the bills. What brings together the realities experienced by students and workers is the constant awareness of the added numbers, the permanent worry about reimbursement, the shame of being unable to repay. The so-called working world, or paid labour, is linked to the constraint of economically managing one's time. Even if we convince ourselves that we are in a certain career sector because of our passion for the job, the first criterion of any economic relation in the world of wage labour is to sell ourselves as labour power to an employer. In the case of the student, however, the absence of any salary imposes the same constraint without the possibility of taking charge of it immediately, but rather later, as the diploma will formalize the student's value on the market.

By failing to remunerate students, we create conditions of indebtedness and the moral weight that accompanies it, besides pushing students towards precarious jobs that only fill in the gaps... The devaluation of said

1. Reproductive labor concerns all non-salaried activities intended to prepare for integration into productive labor, i.e. the labor market.

2. See David Graeber's *Debt: The First 5000 Years*, which traces the history of debt through the ages. Graeber argues that the credit system precedes the creation of money and that debt has always structured our economic systems and social relations.

3. Quoted from Gilles Deleuze's *Postscript on the Societies of Control*, easily found on the web.

performed work does not only impact one's wallet. The future is mortgaged on the belief that studying requires a sacrifice. Neoliberal ideology individualizes to an extreme the student's responsibility towards their career choices and configures the notion of clientelism in which, according to the formula, education is just another commodity. The morality we are opposing to the latter, that of a strong and interventionist state, is not so far removed from the notions of sacrifice and devotion. As mentioned Georges Caffentzis, one of the authors of the Wages For Students manifesto at the November 9th conference organized by the CUTEs at Concordia University, it is certainly fair to oppose the commodification of education... Though not at the cost of doing unpaid work because "no one can survive breathing only air in this society"<sup>4</sup>. As a matter of fact, why would we need to sacrifice ourselves and where does this logic, implying that a common good is crystallized in the state, come from? It comes from the very modern idea that only the nation-state is able to gather all social classes around a social project. But this vision glosses over the vested interests of the present social classes and reinforces the abstract idea of a national community<sup>5</sup>. It is not surprising that those who are nostalgic for social democracy base their hope for national independence on such an authoritarian political vision, under the guise of a common good. It is a powerful myth that originates in the idea of a better redistribution of wealth rather than a continuous struggle between antagonistic classes.

### THE DOUBLE STANDARD

The problem of indebtedness is a long-standing issue within the student movement. This topic is at the centre of critical analyses regarding the "commodification of education", a concept that intends to highlight the dominant political trend that neoliberalism has become since the welfare state crisis. Education was once conceived as an indispensable element of the modern citizen's learning, that is to offer civic,

public and accessible education, for the purpose of perpetuating the social contract between the state and the individual. The state guaranteed education to citizens who found in this pact a legitimacy to the representative democratic system. At the root of the American education system, Thomas Jefferson, in his Bill for the More General Diffusion of Knowledge, defends the idea, an original one for the 18th century, of free public elementary instruction. In the same way that one does not have to pay to deposit a ballot at the polls, one should not pay to become a citizen who is able to participate in the basics of democratic life. Since America is the epicentre of neoliberalism, it is interesting to see how the vision of education has evolved while the separation between elementary and higher education deepens, the latter being traditionally accessible only to elites. For a long time, in the United States, indebtedness has been privileged to give access to certain universities to poorer layers of society. On one hand, we are wary of the weight of the state and its interference with social life; on the other, this interventionism is replaced by that of private enterprises and banks. Neoliberal policies considerably

4. This conference is accessible online via our website [travailetudiant.org](http://travailetudiant.org) in the videos section.

5. Benedict Anderson's book *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* explicitly covers the abstraction that nationalism is.



increased debt ratios as a direct result of the crisis that universities and, more generally, the education system are going through: education is primarily used to train workforce for businesses and not for citizens. Massive indebtedness is thus a consequence of the crisis of modernity and of neoliberal politics aiming for massive disinvestment, coupled with the globalisation of the capitalist economy. The state representativeness crumbles, whereas tensions between the state, the Capital and social groups become more visible. Through these political and social reconfigurations, we now wonder what a citizen is and what meaning can be given to the word community.

In the student movement, the traditional progressive vision seeks to ensure this social pact between the state and the citizen. The idea of free education at all levels and of a “quality education” - about which there is never too much detail - historically aimed to discipline the student by reinforcing the legitimacy of social institutions. In this world of harmony between the state and the democratic citizen - in opposition to the citizen-consumer of contemporary neoliberalism -, the state provides quality services, which are also rights per se. Health and education are sacrosanct pillars when it comes to free services<sup>6</sup>. In this way, there is no debt, but rather a societal investment. The state ensures a proper transition between education and work: everything is well-structured so that the gap between the different social categories fades into a harmonious totality, in continuous progress.

### REFUSING TO PAY

One could argue that asking for a student wage is an even more interventionist measure, even more social-democratic than free education itself, or that it reinforces the commodification of education. This reflection does not take into account the current transformations of the education system: the boundary between work and studies is constantly shrinking as employers intrude into colleges and universities, using,

for instance, unpaid internships. Beyond the reality of internship, it is the student's condition as a whole that has to be criticized from this relationship between systematic indebtedness and non-recognition of the work done as a part of the academic path. Wage labour is first and foremost an awareness of the value of the work done by the student, which is a way of recognizing its social utility in the production of knowledge. It is also a way to criticize the disciplinary relationship that persists within learning venues between the teacher and the student. The good master is no longer a figure of authority to which the student is subjected: they become responsible for their own choices, thus raising their awareness of the economic and social relationship that binds them to the teacher. While we do not want to be turned into dehumanized commodities, we still refuse to be seen as docile individuals who must at all times abide by the word of the master. The student condition is not just a status that allows the state to reproduce new workers for the labour market, be it for the benefit of private enterprises or for the so-called “common good”. Wage labour is a first step to reconsider the relationship that binds the student population to the state and the companies: by refusing the sacrifice that is required of us, that is to say the principle of going into debt to study, we expose the education system in a capitalist society where the student is historically either a body and a spirit to be disciplined, either a subject of the user-pay approach.

A parallel can be observed with the labour movement which, at its origin, was shot through with the debate between political emancipation and economic demands<sup>7</sup>. Although the CUTEs refer to the status of the student, defined from the beginning of student unionism<sup>8</sup> as an intellectual worker, the criticism of the non-valorization of reproductive labour opens an emancipatory perspective that looks beyond the economic condition. The student wage is not a finality, but rather a means to criticize the actual separation that persists between students and workers. By having a broader

6 Free services related to wage labour, i.e. an amount which is taken from the plus-value and then goes to taxes, it should be clarified.

7. On the one hand, political freedom and the rejection of bourgeois society: on the other, demands for better salaries, better working conditions. Here we outline the historic debate on the role of unionism as a true actor of social transformation, or instead as an actor that integrates worker's movements into the capitalist economy.

8. The Charter of Grenoble of the National Union of Students of France, dated 1946.

perspective on the student's relationship to the production and to knowledge, a critique of all separations takes shape. The question asked by the CUTEs concerns the nature and the value of the work done. By placing work at the centre of the debate, all social activities then become concerned. It is not an economic discourse, which reduces life to work and commodification; it is one that aims to fight against a system that sees us as statistics and malleable figures. This is why the fight against indebtedness is complementary: we are asked to repay what should have been used for our remuneration. In 2012 in the United States, a movement - inspired by the unlimited general strike then

taking place in Quebec - was created, calling for a debt strike. This demand was ignored here, especially since the student movement was obsessively concerned with the massive reinvestment in education and the abolition of tuition fee hikes. This was nonetheless an example to be followed since the movement was essentially saying that the problem of systematic indebtedness is historically linked to the non-valorization of reproductive labour<sup>9</sup>. Rejecting indebtedness while demanding a student wage is therefore a way to contextualize the adversarial rapport maintained for centuries by the exploited sectors of society against the state, banks and global finance.

9. See <http://strikedebt.org/>. Whereas the movement did not explicitly defend student wages, many of its' members, including George Caffentzis and Silvia Federici, were favorable to the idea and criticized indebtedness as a devaluation of reproductive work.

CRITIQUE OF INTERNSHIP'S EVALUATION

## HOW MUCH DID YOU SCORE IN YOUR INTERNSHIP?

BY NICHOLAS BOURDON AVEC LA COLLABORATION DE MIRCEA ADAMOIU  
TRANSLATION BY RONNY NOU-KHLOT

Lately, many students have been focusing on analysing the existing link between interns and the work done in the setting of their practical training. Many came to the conclusion that they endure an exploitative situation due to the non-recognition of their value as workers, which increases their precarious state. Internships are usually depicted as a simple training leading inevitably to a paid job, justifying the absence of wages. However, the question of remuneration is just a single part of the problem. The internships' evaluation in education itself generates consequences linked to its' arbitrary and unjust dimensions. Thus, in addition to our demand for paid internships, it is our responsibility to question the current evaluation process in order to improve the conditions in which the internships take place.

### A SUBJECTIVE EVALUATION

How is one to evaluate two students who are completing internships in completely different backgrounds, and fairly<sup>1</sup>? In teaching, for example, it is obvious that one first-cycle internship in a private school and a second-cycle one in a regular program within a poor neighborhood doesn't represent the same challenges. Furthermore, the people responsible for the evaluation aren't the same for all interns since each student is guided by a different associate teacher. This person's job is to welcome the intern in their class and to accompany them along their path by providing regular feedback in order to foster professional development. They are often the only reference for the internship supervisor, representing the link between the university and the internship environment,

1. This text is greatly inspired by the internships' evaluation in education at Université du Québec en Outaouais (UQO) and the author's personal experience at the bachelor's level in secondary education. It must be understood that the reality may differ from one university to another even if the formula is often similar.

since they see the intern only for some hours throughout the entire work experience. In brief, it is the supervisor who's in charge of emitting the final grade to the department of education, but it is the associate teacher who, in reality, holds considerably more weight in the evaluation. This significant power greatly influences the intern's experience. For instance, it could become difficult, even risky for an intern to stand their ground in front of an associate teacher practicing pedagogic and educational methods different from theirs. Even so, the internship should be an occasion to apply the strategies learned through their university education and to actualize them. That is, at least, the rhetoric that universities provide when they present internships, whereas the reality is quite different. This relationship of subordination favors the emergence of situations of abuse reported by some colleagues. Rather than rely on the good faith and the kindness of the evaluators, we should implement mechanisms that prevent the appearance of such situations.

#### Grade revision: truly effective?

If the student wishes to request a grade revision, the situation is only worsening as the outcome of the process doesn't appear to have any impact on previous evaluations. At UQO, the procedure comes down to a first reevaluation by the same person who gave the internship's final grade, followed by the formation of a comity leaning over the question again if the student is appealing the decision. Nonetheless, the comity doesn't have the necessary resources to properly review the evaluation of the internship since it wasn't present during its realization. The whole represents a financial charge of 80\$ for the student, which is almost equivalent to an eight-hour of work on minimum

wage! Moreover, taking into account the fact that the department isn't shouting the existence of the grade revision program from the rooftops, few students know about it and use it to challenge the evaluators' judgement.

#### BAD GRADES CAUSE ILLS

Unfair evaluations and difficult internship situations may indeed have an influence on the professional development and the well-being of students. In fact, according to a survey conducted by the CRIS-UQO<sup>2</sup>, 38.4% of respondents stated that they had or should have reached out for psychological support because of their internship. According to us, the weight of their evaluations could be one of the factors at play. Thus, these various scenarios have negative repercussions, such as mental and physical health disorders (anxiety, depression, weight loss, low self-esteem, etc.) and cast doubt on interns' professional choices. Thereby, in addition



to creating barriers with regards to the teachings of an internship and an admission to a master's program, evaluations can have serious repercussions that influence the student's own teaching and assessment skills, thus creating a vicious cycle fraught with consequences.

#### **REORGANIZE EVALUATIONS TO GIVE MORE AUTONOMY!**

To remedy these problems, replacing the literal notation (from A+ to E), which correspond to numeric values used to calculate the overall average, with a passing or failing grade would address some injustices mentioned above. This should also be accompanied by constructive comments that build on the strengths and challenges of the student, as it is currently done at UQO. Generally, these comments are useful for the students' consolidation of their learnings in an internship environment. In this way, by

articulating the observations concerning the interns' practices, the student would more easily be able to give and take the criticism that they deem (ir)relevant according to their vision of education. Including the students' vision in the evaluation process would also be beneficial, considering that they are the ones concerned by the education of interns. This would ensure that more people would be involved in the evaluation, thereby limiting the associate teacher's power. Next, why not include in the internship placement process a discussion between the students and the future associate teacher so that they can choose one another mutually? It would then be possible to avoid potential ideological conflicts and allow interns to choose the mentor with whom they wish to pursue their professional and personal development.

All these propositions also aim to give more professional autonomy to interns who are currently subject, on one hand, to the associate teacher's authority, and, on the other hand, to the university's evaluation process, which is mainly based on the perception of the former. For decades, professional autonomy has been deemed indispensable and ardently defended by unions and education unionists. So, why shouldn't interns be entitled to them? Having the opportunity to make one's own decisions is a formative act in itself. In the case of interns, this power to act would allow them to build themselves intellectually in addition to learning how to manage the various professional responsibilities that will come back to them and to promote an awareness of exploitative relationships to which they are subjected.



"Our participation deserves compensation"

### **WAGES FOR INTERNS, AND A RENEWAL OF THE EVALUATION PROCESS?**

All in all, the internships' evaluation in a professional environment should without a doubt be reevaluated since its' inequitable, arbitrary and restrictive dimensions constitute an obstacle to the interns' personal and professional development, as well as access to their chosen professions. Not only they must conform to the evaluators' expectations, but also to the ministerial imperatives. In fact, teachers and students are required to have mandatory ministerial examinations. In theory, high school teachers are free to provide teaching and evaluation as they see fit as long as the objectives set by the government are respected. In practice, it instead conditions their students to the standards set by the exams required for the obtention of a high school diploma. This leads us to demand a change in practices currently in place for the evaluation of learnings throughout the school system.

The evaluating processes, which are derived from the market logic of the capitalist system, promotes competition, obedience and social stratification. They contribute to the industrial model of the school (factory-

school) which reproduce a docile labor force, as well as the existing social hierarchies within society. In the same order of ideas, by paying the internships and modifying the evaluation process, the interns' material and legal conditions would be improved. However, internships are only the most visible part of the free work that is done by students. By demanding recognition of the work and skills of students, one recognizes that studying is an intellectual job that deserves much more than contempt, misery and indebtedness. A student wage would be a means of fighting against the exploitative relations that currently govern the school system and which also transcends all social institutions. This is why fighting for a student wage is a crucial step in order to combat student precariousness and social relations of power so as to make them more egalitarian.



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# INTERNSHIPS, RACISM AND HEALTH SYSTEM : HISTORICAL JOLTS

BY JAOUAD LAAROUSSI ET CLAUDIA THIBAUT

TRANSLATION BY RONNY NOU-KHLOT

On June 18<sup>th</sup>, a video<sup>1</sup> of an Ontario woman refusing to have her son treated by a person of color became viral on social media. This scene reminded us that racism still exists by unveiling the particular form it takes in the health system when patients refuse contact with racialized caregivers. This video showcased the particular role that caring and bodily intimacy can play in the expression of racist representations of individuals and of the racist imaginary specific to the contemporary Canadian society.

This vulnerability of sick bodies and the intimacy of the act of care have been, throughout the different periods of Quebec and Canadian history, a space for the expression of racist imaginaries at work in society. In this text, we will cover three moments of expression of racism in Montreal hospitals to reflect on the contemporary implications of the fear of the "Other" on structural racism in the Quebec health system. We will focus more specifically on the case of medical students who, because of their origin, real or not, were excluded from their internships, thus blocking their access to the medical profession.

## THE IRISH "OTHER" (1852)

Between 1816 and 1860, Canada experienced an important wave of Irish migrant fleeing misery and famine, resulting in interethnic tensions that were reflected in the health system. In 1852, an anecdotal event seems to us to be emblematic of the racism present in Canadian society with regard to the Irish

community and its specific repercussion in clinics and hospitals. The Irish student Mckeeon sent a complaint to the Bishop of Montreal, Mgr. Ignace Bourget. Mckeeon, who was then doing an internship at the Saint-Joseph hospital, complained that, because of his Irish origins, he was prohibited from treating French-Canadian women<sup>2</sup>. This individual complaint was not representative of the whole system, but nevertheless reflects the negative representation of the Irish in Quebec society and the implication of these representations on the exclusion of the Irish from practicing medicine.

## RACIAL SEGREGATION AT MONTREAL MATERNITY HOSPITAL (1917)

It is not only Irish students who will experience some form of discrimination in the health system, but also "students of color" who have been denied the right to do their internships in some institutions. An article published in 1917 in the Montreal Herald<sup>3</sup> is, in this respect, indicative of the discrimination present in the health system. The article tells us that the Montreal Maternity Hospital would close its doors to all students of color. The doctor W. Chipman, in charge of internships at the Montreal Maternity Hospital, told the newspaper that:

*"We are not barring colored students from any assistance that we can give them, but the number of colored patients is very small, and of course the white patients object to receiving treatment from them."*

1. <https://youtu.be/ZI5JK-DIIsbU>

2. Mc Mckeeon; Montréal, Plainte d'un étudiant contre les Srs pour racisme, Dossier des Hospitalières de Saint-Joseph, Archives de la Chancellerie, No. 525.102, 852-39, 1852-10-13.

3. « Le Maternity Hospital ferme ses portes à tous les étudiants de couleur », Montreal Herald (1917-04-30).

The frankness with which Chipman claims that white patients "of course" refuse to be treated by people of color, highlights the racist bias of early twentieth-century Canadian society. Students who had been refused at the Maternity Hospital were therefore forced to complete their maternity internship in New York, where hospitals, unlike Montreal institutions, accepted students of color. Segregationist logic, where white people look after whites and people of color look after people of color, explains the transfer of these students to a hospital in New York, where the Afro-descendant population is much larger than in Montreal.

#### **INTERNSHIPS STRIKE AND ANTI-SEMITISM AT NOTRE-DAME HOSPITAL (1934)**

During the 1930s, a virulent wave of anti-Semitism afflicted, in many ways, Quebec and Canadian societies. One of the most emblematic cases of this climate took place in 1934 when an internship strike was called at Notre-Dame Hospital. This medical interns' strike, the first in Canada in the medical sector, demanded that the recently-nominated senior intern of Jewish origin, Sam Rabinovitch, be removed from his post and replaced by a French Canadian. The backbone of the strikers' speech was that a Jew could not work in a Catholic hospital. The Notre-Dame Hospital interns strike extended to four other Montreal hospitals, while nurses from these hospitals also threatened to join the movement. After four days of strikes, Rabinovitch resigned because of anti-Semitic pressure.

At the intersection between university institutions and hospitals, this interns strike helped to formalize systemic racism towards Jews in these institutions during the 1930s and 1940s. Indeed, as a result of the strike, Notre-Dame hospital had decided to no longer hire Jews. Both the University of Montreal and McGill University introduced selection measures during the same period, restricting Jewish access to the university institution. The case of entrance quotas at McGill University is indicative of the

systemic racism at work in the university institution. In fact, the average required for a Jew to be accepted to the Faculty of Arts was 75%, while it was 60% for the others, in addition to a maximum quota of 10% of Jewish students applied in the faculties of law and medicine.

#### **AND IT GOES ON...**

These three cases, which one might believe are now part of Quebec's past society are rather part of a continued story of racism that persists to this day. Racism against health care workers, whether student or not, is still extremely common in the health system<sup>4</sup>. Whether it is a matter of state policy, such as the Parti Québécois' defunct Charter of Quebec Values, or the result of the racist bias of patients or employees, this racism contributes to the exclusion of racialized people from québécois society, in a

4. Ousman Thiam, 'You don't want to be in a french hospital', *Condition critique* : <http://www.comitestat.org/2014/09/you-dont-want-to-be-in-a-french-hospital/> ; Nancy Beaulieu, Du racisme dans les CHSLD, TVA Nouvelles: <http://www.tvanouvelles.ca/2013/10/03/du-racisme-dans-les-chsld> ; Félix Dumas-Lavoie et Youri Jones Vilmy, Exploitation des femmes et racisme dans la santé: une pilule difficile à avaler pour les stagiaires, *CUTE magazine* no. 1: <https://dissident.es/exploitation-des-femmes-et-racisme-dans-la-sante-une-pilule-difficile-a-avalier-pour-les-stagiaires/>



broader sense. In recent months, discussions about systemic racism have all too often focused on the issue of recognition of diplomas obtained abroad. The stories we have exposed and the experience of many racialized workers and interns<sup>5</sup> remind us, however, that the racist bias within one's training contributes to the difficulties of obtaining a diploma for these persons and

their generalized participation in society. The interns' fight can not be limited to claiming a salary: it is inseparable from a general struggle against racism, which contributes to devaluing the work of immigrants and racialized people and justifying free work in the health network as in all direct services to the population.

5. Sandrine Belley, Nicholas Bourdon et Valérie Simard, *L'école qui te remet à ta place*, CUTE magazine no. 2 : <https://dissident.es/lecole-qui-te-remet-a-ta-place/>

STUDENTS-WORKERS

## A BLURRY STATUS THAT MAKES YOU SEE DOUBLE

BY VALÉRIE LA FRANCE-MOREAU<sup>1</sup> ET LAURENT PARADIS-CHARETTE<sup>2</sup>

TRANSLATION BY RONNY NOU-KHLOT

**Y**ou're a university student and you managed to get a research contract with a teacher you admire? Excellent! It might be a one-time contract or a contract of several thousand dollars for the entire year, complete with an office and a nice desk. You'll nonetheless have to pay taxes and you'll have to produce to the level that is expected of you. The most important contracts often come from an existing or future thesis or dissertation supervisor. Theoretically, your worker's rights seem protected by a collective agreement and by the Labour Code, but what does this look like in reality?

In fact, salaried student's rights are difficult to defend because of, among other things, the vagueness surrounding the supervisor-student and employer-employee relationship, the delays of complainants' settlements in relation to the duration of their studies, of the pressure on salaried students to keep producing to fulfill their contract, and the lack of consideration given by university directorates. In short, the double-status of student and worker is throwing people into confusion that benefits employers, while fostering harassment and abuse of power.

### GRANTEE: THE OTHER SIDE OF THE COIN

Even better, you got yourself a scholarship

or a grant? Congratulations! It may be a scholarship of excellence or perseverance. It is not usually possible to live on this type of scholarship, but it is generally free of taxes and does not require the production of scientific work. The most popular scholarships, however, are those that cover in full or in large part the cost of living for a year, such as those given by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), the Fonds de recherche société et culture (FQRSC) and those occasionally offered by the most well-off research chairs. For these exchanges, the parameters are more vague, sometimes even illegal. Practices vary from one chair to another and the legal and social protections offered to union members are absent<sup>3</sup>. What's more, some of these scholarships include a production requirement for a chair or for the advancement of a dissertation or a thesis<sup>4</sup>.

### GRANTEE OR SALARIED STUDENT: THE SAME VULNERABLE STATUS

Let's first explore the major differences between the statuses of grantee and salaried students. The tax aspect is the most cited advantage of scholarships. It should be noted, however, that only some scholarships are tax-free and that the general precariousness

1. Valérie LaFrance-Moreau studies at Université du Québec en Outaouais (UQO) and has a scholarship. She's also a union rep at Syndicat des étudiants et étudiantes salarié.es de l'UQO (SEES-UQO).

2. Laurent Paradis-Charette studies at Université du Québec à Montréal (UQAM) and has a scholarship. He's also the former President and Secretary-treasurer at SEES-UQO.

3. SÉTUE UQAM. (23 mai 2016). Les fausses bourses: une pratique illégale: <http://setue.net/faussesbourses/>

4. FQRSC. (2015) Le guide du boursier. [http://www.fqsc.gouv.qc.ca/documents/11326/512073/Guide\\_du\\_boursier/843e8201-ec77-4034-b773-da540995711f](http://www.fqsc.gouv.qc.ca/documents/11326/512073/Guide_du_boursier/843e8201-ec77-4034-b773-da540995711f)

of students means that they often have no tax to pay anyways. This tax exemption is often presented by "bosses" as an advantage equivalent to the rights the student loses by not being a worker. However, in some cases, such as when scholarships are associated with a chair, the student is expected to perform tasks normally reserved for workers without the protections that a collective bargaining agreement can offer. The student is thus forced to do undeclared work: no taxes, but no rights in the event of litigation.

Despite these differences at the theoretical level, students who receive either bursaries or salaries face many common issues related to the strengthening of the supervisor-student relationship, already unequal, by the addition of a financial component. In fact, an employer-employee or supervisor-grantee relationship strengthens the power of the teacher over their student. In the case of salaried students, the professor can make the student's working conditions difficult and possibly not renew the employment relationship. In the case of students with scholarships, it is often the supervisor who is responsible for communicating with the subventionary organization (FQRSC, SSHRC, research chair) to confirm that the conditions for awarding the scholarship are always respected and that payments are being made. In the case of SSHRC, it is forbidden for the student with a scholarship to work beyond a certain number of hours. It is the prerogative of the supervisor to monitor the hours of work done for them by the grantee. In both cases, the research supervisor is in a position to be able to terminate the scholarship if the student works "more" than desired by the subventionary organization.

For union delegates and executives, it is not uncommon to hear from students who are dissatisfied with their working conditions or who are victims of harassment and abuses of power, but who do not wish to make a complaint for fear of reprisals. "I don't want to complain about my teacher because I need the next research contract to pay my rent!" "I can't refuse the hours of work,

because this teacher controls the payment of my scholarship!" "I don't want to make a complaint against my teacher, I'm afraid they'll reject my thesis." Indeed, although collective agreements and codes of academic conduct seem, in theory, to prevent abuses of power and cases of harassment, it is very easy for a research supervisor to abuse their power with impunity. The double status (student-grantee or student-worker) renders impotent the collective agreements, the Labor Code and the university's disciplinary code.

It must be noted that this dynamic of vulnerability and of supervisor's abuse of power is gendered, marked by sexism and uneven between men and women in the teaching profession given the female student-majority in classes. This gendered aspect of the relationship between research leadership and students helps to enable harassment, while also complicating the complaint process for victims.

#### **FOR A LESS HIERARCHICAL AND MORE PEDAGOGICAL UNIVERSITY COMMUNITY**

If students who are currently salaried or receiving "privileged" scholarships remain vulnerable to abuses of power, it is because of the working student's double status and the hierarchical structure of graduate studies that places the master-disciple, supervisor-directed relationship at the center of the pedagogical experience, regardless of the nature of the relationship and the consequences it may have on students. We therefore call for the recognition of the status of worker for all students so they can benefit from the corresponding rights, and we call into question the hierarchical organization of the university community. It is imperative that this questioning of the status quo not only breaks the exploitative relationship between supervisor and directed, but also offers recourse to students who are victims of abuse.



CRITIQUE OF THE CRAIES

## YOU THOUGHT YOU KNEW; YOU THOUGHT WRONG

BY XAVIER DANDAVINO

TRANSLATION BY PAOLO MIRIELO

**O**n November 14th of last year, the spokespeople representing the CRAIES<sup>1</sup> participated in a press conference at the National Assembly in order to demand financial compensation for the final internship in education. They spoke out to media only a few days after a daylong student strike held by several programs in favor of wages for all internships. The two struggles are obviously linked. However, the

objective of this text is to explain how the CRAIES' campaign is very different today than the one imagined at the time of its' creation, but just as different as the one put forward by the CUTE as well as the regional coalitions for paid internships.

### ORIGINS

The CRAIES was born in August 2014

1. Interuniversity advocacy and action campaign for student interns in education (Campagne de revendication et d'actions interuniversitaires des étudiant.es en éducation en stage).

2. The author of the text acted as a representative during most of the meetings of the CRAIES between august 2014 and april 2016.

3. Educational sciences faculty students association of UQAM (Association des étudiantes et étudiants de la Faculté des sciences de l'éducation de l'Université du Québec à Montréal).

4. Confederation of students associations of Laval University (Confédération des associations d'étudiants et étudiantes de l'Université Laval).

5. University student federation of Quebec (Fédération étudiante universitaire du Québec, aujourd'hui en processus de dissolution.)

6. Education faculty general students association of UdeS (Association générale des étudiantes et étudiants de la Faculté d'éducation de l'Université de Sherbrooke.)

7. Education faculty students association of UQO (Association étudiante du module d'éducation de l'Université du Québec en Outaouais.)

during a meeting held at UQAM<sup>2</sup>. The invitation was initiated by the ADEESE-UQAM<sup>3</sup> and the CADEUL<sup>4</sup>. It brought together the associations representing in part or in full the students who were to complete an internship in education. During this meeting, the ADEESE, one of the associations from which the invitation originated, was still affiliated to the FEUQ<sup>5</sup>, which already had a specific plan of action concerning internships in education. However, the ADEESE and CADEUL delegates found themselves unsatisfied: since the CADEUL was not a member of the FEUQ, it was difficult to influence the campaign being lead. As for the ADEESE, we noticed that too many students in education were not being represented on a national level by the FEUQ since a number of student associations had disaffiliated. For many, the creation of a parallel organisation which would group together the entirety of student associations in education had to happen. The creation of the CRAIES was first and foremost motivated by the will to work together and to offer better representation. In fact, that objective was accomplished: once united around the same table, the representatives of the associations started putting together their ideas and their demands. But from one meeting to another, although the delegations from all the associations seemed well-intentioned and enthusiastic in wanting to organize around the question of paid internships, major structural and ideological obstacles stood between the CRAIES and the objectives it had set out, hampering its' efficiency. What followed was the result of contradictions at work within the CRAIES' since its' very creation.

### **MORE THAN A WAR OF WORDS**

The first decision that stirred up tensions and curbed the initial enthusiasm was the one establishing an opposition between the demand for "remunerated" internships rather than "compensated" internships. Many associations, including the ADEESE-UQAM, the AGEFEUS<sup>6</sup>, and later the AEME-UQO<sup>7</sup>, considered that it was better

to talk of remuneration since a principle recognizing the work of interns had been unanimously adopted during the CRAIES' first meeting in August 2014<sup>8</sup>. With this taken into consideration, the most coherent demand seemed to be that the work should be remunerated. Delegates from other associations then brought up the fact that interns were in training and therefore should not be "remunerated": in our current educational system, a person pays to be trained, not the other way around. On top of that, many alleged that bringing up



remuneration would cripple the support that we could get from unions in education, who might see it as an intrusion into the terms of their collective agreements. In any case, the position in favor of compensation eventually won, and this explains why the CRAIES never requested more than 330\$ a week during internships. This amount would not be allocated for the work done at school, but rather to compensate the revenue lost by an intern incapable of keeping their job during the internship<sup>9</sup>.

### **FROM BELONGING...**

As we have stated, the first moments of the CRAIES were enthusiastic, most notably

because the campaign addressed a crucial need: bridging the gap between students in education everywhere in Quebec. Without a national association they could call their own, just as the students in engineering or medicine currently have, these students did not have a specific voice to defend their interests. It was indeed the origin of many frustrations while the issue was being shouldered by the FEUQ, by associations having little or no contact with the concerned students. To speak and vote at the CRAIES, associations had to have education students



in their membership. During the autumn of 2015, the CRAIES decided to put an end to its' demands for better working conditions during internships for all students in education, focusing exclusively on student teachers. It was therefore considered simpler to demand compensation for a group with contingent characteristics, and it was also believed that the apparent cohesion of a claimant group, composed of future teachers, would facilitate the articulation of rhetoric promoting such a demand. That being said, this strategic decision had the effect of excluding, without creating too much of an upset, hundreds of students signed up for the career development program. These students also need to complete internships,

but their reality remains rather unknown and often forgotten by students in the teaching program.

### ...TO BEING EXCLUDED

It is to be noted that the idea of dividing demands along program lines was echoed by many during this period. During the FEUQ's autumn 2014 congress, the action plan specified that internships would be divided into two parts. I personally remember having heard delegates argue that the best way to obtain paid internships in every domain would be to first obtain a victory for the internships in education, consequently forcing the government to remain coherent by broadening the scope of students aided by the government program. This strategy was risky for two reasons: it was based on division between programs and it idealized the government's willingness to act in good faith. On top of that, during the campaign for intern strikes organized by Psychology doctoral students, a few contacts had been established between various delegates of the CRAIES and the FIDEP<sup>10</sup>. Psychology doctoral students were starting their awareness-raising campaign on the upcoming boycotts while the CRAIES was still starting out; the FIDEP was therefore a source of inspiration at the time. Although an attempt was made to reach out to a representative of the federation to discuss the possibility of joint alliances, the answer given was a refusal to comply: the doctoral students believed there was a big difference between their internships and their fellowships<sup>11</sup> and, consequently, could not support the CRAIES' campaign. This is a good example of corporatism, where the status of professionals is used to elevate oneself above the melee. In fact, the CRAIES adopts the same rhetoric when it refuses to create political relations with the CUTE and with the regional coalitions for paid internships. The CRAIES believes that the fourth internship in teaching is a more important task and therefore establishes a hierarchy between the types of work accomplished by students in different programs.

8. "That a measure should be put in place by the government of Quebec establishing financial compensation for students participating in educational sciences internships and that this compensation should reflect the following elements: (1) the exceptional workload taken on by educational sciences interns and the benefits that these interns bring to their academic establishment, [...]".

9. According to the data collected at that moment by the CADEUL.

10. Interuniversity federation of doctoral students in psychology (Fédération inter-universitaire des doctorant.es en psychologie).

11. These doctoral students accomplish a 700 hour unpaid internship prior to their fellowship.

## THE TIP OF THE ICEBERG

The other major conflict that has plagued the CRAIES during the first years of its' campaign concerns the publication of a website. While this may seem trivial at first, it allows us to understand the deep division between the tendencies within the coalition. The dispute over the website was the visible part of a greater dissension which is not new to the student movement. During many months, the ADEESE-UQAM tried to convince the other associations that creating such a website was necessary. After many attempts at compromise and reform of the content, the website still does not exist. Lack of content and the need for better research and arguments: the associations opposed to the creation of the website repeatedly brought up the same points. The value of a website resides in the increased visibility for the campaign to organizers and education students while also serving as a database for those seeking to learn more about the cause. At the time, and until recently, there was nothing but a Facebook page, which is an insufficient medium for containing, indexing, archiving and making accessible all relevant documents to all members and non-members. As the school year carried on and as, meeting after meeting, the website was still unavailable, it became obvious that the reasons invoked to avoid putting it online were nothing but excuses and that there were greater underlying reasons. The opposition instead proposed a strategy of collaboration with political parties. The CRAIES was supposedly not ready to publish its' campaign for lack of content and research, but apparently had the rhetorical means to defend the cause during negotiations with the members of the National Assembly

12. Student union of Quebec (L'Union étudiante du Québec), the new FEUQ.

13. UdeM's FAECUM, the CADEUL from Laval University, the FEUS of the University of Sherbrooke, the AGE-UQO, the AGE-UQTR, the AGE-UQAT are the associations which group together all students from the university and not just those in education.

and the youth wings of their parties. While certain associations proposed an action plan centred around mobilization, awareness-building, and the escalation of pressure tactics, methods historically associated with confrontational student unionism, other associations opted for tactics such as lobbying and representation alongside elected officials, the privileged strategy of the defunct FEUQ. It is not surprising, in these conditions, that after many months of stagnation and of organizational issues, a proposition was put forward to integrate the CRAIES into the UEQ<sup>12</sup>, the heir to the FEUQ. This decision, while also answering structural and financial issues, was taken in the autumn of 2016 and marked a definite turning point in the CRAIES' strategy for action.

## WHOSE CRAIES?

This situation is also the outcome of the educational sciences associations' dispossession of their campaign. The CRAIES was initially founded by program associations in order to bring the campaign's organization as close to the concerned student body as it could be. The only faculty associations came from UQAM and from the University of Sherbrooke, and the program associations had difficulty getting involved at the national level. In that way, faced with the inconsistency of representation, it was decided in December of 2016 that the right to vote would only be given to a single association per university. Although this policy had the effect of reestablishing the balance between urban centers and rural areas, it nevertheless had the effect of distancing the campaign from its' roots in education. Therefore, it is now mostly the general associations which have the right to vote<sup>13</sup>, leaving the ADEESE-UQAM as the only student association in teaching which has the right to vote at the CRAIES. This process of dispossession was already underway when the choice of the CRAIES' spokesperson was made under conditions set by the UEQ, that is to say by the hiring of a project manager chosen by a committee exclusively composed of members of the

**QUESTIONS ABOUT OUR CAMPAIGN?  
WE HAVE ANSWERS!  
TRAVAILETUDIANT.ORG/#MATERIEL**



"Interns' strike, women's strike"

UEQ without any leverage given to the associations of the CRAIES.

#### **RECAP OF A CO-OPTION**

The foundation of the CRAIES represented a step forward for the cause of interns in education. However, the positions that it has taken as the years have gone by and its' evolution today cast doubts on its' relevance. Asking for compensation as restitution rather than remuneration for the work done does not allow for the appreciation of interns' work. Declaring that only student teachers in their final internship deserve such compensation is problematic: this position excludes every other "care" and culture sector faced with the same problem of devalorisation accompanied by the dismantling of public services. Centering one's entire strategy around lobbying with politicians rather than informing and mobilizing interns and the public is probably logical for the general associations who now make up the CRAIES within the UEQ, but this method fails to deliver in terms of representing and allowing

for the appropriation of the campaign by students. We should therefore not be surprised by the recent public messages we've heard coming out of the CRAIES last November. Their spokespeople's co-option of the November 10 strike is the result of a tangent that emerged during the very founding of the CRAIES. Its' officers should ask themselves if this is truly a winning strategy, and the delegates of associations participating within the CRAIES should ask themselves if they want to condone a policy which could alienate many allies and harm the broader movement for all paid internships.

# REMARKS ON VOCATIONAL TRAINING PROGRAMS FOR FUTURE LAWYERS

BY GIANLUCA CAMPOFREDANO

TRANSLATION BY PAOLO MIRIELO

*“Honest work won’t let you live in a stone palace.” (Russian proverb)*

After having completed one’s exams at the Bar school (École du Barreau), all students wishing to pursue the profession of lawyer must complete an internship. To become an intern, the student must find a lawyer, a member of the Barreau du Québec who has been in good standing for at least five years, who will accept to become their internship supervisor for a period of six months. As for myself, I have accumulated twelve months of internships, a quarter of which were done in Quebec, and I spent six months of time searching for an internship.

Let us first look at some interesting data drawn from various studies and reports:

The amount of 543\$ may seem high: that being said, this amount is far from being widespread. We could indeed point out that the majority of internships advertised on the École du Barreau’s website are rather to the order of 250\$ per week.

In a similar vein, the great imbalance between the annual number of graduates from the École du Barreau and the small amount of internships offered as well as the lack of legislation prescribing an obligatory minimum wage for interns promotes cheap labour. On top of these circumstances, there is the obligation to complete an internship within the three years following the completion of the École du Barreau’s exams.

- Number of lawyers registered with the order (2014): 25 095;
- New registrations with the Bar (2013-2014): 949;
- Applications for the Bar school (2013-2014): 1 300;
- Graduates of the Bar school (2013-2014): 1 022;
- Population of Quebec (April 1st 2014): 8 191 946.

*Barreau-mètre 2015 – La profession en chiffres*

- Proportion of unpaid internships (2016): 1 out of 23;
- Average weekly salary of interns (2016): 543 \$<sup>1</sup>;
- Proportion of lawyers unemployed after their internships (2016): 18.2 %.

*Rapport sur la situation de l’emploi chez les jeunes avocat.es du Québec*

- Increase of the Bar’s student clientele (between 2005 and 2013): 42 %;
- Proportion of students starting their internships in the 3 months following their eligibility (2015): 60 %;
- Proportion of students starting their internships in the 6 months following their eligibility (2015): 83 %.

*Le Journal du Barreau du Québec – Mai 2016 (Vol. 48 n° 4)*

- Proportion of unpaid internships: nearly 1 out of 10.

*Extrajudiciaire – Octobre 2017 (Vol. 13 n° 5)*

1. As for the Bar, they declare an average pay of 614.50 \$, including unpaid internships.



"We have the power to demand"

It is therefore comprehensible that students should accept to work under abysmal conditions to complete their training.

This situation is not only detrimental to the lawyer profession's reputation, but also degrading for the student population to whom a prosperous and sustainable judicial career is promised by the universities, with the help and encouragement of major law firms.

#### FRANCE AS A MODEL?

"The Bar school deems it desirable that internships should be paid, so long as it is possible, in accordance with the context of internship."<sup>2</sup>

While I would rather not linger on the pusillanimity of the aforementioned principle, the time has come for Quebec to follow in the footsteps of France with regards to the working conditions of interns, and it should go even further<sup>3</sup>. Thanks to the Union des Jeunes Avocats (Young Lawyers' Union), the French cousin of the Jeune Barreau

de Montréal (Young Bar of Montreal), the student lawyers in France benefit from a mandatory minimum gratuity since January 1<sup>st</sup> 2008<sup>4</sup>. It is to be noted that this policy would never have seen the light of day if it were not for the mobilization of the Génération précaire collective which lead to the adoption of law n° 2006-396 through the intervention of Dominique de Villepin's government<sup>5</sup>. In reality, the minimum monthly wages for law interns varies according to their employer's scale between 60% to 85% of the SMIC (French minimum wage<sup>6</sup>) in accordance with the 2007 Agreement<sup>7</sup>.

#### AFTER THE MAPLE SPRING, QUEBEC 1789?

While groups such as Intern Aware in England, or La Repubblica degli Stagisti, in Italy, denounce the working conditions imposed on interns and have been fighting for a legislative intervention in the form of a minimal retribution during vocational training programs for nearly 10 years now, many similar initiatives are taking shape in Quebec. Indeed, a call to form unitary

2. Chapitre II. Section II 6. – Énoncé de principes par le Comité de la formation professionnelle le 18 mai 2016.

3. In France, one third of students must complete an internship, but less than half receive a gratuity. This information was found in Séverin Graveleau, Stages étudiants : de fortes disparités selon les cursus, Le Monde, 27.10.2017 : [http://www.lemonde.fr/campus/article/2017/10/27/stages-etudiants-de-fortes-disparites-selon-les-cursus\\_5206784\\_4401467.html](http://www.lemonde.fr/campus/article/2017/10/27/stages-etudiants-de-fortes-disparites-selon-les-cursus_5206784_4401467.html)

4. Accord professionnel du 19 janvier 2007 relatif aux stagiaires des cabinets d'avocats – Brochure n°3078 et Avenant du 21 décembre 2007 à l'accord professionnel du 19 janvier 2007 relatif à la gratification des stagiaires.

5. Loi n° 2006-396 du 31 mars 2006 dite égalité des chances.

6. Around 1500 euros, or 2255\$ (around 563\$ per week).

7. Maintenance and service staff are not counted among the non lawyer employees.

8. <https://www.facebook.com/events/1908735969401909/>

9. On February 20th 2018, the CUTE joined the call to action for an Intern Strike launched by the Global Intern Coalition, made up of organizational committees for interns in the United States, in Europe and in Australia, and will organize interventions on university campuses all over.

10. École du Barreau. Frais de scolarité et de documentation : <https://goo.gl/R6uVwG>

11. École du Barreau. Contitution en bref : <https://goo.gl/EMDBY2>

12. To learn more about the issues around this demand: <https://dissident.es/quand-lexception-devient-la-norme-est-ce-que-la-norme-est-dexception/> (French text).

committees on student work (comités unitaires sur le travail étudiant, or CUTE) was put out in 2016, and regional coalitions for paid internships<sup>8</sup> have been organizing since June 2017<sup>9</sup>.

Being unaware of the issues regarding access to the labour market for the wider array of trades and training programs requiring an internship, I will focus on the main financial obligations imposed on future lawyers.

In addition to the registration fees for the École du Barreau du Québec which are continually rising (between 5500\$ and 6400\$<sup>10</sup>), many interns will also need to acquire a gown to wear in court (starting at 450\$) and will be required to pay a membership fee as well as a liability insurance premium upon their entering the Order (the entire fee adds up to around 2600\$<sup>11</sup>). On top of that, we could also add the professional expenses which hundreds of young lawyers will need to cover as self-employed workers, for lack of job opportunities offered at the end of their internships.

In view of this, Quebec's legislator must regulate the working conditions of future

lawyers, in the same way as it has done for other fields of study. In that respect, Montreal and Sherbrooke's coalitions for paid internships have adopted demands this year in favor of the repeal of the exceptions contained in the Labour Norms Act, exceptions which allow for unpaid internships<sup>12</sup>. Therefore, interns would no longer be subjected to a particular legal framework, but would instead gain the same protections and rights provided for other workers.

### **Labor debet esse respectari**

One of the many things I learned as a student lawyer in Paris had to do with the human value of labour. My internship supervisor told me: "When we work, we must get paid, or else we will not be respected." This observation unambiguously reflects the spirit of a reform required to ensure respect for the human dignity of thousands of future interns who will access the labour market in the coming decades.

That is why I am convinced that a struggle for the recognition of the work of interns is consistent with the principle of rule of law upheld by the legal community and would greatly benefit all future lawyers.



"My internship is bankrupting me"

## CONDITIONS BELOW STANDARDS

BY KIM CHAUVETTE ET CLAUDIA THIBAUT

TRANSLATION BY RONNY NOU-KHLOT

Even if work is in profound transformation, most of us still spend more or less 40 hours a week on work or studies. Employment often defines a person in a political, social (hierarchical) and economic way. Since we are spending a lot of time and effort on it, the work conditions and the work environment we live in have an important impact on our daily lives and on our relationship with work. Moreover, this relation to work is constantly evolving, but is always defined by the requirements of capitalism. We will first look at a brief history of Quebec's working conditions. Then, we will make some assumptions about our gains and losses in labour rights.

### A HISTORY OF MISERY

During the preindustrial era, work was mainly concentrated in the primary sector, that is to say, devoted to the extraction of raw materials. The working day was aligned with the canonical hours sounded by the church bell and working periods were modulated by the seasons. Sometimes a busy period could be followed by a long period of unemployment. In sum, people worked fewer hours yearly, while working periods and hours were more irregular.

In the industrial era, if though most people continued to work in the primary sector,



more and more of them were integrating the secondary sector, transforming raw materials within factories. The conditions were inhuman. The vast majority of people worked in environments exposing them, too often and for countless hours, to dangerous substances that compromised their health and greatly reduced their life expectancy. Indeed, women, men and children worked between 10 and 14 hours, or even 16 hours a day in mines, factories, ports, shops and spinning mills. Work accidents were frequent and no measures were put in place to compensate injured or exhausted workers.

Although the idea of the 8-hour day had been put forward since 1817<sup>1</sup>, it was only in the 20th century that this demand was enshrined by the law.

The working class waited until 1976 for the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights (ICESCR) to come into force. This covenant is an integral part of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and serves among other things as a basis for the legislative development of labour codes throughout the world.

In Quebec, the *Labour Relations Act* was adopted in 1944 : at the time, it was important legislation on the right of association, since it established a monopoly of representation by accredited union associations. It also reinforced the obligation to negotiate in good faith collective agreements governing the working conditions between the two parties, the employer and the accredited union association. This Act was replaced by the *Labour Code* in 1964.

The *Act Respecting Labour Standards* was passed in 1979 and contained minimum required working conditions for all salaried workers. That said, the minimum wage that

was provided did not always meet the basic needs, ie the minimum wage was insufficient to meet the cost of living, and, which is still the case today. In addition, the prescribed periods of rest were insufficient to allow workers to disconnect, to really rest and to fulfill all the obligations of everyday life. Basically, if we simply rely on the minimum required working conditions that the labour standards impose, we realize that employers are by and large allowed to exploit their workers.



Labour standards are tools that regulate the powers of employers, but are mainly tools that force workers to submit to precarious working conditions. All of this, of course, for the sake of mass production of products and services, in the public and communal as well as private sectors.

1. Robert Owen is generally credited with the formulation of the slogan "8 hours of work, 8 hours of leisure, 8 hours of sleep", later taken up by the labour movement and the International Workers' Association.

## OBSOLETE STANDARDS

Despite many advances in labour rights and improved working conditions for some of us, capitalism gives shape to our way of life and our way of perceiving work. The current employment laws in Quebec certainly protect us; on the other hand, they also support a system that allows the exploitation of our labour force for the benefit of a minority of well-off individuals.



The development of the tertiary sector, i.e. services, has brought a lot of change, and for some time the world has even been talking about a quaternary sector of the labour market. However, we don't seem yet to agree on what it is and on what it is composed of. Some suggest that the quaternary sector is the

result of the cleavage of the tertiary sector. It would cut across development, research and consulting services for electronic, computer and communications products. We believe that the spill of the tertiary sector towards a quaternary sector will generate a modulation of the nature of work and its conditions. Indeed, jobs are increasingly atypical, such as self-employed workers, fixed-term jobs, shifts interspersed in the same day, precarious and gradually less unionized. The professional responsibilities weighing on the shoulders of

employees, the competitiveness of the market and the precariousness of jobs, result in a professional exhaustion more often of emotional nature than physical. It should be noted that even after one year of service with a company, in Quebec, a worker can easily be dismissed, without much reason. The Act Respecting Labour Standards only provides the possibility of challenging a dismissal after two years of service within a company. As a result, people who are newly employed, people working on a fixed-term basis and those in a situation of self-employment are vulnerable. The laws in place protect us, but a fired person has to go through a long bureaucratic process, fill out several forms such as an application for unemployment or a request for help of last resort and compose several letters as a history of events and a complaint.

It's a lot of mobilization for a person who is going through a crisis and who also has to find ways to survive.

In addition, the application of the standards set out in the Act Respecting Labour Standards is not uniform and many of the atypical forms of work are not covered, which is why a person with multiple jobs will not be able to rely on the 40 hours work week standard. In fact, the weekly schedules of these workers begins to look like those of their ancestors in 1908, reaching 58 hours to meet their basic needs.

It is high time that we rethink our conception of work. Laws that, instead of protecting us, allow more and more companies to exploit us must be reviewed. The gains in labour rights acquired during the twentieth century are not adapted to the constant changes in capitalism and its labor market. Wouldn't the answer be elsewhere, in another way of thinking about the economy and work?

### **THE RIGHT TO EXPLOITATION**

It is clear that the standards imposed are unrealistic when the schedules of students and interns are taken into consideration. Internships require a great deal of personal involvement from intern students. Internships and schools demand that they perform more and more tasks for more and more hours for little or no money. This imposes very high demands and unrealistic expectations on the abilities of student interns. We ask them to

complete an internship, that is, to perform tasks for an employer and produce school work, all for 60 hours or more in a single week. And that's not counting the hours spent on a side job in order to successfully pay bills. In this way, we accustom them to accept working a lot more than what they are paid for once they get into the job market.

Since the labour laws mostly guarantee the right to exploitation, the working conditions of interns don't even reach these mediocre standards. All this, of course, isn't surprising in a system where the ability to make profit and accumulate capital is based on the free work of billions of people. In this context, our training inevitably teaches us to accept all of this, or at least to get used to it. The global interns' struggle would therefore benefit from acting in solidarity with all the struggles that aim to change or replace this system for the better.



# ENOUGH! STOP THE EXPLOITATION OF INTERNS!

The growth of global economy is dependent upon millions of students, whose professional education requires them to fulfill hundreds of hours of unpaid labor in order to obtain a diploma. That labor is just as demanding as the work accomplished by any professional. As a matter of fact, finding an internship often means just as much competition as finding an actual job, not to mention the fact that employers often look for interns that are just as qualified as actual employees.

The number of interns is on the rise, regardless of fields, perhaps because of millions of dollars' worth of budget cuts, alongside the withdrawal of public funding which limit employers' ability to hire paid workers. Even so, being a paid employee does not necessarily mean decent working conditions. Employers therefore end up filling atypical work positions (part-time or contractual work, for instance) or hiring unpaid interns. We are at an impasse, where our failing system hinges on corporate practices that are, at best, unstable. To top it off, the workers and interns who fill up these precarious positions are generally left without the legal advantages and protections which actual employment might offer them through provisions such as the Act Respecting Labour Standards. Since unpaid interns do not receive the social recognition that a salary entails, they are left in a sort of proletarian limbo, where morality is gray enough to justify brutally and shamelessly exploit them, as today's society deems it a "necessary part of professional development".

Many higher education programs contain mandatory internships. Contrary to popular belief, the student-intern is not a whiny, lazy millennial. These unpaid workers are oftentimes immigrants, whose diplomas are not recognized, parents with young children, adults who have opted to return to school, people living with various physical or psychological conditions, etc. They can often only afford to complete their studies at a great personal cost.

The common denominator of programs that offer unpaid internships (mandatory or not) is, without a doubt, the fact that they are undertaken by a largely feminine population. Consider the care fields (education, nursing, social work, etc.) or the culture fields. In these fields, vocational work and career opportunities are on par with exploitation. The reality of it all appears aberrant, especially considering that in the United States and Canada, internships in traditionally masculine fields are often well paid, which emphasizes prioritization of programs and prevents equal treatment for all students.

On this International Interns' Day, we take action, as thousands of other interns are mobilizing throughout regions of Mexico, the United States of America, and Canada. We move to blow the whistle on abuse and exploitation and we call for all interns and any workers, worldwide, to join us in the fight for decent working wages and conditions.

There is strength in numbers. Our voices and actions become those of a collective will rather than isolated "incidents" for the media to disregard. For the ceaseless extortion of interns of all fields to end, we believe it is time to launch a common offensive and organize an internship strike. A collective interruption of internships is a great political tool and the best way to obtain leverage on the people and powers that stand to gain from our unpaid labor, in order to obtain the salary that is rightfully ours. Said strike would also grant us the resources to mobilize without risking exhaustion ; moreover it would allow us to organize our collective movement and show the world that we intend to defend our project : a world rid of exploitation.

\* \* \*

About 70 organizations from Mexico, the United States and Canada have signed the "Enough! Stop the exploitation of interns!" declaration last november 10. Demonstrations and actions for paid internships were organized in Europe and North America for the occasion and nearly 20,000 students were on strike in Quebec. For the list of signatories: [globalinternsday.org](http://globalinternsday.org).

EXPLOITATION



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