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Quebec

One of the largest student strikes in Quebec history!

- News from around the world -

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Since the Jean Charest led Liberal Government came to power on 14 April 2003, it has kept to its promise to lower taxes. To achieve this end it had to cut the budgets of several ministries, including Education.

[https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/Quebec_studentsstrike2.jpg]

The overhaul of the loan and bursary system [1] sparked off the current student discontent. After its "reform", the government turned a deaf ear to students' demands for the reform to be rescinded.

On 24 February of this year, the student associations belonging to the CASSÉE [2] were the first to go out on unlimited strike. The first weeks of the strike did not produce any reaction by the new Minister of Education (Jean-Marc Fournier).

Only when the strike movement grew in scope and more and more student associations joined in the strike did the minister begin to seek to meet the students. In the mean time, the student associations in the FECQ and FEUQ [3] also launched a strike call.

[<https://internationalviewpoint.org/IMG/jpg/McGillstudents.jpg>]

McGill students read strike declaration

After the government made an offer that all three student federations saw as a slap in the face, by 16 March the strike wave had grown to 250 000 students on strike. 16 March also saw almost 100 000 demonstrators in the streets of Montreal, and a smaller demonstration in Quebec City [4]. The Liberal Government's arrogance has pushed more and more students to take part in the eighth student strike in Quebec history.

By the middle of March, it became the largest student strike since 1974. Even educational institutions whose reputation was far from militant, such as l'école des Hautes études commerciales (HEC) [5], l'École nationale d'administration publique (ÉNAP), Polytechnique and McGill [6], joined in the strike wave.

[1] The most visible effect of this "reform" is a cut of 103 million \$CAN (approximately 64 million €,,-).

[2] Coalition de l'Association pour une solidarité syndicale étudiante élargie, representing the radical wing of the student movement.

[3] Fédération étudiante collégiale du Québec et Fédération universitaire du Québec, representing the majority of university and college students.

[4] Montreal is the largest city in Quebec by far, and Quebec City is the provincial capital. Quebec has a population of 7 million people.

[5] The elite business school associated with the University of Montreal

[6] UniversityENAP - public administration school, Polytechnique - engineering school, McGill - the more conservative and élite of the English-language universities in Montreal.