

# Occupy Solidarity?

## Prairie Struggle

2013

For the past month, organizers in Prairie Struggle, and the ASSE Support Committee have been mobilizing around the Quebec student general strike, and the ideas of combative unionism promoted by L'ASSE. A significant part of this combative unionism is the constant escalation of protest, and the use of direct action to disrupt the economy of the employer. Over the past month, the Regina pots and pans rallies have been almost exclusively a show of solidarity for this movement. However, on June 22<sup>nd</sup>, community members responded to calls for greater disruption, and graduated from wearing the red squares to living the combative unionism that the red square represents.

The night started innocuously enough with small number of people collectively deciding to go to the Ramada Hotel in Regina to disrupt business, and the work of scabs in solidarity with striking UNITE HERE workers. This was in conjunction with calls for a night of solidarity with the Quebec student movement. The message of the striking students in Quebec, including support for combative unionism and a call for a broader social revolution, is something that Prairie Struggle identifies deeply with. No gains have ever occurred without the people fighting for them, and unfortunately we find ourselves having to re-fight the same battles just to keep what we've won.

However, just as the Charest government in Quebec has shown its true colours in their response to the massive student uprising, so too, did Occupy Regina members during this action. A quick point to note, we do not speak here of all supporters and participants of Occupy Regina, nor of a broader Occupy movement. We speak only about the core group of leaders that has developed within Occupy Regina and were in attendance at the Pots and Pans rally on June 22<sup>nd</sup>.

Rather than participate in the agreed to action, these Occupy Regina members negotiated with Ramada security on behalf of a group of people they had no mandate from and no right to speak for in order to ensure the ability to protest off property for an issue completely disconnected from both the Quebec Student strike, and the Ramada strike. Our position is that by agreeing to participate collectively in a direct action, you take on a collective responsibility (in one of the simplest senses) to do what you said you would. By talking to security forces while the majority of people were inside performing the direct action, Occupy Regina put the action at risk, as well as members of the community participating in the action. In fact, Occupy Regina members themselves used the term "negotiated" in their description of what they did with security forces

on site. Great job, Occupy Regina, in your staggering ability to negotiate yourselves right off the damn property.

Let's look at this in a broader sense though. Occupy Regina members were there to stand in solidarity with the striking students in Quebec and with the striking workers at the Ramada. Not only did Occupy Regina members "negotiate" with security so they could engage in a separate, non-strike related act of protest, but when challenged on this choice they told someone participating in this action to "go back to Quebec". Who, exactly, is Occupy Regina standing in solidarity with? Certainly not with the working class, whom they have shown utter contempt for; certainly not with the student movement in Quebec, with their racist remark to our comrade; and certainly not with other organizers in Saskatchewan, with their willingness to act as collaborators and infiltrators.

What is at stake here is more than just the safety of those participating in a movement, or in an action. Acting as Occupy Regina did risks division and a lack of trust. We need to be able to work together for our lofty common goals. Occupy Regina had no right and no call to talk with any member of security for anyone, and when questioned, they responded with racism. When a group does this, they show where their loyalties stand.

Prairie Struggle will not work with these Occupy Regina members in the future, nor will they be welcome at any actions or events. We encourage you all to do the same. We fight with the entire working class and will give zero space for people that knowingly betray the very collective they claim to fight for.

You can't co-opt a social revolution!

Against racism on all fronts!

In solidarity with the Québec student strike!

Prairie Struggle Organization & the ASSÉ Support Committee

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