



FILE

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YORK IS
UNIVERSITY



rat vote blues

KEEPING THE COMMUNITY FROM BEING MISINFORMED

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Department of Employer Relations and Human Conditions

Rat Vote Blues:

***Enough! York U's Bargaining Team on Strike. Rats have a Life too!
Confessions of a Dirty Picket Captain***

Enough! York U's Bargaining Team on Strike. Rats have a Life too!

For immediate release.

The full-time faculty members of York University Administration's bargaining team have declared they can no longer work under such untenable conditions. As of Monday January 12, they are officially on strike.

"This whole bargaining process is a thankless task and we just can't take it anymore," the spokesperson for the striking team said. "The amount of work is strangling us. We were promised an easy ride: a bit of stonewalling, some easy cut'n paste PR, a few phone calls to the Globe and Mail and the Toronto Star – nothing you couldn't take care of on a golf course or at one of those exclusive receptions the BOG so regularly invites us to. But no, the union's bargaining team just seems to suffer from a particularly resilient strain of AEJV (Accountability, Equity and Justice Virus) and we were "advised" that the only way to get rid of them was to "make friends with them" ...make friends?? Five full days in an unbearably cheap hotel, shut up in a room with a bunch of stinky picketers who still have the nerve to turn down an offer for which we worked a full two hours on and only because their membership said no in a democratic vote? ... This is more than any self-respecting career academic can muster!

"Where is the leisure and the glory granted to us uncritically by our colleagues at international conferences and academic functions? Where are our beloved fellow colleagues laureates with whom we share an unrivaled collegiality, which we surely don't share with those TBA-TTP untenured profs, not to talk about those Ghost Auxiliary students (GA) who just appeared out of nowhere in the last few days.

"During 5 days we were forced to learn about the irrelevant details of the day-to-day workings of the University factory. Really, who cares? GAs? What kind of insignificant worms are they? Some of us didn't even know of their existence. We thought they were just a keyboard and a voice recruited from some call centre in a remote Asian country and given to us in homage to our impeccable scholarly excellence. Whistleblower protection? What's the point in having it when everybody agrees that the funding that private companies give us for research is more important than what we actually research?

CUPE3903 are too resilient! We'll no longer endure such strenuous work conditions. Enough! No more bargaining, just use the army and force the members to ratify. After all, if one war is wrecking havoc on the other side of the world with the blessing of our politicians, why would anyone notice a little use of force around here? Oh, rat vote, deliver us out of our misery!"

Confessions of a Dirty Picket Captain

It all began with the coat. Well-versed in proper picketing wear during the last strike, I had the layering down. I even had the forethought to hold onto much of the gear I had collected in the 2000/2001 strike. But the coat I'm wearing for this strike is a new addition. I inherited it from my dad, who died the summer of 2001. When I received it among his belongings I remember thinking "this would be great in a strike!" I wore it rarely before this year, but when the cold weather hit I began to wear it on the line. It is huge, a Men's Large. I am just over 5 feet and small. The coat is a wonder for picketing: It comes down to almost my knees and I can fit all manner of things underneath, a whole other coat on really cold days. Some of its ability to resist moisture has gone, but it does pretty well in wet snow. The huge hood fastens in front of my face to block the wind completely. The pockets can hold a mug and a CUPE-issued radio. It's big, blue and stained. It's ugly and smells of the fire barrel. Perfect gear for picketing.

I have to wear it to and from the picket line. Doing errands on the way involves the coat and other strike gear, most of them covered by the big ugly smelly coat which gets all the notice. Some people think I am homeless or an eccentric of some variety. I'm not sure if the red square of felt attached to it makes me look more odd, or less. All I know is that I am starting to enjoy being a smelly picketer, even off the picket line, so I've been wearing the coat everywhere. Grocery store? Big blue coat. Daycare run? Big blue coat. Open house at partner's boss's house? Okay, he drew the line and the coat stayed at home. Otherwise, the big blue coat and I go everywhere. The stains on the coat are a steadily growing collection (coffee, chili, channa-wrap skid marks) adding to the coat's rich aroma. I can't smell the fire barrel on myself so I don't care when others turn their head. I wash my hair less frequently, and look greasy. I am no longer anything but a Dirty Picket Captain, walking the line for justice and a paycheque.

These posters can be downloaded from our website for a bit of DIY propaganda fun: 1) Download and print the poster you like the most from <http://yorkisus.org/diy> (or type in individual poster's url). 2) Insert the printed sheet inside a plastic binder sheet protector. 3) Pass a string on both sides through the plastic protector's end holes and tie them. 4) Wear it around your neck and style your striking presence on the picket lines, on the transit, around the dinner table, ...

