

# Defy the injunction! Step up the struggle against layoffs!

Statement of the AUCE Members Against Layoffs, November 10, 1983

Tonight's meeting has raised for discussion a matter long since settled in our Union - whether or not to carry the fight against the July 7 budget and the accompanying legislation. Not only have we already decided to fight this package, the facts of life demand that we must fight! The situation demands that we step up this fight, not retreat from the struggle.

The July 7 budget and the government's legislative program is a component part of the offensive of the bourgeoisie to force the burdens of the grave economic crisis onto the backs of the people. All across the country, in "Conservative" Ontario or Alberta, or in "Socialist" Manitoba or Quebec, the representatives of the rich are bringing down their "austerity" budgets. Under the heading of "restraint", these governments are imposing savage cutbacks in all social services, jacking up the taxes which fall on the workers, laying off great numbers of government sector workers, and attacking the democratic rights of the people. At the same time, these governments are exempting the big corporations from any taxes, and granting them huge subsidies and lucrative contracts. When Bennett spoke to an audience of the heads of the big banks, the multinationals, and big corporate executives in Toronto on October 12, he received a tumultuous ovation for his "restraint" program.

Yes, we want "restraint", but not the sort dictated by the big banks and the trust companies. We want the rich restrained from going on the offensive against the workers; we want the employers restrained from sacking the workers; we want the financial oligarchy restrained from getting another pound of flesh in interest payments on the huge loans borrowed by B.C. Hydro and the other government agencies from the big domestic and foreign banks.

Capitulation to the demands of the employers is a dangerous path. When our Union agreed, in the case of the Laid-Off 10, to waive the seniority provisions of our contract, not only was it contrary to the opinion of our lawyer, it set a bad precedent for the future and the University will use it to their maximum advantage in the months to come. Now, when we are in the thick of an important struggle, some people want to hoist the white flag of surrender. This is not mere timidity. It is actually the position of the rich, the employers, that the resistance to the onslaught of the rich be abandoned. We don't agree with liquidating the struggle. On the contrary, it should be stepped up. Our picket lines should be strengthened, our disciplinary actions against scabs enforced, and we should go all-out to show that we will not be cowed or bent by threats or intimidation.

Stepping up the struggle also includes formulating definite demands for the coming contract talks. Here we think that we should fight for a no-layoffs clause in our agreement, retroactive to January 1. This means that the Laid-Off 10 must be re-instated. This concrete demand is a just and a practical one; it will prove that our union really does stand in solidarity with workers who are unjustly laid off and that AUCE upholds in practice the motto that an injury to one is an injury to all.

The issue facing AUCE is the same issue facing the rest of the workers in the province and across the country: who will pay for the crisis? Will the workers be made to sit in a passive position, like sitting ducks, while the labour aristocracy wheels and deals their rights away behind their backs. The labour aristocrats in the leadership of Operation Solidarity are behaving in the same way our own leadership has been acting. Their mandate was to fight to have all the legislation withdrawn. They paid lip service to this goal, but they are now busy negotiating deals to exempt this or that union from the impact of Bill 3, and thus giving the government a free hand to impose large scale layoffs across the province. The manoeuvres of the labour aristocrats to achieve these exemptions is contrary to their mandate, which was to fight to have all the legislation withdrawn.

Under the signboard of "restraint" the bourgeoisie is putting forth its class interest of shifting the burden of the economic crisis onto

the backs of the working class. Through their manipulation of the leadership of Operation Solidarity the bourgeoisie is trying to force us to accept layoffs as a fact of life. Right from the beginning of the struggle against the July 7 budget the motto of the labour aristocracy in Solidarity was "RESTRAINT, NOT REPRESSION." In this, the labour aristocrats agreed with and supported the demands of the employers on wage cuts and layoffs, and they are now trying to reduce our struggle to how these layoffs will be imposed. This is betrayal, and we will never agree with it!

The working class can never agree that mass unemployment and layoffs are acceptable. We cannot speak of the condition of the working class without taking into consideration the misery and the poverty suffered by the unemployed workers. We can never agree that the only issue for our union is how the capitalists will administer their policy of layoffs.

The University is busy at the Labour Relations Board, getting an injunction to drive us back to work. In considering our response to this, we must not become panic-stricken or despondent, thinking that if the "law" declares our actions "illegal", then all is lost. We should expect that the judicial arm of the state will act to support the executive arm of the state in the state's decisions to attack the workers and strip them of their rights and livelihood. It is, after all, the state of the rich, carrying out the aims and objectives of the rich. Not a book can move, nor a typewriter click on this campus without us, and AUCE workers should reflect seriously on this fact: to achieve any gains in our struggle we must be prepared to fight, and not cave in when the enemy bristles or roars.

In the course of preparing ourselves to step up this fight, everyone who has sentiment to oppose the enemy should speak up. We strongly oppose any attempts to stifle or silence those who are in the front ranks of the fight under some bureaucratic manoeuvre or regulation. Far from doing anything which would weaken our strike struggle, we should strengthen our resolve to carry this fight through.

**DEFY THE INJUNCTION! STRENGTHEN THE PICKET LINES!**

**NO CAPITULATION! NO COLLABORATION!**