

in much the same way it does in other workplaces.

Struggle against schoolwork at university

When we recognize that going to school is work for us, it's possible to begin to understand the various ways we have been struggling both against work and to gain access to some money or a wage for that work.

Our struggle against schoolwork at university also takes on a variety of forms. It involves skipping classes using the same essay for several courses, helping fellow students with assignments.

The avoidance of schoolwork can also be a pleasant love affair, long conversations in pubs with friends, reading the wrong book at the right time and the right book at the wrong time. Those of us who have enough money frequently buy term papers from essay companies.

One of the most tangible results of students' strug-

grades have lost much of their usefulness to employers in assessing job applicants.

School authorities describe this phenomenon as "grade inflation". From our viewpoint, when we struggle for higher grades for less work, we are making a similar struggle for more money and less work is called "wage inflation" by the state.

We students have not only been struggling against schoolwork; we have also been fighting for money in various forms.

In the late 60's federal and provincial authorities were faced with a widespread refusal of university students to pay back their student loans. By 1970, more than 50 per cent of outstanding loans were not being repaid. In this way, students were refusing the discipline and the pressures that a huge debt creates to quickly find a job after graduation.

Since then, student loan regulations have been tightened up to prevent students from simply taking money for schoolwork by refusing to repay loans.

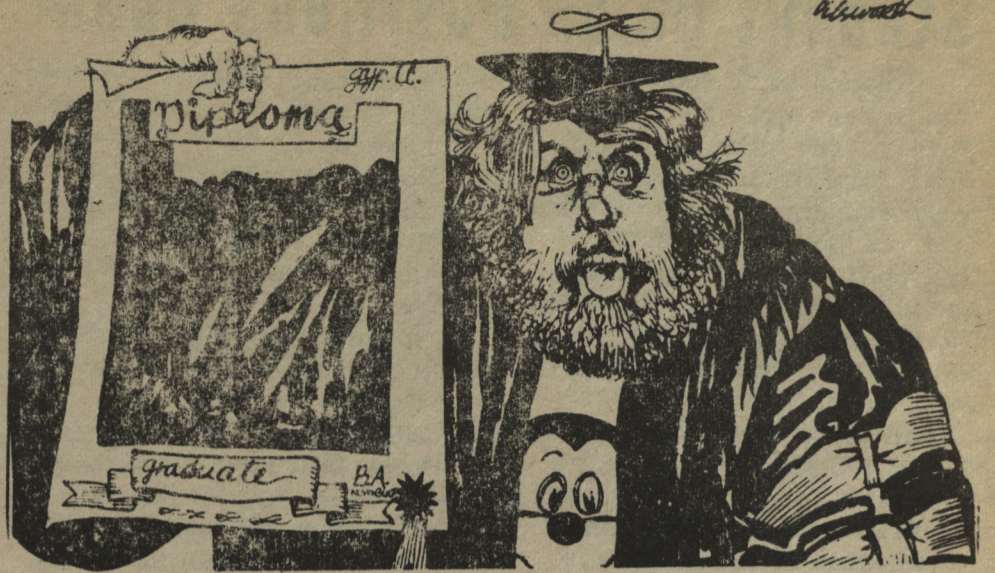
In the last few years, university students have been organizing around how much money they get from the state for schoolwork. In 1976 already there have been large demonstrations of students at Queen's Park, at the New Brunswick legislature and at the University of Calgary over grants and loans.

In a three-week Quebec wide strike by community college students last year, students demanded that their parents income should have no bearing on student grants, and that all students should get a guaranteed annual wage equivalent to welfare for a single person. The fact that even getting welfare would be a big gain shows how little our work is valued at present.

In effect, the Quebec students were demanding wages for schoolwork, without being quite so coherent. It should be noted that community college students in Quebec pay no tuition, so they already had a significant amount of leverage or power to reduce the level of indebtedness that wagelessness usually means for students.

These recent actions by Canadian university students demonstrate that we already receive a form of wages for schoolwork through the grant system.

Other categories of students also receive a



form of wages for schoolwork. Thousands take Canada Manpower Training Programs, and receive a subsistence wage while at school. High school students who leave home can get welfare if they stay at school. Also, the Canadian Armed Forces pay university students to go to school if they enroll in officer training programs.

The difference between all these forms of wages for schoolwork and an explicit wage for schoolwork is that they all assume that schooling is a privilege rather than work, so we should be glad to receive less than welfare and accumulate large debts. When we demand wages for schoolwork, we make clear that schoolwork is a job like any other job, and that we want a lot more money than mere subsistence.

Wages for schoolwork

Although we and other students have been struggling against schoolwork in all kinds of ways, as well as getting some money, our weakness has been the failure to fight for wages for schoolwork in a direct way. When high school students drop out, they are forced by the lack of power that comes with wagelessness to take jobs for the minimum wage (although they seldom remain tied to them).

When we finish university with large debts, our wagelessness forces us to find a job quickly. Frequently we even have to lie about our education in order to get temporary jobs in offices and factories. Our power to date has been built through our refusal of schoolwork and our limited success in getting some money. But we need wages for schoolwork to further develop our power to decide how much work we do at school and whether to take part-time or full-time jobs after graduation.

In this way, we will be able

to take time off from schoolwork without having to feel guilty. Wages for schoolwork will also remove much of the anxiety we experience about having to work hard and perform well in school in order to get a good job.

Wages for schoolwork will not only mean having the power to refuse part-time and summer jobs in addition to schoolwork, but will also enable us to reduce much of our schoolwork.

The idea that we should get wages for schoolwork is not something that fell out of the clouds. It emerges precisely at the time when the state is trying to impose more work for less money on all workers, waged and wageless - through transit fare increases and reduced services, daycare cutbacks, rising food prices and energy prices, and wage controls.

As we examine all the unrecognized and unpaid work we do at school, we shouldn't forget that other workers are struggling to get paid for all their work too. When women, for instance, struggle for more and cheaper daycare, lower food prices, or the availability of safe abortions and birth control, they are struggling over the amount of work they are forced to do.

And now women are organizing for wages for housework - not only in the home, but all the unpaid work they do outside the home too. And when men workers struggle for more money and less work, as they've been doing in record numbers and with "alarming" success in the last few years, they are fighting for wages for all the work they do both on and off the job.

Thus, while the state is trying to get more schoolwork for less money from us, we are not alone in wanting more money, more time and less work for ourselves.

AFTER FOUR YEARS FOLLOWING IN



gle over the past 10 years has been the steady erosion of the grading system. Schools, employers, and the state use the grading system to check the "quality" of the products of the school system. As long as it functions, grading forces students to work harder and compete with each other for jobs or places in graduate school.

Increasing criticism by students of authoritarian learning and the refusal to do a lot of schoolwork has significantly reduced the use of the bell curve, and grade levels have risen steadily.

Now the universities complain that most first year students lack basic reading writing, and mathematics skills, despite adequate grades in high school. Also,