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INTRODUCTION:

Organizing Canada

This section began as a special section devoted to the University of Toronto strike. We began work midway through the strike but as we progressed we quickly realized that it was impossible to consider (let alone evaluate) what was happening in Toronto without comparing it to other sites of struggle--not only in Canada but in the US as well. Initially, Vicky suggested McMaster as a complementary case to Toronto. Then Ellie suggested Queen's and ACCESS 2000. Doug Ivison's posting to e-grad (see the e-mail exchange below) sparked the comparison of US vs. Canadian bargaining contexts.

At the heart of this section, though, are the labor struggles of graduate students at three Canadian universities. Among these struggles, you will find a story of success, a story of failure, and a story of uneasy resolution. Around them, you will recognize a system of higher education tottering toward the slope of corporatization and privatization. These struggles are by no means finished and the story of each university reflects the continuing fight to decide the future of higher education in Canada. We hope that, by reading about these three, Workplace readers, (especially those belonging to the many newly organized TA unions) will find heartbreak and disappointment to identify with, lessons to learn from, and inspiration to take forward.

Finally, there is an even larger picture to these three campaigns that must link this section to another in this issue: the fight against the WTO, the IMF, the World Bank. Education is only one crucial piece in a massive reorganization being undertaken across the globe. In this global shakedown, neoliberalism threatens to "free" the market to align every dimension of human reality according to a corporate agenda--putting profits before people, before the environment.