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## Neo-Liberal Attacks on Labour: A Municipal Worker Strike in a Labour Town

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Labour is the primary target of neo-liberalism. A principled strike in 2009 over post-retirement medical benefits for new hires by Canada's largest public sector union in the labour town of Windsor, Ontario was studied in the local monopoly daily. Three quarters of the reported news on the 101-day strike was anti-union, while the editorials and opinion columns were virtually entirely negative. City administrators could do no wrong, as they stuck to their agenda of privatization and union derogation. Four out of every five articles inaccurately described the City unions as greedy, wasteful, self-destructive, violent or militant. Ironically, the *Windsor Star* reporters are members of the CAW union, demonstrating that newspaper management's prerogatives prevail.

Neo-Liberalism | media | labour | privatization | strikes

### Neo-liberalism Replaces Embedded Liberalism

According to economist Joseph Stiglitz, neo-liberalism is, "this market fundamentalism that underlay Thatcherism, Reaganomics, and the so-called 'Washington Consensus' in favour of privatization, liberalization, and independent central banks focusing single-mindedly on inflation."

Stiglitz, Klein, and others have extensively documented the disastrous results of neo-liberalism on a large swath of mostly Third-World nations, from Chile to Sri Lanka, and from Poland to Russia.<sup>1</sup> Third World adoption of policies dictated primarily by the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank was conditional for securing loans: such as fiscal policies of minimal government spending, tax cuts for the wealthy, trade liberalization which opened markets to foreign investment, deregulation which minimized supervision of corporations, and privatization, frequently, as Klein notes, resulting in fire sale prices for public enterprise.

One shocking example of this is from Russia where the public riches were auctioned off for a fraction of their worth to the new Russian oligarchs in the late 1990s. For example, the massive oil company Yukos, which controls more oil than Kuwait, was sold for \$309 million, but in 2006 earned more than \$3 billion in revenue annually.<sup>2</sup> Another example comes from the so-called "Cochabamba water wars" in Bolivia, where the World Bank indicated it wouldn't renew a \$25 million (U.S.) loan unless La Paz and Cochabamba Bolivia privatized their water utilities and Bolivia halted subsidies. An international consortium including Bechtel Enterprise Holdings of the USA acquired the water rights in Cochabamba for \$200 million, and raised fees by at least 35 percent. Families earning about \$100 per month were required to pay \$20 monthly for water bills. Protests in 1999 and 2000 in Cochabamba and an international email effort,

and a public referendum, led the Bolivian government to end its agreement with Bechtel, and it forced the company out of Bolivia, and ultimately forced Hugo Banzer out of the presidency.<sup>3</sup>

### The Struggle Against Neo-liberalism in Latin America

As disparate voices argue, from Stiglitz and Klein, to intellectual Noam Chomsky, to journalist John Pilger and film maker Oliver Stone, the predatory neo-liberal economic policies ruined the economies of Central and South America, pitching citizens into desperation. More recently, these policies have contributed to electoral revolt and sweeping reform leadership in several countries, leading to a rejection of U.S. hegemony. Sometimes these are referred to as the *Pink Tide* nations, which include: Venezuela, Brazil, Nicaragua, Argentina, Bolivia, Ecuador, Uruguay and Paraguay.<sup>4</sup> In 2009, some of these countries established the Bank of the South as a mutual monetary fund and lending organization. As Naomi Klein noted,

... the IMF, supremely powerful in the eighties and nineties, is no longer a force on the continent. In 2005, Latin America made up 80 percent of the IMF's total lending portfolio; in 2007, the continent represented just 1 percent—a sea change in only two years. 'There is life after the IMF,' [then-Argentine President Nestor] Kirchner declared, 'and it's a good life.'<sup>5</sup>

These neo-liberal policies, as Klein notes, have been extended to Sri Lankan beaches following the disastrous December 26, 2004 tsunami, which saw local fisher beach shacks displaced by tourist hotel havens. In the U.S., cities such as New Orleans were recreated under *Disaster Capitalism*, following on Hurricane Katrina in 2005. This included "contract-city mania." Residents of Sandy Springs, a wealthy Republican suburb outside Atlanta Georgia, decided they were tired of having their property taxes subsidize schools and police in the county's low-income African-American neighbourhoods. They voted to incorporate as their own city of Sandy Springs. In late 2005, residents of Sandy Springs contracted out to the construction and consulting giant CH2M Hill, to build the first "contract city." Writes Klein, "Only four people worked directly for the new municipality — everyone else was a contractor."<sup>6</sup> Neo-liberal heaven.

### Domestic Neo-liberalism

Sandy Springs is one example of what Klein terms, "Hollow Government," which results from privatization. Other examples include the extensive privatization of the invasion of Iraq, using mercenary forces such as Blackwater, as well as contractors such as Halliburton and the Carlyle Group. This ideology of privatized military and defense extended to

domestic policies as well. Klein writes, “The job of the state was not to provide security, but to purchase it at market prices.” She quotes Ken Minihan, former director of the U.S. Security Agency: “Homeland Security is too important to be left to the government,” he stated.<sup>7</sup> From September 11, 2001 to 2006, the Department of Homeland Security “handed out \$130 billion to private contractors,” which was “more than the GDP of Chile or the Czech Republic.” In 2003, the Bush Administration spent \$327 billion on contracts to private companies: “nearly 40 cents of every discretionary dollar.”<sup>8</sup>

### Thatcher and Reagan: ‘The Enemy Within’

As Stiglitz noted, this economic neo-liberalism is closely identified with the policies of former U.S. President Ronald Reagan, and former British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, in the 1980s. In a neo-liberal action, which is seen as defining her prime ministership, in 1984, Margaret Thatcher went up against Arthur Scargill and the National Union of Mineworkers. At the time, coal was a subsidized, nationalized industry, managed by the National Coal Board. Bolstered by her “victory” in the Falklands war, and a popularity boost, Thatcher announced that 20 coal mines would be closed, with 20,000 miners thrown out of work. The strike lasted for almost one year.

Thatcher ratcheted up the pressure by referring to striking miners as “the enemy within.” She continually referred to the strike action as the “rule of the mob.” Scargill, in turn, compared the government’s techniques in crowd control to those of a “Latin American state.” Whereas NUM strikes in 1972 and 1974 were seen as responsible for bringing down the Conservative government of Ted Heath, Thatcher defeated NUM in the 1984-5 strike. The coal industry was privatized in December 1994 to create a firm called “R.J.B. Mining,” now known as UK Coal.<sup>9</sup>

Ronald Reagan intervened in a strike by air traffic controllers belonging to the Professional Air Traffic Controllers (PATCO) union, in August 1981. This incident has been termed, “one of the most important events in late twentieth century U.S. labour history.”<sup>10</sup> Reagan said the PATCO strike was a “peril to national safety” and ordered the controllers back to work. The workers struck for shorter hours, increased staffing and improved wages. Only 1,300 of the nearly 13,000 controllers returned to work. Reagan demanded that those still on strike return to work within 48 hours, or forfeit their jobs. Two days later on August 5, 1981, Reagan fired the 11,345 striking air-traffic controllers who ignored the order, and banned them from federal service for life.

The ban was later lifted by U.S. President Bill Clinton in 1993, but this has been described by Grey (2006) as “a token gesture.” He reports that “only 846 PATCO controllers” of the 11,000 fired by Reagan, have been allowed to return to their profession. The controllers were replaced initially with strike breakers, supervisors, staff personnel, and some military

controllers. The FAA initially claimed staffing levels would be restored within two years; however, it would take closer to ten years before the overall staffing levels returned to normal. PATCO was decertified on October 22, 1981.<sup>11</sup> Grey (2006) writes,

The smashing of PATCO marked a turning point in class relations both in the US and internationally. It signalled the definitive end of the policies of liberal reformism and relative class compromise that had predominated in the post-World War II period and the onset of a ruthless capitalist offensive against the working class that continues to this day.

One month after Reagan fired the PATCO strikers, more than 500,000 workers converged on Washington, DC, in a “Solidarity Day” demonstration — the largest protest ever in the US — to express their outrage and opposition to the Reagan administration. To no avail. According to Grey,

The defeat of PATCO was the signal for a wave of union-busting, wage-cutting and mass layoffs carried out by big business in every sector of the American economy .... The result was a vast decline in the social position of the working class, the destruction of gains won in previous decades of struggle, and an immense growth of social inequality.

### Mulroney, Chretien and ‘Free Trade’

In Canada, early examples of neo-liberalism at work include the ‘free trade’ agreements signed by former Prime Ministers Brian Mulroney in 1988, and Jean Chretien in 1994. These agreements have surrendered Canadian sovereignty over natural resources such as oil and gas, while displacing hundreds of thousands of manufacturing jobs to the southern U.S., the Maquiladora sector of Mexico, and elsewhere.<sup>12</sup> Campbell (2007) studied employment levels and corporate revenues and profits, before and after free trade. He found declining employment and increased profits by the large corporations which lobbied for free trade. Campbell writes that free trade was “an historic watershed” in Canadian public policy, because of its “sweeping new provisions limiting the power of governments,” but also by locking these into an international treaty, ensuring “continental integration.”<sup>13</sup>

In Ontario, NDP premier Bob Rae had little interest in stanching the tide of neo-liberalism, and indeed his *Social Contract* ripped into collective agreements and alienated the Ontario NDP from many of its supporters, during five years in government from 1990 to 1995.<sup>14</sup>

Rae was defeated in 1995 by Conservative Premier Mike Harris, who implemented his “Common Sense Revolution,” an attack on deficit spending which involved cuts to social

welfare programs and health care, tax cuts, freezing the minimum wage for ten years, privatizing Highway 407, deregulation of water testing and cuts to the Ministry of the Environment. Harris introduced “workfare,” and cut welfare rolls by 500,000, leading to an increase in homelessness and poverty.

### Inventing a Crisis in Education

One of the signature moments for Harris’s Conservatives was when Education Minister John Snobelen, a high school dropout, told his senior staff that he wanted to “invent a crisis” in education, to help create the climate for reforms. He described the education system as “broken,” and depicted teachers as overpaid underachievers. He cut \$400 million from education spending in the school system, and another \$400 million from colleges and universities. The press reported,

Snobelen has complained that teachers are overpaid; that school boards waste money on buses and janitors; that the property tax system enriches Toronto and Ottawa schools at the expense of the rest of the province; that the bargaining process with teachers doesn’t work; and that high school curriculum isn’t relevant. Four words, are spoken over and over again: ‘The system is broken.’<sup>15</sup>

Journalist Linda McQuaig wrote in 2003 about the “invent a crisis” incident, saying that it highlighted something important about the Harris government: “that one of its central goals over the years has been to destroy public confidence in public institutions and in government itself.” McQuaig said this apparent contradiction lies at the heart of the right-wing political movement typified by Harris, which “has dominated politics in the English-speaking world for the past two decades.” She described the movement as,

[A]n attempt by the financial elite to greatly reduce the role of government, particularly in providing the wide-ranging set of public programs — healthcare, education, social security, etc. — that became popular in the early decades after World War II.<sup>16</sup>

Harris’ actions provoked strikes in the education sector. In 1995 the Ontario Federation of Labour organized a series of *Days of Action* protests against Harris’ neo-liberal policies, in eight cities across the province.<sup>17</sup> The protests had successful turnouts, reaching 100,000 in Hamilton and 250,000 in Toronto, but did not appear to affect the Harris government’s policies. The OFL originally planned to end the demonstrations with a province-wide strike, but in the end did not.

### Workers Punished For Financial Crisis

The final topic to be discussed here by way of context is the development of the U.S. and global financial crisis, beginning in 2008. As Steinhauer (2008) notes, unions and workers have been blamed and punished for this crisis.

A vital strategy for the survival of neo-liberalism post-crash has been misdirection and diversion. Workers and unions are offered up for blame for the North American auto industry debacle rather than managerial incompetence and short-sighted corporate greed. The U.S. subprime mortgage fiasco is blamed on ordinary working families trying to buy a home, rather than on the unscrupulous larcenous lenders who misled them.<sup>18</sup>

### Critical Discourse Analysis

This study uses a specific type of methodology used for progressive and critical purposes. Critical discourse analysis (CDA) revolves around an idea of normativity which places at its core challenging established power through the texts and discourses central to cultural functioning. Herein, we engender an understanding of the political economy of communication to articulate that which we criticize.

The most succinct detailing of the implementation of CDA comes from Huckin<sup>19</sup> who posits that successful CDA takes into account several readings of the text, both from critical and uncritical perspectives. In his iteration of CDA, Huckin outlines a concrete plan for executing a successful analysis by looking for instances of foregrounding, backgrounding, framing and presupposition among other things. CDA works within and reinforces theoretical notions of the political economy of communication, thus exposing the tendency of the mainstream media to endorse and participate in neo-liberal practices often associated with dominant discourse.

Huckin proposes that a text should be read in a few ways. First, the text should be read from as uncritical a level as possible—in other words, what specifically is the author trying to convey? What are the facts being presented? The next step is to try and imagine how the article may have been written differently. Is there another angle that could have been taken, but was not? Huckin, then, suggests reading the text on a sentence-by-sentence level in order to determine how the article is being framed, what sorts of things are being insinuated or presupposed. Finally, he suggests reading the text on a word-by-word level in order to look for loaded words that may shade the perception of the article.

CDA fits well into the theoretical foundations of political economy given its inherently critical nature, which seeks to challenge the dominant discourses which reflect the media’s central motivation. It works in concert with many political economic-based theories such as the Propaganda Model as

laid out by Herman and Chomsky<sup>20</sup>, which also directly informs this study. Herman and Chomsky's five editorially distorting filters of the media — the size and influence of ownership, advertising as a source of revenue, reliance on "official" sources, flak or negative responses to media statements, and ideology — provide a backdrop for the types of things often found in a comprehensive critical discourse analysis.

### The Current Study In Windsor

The current study examines mainstream media coverage of neo-liberalist policies during a public sector strike. Despite claims of "objectivity" or at least "balance," Canadian corporate media coverage is generally biased against labour unions. This conclusion comes from years of observation and study, amounting to reams of research.<sup>21</sup> As Shane Gunster noted in the context of mainstream news coverage of a teachers' strike in B.C., "... both news organizations maintained their focus upon the strike's illegality and its disruptive effects."<sup>22</sup>

Logically, one would not expect anything different, despite news media protestations to the contrary. Former CBC TV newsreader Knowlton Nash once opined that the news media are "a searchlight probing for truth."<sup>23</sup> But, labour is a significant production cost, and given corporate profit expectations, there appears to be very little probing going on. Ownership consolidation has led to integrated media companies, which are at least well-connected to — if not subsidiaries of — other corporations. Advertising dollars outweigh consumer media spending by a margin of 4:1 or more, and wield heavy influence.

In Canada, as indicated above, free trade agreements, corporate globalization, the 2008 global financial crisis, and a minority Conservative federal government have all been used as clubs to further batter labour organizations with neo-liberal perspectives. In addition, as Murray Dobbin writes in *The Myth of The Good Corporate Citizen*, there was a push for the "free market" in Canada by corporate backers, through the creation of the C.D. Howe and Fraser Institutes, as well as the Business Council on National Issues (now the Canadian Council of Chief Executives), composed of the heads of the 150 largest corporations in the country. Notes Randy Steinhauer, "Rather than a balanced analysis of neoliberalism and globalization, corporate media largely took on the role of head cheerleader."<sup>24</sup>

From the perspective of researchers in the area of critical political economy of media, the neo-liberal ownership, management, policies and other biases of the news media result in them reflecting these predominantly narrow, capitalist viewpoints, at the expense of broader perspectives, in their news, opinion columns, and editorials. These neo-liberal biases result in blatant marginalization and/or stereotyping in news media content. Examples involve not just labour representations, but other cultural groups such as:

visible minorities, women, and the poor. But beyond documenting stereotyping, political economists have also observed that the very nature of how individual societies and even the world operate is hidden from mainstream news audiences, in areas such as the economy, trade, politics, and international affairs.<sup>25</sup>

The current case study examines newspaper coverage of a strike by about 1800 municipal workers in the labour town of Windsor Ontario, in 2009. Casual observation of the coverage indicated that it was quite anti-union. Will a detailed analysis support or refute this?

In spring 2009, two City of Windsor Ontario union locals representing inside and outside city hall workers, members of the Canadian Union of Public Workers (CUPE), went on strike for 101 days. The primary issue was post-retirement medical benefits, which were to be withdrawn from new hires, creating two-tiers of employees. Thus, the strike was "a battle over the principle of intergenerational equality between workers," (Noonan, 2009)<sup>26</sup>.

Windsor is the "automotive capital of Canada," and the famous historical site for the 99-day, 1945 Ford Motors strike which gave rise to the Rand formula. While in the 1970s *The Windsor Star* was a somewhat more progressive, independent newspaper, it has been run in recent decades by the Southam Corp. chain, which was, in turn, purchased in the 1990s by financier Conrad Black, then from him by the Izzy Asper family at CanWest Global, in 2000. In 2010, a group of creditors led by CanWest Global's *National Post* president Paul Godfrey purchased the chain, creating Postmedia News Inc.

Our Critical Discourse Analysis study of a Canadian Newsstand computer population of about 480 CUPE-related *Windsor Star* articles, all of those published in 2009, found the themes below prioritized, to the detriment of the union's cause: (Proportion of all 295 articles, excluding letters, in brackets).

#### Derogatory Themes About Unions in Newspaper Articles:

- CUPE members are 'the other,' and are at odds with the public, while management is 'us.' (36%)
- Negative Discourse: Unions as greedy, wasteful, self-destructive, violent, & militant. (81%)
- Positive Discourse About Management: Which is Fighting the Good Fight. (42%)
- Union Concessions Required: paying too much for too little. (30%)
- Management is willing to negotiate, while Union is stubborn and unwilling to negotiate. (20%)
- Important information favourable to Union buried at the 'back-of-the-bus.' (40%)
- Focus on the impact of strike on the public and local economy rather than strike issues. (40%)
- Focus on strikers' slogans and mundane points rather than strikers' principles. (10%)



- Private sector is good, efficient/Public sector is inefficient, wasteful, etc. (15%)
- Exaggeration of public reaction toward strike: vast majority said to oppose union (20%)
- Focus on CUPE and union members' mistakes, rather than strike issues (15%)

### CUPE members as 'the other'

In the *Star's* version, the dispute was between CUPE and the citizens of Windsor, rather than what it truly was: a dispute between CUPE and *the Corporation* of the city. Thus, CUPE was branded as the "other," while management represented "us," the audience. Also, *The Star* framed city workers as living outside of Windsor, and hence as less interested in the well-being of the community. The workers lived in 'Tax Haven' homes and were indifferent about having to 'bleed the taxpayers of their money,' for this reason.<sup>27</sup>

An interesting example occurred when two neighbourhood residents decided to protest at one union hall about CUPE garbage on the sidewalk. *The Star* gave this front-page play, and declined to mention there were only two protesters. Here, the union is getting some of 'its own medicine.' We identify with the frustrated neighbours because we, too, are tired of the mounting garbage. Here's *The Star's* lead paragraph:

The tables were turned on striking city workers Monday when angry residents carrying protest signs picketed their union hall in the 1500 block of Parent Avenue. The neighbours, incensed at the growing mounds of garbage along the sidewalk outside union HQ, vowed to be back again today, despite copies of a no-trespassing order waved in their faces by CUPE Local 543 president Jean Fox.<sup>28</sup>

The emphasis was often on wage increases and the alleged overpaid nature of union workers, rather than the fact that the Corporation was seeking to eliminate post-retirement benefits (PRBs) for its public sector workers. PRBs were something that was often assumed by the *Star* to be a wasteful expense on the part of the Corporation. They also often bring up other unions and how the 'upper echelon' of the union is simply trying to make an example out of the city and its taxpayers so that precedents cannot be used against other unions who also share 'benefits for life.' *The Star* focused on the head 'bosses' of the union and used them to signify the type of people who are not from the community (infiltrators or outside agitators), and their desire to see it destroyed by allowing benefits for life to continue because they do not understand the community.

### Negative Discourse: Unions as Greedy

Negative discourse about unions, point two above, is the most prevalent theme. Some of the newspaper articles had as many as seven of the above themes. The overall average was 2.89 themes per article, with letters averaging 1.95 themes and other articles 3.48. Furthermore, the union was often portrayed as violent or as potentially violent. As an example, the city of Windsor is the host to many summer festivals that took place during the strike, and when reporting on all of them, the *Star's* reporters assumed the union would be mischievous, disruptive and possibly become violent at these.

The paper even emphasized the need for additional policing at rallies and events. Frequently, public sources were used within the articles who shared the same view of union members as deviants, in order to give an appearance that the community shares these same feelings of animosity, fear of vandalism, violence and more. When addressing the topic of the strike, there was often a misstatement about how the strike began. There were many authors who referred to the strike as being brought on solely by union members, referring for example, to "The strike by union members." What this tells the reader is that the union is to blame for causing the strike, as well as any inconveniences due to the strike.

### Positive Discourse About Management

Mayor Eddie Francis, the leader of the management side, was often portrayed as fighting the good fight for the citizens of Windsor and was made out to be unlawfully maligned in the face of union demands. Councillors who supported Francis's stance were correspondingly regarded with reverence and respect and as 'looking out for the best interest of the public'. This theme was present in far fewer instances than the theme about greedy unions, appearing in only about 27% of the articles, but was almost always accompanied by the greedy union theme when it was present. In doing this, *The Star* suggested to the reader which side they should agree with in the conflict.

Within the articles there was also an angle of victimization used in order to portray the *Corporation* as the victims within the strike. Mayor Eddie Francis was often portrayed as a target and 'martyr' for the city by enduring threats, harassment (against himself and his family) and more. In this way, the workers are again portrayed as villains.

### Union Concessions Required

Throughout the *Star's* coverage of the strike, many reasons were given by its editorial staff and reporters for why CUPE should concede and give in to the Corporation. Routinely, the *Star* would criticize the union in its editorials for being greedy, claiming that workers should not have post-

retirement benefits when so many in the city were struggling to find jobs. The letters to the editor sometimes reflected this bias as well, with angry citizens berating the union for not conceding this apparently lavish collective bargaining reward. The argument the *Star* put forward was: 'so many people need jobs, just shut up and take the concessions or we'll find people who will'. This use of the economic recession to repeal workers' rights is something the *Star* did very effectively, given how many letters to the editor cited these same arguments.

The *Star* appeared content to promote a 'lowest common denominator' mentality, rather than presenting the union's argument that keeping post-retirement benefits would set a precedent and possibly allow such benefits to generalize to private sector workers. Obviously, this approach by *The Star* represents neo-liberal economics, rather than the more liberal Keynesian economics. The latter promotes government spending in hard times, and is how the 1929-39 Depression was ended. The *Star* routinely painted CUPE membership as greedy and overpaid, some editorials even labelling them "rich." All labour initiatives came to be represented as exercises in public relations, while the mayor and management were acting on behalf of taxpayers.

The front-page article below, from July 9th, illustrates how union benefits were maligned, this time from a small business perspective. The second half of the story, which few would read, contained both union and CFIB opinions.

A Canadian small business organization has turned Windsor's 13-week strike by municipal workers into a battleground in its pursuit of public sector wage and benefit cutbacks. Small business owners are "over a barrel" when it comes to paying taxes for public sector costs and services, limiting their ability to survive or expand and hire more workers, says the Canadian Federation of Independent Business.

"They pay heavy taxes at the city level," said Judith Andrew, vice-president for CFIB in Ontario.

The organization has advocated for small business owners for 35 years and has more than 105,000 members across Canada.

"The unions have no concept of the environment we are in. They feel entitled regardless of what is going on in the city, province or country."

CFIB has used local radio stations to promote its stance and issued a letter of support to Mayor Eddie Francis.

"It is not as though this long work stoppage is aimed at improving working conditions for those at an unfair disadvantage," says a letter signed by president and CEO Catherine Swift and posted on CFIB's website.

"Windsor's CUPE workers currently enjoy

contracts which, if described as generous, would be seriously understating the case. Precious few private sector employees can even dream of such rich benefits."

The letter concludes taxpayers are being held hostage by union demands to "retain absolutely out-of-touch ridiculous provisions, such as bankable sick days and benefits 'for life' for present and future employees.

"Providing CUPE members with full benefits (at taxpayers' expense) until their death and the death of their dependents is absolutely outrageous," Swift said.<sup>29</sup>

### Cooperative Management, Stubborn Unions

Whenever negotiations were discussed, the words used to describe the union indicated that the local leaders were stubborn and/or unwilling to cooperate with the Corporation's negotiating team. Even during negotiations, CUPE made "demands" while the Corporation had a "stance" or a "position" and made "offers." This language gives the reader the impression that the union is unreasonable and stubborn while the Corporation is cooperative and trying its best to resolve the issues at hand.

In a June 20th story, the first two paragraphs pointed to the union's 'intransigence':

CUPE leaders said Friday that Windsorites could expect to see an escalation in picket line activity by striking municipal workers and that the atmosphere had become "too poisonous" for talks to resume anytime soon with the employer. Many of those who spoke out at a CUPE membership meeting at the Caboto Club "were adamant that we've been too soft," said Local 82 president Jim Wood, representing outside workers.<sup>30</sup>

This contrasted with the portrayal of the city administration bargaining team, a few paragraphs later.

Thursday's talks broke off in acrimony. The city's bargaining team hunkered down Friday morning at the Holiday Inn in hopes its CUPE counterpart would return. But both union leaders said the atmosphere now was "too poisonous" and they called for the appointment of a new mediator before talks can resume.<sup>31</sup>

A deliberate mention of council meetings and extra hours worked by council members to discuss the strike was reported, demonstrating to the public that their city was working for them, all the while leaving out any mention that union members did extra work as well, on the strike lines, for

example. This framing transmitted the idea that councillors and administration were the ones really working to resolve the dispute, and the union was either goofing off or violent. Combined with the notion mentioned earlier, that the union alone caused the strike, this made it clear who was the bad guy.

### Union Perspectives To The 'Back of the Bus'

In the *Star's* coverage of the strike, important information within stories which was favourable to the union position was often buried at or near the end of articles. Market research and casual observation reveal that few readers go beyond the headline and first few paragraphs in stories. Indeed, the "Inverted Pyramid" format used in journalism assumes this, by leading into the *least* important information with the earlier, *most* important. The July 9th article by Dave Battagello, cited above, is an example.

The burying was most often done when the union or its members were accused of wrongdoing. The accusations and the Corporation's (or sometimes citizen's) responses were placed at the beginning of the article and given much more space to articulate their side of the story, while the union's defence was either buried at the end or sometimes omitted altogether.

Statements were often taken out of context and partial sentences were used to support the stance or framing of the article. Usually only enough was used either to incriminate the union or to demonstrate the writer's disregard for, or dismissal of, the strike itself. The union was quoted within the article but only excerpts were used and those excerpts were usually cut and edited to emphasize the point of view or framing of the author. The article would be about union mischief and the only statement used would be something along the lines of ... "That wasn't us. I've talked to my people, claimed Jean Fox." This allowed for the authors to demonstrate that they were 'balancing' the article, still using and incorporating the statements of the union, but were still getting across *the Star's* perspective.

The normal routine is that an article begins with the position of the mayor/administration/Windsor Star, and sources are quoted to legitimize this perspective. For example, on one occasion, May 26th, 2009, about 25 picketers were reported to have appeared for about 20 minutes at the mayor's home in South Windsor. The headline and first 12 paragraphs of the story expressed outrage that this would happen, and Eddie Francis' allegations that the union had "crossed a line." The story played up the fact that the mayor's wife is pregnant, and that Eddie Francis was in the process of taking his two-year old daughter to (private) daycare.

Mayor Eddie Francis is outraged that CUPE has "crossed a line" by sending striking workers to picket his private residence and the homes of

other council members.

"They can picket me all they want. They can hurl names at me. They can follow me during the entire course of the day," said the mayor with noticeable anger.

"But when you take this to the family home, you've crossed a line (and) I think it's offensive to all of us."

According to Michelle Prince, the mayor's wife, about 25 sign-toting CUPE members arrived on Huntington Avenue in South Windsor around 8:30 a.m. Tuesday, just as Francis was preparing to take his two-year-old daughter Sienna to a private daycare.

The pickets reportedly parked up the road from the mayor's house, then made their way down the street.

Prince said that when her husband saw the marchers, he hurried to put Sienna in his car and left. The pickets made no attempt to stop or delay the mayor.

But Prince said she "absolutely" feels part of the intent of the demonstration was to intimidate.

"If the union cannot get control of their members, and lets them do something as disrespectful as this, it's disgusting," she said. "It will win them no votes in this city. They're losing them daily anyway."

The CUPE members dispersed after about 20 minutes. A Windsor police sergeant arrived a few minutes later, only to find the strikers were gone.

Prince — who is five months pregnant with the mayor's second child — said she was unnerved by the incident, and worried for her children's well-being. "I won't stand for it ... This is my house, my family, and I will protect it."

Prince's concerns were matched by Francis, who said the picket sent a dangerous signal. "It says 'You know what? Family members are fair play, fair game.'"<sup>32</sup>

Even the article headline incorporated the mayor's position: "Pickets target mayor's home; Move by CUPE 'crossed a line,' says Francis." The article then included some defensive comments by a union leader, to the effect that the demonstrators were "very peaceful" and "very quiet," and "They made their point, and they probably won't be back. It's not going to be an ongoing thing." After apologizing if the mayor's daughter was upset, Jean Fox, president of CUPE Local 543 representing inside city workers next alleged that the mayor could have waited quietly inside his house, but chose to try to turn the event to his advantage by bringing his daughter outside. This of course led to a response and more accusations by Eddie Francis. Then we read the following:



CUPE Local 82 president Jim Wood, representing outside workers, said his members had nothing to do with the picket and he couldn't condone it. "I would never have done that ... I wouldn't want it to happen at my house. My biggest fear is that people start dropping garbage at my house," Wood said.

So, here we have quotes selected from one union leader publicly dissing the actions of another striking union leader, and inside workers. Divide and conquer! The story concluded by discussing and quoting councillors, some of whom had been picketed at home and some had not, and then stated that such domestic picketing was illegal, and that police would monitor the situation. An online poll asked, "Do you think CUPE went too far?"

### Impact, Not Issues

The *Star* seemed to mostly ignore (or place less emphasis on) the issues at hand such as what the workers were striking for and why. Instead, the *Star* chose to orient their stories to focus on the impact the strike was having on the public and local economy; on how parents could not take their children to city-run daycare, how garbage was piling up on the streets, how the parks were overgrown and unusable, and how local businesses were suffering because of the lack of tourists who were apparently not visiting Windsor because of the sorry state the city was in.

An example of the focus on impact rather than issues revolved around the annual Dragon Boat races, a breast cancer fundraiser scheduled for a public park area. The race would likely have to be moved owing to uncut grass. Below are the first five paragraphs of the June 25th story.

An organizer of Windsor's International Dragon Boats for the Cure race said he may have to move the breast cancer fundraiser to a new location this year because of poor conditions at Sand Point Park.

Gerry Orum said the untended grass in the municipal park next to Sand Point Beach, where the event is usually held, is simply too long. "That grass there is a foot-and-a-half thick in certain areas. There's just no way that you could lay anything down," he said.

The grassy area normally accommodates thousands of spectators and 100 tents for vendors and dragon boat teams.

Orum attended a meeting Tuesday night with representatives of CUPE Local 543 and Local 82 to discuss the possibility of cutting the grass.

"What we were trying to do was see if they would cut the grass or if we could cut it. They came back and the answer was that they were not able

to allow us to cut the grass nor would they cut the grass," Orum said.<sup>33</sup>

This entire article failed to present a single word of the union side of things, because *the Star* reported, "Neither CUPE members who attended the meeting nor Local 82 president Jim Wood were available for comment." It appears to be common sense that you don't run the story until you get both sides.

Another important aspect to this theme is the way in which the *Star* made the frontline worker invisible. While important players such as Mayor Eddie Francis and local union leaders Jean Fox and Jim Wood were given plenty of column space in stories involving the strike, the frontline worker was essentially ignored. Instead, focus was placed on the impact on the public and the struggling economy which was to blame for the Corporation's need to cut back on worker's rights. Citizens were interviewed ad nauseam about the need for services to return and the toll the strike was taking on them, while the strife of the frontline workers who went over three months without regular pay and are the subject of the cutbacks the Corporation was forcing upon them, are all but forgotten. Rarely if ever are they given voice in the *Star's* coverage.

In doing this, *The Star* belittled CUPE and omitted their very legitimate reasons for walking off the job, while making it seem as though the public was the real losers in labour-management disputes.

Local businesses were the personification of the economy. The emphasis was on how local businesses were being shut down and ruined through the strike. This was usually carried out by first outlining the increasing ugliness of the garbage-strewn city, and the affected services, and then interviewing local businesses so that they could describe the reactions of their clientele or the drop in attendance by patrons.

### Private Good, Public Bad

Present in many of the opinion columns by Chris Vander Doelen, Gord Henderson and others was the idea that no matter the situation, the private sector is good and the public sector is bad. For these columnists, and correspondingly in many letters to the editor, the root problem in the CUPE strike was the apparent inefficiencies in the public sector. Constantly, the *Star* would bring up reasons that the services CUPE members provided should be turned over to the private sector because they would cost less and be more effective for the taxpayers. Besides the fact that there is no real evidence for this being true, the outsourcing of city services to the private sector would employ fewer people and provide less substantial wages and benefits packages to the remaining workers, which is obviously bad for the Windsor community as a whole.

Despite knowing this, financial figures without background

information were tossed about, promising financial savings and taxpayer bliss. The fear of having strikes and garbage would be lifted and the promise that Windsor could join the rest of the carefree private service-owning province was pitched in such a way that the people of Windsor became misinformed about what moving to a private sector firm would truly entail after cost of training etc.

Focus was placed repeatedly on how the private sector could do no wrong and how privatization was the ultimate solution to the bigger problem of labour-management disputes. What these columnists and editors ignored, however, is that workers in the private sector can and do strike, as well. Here are a few examples from early on in the dispute:

- “Halberstadt said municipal employees in Windsor are still paid “well above the scale of the private sector” for similar jobs.” —April 13, 2009
- “The situation is obvious: This municipality is facing devastating private-sector job losses and a shrinking tax base, and public-sector wages cannot exceed what taxpayers can afford.” —April 17, 2009
- “In fact, the Canadian Federation of Independent Business reported late last year that municipal workers are paid 36 per cent more than counterparts in the private sector. That is significant, especially at a time when so many others are receiving modest raises or layoff notices.” —April 17, 2009
- “How does giving a raise to CUPE members stimulate investment? It doesn’t bring new jobs to this community. It doesn’t put the private sector back to work. It simply takes money out of taxpayers’ pockets and gives it to the public sector payroll.” —April 22, 2009
- “While difficult to generalize because of the many different types of employee benefits packages that exist, Mihalo [HR administrator] said she agrees that Windsor’s plan would be the envy of most workers in the private sector. —April 23, 2009
- “... pickets don’t have to worry about their own garbage turning to rancid sludge because they happen to live in tax refuges like Tecumseh which contract out garbage collection to the private sector and enjoy pristine streets and economical service.” —April 25, 2009
- “Public sector employees make on average 36 per cent higher wages than the private sector. Yet, that still isn’t enough. CUPE argues management received a 15 per cent wage hike — wrong in the first place. But, one mistake doesn’t deserves another.” —April 28, 2009
- “For more than 600 CUPE strikers, the ones who voted with their wallets and opted for lower taxes and more efficient services in Tecumseh, Lakeshore and LaSalle, that old adage about having your cake and eating it too, holds true. Their garbage and blue boxes are being picked up, thanks to sensible contracts with private sector firms.” —May 2, 2009

## Article Stance

The “stance” taken by each news article or letter was also measured, on a 7-point Likert scale (item) ranging from 1 as hard-line anti-city administration, through a “neutral” point, to 7 as hard-line anti-union. The intercoder reliability coefficient between the latter two authors was 92% for themes, and 87% for stances, which is very good.<sup>34</sup>

The authors coded 480 articles into four types of categories: News, (46%), Editorials, (4%) Opinion Columns, (11%) and Letters to the Editor (39%). The letters were the “least” biased against unions, with 185 letters, which were 63% anti-union, 9% neutral and 28% anti-administration (Table 1). The 219 news items coded were 76% anti-union, 15% neutral, and 10% anti-administration. The newspaper editorials were 90% anti-union, 5% neutral, and 5% somewhat anti-administration. The opinion columnists were 95% anti-union, 2% neutral, and 4% anti-administration.

There was only one column run in the paper during the whole year, which was moderately anti-city administration, and it was written by Sid Ryan, then the Ontario President of CUPE. Ryan argued that the strike conflict should be sent to arbitration, something that the *Windsor Star* and the city administration vehemently opposed.<sup>35</sup> In all of the articles, there were only two (both letters) which were hard line anti-administration. One of these, on September 17, 2009 stated, “Eddie Francis went to extreme lengths to put his name at the front of this summer’s war on labour. He wanted to take credit for grinding the members of CUPE into capitulation on the issue of PRB’s [Post Retirement Benefits] to further his own political career. His conduct during this dispute was unprecedented in the history of labour negotiations in this city.”<sup>36</sup>

Of course, the letters, which were the least biased, were also the shortest articles, averaging 158 words, compared to 590 average words for news articles, 472 words for editorials, and 757 average words for opinion columns.

Another important factor is the sources relied upon in articles. When we look at the use of sources, we coded up to 12 sources per article. The largest source was the local union leadership, which was quoted as a source in 35% of the news stories and columns. City management, including the mayor, was a source in 25% of articles. City Council members, excluding the mayor, were next, at 16%. Citizens were at 12% while 13% of sources were miscellaneous (such as someone at the provincial Ministry of the Environment being quoted about the garbage piles).

The following quotation from *Star* columnist Gord Henderson illustrates the way sources were often used. As mentioned above, CUPE union members sometimes used ill-advised tactics, which backfired on them. One was to hold a peaceful demonstration at mayor Eddie Francis’ house. *The Star* and mayor were appalled. Predictably, Henderson wrote about this “shameless” tactic of “making life miserable” for “pregnant women” and “tiny tots”:

Little wonder Mayor Eddie Francis was incensed. It's one thing to be painted as Public Enemy No. 1, at least in CUPE's simple-minded take on this dispute. It's one thing to be harassed and vilified everywhere you go. That's all fair game. It's quite another to have your family targeted for the same kind of treatment. 'The signal it sends is that we know where you live. And now, thanks to the newspaper, the whole city knows where I live. And all it takes is one,' fumed Francis. 'Picket me. Call me names. Harass me all day long. But if you've got a beef, keep it with us, not with our families.' Francis told me he appreciated the fact that CUPE Local 82 president Jim Wood refused to condone those actions and said he wouldn't want his members 'bothering people at their houses.' Contrast that with the feeble response from CUPE Local 543 president Jean Fox, who dumped responsibility for this mess on her picket committee and claimed 'they made their point' and probably won't be going back. Point? What point? That they can make life miserable for pregnant women and tiny tots whenever they choose? Shameless.<sup>37</sup>

Here we see how Francis is quoted approvingly. He's protecting his family, a pregnant wife and young child. The columnist agrees with his position wholeheartedly. Next, Jim Wood, the local head of the outside workers on strike is quoted, using five words. He too is reported as not being in favour of his own union's actions. Next, Jean Fox, local head of the inside workers on strike is allowed a four-word quote, and then is slammed by the columnist. This illustrates that being a union source is not necessarily a good thing.

Another example comes from a front-page news story by reporter Doug Schmidt, who wrote more strike articles than any other reporter. Here, we can see the emotional, angry reactions from local union leaders Jean Fox and Jim Wood.

Mayor Eddie Francis's bid Monday to do away with post-retirement benefits for politicians drew an angry response from union leaders representing striking city workers. 'I'm just outraged — (Windsorites) should be livid, absolutely livid,' CUPE 543 president Jean Fox, representing inside workers, said after Francis sought a motion to get rid of post-retirement benefits for elected officials. The city's attempts to get rid of such benefits for future employees is what both sides claim is the sole intractable issue that is keeping the *strike* going. 'You're in the negotiating process and you bring this up here? I think it's unspeakable,' CUPE Local 82 president Jim Wood, representing outside workers, told the

This angry union representation sharply contrasts with the apparently reasoned explanations emanating from Mayor Eddie Francis, in the same news story.

Francis later told reporters the idea to seek a repeal of the post-retirement benefits for elected officials, approved in a bylaw in 2003, came to him earlier that day. He said it was in response to CUPE advertisements and recent union leadership statements asking why such benefits are good for politicians but not for employees. 'We need to remove excuses on why we can't have a deal,' said Francis .... Francis told reporters that council's position remains firm on the 'threshold issue' of post-retirement benefits for new hires, an issue the employer says is a large and growing unfunded liability for future ratepayers that currently stands at close to \$300 million for all city employees. Striking workers account for about 30 per cent of the pension liability.<sup>39</sup>

This finding agrees with other research, for example Greenberg (2004) who notes that it's crucial to look at *how* labour sources are represented in addition to how many times:

[I]t is also important to note that attention to patterns of source access tells us only who gets to speak but reveals very little about *how* these sources speak and how they are represented. Indeed, while labour voices outnumbered government voices near the end of the strike, the coverage revealed far more instances of conflict among teachers over issues about strategy and tactics: should they have gone on strike in the first place and when was the best time to return to work?<sup>40</sup>

### Individual Authors

Finally, for this paper, we looked at the mean average stance for article types and authors. As may be seen in Table 2, all newspaper content was at least somewhat anti-union, while virtually no content was anti-administration. With a maximum of 7, the letters averaged 5.06; news articles = 5.15; editorials = 6.05, and columnists averaged 6.45, which is heavily anti-union. (Table 2). This is borne out when we look at individual Windsor Star writers. Columnist Gord Henderson led the pack with an average stance of 6.87 out of a maximum of 7. In other words, if every column he wrote was strongly anti-union, he would average 7.0 Columnist Chris Vander Doelen was second, with an average anti-union

score of 6.87. The least biased reporting came from Don Lajoie, a more progressive reporter who travels to Haiti and writes special features on the plight of the people there. His average was 4.57, which is midway between neutral and mildly anti-union. But Don Lajoie only wrote seven articles, whereas reporter Doug Schmidt wrote 73 articles, and his stance was mildly anti-union, at an average of 5.1. It should be noted that all of the reporters, as well as the columnists, were at least somewhat anti-union in their writing, with the news writers averaging as high as 6.0 and 5.8.

In total, 80% of all of the Windsor Star material was anti-union, versus 11% which was neutral, and 8 percent was somewhat anti-administration. Although 23% of the material was hard-line anti-union, *none* of the content was hard-line anti-administration (see Table 2).

## Conclusions

The Windsor Star's editor addressed accusations of biased coverage by the Star, after the strike ended, in a column. Editor Marty Beneteau again lashed out at the union, and claimed that his paper's news reports were objective.

The union response [to public anger over the strike] was to slam *The Star*, which Ryan in a speech to union members called 'that rag of a newspaper.' His assertion that 'there's absolutely no impartiality whatsoever' failed to make the distinction between opinion writers and news reporters, people paid to check their points of view at the door. And in doing so he paddled his 1,800 members out on to an island.<sup>41</sup>

Beneteau's advice to the union? "Next time, try learning the difference between news and opinion. Treat journalists with some respect." This is an ironic stance for a man whose paper has been bashing unions and strikers! Beneteau appears to be aware of the fact that the editorials and opinion columns were heavily biased. Recall that there was only one pro-union column in a whole year! But he is oblivious to the bias in the news columns of his own paper, which were 76% anti-union. This is slightly more biased than the letters, but less biased than opinion columns and editorials.

The current study, like much of the academic literature, finds that news coverage was not objective, but rather it was heavily biased against the unions and the strike. News coverage was just *less* heavily biased than columnists and editorials in *The Star*.

Another major issue in the strike was that of arbitration. The *Star's* position was that going to arbitration was an unacceptable solution, prior to and during the strike. Like the city administration, the *Star* said repeatedly that arbitration was an unacceptable alternative. Columnist Gord Henderson's May 30th column was headlined, "Binding arbitration means throwing in towel."

On November 14, 2009, well after the strike was over, *The Star* said in an editorial that: "... arbitrators, trying to please both sides, traditionally give wage hikes that are significantly higher than in the private sector." But the deeper reason was revealed in a single, unique story written much beforehand, on June 13th, by reporter Dave Battagello.

A breakdown of the \$291.1 million cost for retiree benefits shows the largest sum belongs to the Windsor police department at \$86.6 million, or 30 per cent, according to Reidel. *CUPE* Local 543 is next at \$62.2 million or 21.3 per cent, followed by the fire department at \$46.3 million or 16 per cent. *CUPE* Local 82, which represents striking outside workers, accounts for \$34.5 million or 11.8 per cent of the cost and Transit Windsor employees account for \$21.9 million or 7.5 per cent. City negotiators have already taken a run at removing retiree benefits from Huron Lodge nurses, the police and fire departments. But each of those groups do not have the right to *strike* and their contract disputes go to arbitration. Councillors say that fight is nearly impossible to win—unless a new deal with *CUPE* workers provides a precedent. 'The idea is if (retiree benefits for) new hires are removed from *CUPE*, there is a better opportunity to do the same with police and fire down the road,' [councillor] Halberstadt said.<sup>42</sup>

It's quite explicit from this quotation that a sub-agenda here during the strike was for Windsor City Council to use *CUPE* to provide a precedent of sorts for attempting to remove post-retirement benefits from the city police, firefighters, and possibly others such as nurses, as councillor Alan Halberstadt states directly.

Most observers would probably conclude that the *CUPE* workers "lost" the strike. In the end, they conceded their main strike issue to management: new hires would not receive post retirement benefits. The principle of intergenerational equality has been lost. At this writing in October 2010, 14 months after the end of the strike, Windsor City Council has now voted to outsource city garbage and recycling collection to a private Toronto company, beginning later in 2010, or in January 2011. A City Administration report indicated that the city could save more than \$1 million annually through this outsourcing. Most workers in these areas will bump into other positions, but some workers will be lost. The following week, City Council voted to privatize city parking enforcement. Earlier in 2010, City Council voted to completely disband its public childcare centres, leaving child care to private companies, as of September 2010. After waiting for a very long time to announce, Mayor Eddie Francis indicated July 20, 2010 that he would run for re-election in November 2010, although he earlier stated he would not go beyond his



current, second term. A local labour leader threatened to run against him, but then decided against this.

In the “labour city” of Windsor Ontario, the unions are fighting the power establishment, including the media. They are beleaguered by the financial recession, thrown out of work by free trade, and vilified in the local press. The neo-liberal policies of the Chicago School and the Washington Consensus are alive on the streets of Windsor. A conservative City Administration run by Mayor Eddie Francis, the lawyer son of a bakery owner, is openly privatizing and union busting, with the support of a majority of the City Council. In 2009, two locals of CUPE, the largest union in Canada, went head-to-head with the Mayor and — more importantly — *The Windsor Star*. The CUPE fight primarily was for the important principle of “intergenerational equality between workers,” as professor Jeff Noonan put it. The union campaign made a few mistakes, which *The Star* pounced on, exaggerated, and repeated *ad nauseam*. These unionists went 101 days without pay, and many suffered greatly during the strike. Their story has not been told. Their side has had no hearing. Perhaps, like the people of Tunisia, Egypt, and Libya, or Cochabamba Boliva, Venezuela, or Cuba, they will take to the streets and ultimately win their victory.

## Endnote

<sup>1</sup> See also Jeffery Klaehn, “Discourses on Power” in *The Political Economy of Media and Power*, New York, Peter Lang, 2010, pp. 9-48.

<sup>2</sup> Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, p. 280.

<sup>3</sup> This story is told in the Canadian documentary film, *The Corporation*, directed by Mark Achbar and Jennifer Abbott, 2003. See also, Jim Schultz, “Bolivia’s Water War Victory,” *Third World Traveller*, Autumn, 2000; Amy Goodman, “The Cochabamba Water Wars,” *Democracy Now!* April 19, 2010.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Peter Mitchell and John Schoeffel, *Understanding Power: The Indispensable Chomsky*, The New Press, N.Y., 2002; John Pilger, *The War on Democracy*, 2007; Oliver Stone, *South of the Border*, 2010.

<sup>5</sup> Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, p. 550.

<sup>6</sup> Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, p. 507.

<sup>7</sup> Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, pp. 359-60.

<sup>8</sup> Klein, *The Shock Doctrine*, pp. 361-2.

<sup>9</sup> Anonymous, Wales History, “The Miners’ Strike,” British Broadcasting Corporation. Online, August 15th, 2008. [http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/history/sites/themes/society/industry\\_coal06.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/wales/history/sites/themes/society/industry_coal06.shtml) Retrieved February 24, 2011.

<sup>10</sup> Joseph McCartin, “Professional Air Traffic Controllers Strike (1981),” in Eric Amesen, *Encyclopedia of U.S. Labor and Working-Class History*, CRC Press, Boca Raton, pp. 1123-1126.

<sup>11</sup> Barry Grey, “25 Years Since the PATCO Strike: A Historical Turning Point in the Class Struggle,” *World Socialist Web Site*, August 3, 2006. <http://www.wsws.org/articles/2006/aug2006/patco03.shtml> Retrieved February 24, 2011.

<sup>12</sup> See Stephen Clarkson, *Uncle Sam and Us: Globalization, Neoconservatism, and the Canadian State*, University of Toronto

Press, Toronto, 2002.

<sup>13</sup> Bruce Campbell, “20 Year Later: Has Free Trade Delivered on its Promise?” North American Deep Integration Series, Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, Volume 1:2, December 2007.

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<sup>14</sup> For an analysis, see Thomas Walkom, *Rae Days: The Rise and Follies of the NDP*, Key Porter Books, Toronto, 1994.

<sup>15</sup> Patrick Dare and Francine Dub, “Has Snobelen gone too far with changes?” *The Kingston Whig-Standard*, December 27, 1996, p.2.

<sup>16</sup> Linda McQuaig, “Fire Tory wrecking crew,” *The Toronto Star*, September 14, 2003, p. A13.

<sup>17</sup> See Marcello Munro, “Ontario’s Days of Action and Strategic Choices for the Left in Canada,” *Studies in Political Economy*, Volume 53, pp. 125-140, Summer, 1997.

<sup>18</sup> Randy Steinhauer, “Marketing a Myth: the Selling of Neoliberalism,” *The Parkland Post*, Fall 2009.

[http://parklandinstitute.ca/post/story/marketing\\_a\\_myth\\_the\\_selling\\_of\\_neoliberalism/](http://parklandinstitute.ca/post/story/marketing_a_myth_the_selling_of_neoliberalism/) Retrieved February 27, 2011.

<sup>19</sup> Thomas Huckin, “Social Approaches: Critical discourse analysis,” 2000. Retrieved June 8, 2006, from [http://exchanges.state.gov/education/engteaching/pubs/BR/functionalsec3\\_6.htm](http://exchanges.state.gov/education/engteaching/pubs/BR/functionalsec3_6.htm)

<sup>20</sup> Edward S. Herman and Noam Chomsky, *Manufacturing Consent: The Political Economy of the Mass Media*, New York, Pantheon Books. See also, Jeffery Klaehn and Andrew Mullin, “The Propaganda Model and Sociology: Understanding The Media and Society,” *Synaesthesia: Communication Across Cultures* Vol. 1.1 Autumn, 2010, pp. 10-23; John Robertson, “The Propaganda Model in 2011: Stronger Yet Still Neglected in UK Higher Education?” *Synaesthesia: Communication Across Cultures* Vol. 1.1, Winter, 2010, pp 24-33; Jeffery Klaehn, “The Propaganda Model: Theoretical and Methodological Considerations,” *Westminster Papers in Communication and Culture* Vol. 6.2, 2009, pp. 43-58; and Andrew Mullen, “Bringing Power Back In: The Herman-Chomsky Propaganda Model, 1988-2008” in Jeffery Klaehn, *The Political Economy of Media and Power*, Peter Lang, New York, 2010, pp. 207-234.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. James Winter, *Lies The Media Tell Us*, Black Rose Books, Montreal, 2007; William Puette, *Through Jaundiced Eyes: How the Media View Organized Labor*, ILR Press, Ithaca NY 1992; Michael Parenti, “Giving Labor the Business,” in Michael Parenti, *Inventing Reality: The Politics of News Media*, St. Martin’s Press, New York, 1993.

<sup>22</sup> Shane Gunster, “Listening to Labour: Mainstream Media, Talk Radio, and the 2005 Teachers Strike,” *The Canadian Journal of Communication*, 33:4, 2008, p. 661-683. See also, William Puette, *Through Jaundiced Eyes: How the Media View Organized Labor*, ILR Press, Ithaca, New York, 1992.

<sup>23</sup> Knowlton Nash, “The Imperfect Necessity,” *content* magazine, Jan./Feb., 1988, pp. 7-11.

<sup>24</sup> Randy Steinhauer, “Marketing a Myth: the Selling of Neoliberalism,” *The Parkland Post*, Fall, 2009. [http://parklandinstitute.ca/post/story/marketing\\_a\\_myth\\_the\\_selling\\_of\\_neoliberalism/](http://parklandinstitute.ca/post/story/marketing_a_myth_the_selling_of_neoliberalism/) Retrieved February 25, 2011.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. For example, the teachings of Noam Chomsky, in Peter R. Mitchell and John Schoeffel, *Understanding Power: The Indispensable Chomsky*, The New Press, New York, 2002.

<sup>26</sup> Jeff Noonan, “Cyber-Scabbing? Lessons for labour from the



Windsor CUPE strike," Rabble, July 10, 2009.

<http://rabble.ca/news/2009/07/cyber-scabbing-lessons-labour-windsor-cupe-strike>

<sup>27</sup> Cf. Gord Henderson, "CUPE ignoring the economic reality around us," the *Windsor Star*, April 18, 2009, pg. A6; Anonymous, Editorial, "Jobs debate; Let's have the numbers on garbage collection," *The Windsor Star*, Nov. 14, 2009, pg. A.6

<sup>28</sup> Doug Schmidt, "Neighbours picket CUPE HQ; Growing garbage pile irks residents," *The Windsor Star*, Jul. 7, 2009, pg. A.3.

<sup>29</sup> Dave Battagello, "Business group takes on CUPE; Public sector wages, benefits come under fire," *The Windsor Star*, July 9<sup>th</sup>, 2009, pg. A.1.

<sup>30</sup> Doug Schmidt, "Picket-line escalation expected in cupe strike; Atmosphere 'too poisonous' for more talks with the city," *The Windsor Star*, June 20, 2009, pg. A.1

<sup>31</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>32</sup> Dalson Chen, "Pickets target mayor's home; Move by CUPE 'crossed a line,' says Francis," *The Windsor Star*, May 27, 2009, pg. A.1

<sup>33</sup> Frances Willick, "Dragon boats may be next casualty of CUPE strike; Race could change locations," *The Windsor Star*, June 25<sup>th</sup>, 2009, pg. A.3.

<sup>34</sup> We used the formula of Ole R. Holsti, *Content Analysis for the*

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<sup>35</sup> Sid Ryan, "CUPE: Arbitration Not a Four Letter Word," *The Windsor Star*, June 11, 2009, A8.

<sup>36</sup> Jody Percy, "Labour Council Has its Rights," *The Windsor Star*, September 17, 2009, pg. A.9. Letter.

<sup>37</sup> Gord Henderson, "Binding Arbitration Means Throwing in Towel," *The Windsor Star*, May 30, 2009, pg. A6.

<sup>38</sup> Doug Schmidt, "Motion to cut council benefits angers strikers," *The Windsor Star*, June 16, 2009, A1.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>40</sup> Joshua Greenberg, "Tories, Teachers and the Media Politics of Education Reform: News Discourse and the 1997 Ontario Teachers' Strike," *Journalism Studies*, 5:3, 2004, pp. 353-371.

<sup>41</sup> Marty Beneteau [then-editor] "CUPE's Jumbled Message," *The Windsor Star*, July 29, 2009 pg. A6.

<sup>42</sup> Dave Battagello, "A line in the sand; The city has striking CUPE workers in its sights over retirement benefits, but police and firefighters are also feeling the heat," *The Windsor Star*, June 13, 2009, pg. A5.

Table 1

Stance By Story Type

Stance	News		Editorial		Columns		Letter		Total					
	(N)	%	WC (X)	(N)	%	WC (X)	(N)	%	WC (C)	(N)	%	WC (X)		
Hard														
Anti-admin	0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0.0	1	2	788	22	12	193	23	
Anti-admin	6	4	648	0	0.0	0.0	0	0	0.0	0.0	15	8	157	21
Some Anti-admin	13	6	659	1	5	339	1	2	755	15	8	168	30	
Neutral	33	15	364	1	5	551	1	2	430	17	9	126	52	
Some Anti-union	73	33	569	5	24	318	5	9	817	9	5	154	92	
Anti-union	79	36	686	3	14	372	7	13	726	20	11	177	109	
Hard Anti-union	15	7	609	11	52	573	40	73	762	87	47	150	153	
Total	219	46	590	21	4	472	55	11	757	185	39	158	480	
Mean Stance	5.15			6.05			6.45			5.06			5.3	

WC = average word count in articles

