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Quebec : Students occupy Montreal Stock Exchange to protest tuition hike

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Anti-Capitalist Movement On Friday, November 16th, 150 students and supporters occupied the Montreal Stock Exchange at 8am for approximately an hour. An estimated 60,000 students from various universities and cegeps were on strike this past week in order to protest the lifting of the tuition freeze in Quebec, which has been in place for 13 years. Tuition is expected to rise 500\$ over the next 5 years.

L'Association pour une Solidarité Syndicale Étudiante (ASSÉ), representing over 40,000 students from different student unions, organized the surprise action on Friday. Students successfully occupied the ground floor of the Stock Exchange, blocking the doors and elevators with overturned furniture and potted plants from around the building. They refused to allow any employees to enter any area of the building beyond the lobby. Police showed up minutes into the occupation and stationed themselves at all entrances, but did not enter the building. The cops patiently awaited the riot squad (whose response time was unusually slow, likely due to exhaustion from student riots which had occurred the three previous nights), and then held the doors open(!) for the protesters who left around 9am, chanting "la police au service des riches et des fascistes".

The demo then took to the streets, chanting "Whose stock exchange ? Our stock exchange !" and marched to a nearby cegep where a riot had taken place on Tuesday when 102 people had been arrested. They proceeded to re-occupy the building and reinforce the barricades around the school.