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Teachers and Education Workers Stand as One

Ontario Liberals Are Out of Order!

They Must Stand Down!



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Ontario Liberals Are Out of Order!

They Must Stand Down!

Teachers and education workers in Ontario have been trying to negotiate new contracts since before they expired on August 31, 2014, to no avail. They are dealing with a Public School Boards' Association and a government which refuse to follow the rules set out at the start of the process. This is the problem, not the demands of the teachers and education workers.

Since the contract negotiations of 2008, teachers and education workers in Ontario have not been permitted to negotiate a collective agreement free from intimidation and blackmail and ratify it of their own free will.

Teachers and education workers have a right to negotiate their working conditions -- which are

students' learning conditions -- and wages commensurate with the jobs they perform. Government has a duty to uphold that right. It is as simple as that.



Excuses and false pretexts about a lack of funds when millions are spent on self-serving projects and to pay the rich will not fly, Premier Wynne. Only in the boardrooms of the monopolies do such arguments fly, not in the world of Ontario's working people.

Ontario's families have a right to expect that their children will be provided with the best education available in the 21st century. The Liberals' attempts to smash the collective resistance of the teachers and education workers and exhaust them and the parents and students are despicable. The teachers

and education workers comprise one of society's most precious assets. To treat them in such a shabby manner says a lot about what kind of government the Wynne Liberals are, and does not bode well for the working people of Ontario in any way.

Teachers and education workers' fight for a negotiated contract and to affirm their rights is a stand that defends the rights of all and deserves everyone's unreserved support.

*All Out to Support the Teachers and Education Workers in
Their Fight for a Just Settlement to Their Demands!*



Despicable Methods Used by Ontario Liberal Government to Isolate Teachers and Education Workers

Teachers and education workers have been in action politically since 2011 to defend their rights, from helping to force former Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty to resign after losing the Kitchener-Waterloo by-election, to using subsequent by-elections in key working class areas to make a statement against the austerity agenda by helping to ensure both the Liberals and PCs lost.

These actions have shown the Liberals that teachers and education workers are a political force which stands for a society which upholds the rights of all. It was to suppress their initiative and coerce them to accept austerity that the current Premier, Kathleen Wynne, was selected by the Ontario Liberals as leader once the uproar against the anti-social offensive and corruption of the Dalton McGuinty government got too loud and he was forced to resign. In the next election, the method was to present an image of the Wynne government as "progressive" and the alternative to the Hudak Conservatives. This was supposed to



get the teachers and education workers to submit to an unjust dictate.

It did not work. Despite this, during the recent federal election the very same method was used. It was declared that the Liberals stood to the left of the NDP. They would be Ontario's salvation on the issue of pensions and were the alternative to defend health care, education and get infrastructure projects funded and thus create jobs. Wynne became a champion of Liberal leader Justin Trudeau and went out of her way to promote him in Ontario.



Campaign managers for Trudeau's Ontario campaign are said to have come from the Ontario Liberal Party. A concerted attempt was made to make sure the demands of the province's teachers and education workers did not break out into the open during the election. This was a key component of the Liberals' attempts to present themselves as progressive and something Wynne needed to pull off. It now appears that with the election of Trudeau the stalemate has been broken and Wynne feels she has a green light to once again attack. The attack now takes the form of

threats to allow school boards to dock the pay of elementary teachers and support staff if a provincial deal is not reached by November 1.

This dictate will not give rise to solutions that benefit the teachers, education workers, their employers or the students. With Justin Trudeau saying his government will spend billions, why shouldn't investments in education increase, thus ending the campaign to attack teachers and education workers in the name of fighting the deficit? Already billions have been stolen from education since 2011. How can a society justify massive spending on infrastructure -- handing over billions to private construction firms -- which will result in massive corruption, along with handouts to auto and other monopolies in response to blackmail about moving production, but then go after educators as if it is they who are blackmailing the public?



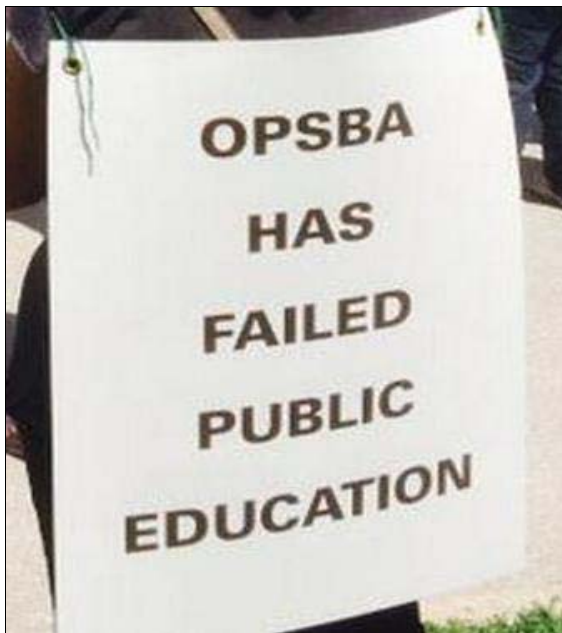
New Round of Blackmail

On October 23, Ontario Liberal Premier Kathleen Wynne announced that she would give local school boards permission to unilaterally change teachers' terms of employment, threatening that teachers could be docked pay if no agreement is reached by November 1. This announcement comes after elementary teachers announced they would begin full withdrawal of extra-curricular activities starting October 28, in order to pressure the government to stop stalling negotiations.

Elementary teachers represented by the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario (ETFO), support staff represented by the Canadian Union of Public Employees (CUPE) and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF) are the three groups that have not ratified a provincial agreement, the first step towards a full collective agreement. Collective agreements include a local agreement between the local union and the local school board as well, which also need to be finalized once a provincial agreement is reached. In many cases the local negotiations are ongoing while provincial negotiations are taking place.

During the federal election, the Wynne Liberal government along with the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) deliberately refused to negotiate in a serious manner or even

respond to proposals from ETFO. ETFO filed a complaint with the Ontario Labour Relations Board alleging the government and OPSBA were negotiating in bad faith. This brought the government back to the table. However things only got worse, in particular after the Thanksgiving long weekend, when advance polls for the federal elections closed.



Abruptly, on October 14 two days after advance polls closed, OPSBA issued a public press release stating the areas that the three bodies have agreed to and the areas that appeared to be sticking points, in a clear attempt to bring public pressure onto elementary teachers. The government and OPSBA knew that this would provoke ETFO, given that ETFO has refused to negotiate in the media and has routinely told the government that it would not do so.

This media stunt was fishy given that all sides indicated negotiations were progressing. It appears that the fix was in for the Ontario Liberals to stall negotiations during the last leg of the federal election in order to prevent teachers from going into action province-wide. This would have exposed the Liberals' attacks on public education

and brought to the attention of all that they are not in fact "progressive," as they claim.

Now that the election is over, the Liberals have unleashed a new attack. That the Wynne government is blackmailing teachers and education workers to submit to concessions with the threat of stealing their pay, despite the fact that they are carrying out their teaching duties, shows how low it can stoop.



Organized Campaign to Put Unions on Defensive

Another line of attack from the media on teachers and education workers has been to present aspects of deals negotiated with the other unions as spurious, or secret deals with the government to screw taxpayers. In particular on October 21, two days after the federal election, the *Globe and Mail* published a story that attempted to paint lump sum payments to the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation (OSSTF), Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association (OECTA) and l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens (AEFO) as bribes. The story sensationalized these as secret payments to create an air of back room deals. In fact the sums were not at all secret to the tens of thousands of members of the unions who reviewed the tentative agreements their unions signed with the government before ratification.

The lump sum payments of \$1 million to OSSTF and OECTA and \$600,000 to AEFO were negotiated in order to cover a portion of costs associated with provincial negotiations imposed on the unions by the government through new provincial bargaining legislation. The legislation essentially mandates a second tier of negotiations, in addition to local negotiations, so that any issues relating to money are negotiated between the provincial unions, and the government and the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA).

The process is aimed at usurping local decision-making by local unions and school boards,

creating instead a centralized arrangement whereby the province can impose its neo-liberal austerity agenda in education to steal funds and privatize in a very efficient manner. The government itself has pointed out that the process has been drawn out, although it does not admit that it has been the one drawing it out. In this first round of negotiations under the provincial bargaining legislation, every single collective agreement across the province at the local level also has to be rewritten to incorporate new provincial terms. This requires many hours and meetings so that unions can ensure that the boards or governments do not pull fast ones in the editing of new contracts.

The unions have responded to the attempt to usurp local decision-making through provincial bargaining by keeping their locally elected officials in the loop during the provincial negotiations, which means bringing them to Toronto for days at a time during the negotiations. OSSTF established working groups from the two main areas of bargaining: teachers/occasional teachers and support staff. They also brought together all locally elected presidents and chief negotiators to review and approve tentative agreements. This is all on top of the local negotiations that are taking place now.



The costs of transportation, food and lodging alone could easily wipe out a union's funds for negotiations, which are also still required for local negotiations and strikes, if they should take place.

Teachers and education workers have bitter experience with how governments can draw out negotiations or strikes to drain the unions and those on strike of funds, in order to exert their will. This was the case with the teachers in British Columbia. Thus, a mechanism to balance the negotiations in a manner that does not facilitate the elimination of locally elected officials, is being misrepresented as a sort of scam or bribe or other crooked activity in which the unions are involved. It is of note that no significant mention is being made by the media or government of the likely millions of public dollars the government has wasted on renting out whole floors of hotels rooms and paying for food for its officials as it stalled negotiations since last summer. This is not considered a scam that goes along with other scams to degrade the quality of education in Ontario and privatize it in the name of deficit reduction which the Liberals are pursuing with a vengeance.

The unions are being accused of negotiating a "secret deal" or scam of some kind because they are attempting to limit centralized provincial takeover by demanding the government pay for a process it imposed. The disinformation and phoney discourse around the funds negotiated by the unions to offset costs of negotiations is aimed at putting the unions on the defensive in order to get them to accept the degradation of working conditions, which are students' learning conditions.

The government, the official opposition in Ontario, as well as the media are in cahoots to break the support of the people of the province for teachers and education workers. It must not pass!



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