

HILTON-O'BRIEN: Labour, Protest, and Elitism

September 16, 2023

Everyone rolls their eyes about political hypocrisy, but you seldom see it so naked. That's the case with the [Ontario Federation of Labour](#) (OFL), which is planning to counter protest against the Million March for Children on Wednesday.

The arrogance is breathtaking: how do they go from talking about the labour issues of their members to some sort of ideological social crusade?

It's a neat inversion of the traditional role of labour unions in North America. Traditionally, unions grew up to support people like the organizers of the Million March: working class, mostly immigrants, who were exploited by the entrenched interests of those more powerful than them.

However, the spokesperson for the OFL is a well-to-do, very educated-class Canadian bureaucrat. The organizers of the Million March are working-class immigrants. The OFL is attacking the people that it was created to help.

There are so many questions about how the OFL can get to a position where this decision makes sense to anyone, regardless of how deep they are in the hellish echo chamber of union management. How can the OFL possibly justify being against parents, when they supposedly represent working-class people with kids? Whose interests are the OFL representing, if not those of workers?

The answer, of course, is that the OFL does not really represent that kind of worker. From the beginning, there was always a division between "trade"

unions representing workers with specialized skills, and industrial unions, representing less-skilled workers. The trade unions were always more monied and powerful, and their members needed less protection than the labour unions did.

OFL mostly represents an order of employee even more genteel than the trade unions: its most significant members are public sector unions. From the point of view of an actual labour union, they might as well be representing management.

On that score, the OFL is representing a significant number of its members. And it is representing a class of worker whose jobs really are at risk. [We've overproduced elites](#). A lot. And an astounding number of them work in the public service, whether for the Ontario government, or in school boards, or in large corporations. Lacking any sort of productive capability, they have used advocacy to create a class of jobs involving telling other people what to do. They collect six-figure salaries as Diversity, Inclusion, and Equity consultants, at various levels.

These folks don't just work in DIE departments, of course. They also work in school boards, teaching about Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity, or teaching mandatory workshops on Critical Race Theory. Many of them are funded partly by government grants, like the folks who recently bullied a respected Ontario principal to death.

Their jobs are constantly under threat: at some point, someone is going to notice that, for instance, they

contribute absolutely nothing to helping kids master mathematics or actual hard science. In fact, most of them can be replaced by buttons that don't work. As a result, they are highly motivated to become officers of public service unions — and compete for the top spots in the OFL.

So make no mistake: the OFL is not at all disconnected from reality here. They are firmly grounded in reality. They are representing the interests of what they regard as their most critical members.

The problem for the rest of us is that the most influential members of the OFL are in fact social parasites. They regard the productive members of actual labour unions as definitely second-class citizens, separated from them by a vast gulf of race and social class.

That's why the OFL is doing what they're doing: for them, it's realpolitik. They're representing the most influential, wealthiest workers, against the interests of the poor ones. The racist optics — the fact that the organizers of the Million March are largely immigrant Muslims — does not even occur to them, for all their trumpeting of inclusivity. The union association is motivated by money and power — when nip comes to tuck, ideology is a meal ticket, not a meaningful commitment.

For members of sexual and gender minorities, this should give pause. The OFL's commitment to them is no more solid than their commitment to grassroots workers, or to immigrants or religious minorities. The OFL will cast aside sexual and gender

minorities the moment that they can gain money or power for themselves and their more influential members. Nobody needs a champion like this.

It isn't just the OFL, either. We are looking at a corruption at the heart of our political class, that expands beyond the sphere of labour and into

our bureaucracy. Groups like OFL are elites, who disdain the good of anyone else. God help anyone for whom they pose as champion.

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