

# Letters from our readers

21 September 2013

On “New York Times on Syria: All the propaganda fit to print”

A “Limerick to the Editor” carried in the central *Oregon Weekly Source* journal (Sep.12, 2013), regarding Syria:

*Another concocted attack  
Like the lies that ignited Iraq  
Shows it's just as we fretted  
Barack's George Bush retreaded  
If you think things have changed  
you're on crack*

The editors awarded it “Letter of the Week!”

This is not unencouraging. And a total rejection of the *New York Times* propaganda.

Randy R

Oregon, USA

18 September 2013

On “Wall Street celebrates Fed decision to maintain pace of money-printing”

I think we should be asking how and why the two big stunning surprises of the past week might be connected. Is the unexpected delay in the US war to remove Assad from power in Syria connected to the unexpected delay in paring back quantitative easing?

Brian

Florida, USA

19 September 2013

On “*Regent Park: A symbol of Toronto's housing crisis*”

Thank you, Dylan, for your wonderful article. I work nearby and see daily the pictures of urban decay you showed in the Regent Park area of Toronto. You put to lie, thankfully, the false belief spread about our supposedly “most livable city in the world”. Our present mayor of well-deserved international derision is not an anomaly in a “progressive” city, but the true face of its rednecks put to good use indeed by developers who loot and destroy wonderful communities, for instance the area around where you took your pictures.

This place was Cabbage Town for the Irish poor once,

and there are many with deep roots to that era who still gather daily hobbling on crutches, pushing walkers, hauling their sore bodies and buddies to a small place by the monstrous block-long condominium dominating the area like the castle had houses with thatched roofs. The condo dwellers clearly never set foot out the door.

Your loss, foolish bourgeoisie, threatening wondrous Hallal groceries, Afghan and Tamil restaurants, mosques and Hindu temples, stores selling African beauty products, all that makes a community a community—serving people's material and emotional needs at once, the latter as important as the former. By contrast, I leave and return from my apartment in a high rise of a plush neighborhood among fearful people ignoring each other, my neighbors.

I know the place where you took pictures, love it dearly, so that it tears my heart to see what is being done to its people who are so varied, linked only by poverty, and more important, the deep need we all have to give and receive help when we have no financial resources and face hard times.

Although I am suspicious of organizations that purport to help the poor, I see first hand the work of the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty and like very much indeed that you gave due credit to the organization with an anarchist direct-action bent which John Clarke put together, even though clearly you are not in political agreement regarding strategy and tactics.

It will be remembered that the vicious Toronto cops first tested their new crowd control tools on the Big Unions and John Clarke's wee group. There are pictures of Ontario's unions thinking they have their former place in the world, their members lying prostrate before the Ontario Legislature, the boots of cops stepping on workers, sharp shooters on elevated platforms standing by, police cameras whirling. The Big Unions, true to form, got the message and pointed their rear end to the sky, their muzzle to the ground, never holding such rallies again. They got a lot smaller, now staggering about like the drunks in Parkdale trying to lean on each other,

peeing in their pants and on their constituents.

Not so John Clarke whose anti-poverty demonstration was similarly broken up at the turn of the century. For months after, the OCAP leadership was targeted in courts, Clarke not allowed to go near the Legislature which is at a corner of downtown that is the hub of the transportation network. Among the first of the principled people targeted as “terrorist”, he deserves recognition.

Only last year, one of their number, Gaetan Heroux was fired from his position in a street-health organization which attempted to move his office to suburban Scarborough beyond the reach of clients dependent on him. I saw him sitting issuing whatever he was issuing to a line of the poor before he was fired, then to cheer my troubled and cowardly heart in bad times, he was putting up posters in his own defense using a bucket of glue against the walls of my own place of work.

Surrounding him were Toronto cops who have clearly been watching those vicious cop shows where intimidating and humiliating the poor is entertainment, a very old art form of filthy money from the dawn of capitalism onward. Gaetan, my hero, calmly completed his task and walked across the street against the traffic and proceeded to do the same in full sight of an inspired crowd of young people.

“What are you smiling about?” said a cop to a kid looking on in that surly voice which is surely a part of their training. “You”, the kid said. This loss of fear of the cops everywhere is a startling change. I see it daily when harassment becomes an opportunity for street theater different from OCAP’s, but politically, no offense meant, more important. The kids long ago lost their respect for authority, but losing their fear is new, and the street theater many put on when they are harassed is very encouraging.

AL

Toronto, Canada

7 September 2013



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