

Letter To The Editor:

Dear Editor:
 Mayor Ashe (Pickering), in his December column, is wrong to assert that the proposed introduction of the Municipal Accountability Act 2024 will strengthen municipal governance, and that public trust and confidence in accountability and transparency will be enhanced. Phrases such as critical tools, and stronger enforcement mechanisms, require explanation as to what those tools are, and how those mechanisms would work. If legislated, this Act will most likely facilitate unelected bureaucrats and Integrity Commissioners, as well as politicians, to remove an elected councillor from public office without the input or consent of the people. "Disruptive and potentially harmful behaviours" is very subjective and can easily be misused to intimidate peers. And how is "potentially harmful" assessed? As an example, if a councillor objected to a faulty development proposal, that could be seen as harmful to the developer, however, the objection may be in the communities best interest.

At Pickering council table, the mayor frequently interrupts and silences Councillor Robinson like a playground bully. Most recently, the mayor rudely interrupted and disrupted a delegate from giving his presentation to council. The "pot calling the kettle black" comes to mind. Furthermore, the purported investigation by the Integrity Commissioner into the seriousness of alleged harmful behaviours by a Pickering councillor toward another, was supposedly "unfounded and untrue." Was the report made public? If not, where is the transparency and why the secrecy?

Effective leadership is achieved when the democratic process is respected, and informed debate is encouraged. When open discussion is curtailed and opposing viewpoints are quashed, we are on the slippery slope of restricting free speech. Pickering council is already on that slippery slope as a result of the amendments to Pickering's procedure bylaw which severely limits public engagement in council chambers.

Politicians, bureaucrats and Integrity Commissioners who support the Municipal Accountability Act 2024 ought to be confident that they themselves are squeaky-clean. Within Durham Region, members from these three groups have publicly demonstrated double standards in their respective roles. A lesson can be taken from the Old Testament Book of Esther where Haman, the king's closest aide, became arrogant and plotted to kill a palace official who refused to pay homage to him. As punishment, Haman plotted to kill the official and annihilate his lineage, the Jewish people. Word about Haman's plot reached Queen Esther and she risked her life to expose Haman's plan to the king. When Haman realized the gravity of his situation, he begged Esther to save his life, but the king witnessed his pleading and ordered Haman be put to death in the same manner Haman had intended for the palace official. To this day, the Jewish people celebrate Purim in recognition of Esther who saved her people. The moral of the story is not to allow arrogance, pride or vendetta to shape your decision making lest you be found wanting.

Sincerely, Sharon Dodgson-Smith

Dear Editor:
 No matter what municipality you live in across Canada, you are very likely experiencing & being subjected to the same woke, tyrannical and censorial unlawfulness that those who live in Pickering, Ontario are under their current Mayor and Council.

Providing that we are able to garner enough public support, we will be filing a federal lawsuit against The Corporation of the City of Pickering, the Mayor, the CAO, Integrity Commissioner and all City Councillors who have aided & abetted in violating The Charter of Rights and Freedoms, Human Rights, and potentially even Criminal Code violations. If successful, which we believe is a slam dunk, we will set a legal precedent that would be applied and enforced to reign in ALL municipal governments, Mayors, politicians and city officials/employees Canada-wide.

It's very important to remember that these city officials work for us, not the other way around as they would have us believe. They simply cannot be allowed to intimidate their constituents into silence. Their obligation is to the will and wishes of ALL the people, not just small groups of radicalized activists who support their woke policies and agendas in order to get their own way.

Help us take this fight to the Courts, by doing nothing we are complicit in their tyranny and providing them with free reign to arbitrarily rule over us however they see fit, nothing changes unless we all work together and take action. It's time to put these petty tyrants back in their place!

We'll do all the leg work and heavy lifting, but we need your help to pull this off. Donations to our legal fund can be made right here on our official GiveSendGo page. We are however well aware that times are tough right now, so if you are unable to help financially we totally understand, but if that's the case, please at the very least share this lawsuit and message with as many Canadians and on as many SM platforms as you can.

Thank you for your support,
 Shaun & Team

Dear Editor:
 I normally do not write to newspapers. But I just have to. What is going on in Oshawa. I was driving downtown and my daughter screams from the top of her lung. "LOOK MOM", as I turn there was this young woman right on the side walk squatting and taking a dump. I had to double take. WHAAAAATTTTT. I can hear the excuses... Oh she is on drugs.... Oh she has a mental health issue....

I was as shocked as my daughter. What is going on Oshawa. Our elected officials and or police are not doing anything about it. This scares me. We looked at each other in total shock. Someone please do something. This is not expected in Canada.

Audrey C. Oshawa

Dear Editor:
 It appears that we are seeing police more and more. The other day I was at the Mall in Pickering. Out of no place. Five police cars appeared. Police jumped out and arrested some individual. Now I don't see nothing wrong with that. What caught my eye was that the police looked as rugged as those they were arresting.

What ever happened to standards at the Durham Regional Police. Does the police not have standards when it comes to uniforms?

I looked at one officer he had worn out black pants... his shirt looked like he slept in it and it was faded. he wore running shoes and a baseball cap. He looked like a thug.

Another, had a scruffy beard, His shirt was faded and he just did not look like someone that would radiate respect and or authority. If I had not seen him jump out of a police car. I would have sworn he was a pretend cop.

I travel the world and see how other police dress across the globe. I feel like Canada is becoming a third world country. We have no standards and no real pride in our job.

Frank Beaverton, Ajax

Dear Editor:
 I have been watching the attacks on Lisa Robinson. The Mayor of Pickering should be ashamed. To attack a woman. To deduct pay during Christmas. Shame, Shame, Shame. Heather T. Pickering



What Would You Say This War Is About, Tom Knapp?

by Thomas L. Knapp

More than 40 years after its release, an exchange in the opening scene of Warren Beatty's Academy Award-winning film Reds floats to the front of my mind whenever I think about war.

Master of Ceremonies: "I, for one, see no reason why we here at the Liberal Club shouldn't listen to what Jack Reed has to say. What would you say this war is about, Jack Reed?"

Reed, standing, looking a bit confused and annoyed: "Profits."

The one-word answer, while correct -- Reed, as a staunch Communist, held to some fairly silly ideas on economics -- was also incomplete.

World War One was indeed about profits. It was a clash of declining empires: Empires purpose-built to rake off a share of profits, taken by imperially protected business enterprises from colonized places and peoples, for the benefit of the imperial political classes.

World War Two largely killed off the old empires, but created new ones for its victors, the US and the Soviet Union.

Eighty years later, the declining remnants of THOSE two empires (and even smaller European remnants of the imperial age) rage against the dying of their light, scrapping over territory and the attached profits in the Middle East, Africa, the Americas, and, of course, Ukraine.

Nearly three years into the second phase of that war (the first phase involved the 2014 secession from Ukraine of, and subsequent "frozen conflict" over, Donetsk, Luhansk, and Crimea), I've still got friends who want to believe the war is over "democracy" versus "authoritarianism," "protecting ethnic Russians from literal Nazis," etc.

In fact, that war is, and always has been, about whether poor, politically corrupt -- but resource-rich, and geographically located in ways that maximize its strategic importance -- Ukraine will go forward as the US/EU/NATO imperial satrapy it became in 2014, or revert to its former status as a Russian imperial satrapy.

In other words, it's about profits for Rome on the Potomac versus profits for Constantinople on the Moskva.

An odd bifurcation: Whenever I point this fact out on X, I'm accused of being "pro-Russia." Whenever I point this fact out on a site where I frequently comment, I'm accused of being "pro-US/EU/NATO."

But I'm going to stick to my guns -- pardon the militaristic turn of phrase -- on this one. There are no "good guys" at the policy level here. The only moral principle at stake is whether it's acceptable for imperial gangs to murder each other's colonial serfs to benefit their own political classes.

I say no, but hey, that's just me. Your mileage may vary. If it does, and if you think you must take a "side" in this war other than the side of peace, at least be honest with yourself about what you're supporting.

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