

GLI Newsbreeze Toronto January 29th

Defying Narcissism

I have been getting some more hostility directed at me over this newsletter. I am not overly worried about this because I am getting many more compliments about it. I have had some verbal discussions with some one who does not like this. It soon became clear that this person's real problem is fear of the truth.

I have done numerous newsletter type publications on several topics for several different groups. I have also done some web sites and so on. I usually get praise for them, and almost always attacks and criticism. Some of my efforts have lead to aggressive counter efforts to stop me from putting the publication out, some of which crossed the line into criminality.

The object of this is to draw for people a clear picture of the realities around organizing a serous Basic Income or Income Guarantee movement, from the perspective of central Toronto. There will always be people who cannot stand their own reflection. But if this newsletter is to be worth anything, it has to reflect truth.

I am not going anywhere. I am going to be looking closely at all income guarantees related activism, and participating in it, and initiating a lot of it. Anyone who tries to obstruct or intimidate me in any way from doing so is going to end up a very sorry individual when the tale is told.

=====

Thursday 26th at HSAG

Considerable time was again spent on debating a name for the group. The group has been around under that name for about ten years and so there is little urgency about this. It seems somebody has found that "SHAPE" is already taken.

Some are concerned that discussion of the name reduces the prestige of the group, making us look like we cannot even decide on that. I tried subtly suggesting the whole subject be dropped. Perhaps some totally neutral and cryptic name could be used, as with the "Cool Breeze Under the Shady Tree" group I recall from some years back. I will explain this further in my analysis of the HSAG group.

We got into some discussion of BICN. Some feel it is not true to its beliefs and does not give good leadership to a BI movement. It is stated that their definition of a Basic Income is good but they are not consistent in supporting their own definition. They have a very bad communications strategy.

The HSAG group is designed to involve itself in campaigns as it sees fit. Some worried about the usefulness of expending much effort on the BI movement. Someone thought a BI was not going to happen in our lifetimes. But others thought that a change could happen suddenly, when a tipping point is reached. It looks right now like we are getting close to a tipping point.

The buttons seem to have been dropped as a topic. But someone wanted to know when we are going to get out and distribute the leaflets we spent some months designing.

There was an announcement of a meeting the next day on the concept of a "Degrowth Economy" That is a topic that comports closely with an income guarantee; we need to get away an economy which requires perpetual growth. That is, one that depends on interest rates. Alas, I was not able to get to that one. I hope someone did make it and took some notes.

HSAG will be focussing for the next little while on supporting the TTC riders campaign around the city budget. Especially, with the need for a low income transit pass.

=====

An analysis of HSAG

I have some experience of working with groups of marginalized people looking for some way to improve their situation. Generally, they do not have the resources and skill needed to have much effect outside their own neighbourhood. They are always troubled by social work types who want to run them and use them as "foot soldiers" for whatever causes they are allied with.

For many years I was involved with a group in Regent park. They undertook actions in support of other groups when it suited them. But mostly they focused on helping each other. They operated a food banks for members. They served a very nice meal a couple of times a week. They got together to play games and talk about things.

They came to be subject to a lot of harassment from the social work types upstairs at the old Christian Resource Centre. They were protected by some other of these social workers, but there was great indignation that the group did not want to be run by social workers. It required a considerable campaign in order to have one of these social engineer types ordered to stay away from this "Roomers rights" group whenever it was using the basement of the old CRC.

Originally the group was formed by some roomers in the neighbourhood around Regent Park. It was driven out of other meeting places and began to use the basement of old CRC. It came to be composed of residents of Regent Park and some from social housing complexes near it, such as me.

The roomers were gradually shoved out of the neighbourhood or found other avenues for self help and action. Many social housing residents needed some haven from the relentless efforts of Toronto Housing's social work / social police types to keep us under control. As a symbol of defiance against all these social work types, they finally adopted the name "Cool Breeze Beneath the Shady Tree".

This really pissed some of these control freaks off! Gradually, CBBST's activities were restricted. It was decided that Valda's cooking was unsafe and she was restricted in what she could prepare. We were forced to serve some loutish people at the food bank who kept grabbing food and causing fights, and this was used as an excuse to nix the food bank.

I was not around to see Cool Breeze finally peter out. I was transferred out of the neighbourhood. Around that time the redevelopment of Regent Park began. The old CRC was torn down and rebuilt. Many Cool Breezers were transferred to Scarborough during redevelopment; the biggest "troublemakers", the furthest out.

I look at HSAG through this lens. What is missing is one or two dynamic leaders like Cool Breeze's Rose and Valda. The HSAG people should be focussed on looking after themselves first, and become involved in campaigns only in aid of causes that really affect their interests.

I am puzzled as to why the social workers there are allowed to run the meetings and set priorities. Further, as to why meetings should be cancelled just because they are unable to show up. No, actually, if you have studied the way the "social police" in Toronto opera, it's not much of a mystery.

A group like HSAG could be a good "collective impact" type of ally to a serious GLI movement when one finally gets going in Toronto. A GLI group should try to have such an ally in every area of the city, and help as much as possible to keep them independent from the social police network.

=====

I have already read Graeber's book, **"History of Debt"** I am glad it has come out in this form so more people have access to his ideas. They are essential to arguing for a Guaranteed Living Income on a sound basis.

It provides refutations to false ideas about funding social programs, the nature of money and taxation, the pseudo-philosophical idea of "reciprocity", and the real nature of "work".

You can't solve the problems of the post capitalist era with the thinking of the past century. GLI comports with post modernism; looking at the way things were before the present age to find out how to make the world work as the age comes to its close.

<http://linkis.com/www.bbc.co.uk/progra/TTZDY>

=====

The consultations on BI pilots are winding their way to an end. The **“Put food in the Budget”** people have done good work. Some more videos of people delivering their “resolution” at these events.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VIEa6JVIF6c&feature=youtu.be>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CsFSntainjg&feature=youtu.be>

The message is still; you go and have your “pilot” but the rates for OW and ODSP recipients must be raised immediately.

However, it seems that all consultations on OW and ODSP conditions have stopped.

~~~~~

Unfortunately, whenever any social initiative around the rights of the poor gets going, opportunistic groups like ACORN move in to grab a piece of the action. These are the kind of people who try to promote social action like soap, in order to raise money for themselves. Nothing they do is really effective.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N-N8j2nMQ0M&feature=youtu.be>

<http://www.whistlefiles.ch/acorn/top.html>

=====

**ISARC ( Interfaith Social Assistance Reform Council)** has launched its **“Billion or Bust”** campaign. The aim is to compel the province to raise OW and ODSP rates by one billion dollars. They believe there is at least one billion in uncollected taxes which could fund this.

<http://isarc.ca/home-eh/billion-or-bust-campaign/>

=====

And finally, here is a very good chance to get some low cost training in organizational governance. The **“Tools for Change”** group puts on a number of very good presentations, which add up to a good course in how to set up and run a small organization. These skills are sorely lacking in GLI activists in Toronto. Sign up! February 4th!

<https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/formingreforming-your-groups-structure-tickets-27916276334>

=====

And thats it for this week! Next GLI Newsbreeze is due February 5th.