

Deal or no deal, no one wins in city strike fiasco

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If, by some curious miracle, a contract offer is gussied up and then ratified, and the strike comes to an end, and it is clear to all and sundry that one side or the other has won ... wait a second.

We have long since passed the point where a win for either side is either possible or desirable.

Because when the trash is finally hauled away, if the striking CUPE locals are seen to have lost – or, worse, if they have been split or broken – the result will linger longer and smell worse than any mound of egg shells, apple peels and coffee grounds.

Just as, if the city is seen to lose, rank and fetid vapours of another sort will continue to rise from our foulest right-wing corners.

No matter how long this strike has lasted, the situation we are in ought not to be about winning or losing, it ought to be about finding a fair resolution – unless, of course, you are one of those people who thinks that fairness is either unfair, or a luxury.

Over the course of these past few stinking weeks, those of us who depend on absent services have suffered, just as the families of the strikers – your friends, your neighbours and mine – have also suffered. Pain is useless. An analogy, in the form of a question: If your kids were fighting in the back yard, would you let them pound each other until one fell and the other stood in triumph?

Nope. You'd pull them apart, calm them down and impose a settlement.

As for the flawed bargaining – and equally flawed economic rationale – that caused this mess, here is a question in the form of an analogy: If it was time for supper and you called the kids to the table, what would happen if you gave pork chops to the first ones, and lunch meat to the kids who came late? The answer is obvious.

We could have used an intervention here – we needed it weeks ago – but we did not demand that help from the province, and so we did not get it. That's the only thing I blame the mayor for. What I find curious is that everyone blames him for everything else: He is criticized for being soft on the unions, but when he gets tough with the unions, he is criticized for the predictably smelly result.

When all is over, one of the things that will linger in my memory of these times: In response to a photo of a man dropping off several bags at a dumping station, a *Star* reader wondered why that man had so much garbage.

The correct answer?

None of your business.

Here's another question: Is the stinking tea leaking from our urban middens not biodegradable?

Anyway, here's what I'd have done were I the mayor way back when: I'd have instructed my bargaining committee to offer CUPE the same deal the firefighters, the cops and the TTC got.

I'd also have said that if the recession continues, all bets are off for everyone when the contracts come up for renewal.

If "His Blondness" had done that, the only people who would have been mad at him are those people who are congenitally mad at him.

The rest of us would have been happy to go about our business, setting our papers and our coffee grounds on the curb in the appropriate containers.

What happens here over the next few days if there is no fair offer, and no deal?

We'll always have Windsor.

Joe Fiorito usually appears Monday, Wednesday and Friday.

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