



Chinese Canadian National Council Toronto Chapter
全加華人協進會 (平權會) 多倫多分會

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Toronto, November 3, 2014 - This is an update regarding the Toronto Sun's response to our statement printed on Thursday October 30, 2014.

The day before, the Toronto Sun had reached out to us about wanting to address our concerns over their depiction of Olivia Chow that we outlined in our statement. We spoke with Wendy Metcalfe, the Editor-in-Chief of the Toronto Sun. After our conversation she agreed to include our statement in print the following day and would include a response of their own.

According to the Toronto Sun, they defend that the intent behind the cartoon was not racist and sexist. They explain that cartoonist Andy Donato has used the same Mao suit representation for the political party NDP on numerous occasions and that he "highlights and exaggerates the physical characteristics of his subjects, regardless of their race or ethnicity." They further explain that the Jack Layton reference is based on Olivia Chow's appeal due to her association with her late husband. They finish their statement by saying, "...to the extent that it may be possible to interpret the drawing as highlighting racial or ethnic characteristics, the Sun regrets that implication and apologizes to Olivia Chow and anyone else offended by the cartoon."

To that we say: Focusing on the intention behind the illustration takes away from the significance of its impact and ultimate message. In the context of Olivia Chow being represented as Mao standing on the coattails of her deceased husband, sends a very specific message about Chinese Canadians. There have been numerous occasions when Chinese Canadians have been perpetually portrayed as foreigners or outsiders in the media. This image does not exist separately from that history. Nor is this up for interpretation. Racist beliefs and stereotypes have real consequences on the lives of many people.

The image of Olivia Chow in a Mao suit, with slanted eyes, evokes an existing racist caricature of Chinese Canadians, and minimizes a diverse population into a "character." This establishes that someone like Olivia Chow, who is a Chinese Canadian female, does not represent Canada and most certainly should not be the Mayor of Toronto. Olivia Chow has 20+ years in politics. The Toronto Sun has minimized her career as a politician to the memory of Jack Layton. They say it's a 'political reality' that he is part of her appeal. But the illustration does not allow for those other parts to exist. The image clearly suggests that her overall success and legitimacy in politics depends on him.

The media is, in theory, an outlet to share information with the public. The public entrusts our news to ethical reporting and representation. The Toronto Sun has the important responsibility of maintaining the public's trust. So when they break that trust, we must hold them accountable. It's simply not about needing to apologize to those who are 'offended'. The Toronto Sun still has an opportunity to take responsibility for the impact of this image. This includes fully examining the

existence of racist & sexist beliefs at the level of their writers/illustrators to the overall structure of their organization. The existence of racism and oppression cannot always be crystal clear for one's convenience. It is necessary to develop a critical lens to realize its existence and impact. And most importantly to place it within the context of how our systems like the media have been built and operate.

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