Who Can You Believe About the "White Helmets"?

written by Stanley Heller | March 11, 2017



Recently a group called the "Hands Off Syria Coalition" disrupted a performance of Beethoven's Ninth in Grand Central Station that was done to honor the White Helmets group. The White Helmets, of course, are rescue workers in Syria, of whom 140 have lost their lives while digging out victims of the Syrian regime and of Russian bombs.

A *Russia Today* reporter named Alexander Rubinstein was on the spot and took some video and Putin's very controlled RT immediately published Rubinstein's article. "Anti-Syrian-war activists" he said held up signs that read *"White Helmets are U.S. Propaganda" "No U.S. bases in Syria,"* and *"This is U.S. war agenda."* The RT article says "allegations have arisen that the White Helmets are little more than a propaganda effort funded by the US government."

In the piece *Russia Today* quotes Rania Khalek who used to write for the *Electronic Intifada*, who says, "All you have to do is look at their funding source – which is the U.S. government – specifically the USAID and the UK foreign office have given tens of millions of dollars to this group which is run by the Syria Civil Defense, which is a PR firm."

She's a liar. Syria Civil Defense is one of the civil society organizations that came out of the Syrian revolution. It is not a "PR firm." There are thousands of videos and stills of the people it has rescued. See *Time* magazine's piece about them written by their Middle East editor Jared Maslin who at one time also wrote for *Electronic Intifada*. The fact that humanitarian divisions of Western governments give money is a good thing. It means that we the people have had some impact on governments and forced them to do some charity work. A George W. Bush era program to fight AIDS in Africa has expended $72 billion. Was this an evil imperialist plot?

Rubinstein's video of the disruption of the NY musical tribute to the White Helmets is shown here. Among the disrupters I recognize Sara Flounders of the International Action Center and United National Anti-War Coalition disrupting the performance. I have no reluctance in naming her or anyone else supporting Assad's mass murder despite their "left" labels and verbiage.

If these people aren't shamed they will go further. According to "Orient News" supporters of Vanessa Beeley, a so-called journalist and fanatical Assad supporter, physically attacked Syrians on a London street. See the start of the ON video.

Amazingly only *Russia Today* wrote about the pop-up concert or the disruption in New York. No one

claimed credit for organizing the pop-up. Max Blumenthal says it was the Syria Campaign and mocked them for supposedly spending tens of thousands of dollars on the action. I've been unable to reach the Syria Campaign. In view of the gall of the Assad followers organizing disruptions in the U.S., supporters of Syrians are advised to have "protectors" or "peacekeepers" at all events, to be ready to link arms and peacefully separate Assadists from activists to keep the latter safe.

I'm not against disruption on principle, far from it. I interrupted George H.W. Bush once yelling to an auditorium about his genocide by sanctions of Iraqis. CODEPINK disrupts regularly and wonderfully, speaking truth to power. Syrians this week disrupted Hawaii member of Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard, who went to meet Assad this year and tried to spread his venom at a talk in New Jersey. So what's the guideline? Disrupt killers, fascists, and their apologists. Shut your mouth at events that honor heroes. That shouldn't be too hard to understand.

Interestingly, though the "anti-imperialists" yell "Hands Off Syria," they only go after supporters of the democratic uprising in Syria. They don't do anything to oppose the actual U.S. bombing in Syria of ISIS that has also killed many Syrian civilians. Instead they condemn and act against the White Helmets, the Free Syrian Army, Amnesty International and such. Read the absurd statement of the "Hands Off Syria Coalition" here. Note it raises alarms about U.S. troops being used against Assad forces when U.S. soldiers actually are sent to fight ISIS and never fight Assad. But the simplest lies are the easiest to peddle.

So who do you believe about the White Helmets? These folks support the White Helmets: the Academy Award judges, Jo Cox (assassinated British MP), the 133 organizations which nominated the White Helmets for the Nobel Peace Prize, the leftists who awards the White Helmets the Right Livelihood Award, the reports of Jared Malsin at *Time* magazine (who had been thrown in an Israeli jail for his reporting some years ago), the Snopes rumor busting website, the reporting of *Democracy Now!*, Palestinian-American journalist Yasmeen Serhan who writes for *The Atlantic*, Swiss-Syrian Joseph Daher, Vanessa Redgrave, Daniel Day Lewis and these other celebs, Amnesty International UK, the United Nations Office for Humanitarian Affairs…

Or you could believe Putin's media organs *Russia Today* and *Sputnik***,** a collection of mysterious websites founded by unknown people with names like *21st Century Wire*, a passel of "independent" journalists who never worked for pay for any credible news organization, the conspiracist David Icke, and one journalist, Max Blumenthal, who has done a 180 degree turn on Syria and now sees a nefarious U.S. hand everywhere.

The choice is obvious.

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