

EYE ON THE NEWS

Trump v. the Border-less Left

For progressives, the universe of victims is infinite.

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President Trump's flurry of executive orders on sanctuary cities and immigration late last week flummoxed his opponents, who responded by making good on their promise to stage constant protests as part of the "#Resistance." In New York, progressive politicians have characterized Trump's relatively modest efforts to impose order on what they have always characterized as a "broken" system as outright Nazism, and have taken their rhetorical cues from hard-Left radicals who seek the dissolution of national borders.

For instance, President Trump announced last Wednesday his intentions to "work within the existing system and framework" in order to enforce current immigration law and pressure so-called "sanctuary cities" to end their policies of noncompliance with federal authority regarding immigration. A few hours later, Bill de Blasio, mayor of the nation's largest sanctuary city, called a spontaneous press conference to proclaim his administration's continued dedication to sanctuary policy. "This executive order does not change who we are . . . the stroke of a pen in Washington does not change the people of New York City or our values."

Mayor de Blasio, echoed by City Council Speaker Melissa Mark-Viverito and Congressman Joseph Crowley, insisted that Trump's crackdown on sanctuary cities is a war on difference. Mark-Viverito proclaimed, "Let's be clear: these proposals are driven by the false narrative that immigrants—all immigrants—are criminals." When asked by this reporter if he sees any difference between illegal aliens, legal immigrants, and citizens of America generally, Mayor de Blasio was blunt in his response:

I appreciate the ideological bent of your question, but I will answer it very clearly. . . . there has been an attempt to demonize immigrants across the board, that's what's

happening here. The vast majority of even the undocumented are law-abiding people . . . this has been a systematic—and Steve Bannon is behind this 100 percent—a systematic effort to demonize people of color and immigrants, and it's playing out today.

From illegal aliens who have committed crimes, to all immigrants, to “people of color” generally: the circle of Trump’s victims widens by orders of magnitude in de Blasio’s fantasy of total persecution. Even to ask a question about whether illegal aliens should be regarded in the same way as legal immigrants betrays an “ideological bent”; on the other hand, it is perfectly straightforward to read a legal challenge to sanctuary cities as all-out race war.

The mayor’s expansive definition of victimhood was echoed this weekend by Governor Cuomo, who repeated the Left’s favorite cliché: “I am a Muslim. I am a Jew. I am Black. I am gay. I am a woman seeking to control her body.” This quasi-heroic affirmation of identity with the oppressed fringes of society, powered by anaphora, collapses into intersectional absurdity, and ultimately becomes the lowest form of political pandering, underscored by the repetition of the word “I.”

Last Friday, Trump announced that he would extend and expand the visa restrictions that Obama established in the 2015 Terrorist Travel Prevention Act, impose a 90-day moratorium on travel from seven countries with links to organized terror, and put a halt to the Syrian-refugee resettlement program. These policies fulfill campaign promises and have been clearly stated as temporary measures in order to make sure that migrants are being accurately screened.

Despite applying to a small fraction of the world’s billion-plus Muslims, the policy was quickly labeled a “Muslim ban.” Mayor de Blasio went on television and repeated the canard that the executive order specifically excludes Muslims from entry to the country; when called on this falsehood by Jake Tapper, the mayor responded with clause-heavy babble: “I would be careful on that. The notion that there’s not a pattern of exception for individuals, that the only indication suggests bluntly non-Muslims, should be very, very worrisome here.” The mayor went on to say that, in his view, illegal aliens who are convicted of drunk driving should be protected by New York City, providing that they didn’t run anyone over.

Hundreds of protestors, organized in New York by the immigrant-rights organization Make the Road, flocked to JFK airport—where several dozen foreign nationals in transit were detained—and demanded their immediate release. Thousands more protestors assembled Sunday at Battery Park in lower Manhattan, where they

chanted “No Ban, No Wall,” a pithy expression of disdain for the principle of border controls, or borders generally.

Senator Charles Schumer, standing in front of a handmade sign reading “Fascism is for Fascists,” announced that 42 people in transit stuck at JFK would be released. Then, falling into the rhetorical tic of infinite liberation, the senator declaimed, “So we’ve made progress for forty-two. We’ve got to make progress for thousands, and tens of thousands, and hundreds of thousands more.” Yet only a hundred or so people are being detained as a result of the president’s recent order.

Leftist grandiosity regarding revolution and human potential is limitless, bounded only by the skills of the man with the megaphone. But the Left’s readiness to heighten contradictions, or, in the words of President Obama, to “bring a gun to a knife fight,” indicates the seriousness of its purpose in impeding every part of President Trump’s agenda.

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