



If You “Send Them Back” Where They Came From... Who And What’s Left?

USA Politics | Tony Broadbent | Suggested by the inimitable John Lawton | Submitted 25 July 2019 | ‘Spiked’ by 7DNEWS UAE ownership following day as being rather too damning of President D J Trump’s views on US Immigration

“Give me your tired, your poor; Your huddled masses yearning to breathe free,” perhaps the best-loved words, certainly the most famous stanza, from the sonnet ‘The New Colossus’ by the late Nineteenth Century US poet-activist Emma Lazarus; the words as much a signifier of the American identity as those of the country’s national anthem.

Though, as much we might all yearn for it to be true, the words inscribed on a bronze plaque hung in the Statue of Liberty museum, in New York Harbour, these last hundred years and more, have never actually represented official US immigration policy or legislation, they’ve been more a statement of an ideal to which the New World could forever aspire to make real.

The Statue of Liberty, a gift from the people of France to the US to mark America’s first 100 years as a nation. A shared a celebration of democracy. Though, far more than any idea about friendship between nations, Lady

Liberty's forever-lit torch was forever after seen by millions of immigrants to the New World as being the very embodiment of the unquenchable spirit of enlightenment and the promise of freedom from oppression...and in every which way imaginable, a sure sign of "Welcome."

Yet more and more does the ideal expressed in 'The New Colossus' begin to seem like something out of myth and legend, so much has the promise of "freedom from oppression" been overshadowed by the would-be new colossus that is Donald Trump. A figure of increasing ridicule around the world, as evidenced by the nakedly petulant baby-Trump inflatable blimp, complete with safety-pinned diaper, that now regularly appears at anti-Trump rallies and demonstrations.

The only 'norms' it seems Trump isn't prepared to break or soil the ones of his own making. He'll say anything, at all, that will serve his own political ends as opposed to the people he's supposedly in office to serve. Trump's all but daily Twitter Tirade, now, 'The New World's' new normal.

Shows just how accustomed we've all become to the inanity, depravity, and madness that is the Trump presidency.

The latest example of which was Trump's recent unprovoked Twitter attack on four first-term, progressive Democratic congresswomen of colour, i.e. non-white, Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ayanna Pressley, Rashida Tlaib, and Ilhan Omar. Known on Capitol Hill as "The Squad" and fast gaining widespread support, they were perfect targets for a Tweet-shaming. "They hate America," trumpeted Trump, "so they should all go back where they came from."

It dominated US news cycles for days. And as Trump has since gone out of his way to single out Representative Omar for even more spite-filled, racially divisive Tweets, it still does, and shows little or no sign of abating. Nor will it. As bald-faced 'racism' is now an ineluctable, nay, indelible part of the Race Card for the Presidency.

Yet the truth of the matter is that of the four ladies Trump targeted, only Ms Omar was born overseas, and she became a US citizen in 2000 when she was 17 years old. The other three Democratic Representatives are all US born and bred.

Trump continued his tirade against “The Squad” last week at a campaign rally in North Carolina. Where the populist ringmaster of Trump’s highly-orchestrated three-ring circus instanced Ocasio-Cortez, Pressley, Tlaib, and Omar, mimed inflated outrage, and sputtered: “These people have said horrible things about our country.” Quickly adding: “You don't belong here! Go back to where you came from!” Then, artfully, feigning surprise at the repeated chants of “Send them back!” “Send them back!” from his adoring, MAGA-hat-wearing crowd.

The whole sad charade re-played and/or referenced to, ad nauseam, by all available news sources. All as Trump had envisaged. Despite his half-hearted disavowal of the event when challenged by reporters, the next day, in the White House Rose Garden. And, again, as we’ve come to expect, save for one lone voice, all accompanied by the continued deafening silence by what now passes for the Republican Party.

Trump’s whole ‘populist’ call-and-response shtick at his political rallies, nothing but a coldly calculated re-election ploy: “Lock her up!” “Build the wall!” “Send them back!” Pick one. Trump’s rhetoric weaponised to achieve the same political ends: To set the liberal elite on a roar, to energize his base, and to encourage all true Republicans to fund his 2020 bid for a Second Term.

“I don’t have a racist bone in my body,” trumpeted the Trump. As if by him merely declaring it, made it so. And no better time to apply (Christopher) “Hitchens's Razor” to the Trump body politic: “What can be asserted without evidence can also be dismissed without evidence.”

Trump's intent, this time, not simply to divide and conquer the country, but to drive as large a wedge as possible between moderate Democrats led by Nancy Pelosi, Speaker of the House, and the party's more left-leaning wing as represented by Presidential hopefuls Elizabeth Warren and Bernie Sanders. Trump's single-minded hope, that with enough additional theatrical bluff and bluster on his part, he'll have them all clashing with the more progressive faction as personified by the members of "The Squad."

All so that Trump can paint the entire Democratic Party as "rabid Socialists." All so extreme in their thinking that steadfast, loyal Americans; i.e. independent or as yet still undecided voters; won't even consider voting for them.

A different form of identity politics, maybe, but one, that could well prove to be very effective. For even though the majority of the American people don't like Trump, wholly distrust him, and don't even see him as being fit for office, it all may have little or no impact on the final outcome.

The all too sobering reality; that Hilary Clinton's winning margin of 2.9 million 'popular' votes couldn't trump the final totals in the Electoral College. The very thought of it now made all the more alarming by early projections that suggest Trump could lose by as many as 5 million 'popular' votes and still win the 2020 election.

All Trump need do is repeat what he did to win the Presidency. Make his anti-immigrant "Send Them Back" red-meat chewy enough, for long enough, in the four 'Heartland States' that helped assure his victory in 2016: Michigan, Minnesota, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin. Et voila: Trump has his Second Term.

Perish the thought. For thus would many, if not all the norms of American democracy continue to wither away until everything is made unrecognizable and the great American experiment in democracy; a direct result of its successive waves of immigrants; changed forever.

Yet, as everyone knows, everyone in the USA is an immigrant or the descendant of immigrants of however many generations past, save for its indigenous peoples who were established here long before Leif Eriksson and his Vikings, or the pilgrims aboard The Mayflower, ever set foot in North America.

To bring it a little closer to home: eight of the 56 signers of the Declaration of Independence were born in the British Isles: two in England, two in Ireland, two in Scotland, one in Northern Ireland, and one in Wales.

Since when, according to the 1980 US Census figures, well over 49 million Americans claim “English” ancestry (i.e. “British”). Over a quarter of the total population, which would make them, then as now, the largest single ethnic group in the United States.

Which got me to wondering just how many US heroic figures, past and present, were born outside the USA. But then as I found it impossible to put a clear face to the unknown “huddled masses,” I began to jot down as many foreign-born interpreters of the American Dream as I could conjure up. Famous faces from Hollywood’s hundred-year old Dream Factory that did so much to shape and project the very idea of America to the world.

An unconventional set of data points, admittedly, and in no way exhaustive; but so very much easier to picture: movie and television stars, screenwriters and directors we’ve all spent time with at one time or another; over a hundred of them, without whom etc. (I’ll leave all the many famous US inventors, scientists, politicians, diplomats, and pop culture icons who were also not born in the USA, for another day.)

The Classics:

Elizabeth Taylor
Joan Fontaine
Olivia de Havilland
Ray Milland
Ronald Colman
Cary Grant

Charlie Chaplin
Stan Laurel
Claude Rains
Peter Lorre
Bob Hope
David Niven
Noël Coward
James Mason
Richard Attenborough
Omar Sharif
Peter O'Toole
Ingrid Bergman
Greta Garbo
Merle Oberon
Deborah Kerr
Angela Lansbury
Audrey Hepburn

The Moderns:

Natalie Portman
Emma Watson
Amy Adams
Keanu Reeves
Joaquin Phoenix
Bruce Willis
Arnold Schwarzenegger
Idris Elba
Charlize Theron
Millie Bobby Brown
Milla Jovovich
Andrew Garfield
Sam Neill
Liam Neeson
Famke Janssen
Kim Cattrall
Jeremy Irons
Daniel Day-Lewis
Ben Kingsley
Clive Owen
Jude Law
Benedict Cumberbatch
Ralph Fiennes
Joseph Fiennes
Cary Elwes
Christian Bale
Michael Caine

The Canadians:

Mary Pickford

Fay Wray
Deanna Durbin
Christopher Plummer
Glen Ford
Raymond Burr
Margot Kidder
Michael J. Fox
William Shatner
Dan Aykroyd
John Candy
Mike Myers
Martin Short
Seth Rogan
Brendan Fraser
Jim Carrey
Howie Mandel
Hayden Christensen
Donald Sutherland
Kiefer Sutherland
Leslie Nielsen
Ryan Gosling
Rachel McAdams
Ellen Page
Anna Paquin
Geneviève Bujold
Sandra Oh
Pamela Anderson
Neve Campbell
Carrie-Anne Moss
Alison Pill
Jason Priestley
Bruce Greenwood

The Aussies:

Errol Flynn
Rod Taylor
Mel Gibson
Russell Crowe
Hugh Jackman
Nicole Kidman
Naomi Watts
Cate Blanchett
Guy Pearce
Chris Hemsworth
Liam Hemsworth
Heath Ledger
Geoffrey Rush
Hugo Weaving

Sam Worthington
Eric Bana
Judy Davis
Toni Colette
Anthony LaPaglia
Paul Hogan

The Producers & Directors

Jack L. Warner
Louis B. Mayer
Sam Goldwyn
Adolph Zukor
Michael Curtiz
Alfred Hitchcock
Billy Wilder
Frank Capra
David Lean
Carol Read
Roman Polanski
James Cameron
Christopher Nolan
Ridley Scott
Tony Scott
Paul Greengrass
John Boorman
Norman Jewison
Neil Jordan
Danny Boyle
Sam Mendes
Paul Haggis
Milos Forman
Ang Lee
Peter Jackson
David Cronenberg
Peter Weir
Pedro Almodóvar
Alfonso Cuarón
Lars Von Trier
Fred Zinnerman

All rather amazing when you think about it: such a prodigious amount of talent and all of it drawn to the dream that was, and is, the United States of America.