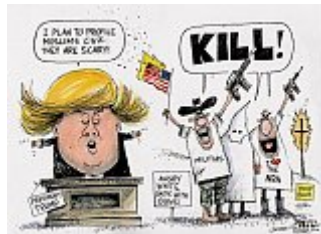


OPINION

A Clash of the Uncivilised: Trump, Muslim Profiling and the Far-Right's Assault

Saturday 25 February 2017, by [NAMAZIE Maryam](#) (Date first published: 1 February 2017).

Donald Trump's suspension of new refugee admissions for 120 days and the barring of nationals from Iraq, Iran, Syria, Yemen, Sudan, Libya and Somalia for 90 days (likely to be extended) is fundamentally about a far-right restructuring of US society under the guise of 'stopping terrorism' and defending 'Western civilisation' whilst hiding behind 'acceptable' bigotry against migrants and Muslims.



It's similar to the rise of Islamism and its far-right restructuring of many societies in the Middle East and elsewhere under the guise of stopping "imperialism" and defending "Islamic civilisation" whilst hiding behind the industry of offence and "Islamophobia".

Despite its packaging of counter-terrorism and border protection, the rise of far-right politics is part and parcel of the well-wrought assault on the fundamental rights of people in the US and Europe where policies imposed on the "other" are now being openly imposed right here at home.

The assault on women's and reproductive rights, refugee rights, citizenship rights, welfare, health services, environment, education, legal aid, human rights, freedom of expression, freedom of the press, freedoms to strike and organisation ... as well as the increasing privatisation and commercialisation of - well just about everything - are the real stories here.

The aims of the Islamists, Trump and Brexit are to dismantle citizenship rights, further lower living standards, and impose additional austerity measures whilst removing remaining constraints on capitalism. The sacred (be it religion, national borders, identity or culture) is used to manage and control dissent, vilify and eventually criminalise those deemed different.

As is always the case, the first lines of attack are women and the most vulnerable in society.



The advance of the far-right has depended in large part on the normalisation of their narrative, which includes cultural relativism; homogenisation of entire communities and societies; limiting free expression; legitimising violence; feigning persecution; blaming the victim; reliance on religion, misogyny, homophobia and anti-Semitism; criminalisation of the other; subversion of the truth; use of threats and scaremongering; and identity politics.

The answer to this calamity is not strengthening one far-right over the other.

Wearing hijabs at protests or continuing to have the Muslim Council of Britain or Linda Sarsour as the “authentic” representatives of the fight-back plays into the Islamist narrative just as defending Muslim profiling, calling for the prioritisation of Christian refugees and promoting Trump or Brexit as the “authentic” voice of the disillusioned plays into the hands of the right-wing Christians.

Siding with either legitimises the subversion of truth and the politics of hate and fear. It helps them, wittingly or unwittingly, in their clash of the uncivilised at the expense of us all, across borders and boundaries, real or imagined.

The principled response to the rise of the far-Right and regressive identity politics has to be one that defends humanity – all of it – irrespective of beliefs, immigration status, race, gender, nationality and sexuality.

Defending the equal rights of those who do not think or look like you, an insistence on universalism, an unequivocal defence of secularism and civil rights as well as welfare before profit are important starting points. The magnificent protests at US airports in support of migrants and refugees are a great case in point.

Today, more than ever, we need politics that puts truth and the human being at the centre – not religion, nationality, race, gender or migration status.

Politics that start and ends with our common humanity.

Politics that break, not builds, walls.

A few points on profiling

“Muslim” profiling has now been imposed by Donald Trump via an Executive Order with its brutal consequences unfolding before our very eyes. Revisiting the main reasons one must oppose it as I had previously discussed in Sam Harris’ “Waking Up” podcast is a matter of urgency. (The full transcript of the podcast, including small sections that had been edited from the aired podcast, is available [\[1\]](#).)

According to *New America* [\[2\]](#), every jihadist who conducted a lethal attack inside the United States since 9/11 was a citizen or legal resident. A quarter are converts. 15 of the 9/11 hijackers were Saudi nationals whilst others were from the United Arab Emirates, Egypt and Lebanon. What this evidence makes very clear is that the issue of terrorism is not linked to migration status.

Moreover, whilst certain regimes like the Iranian or Saudi regimes are the perpetrators of terrorism, there is a distinction between regimes and the nationals of those countries.

Also, blaming every Iranian or Muslim for the crimes of Islamist terrorists is like blaming all whites or Christians or Americans for those killed by white supremacists.

Whatever the nationality, immigration status or belief of the perpetrators, it is unjust to hold entire populations collectively responsible for the homicide and mass murder committed by individuals.

Whilst still very imperfect, fairer justice systems have developed somewhat to move away from collective retribution and revenge to individual accountability for crimes committed. Trump's Executive Orders blame masses of people whose only "crime" has been to be born in a specific geography or have certain religious beliefs, real or imputed.

It is important to note that since 9/11 more people have been killed in the US by white supremacists than Islamists [3]. Based on Trump's logic, should white Christians be placed on registries, targeted and banned en masse or should those who have committed the actual killings be prosecuted?

The homogenisation of entire societies and countless refugees denies plurality and diversity amongst those labelled Muslims. Don't forget, there is a tsunami of atheism in many countries under Islamic rule, other religious minorities, and many who don't consider religion to be the most important marker that defines them.

Also, no one understands the need for secularism better than those living under the boot of the religious-right. Clearly, just because someone is white or Christian doesn't make them a white supremacist that will go on to murder innocent people praying at a mosque; the same applies to Muslims or Iranian, Iraqi or Somali nationals.

More importantly, scapegoating Muslims and migrants conveniently ignores the US' role in perpetrating terrorism globally, including via its militarism or ongoing support of states like Turkey's Erdogan and the Saudi regime.

As many security experts will attest, racial or ethnic profiling just doesn't work; behavioural profiling does [4], as does targeting the far-Right white supremacist or Islamist groups rather than white people or Muslims or migrants. The reality is that most of the terrorists who have carried out attacks are already known to the authorities in various countries because of their links with groups that promote terrorism.

Of course in the post-truth era, facts don't matter. The far-right needs scapegoats in order to whip up populist hysteria against the most vulnerable so it can go ahead with its assault on people's lives and rights.

Eventually they will come for you. And the only way to stop them is to fight for those they come for first. *El Pueblo Unido Jamás Será Vencido* [5].

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P.S.

* <http://freethinker.co.uk/2017/02/01/a-clash-of-the-uncivilised/>

Footnotes

[1] <http://maryamnamazie.com/harris-namazie/>

[2] <https://www.newamerica.org/in-depth/terrorism-in-america/who-are-terrorists/>

[3] <http://www.washingtontimes.com/news/2015/jun/24/majority-of-fatal-attacks-on-us-soil-carried-out-b/>

[4] <https://www.forbes.com/forbes/welcome/?toURL=https://www.forbes.com/sites/bruceschneier/2012/05/09/the-trouble-with-airport-profiling/&refURL=http://freethinker.co.uk/2017/02/01/a-clash-of-the-uncivilised/&referrer=http://freethinker.co.uk/2017/02/01/a-clash-of-the-uncivilised/#141574b41ddf>

[5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_pueblo_unido_jamás_será_vencido