

The Italian American Contribution to Trump's Muslim Immigration Ban

Jerry Kruse (February 01, 2017)



The First Amendment of the United States Constitution (1791) simply states: "Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances."

In deference to the late Italian American Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court Antonin Scalia, the original intent, of what most refer to as the underlined "establishment clause" has been twisted in knots to the point of oblivion, making it almost a "he said, she said" principle. So, we have today a duly elected President of the United States fulfilling a bigoted campaign pledge by issuing a Constitutionally permitted Executive Order (EO) to "temporarily" Ban Muslim Immigration to the USA by the literary device of merely dropping the "Muslim" bit. It is my job in the remainder of this commentary on the margins, to consider the Italian American "contribution" to our collective journey down this rabbit hole called the Trump Administration.

First of all, I must say at the start, as to my bonafides, that I was one of the very few left-leaning persons I know who didn't think The Donald (aka The AntiChrist) hadn't a chance in hell to defeat



Hillary (aka The Whore of Babylon) last November. I was right mostly because I have no illusions about the persistent intolerance of the society in which I live, and which I have spent the last half century studying. As opposed to many other progressive students of American culture, I also regularly watch, listen to, and read things that nauseate me but which are savored by millions of his minions. This is why I was not clueless, or even worse --- "hoping for the best" during the ill-(fill in-the-blank) National Democratic Party campaign. Today's incessant chatter about Counselor to the President Steve Bannon and Breitbart News misses the larger point about past and present Ministries and Ministers of Propaganda. Bannon and Breitbart are really just the tip of the iceberg of America's Phobic media. The public's yearning for bigoted and biased news is what makes idiotic tweets and interviews with inane "experts" from FoxNews to MSNBC, not to mention the Putinesqua Russian Television Network (RTN), so powerful that they can control the conversation and distract attention from what is actually happening like boots on the ground in Yemen. Both Right and Left eat Fake News with relish, and furthermore; naively appealing to idealized American Core Values to combat prejudice is delusional.

PROTECTING THE NATION FROM FOREIGN TERRORIST ENTRY INTO THE UNITED STATES

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and laws of the United States of America, including the Immigration and Nationality Act (INA), 8 U.S.C. 1101 et seq., and section 301 of title 3, United States Code, and to protect the American people from terrorist attacks by foreign nationals admitted to the United States, it is hereby ordered as follows: 11 sections

I jotted down some of his mutterances while he was signing the E.O. "Blah, blah, blah, blah ... allow entry only to those people who support our country and love, deeply, our people." Not a bad sentiment, but please note that the seven Muslim-majority nations in HIS travel ban are not the ones who have been, and continue to be, the best at anti-American terror production and murder. According to Uri Frieman in [The Atlantic](#) [2] (2/1/17 - 1:45 pm.) Radical Islamist terrorists from Iran, Iraq, Libya, Somalia, Sudan, Syria and Yemen have yet to kill an American in the Homeland but other Muslim majority countries like Saudi Arabia, United Arab Emirates, Egypt, and Lebanon have been very more successful so far -- almost 3,000. As a possible explanation for the oversight, National Public Radio (NPR) reported that these "friendly" countries also happen to be places where President Donald and his family have business interests.

In their classic study of the role of race, ethnicity, and religion in New York politics, *Beyond the Melting Pot*, Nathan Glazer and Daniel P. Moynihan, based on hearsay, reported that a world-famous Yale professor of government remarked at dinner on the day Mario Procaccino announced his candidacy for New York City Mayor of New York that "If Italians aren't actually an inferior race, they do the best imitation of one I've seen." (1970: lxxiii-xiv) In my estimation he was only half correct.

If this were a debate on my semi-inferior racial status, I would offer as to this proposition on the "pro" side a January 28, 2017 interview on Fox News' Justice with Judge Jeanine entitled "Rudy Giuliani Brags That He Crafted Trump's Muslim Ban." (see [>>](#) [3])

JEANINE PIRRO (HOST): Does the ban have anything to do with religion? How did the president decide the seven countries? I understand the permanent ban on the refugees. OK, talk to me.

RUDY GIULIANI: OK. I'll tell you the whole history of it. So, when he first announced it he said "Muslim ban." He called me up and said, "put a commission together, show me the right way to do it legally." I put a commission together with Judge Mukasey, with Congressman McCaul, Pete King, a whole group of other very expert lawyers on this. And what we did was we focused on, instead of religion, danger. The areas of the world that create danger for us. Which is a factual basis. Not a religious basis. Perfectly legal, perfectly sensible, and that's what the ban is based on. It's not based on religion. It's based on places where there are substantial evidence that people are sending terrorists into our country.

In contrast, on January 29th, New York State Governor Andrew J. Cuomo, @NYGovCuomo tweeted "As a New Yorker, I am a Muslim. I am a Jew. I am Black. I am gay. I am a woman seeking to control her body. We are one New York."



Currently, many of my progressive Italian American friends and colleagues are writing furiously in an attempt to distance themselves from the broad brush that they and I have used to paint “our” own white ethnic group’s support for the Orange One’s Islamophobic machinations. Much of these Apologia are predicated on the assumption that Italian Americans in general either don’t know, or don’t properly appreciate, how they, as equally despised, albeit Papist, immigrants, have been unfairly treated in the past. The litany of unfortunate slings and arrows is long and usually includes the whole series of discriminatory U.S. Immigration Acts, the Sacco and Venzetti injustices, and FDR’s Executive Order 9066. But Rudy and Andy are not more and less ignorant of these facts, so where’s the manzo?

These well-scripted missives sometimes also include a vague reference to the mythical American values of tolerance and toleration that channels Emma Lazarus and a teary-eyed statue which makes even less sense. Despite the appeal to the overblown notion of American Exceptionalism, WE are hardly that. Even Alan Dershowitz, with whom I rarely agree, while loudly and legalistically condemned the unconstitutionality of the anti-Muslim E.O., reminded other distinguished commentators of the long and ignoble history of America’s serial intolerance, best remembered during Holocaust Memorial Day, which took place the day before The Ban, and in reference to which The Donald forgot to mention Jews in his Presidential Proclamation.

Contrary to humanistic expectations, like other “Americans” Italians have used their own experiences of bias and discrimination to justify their likewise treatment of others, and to make them run the same gauntlet; but this time of course as members of the double line of tormentors. Despite The Shoah, The Middle Passage, and The Great Famine, The Trumpster can rely on Sheldon Adelson, Ben Carson, and Michael T. Flynn to beat a drum for him, so why not Chris Christi, and alia; whether or not they ever read, and understood, Antonio Gramsci’s *La Questione Meridionale* or even Yale Professor Emeritus of Government Edward C. Banfield’s *The Moral Basis of a Backward Society*.

* Jerome (Jerry) Krase is Emeritus and Murray Koppelman Professor at Brooklyn College (City University of New York).

Source URL: <http://www.iitaly.org/magazine/focus/op-eds/article/italian-american-contribution-trumps-muslim-immigration-ban>

Links

[1] <http://www.iitaly.org/files/cartoonpng>

[2] <https://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2017/01/trump-immigration-ban-terrorism/514361/>

[3] <http://mediamatters.org/print/744301>