

## **Rethinking the executive orders on Immigration in our American history**

The new executive order on immigration that Trump signed Tuesday, February 21, to roll back the progress accomplished under Obama is a throw-back to an earlier time in our country's history.

During his election campaign, Trump made references to "the norms" we had adhered to historically. Those norms were based on 1920's criteria which, if folks recall, also coincided with the reign of the Ku Klux Klan in our country's history.

Like today, after the progressive era in our nation's heartland, the country's Zeitgeist made a radical change and national politics became dominated by conservative and regressive measures, much like we are experiencing these days. Then, the U.S. Congress passed the restrictive 1924 Johnson-Reed Act which prohibited immigration from Asia or Africa, limited it almost solely to Northern Europeans. Immediately previous to that, in Colorado, the knights of the Klan controlled the state's politics.

It is interesting to note that Washington succumbed to this fever when Calvin Coolidge signed Johnson Reed in 1924 and, according to historians, like CMU's Steve Schulte, at that point, the Klan's numbers precipitously dropped. Is that a result of the Klan and its sympathizers having stopped the influx of hated "Southern and Eastern Europeans" and achieved their goal?

At any rate, decades later, in 1968 we ushered in the "Great Society" and LBJ signed the Hart-Celler Act abolishing the quota system based on national origins.

Now we face an anachronistic aberration in the context of our neighbors and most countries which leaves most decent people with a feeling that we somehow entered a dystopic zombie movie and the critters have taken over our government.

Or perhaps we can use the metaphor of an alien invasion.

What does this new executive order authorize? The hiring of 15,000 HLS and CBP agents. This at a time when crime has been dropping to historically low levels (the FBI reports "the 2015 violent crime total was 0.7 percent lower than the 2011 level and 16.5 percent below the 2006 level"). So, the excuse of "protecting our citizens from evil foreign threats" is hardly justified. And let's not forget the price tag on this order easily more than one billion dollars per year in salaries alone. And will our "fiscally conservative" Congress authorize this or recognize it as executive over-reach as they did with Obama's executive orders? Up until now Scott Tipton and Corey Gardner have been behaving like Trump-controlled robots

The order says that DACA students will not be effected. But if you have their parents and relatives detained and deported, how will that not affect them? And the impact that ICE raids have been demonstrated to have on the communities where they are carried out? If, as proposed, the reintroduction of local law enforcement

collaboration with raids on non-criminals, as the new order proposes, what impact on our communities' children?

How like a horror movie this is where justice has been revoked and replaced with racism (Steve Bannon), greed and dishonesty ( Donald Trump) and lack of patriotic courage ( our Republican Congress and Senate).

Is this the moment, like in the movies, where the citizens (think mild mannered Hobbits) get the courage to follow the example of their national heroes and work together to wrest power back from the perpetrators of cruelty and injustice? I sincerely hope so.

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