

Resistance Against Injustice is Very Biblical

The book of Exodus begins with the story of how the Egyptian pharaoh and his minions sought to prevent the immigrant Hebrews from becoming too populous and powerful in the land. First, he implemented a program of forced labor to oppress them and deter them from bearing more children. When that didn't work, he issued an executive order to the Hebrew midwives to kill all the newborn boys as soon as they were born. Girls would be allowed to live.

The Hebrew midwives, however, disobeyed the king's orders. They let the boys live. This angered the king, of course, but the midwives acted shrewdly, protesting that Hebrew women were so vigorous that they gave birth before the midwives arrived. So the numbers of the Hebrews continued to increase.

Finally, Pharaoh commanded all his people: "Every boy that is born to the Hebrews you shall throw into the Rio Grande – errr, the Nile – but you shall let every girl live." The stage is thus set for the story of how infant Moses was hidden in a basket in the bulrushes by his mother, only to be found by Pharaoh's daughter and subsequently raised in the society of the Egyptians. Moses, of course, eventually becomes the deliverer of the disenfranchised Hebrews, leading them through the Sinai wilderness in prospect of a better place, a land "flowing with milk and honey."

The ancestors of the Hebrews had come to Egypt seeking refuge, and had once been welcomed there. A new king and a different time changed all that. Might the king have been more successful in controlling the Hebrew populace if, rather than trying to kill off the baby boys, he had separated all the Hebrew children from their parents and put them in concentration camps in the desert? No matter. Sooner or later, their mistreatment by the Egyptians would have had to be redressed.

The enslavement, oppression, or systematic subjugation of any people by a powerful nation is not only cruel and inhumane, it's a prescription for eventual social upheaval. There's an obvious lesson here regarding our own nation's past policies of genocide and slavery, and the current immigration policies that are tearing families apart, denying refugees their legal rights to sanctuary, and sending many would-be immigrants back to intolerable violence.

Current policies are surely being fueled by fears that those who have come from elsewhere in recent generations are becoming too populous and powerful. There are also fears, quite unfounded, that they pose a threat to safety of the rest of us. The evidence shows that, on the whole, new immigrants are more law-abiding than the typical U.S. citizen.

Although our Pharaoh and his administration have not proposed killing off the refugee children on our borders or the immigrants in our midst, it's certain that many who are being sent back will die. They will be killed by the same violent elements from which they have fled, or they will die from inability to re-establish their lives, or perhaps from the stress and grief of being ripped apart as families and communities.

Pharaoh's minions are engaged in a full spectrum of measures that assault the human dignity of

peoples on the margins, curtailing human rights, civil rights, and voting rights so that a minority can continue to rule – a minority that is primarily white, privileged, and incumbent in power. The GOP is now the Government of Pharaoh. Under these circumstances, it is biblical to protest, resist, and not submit to the laws and executive orders that are punitive, cruel, and destructive of the precious human beings who seek refuge among us.

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