The Colossus Crumbles

by JOSEPH ANDERSEN
3rd year journalist

"Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, the wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!" These words, taken from the poem “The New Colossus”, adorn the feet of The Statue of Liberty. They form the basis for how our ancestors planned their immigration policy: open for any and all searching for a better life. With this in mind, it’s ridiculous to think that Donald Trump, a man who’s had two immigrant wives (once again proving immigrants will do the jobs born citizens won’t), has signed an executive order that prevents refugees and immigrants fleeing war and terror from entering the country.

Let’s review the heart of the issue by going back to its roots. America, one of the most powerful nations in the world and has the resources to support them. Most refugees get caught in some form of legal limbo, where they’re being kept from going to countries like Germany, yet still aren’t treated with respect in their current residences.

Once they make it to America, hoping to find a nation that will gladly accept them with open arms. Only to find the “golden doors” slammed shut. This executive order is not only a sign of brazen racism and islamophobia that prioritizes Christian’s over Muslims, it’s straight up a conflict of interest. The perpetrators of the 9/11 attacks hailed from Egypt, Lebanon, and Saudi Arabia, three countries not included in the ban. Surely if this were about stopping terrorism, the nations of the people who committed the greatest terrorist act in history would’ve been included on that list. But they weren’t. Supporters of the ban will claim that the reason those countries weren’t included is because they have vetting systems in place, but the truth is, those three nations have one other thing in common: Donald Trump does business in them.

Make no mistake: this order goes against the ideals of our nation and creates hatred and racism. These are not terrorists looking for their next attack, these are not immigrants coming to “steal our jobs.” The victims in Syria are refugees, looking for safety and a bit of compassion. They read the promises listed in “The New Colossus,” and hope the nation will live up to them.

But we haven’t. Our nation has, across the board, failed to keep these promises, has failed to show decency and compassion towards the suffering of others, and has failed to lead by example in the eyes of the world.
The actions in Syria are a civil and human rights atrocity, but what’s arguably worse is having the power to do something, and choosing not to. When we choose to keep the doors closed, we choose to let children die, we choose to condemn these refugees to the worst sort of horrors imaginable. We have so much privilege here in America, but that privilege shouldn’t be lauded over the rest of the world for bragging rights. Instead, we should use our resources and our privilege to show compassion. To show the world how it’s done.

If you want to make America great again, why not start by making America good?

Despite the Puns, It’s a Syria-s Problem

by DILLON WILLIAMSON
1st year journalist

If you tell a big enough lie and tell it frequently enough, it will be believed. That’s a quote from Adolf Hitler. It seems to embody the world’s attitude towards Syrian refugees, and it is unacceptable.

Due to a violent civil war that began in 2011, Syria is in shambles. When a nation falls, its people seek cover. More than eleven million people have been displaced. These people have either been killed or have fled their homes in search of a safe heaven.

The lies that the world has been telling itself is that these people don’t need help. That someone else will surely step in and do something. That it is not their responsibility to help these folks. To quote civil rights leader and Congressman John Lewis, “If not us, who? If not now, when?”

Most of these refugees do not have a safe living option. They are lost in a world without help, where the EU and the US ignore their cries. In a world where the president of the United States of America, one of the most powerful men in the world, has put a ban on refugees from Syria. And some Americans have the gall to tell themselves different lies. Lies such as: “Trump is right to do this. They’ll just come to our country and take welfare and money from us. Too lazy to work.” These people are not lazy.

These people are afraid. These people are running from a world they don’t want, only to find a world that doesn’t want them. And it’s ridiculous. America has given $4.1 billion in support programs and food to Syrian refugees, but has only welcomed about 1500 refugees. The government is lying when it says it is providing true help to Syrian refugees.

But some of the world is becoming more tolerant, taking more notice. One country that has recently opened its arms to refugees is Canada, with their #WelcomeRefugees. But Canada has only taken in about 39,000 of the millions of refugees. Hopefully their new initiative isn’t just another lie.