Trump’s Bronx Rally Drives Stake in ‘Identity Politics’

By Roger L. Simon

Wouldn’t it be fascinating, actually tremendously heartening, if the man who was supposedly our most divisive politician was the man who ultimately brought our broken country together—former President Donald J. Trump?

America is often, justifiably, criticized for having been built to some degree by slavery. It was not alone in that, and it still exists in some places, but America fought its most painful war to abolish the practice. Years later, it enacted the Civil Rights Act, enshrining equality in our laws. Racism was diminishing.

Yet some people have what I called in one of my books a “nostalgia for racism.” They can’t live without it for reasons

that range from comfort with old assumptions to the most cynical personal gain.
Consequently, for as long as I have been alive, which is the entire post-World War II era, it has been assumed that minorities voted Democratic, whether to their advantage or not.

So I was gladdened to see, watching on television, the throng of racially mixed Americans gathered in one of my childhood haunts from Yankee Stadium to the Zoo to Van Cortlandt Park—the borough of The Bronx.

No less than one of the most reactionary forces in our culture—identity politics—was under attack in the massive show of support from that mixed-race crowd given former President Trump at his surprisingly large rally in Crotona Park in the southern part of the borough.

I used the term reactionary above quite deliberately because it was and probably still is the most supreme insult one could give anyone leaning left. It signified they were behind the times, retrograde.

And much of the left has been that since they reversed the color-blind, character-brd idealism of Dr. Martin Luther King in favor of the reactionary (that word again) dictums of critical race theory and so-called anti-racism that are themselves racist to the core. The latter two assert the primacy of race over character, something that is senseless to anyone who honestly observes actual human behavior in even slightly moral terms.

Those dicta have worked to preserve or even extend racism, rather than destroy it, for reasons of power and profit. In order for society to progress, for the American Idea or, if you prefer, the American Dream, to be preserved or obtained, identity politics must be eliminated.

I don’t mean people should lose their identities, small “i.”

Mexican-Americans should still celebrate Cinco de Mayo, Irish-Americans St. Patrick's Day, and so forth, but that should not be their complete Identities (capital I deliberate).

They are citizens of a country whose founding documents proclaim we are all "created equal" no matter race, religion, ethnicity, and all the rest. Often this was and still is hard to fulfill, but that makes it all the more worthy as a goal.

During President Trump's Bronx speech, he did the opposite of what has become conventional and offered to join New York Democratic Party officials, the state governor and city mayor, in an effort to Make New York Great Again (MNYGA).

This was, in part, good politics, reaching across the aisle in a radically divided country, something the former president has been loath to do, but it seems he is doing now. He should keep it up.

Yes, his Bronx rally had obvious electoral motives, trying to flip New York or at least make enough in-roads to force his opposition to devote more time and money to a state they normally win without effort. But as I am trying to indicate, more than electoral politics is involved. It is the soul of our nation.

Soul of the nation sounds a bit like pompous rhetoric, I admit, but I submit we should concentrate on that as this election goes forward. I know of very few of our fellow citizens who have not suffered on the most personal levels from the degree to which our society is riven. Families and friendships have broken apart across the country.

President Trump was less given to the politics of insult, humorous and/or deserved though it may be, in his Bronx speech than he normally is, concentrating instead more on bringing us together. The country needs healing more than it has in well over a century. In fact, it needs it desperately.

First published in the Epoch Times