



Written by [Selwyn Duke](#) on April 6, 2020

Coronavirus: How NYC Health Officials Helped Kill the Country With Racial Politics and Lies

What do you think about a health commissioner who says that “even brief contact with the police or indirect exposure is associated with lasting harm to people’s physical and mental health”?

How about a city epidemiologist who announces, “We as a public health department have really been trying to frame criminal justice system involvement as an exposure”?



These statements — by New York City health commissioner Oxiris Barbot and her epidemiologist, Kimberly Zweig — could remind you of the SDS radical who once wrote, “The issue is never the issue. The issue is always the revolution.”

Except the corollary apparent here is: The job is never the job. The job is always the revolution.

While there are many questions about the Wuhan virus’ virulence and its actual mortality rate, for certain is that fear of it (and the coverage of it) is crippling our nation. NYC horror stories have been a big part of this, too. But the real disease plaguing the Big Apple — and which exacerbated the Wuhan virus outbreak — is racial politics, avers *FrontPage Mag’s* Daniel Greenfield.

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In fact, NYC health officials, and Mayor Bill de Blasio, had been telling people to go about their normal lives as recently as early last month; they’d also recommended attending Chinatown’s Lunar New Year Parade & Festival on January 25 and implied that the real danger was bigotry. Now de Blasio has gone to the other extreme, pushing for a [shelter-in-place order](#) and threatening to [shut down churches permanently](#).

Yet extremes should be expected from extremists, and the latter status is why, whatever the next pandemic was going to be, the NYC administration wasn’t going to be ready for it. Because educator, epidemiologist, or whatever the job, in the Big Apple it’s all racism all the time.

In his piece “Identity Politics Lied. New Yorkers Died,” Greenfield [points out](#) that Barbot and Zweig are essentially affirmative-action appointees. What qualified Barbot to be named health commissioner last year is “unclear,” he writes, though it seems to be that she is the “‘first Latina commissioner’ who had come out the Bronx housing projects.” So check that box.

Oh, Barbot had also done a stint as Baltimore’s health commissioner under Mayor Stephanie Rawlings-Blake, whose claim to shame is that she once said she was giving minority rioters “space to destroy.” So Barbot fit right in.

Speaking of which, the woman she succeeded in NYC, Mary T. Bassett, “had launched the Center for Health Equity and spent her time warning of the public health threat from racism in talks, ‘Why Your Doctor Should Care About Social Justice,’ articles, ‘How Does Racism Affect Your Health,’ and research papers, ‘Uprooting Institutionalized Racism as Public Health Practice,’” writes Greenfield.



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Bassett had also spent 17 years at the University of Zimbabwe when its nation was ruled by Robert Mugabe, who persecuted white farmers to the point of causing black Zimbabweans to starve. She apparently fit right in, too.

But Barbot as replacement health commissioner provided seamless transition. Her “bio boasted that ‘she uses a racial equity lens’ and credited her with ‘spearheading the creation of the Center for Health Equity which operationalizes the Department’s commitment to racial justice,’” Greenfield further relates.

“As the coronavirus bore down on New York City, Barbot and the Health Department were busy operationalizing social justice while remaining oblivious to the scientific realities of the pandemic,” he continued.

“The department’s focus on health equity required it to discourage recent arrivals from Wuhan from going into self-quarantine or avoiding large public gatherings like the Lunar New Year celebrations.” That could be “racist,” you see.

Thus did Barbot tweet on February 2:

As we gear up to celebrate the [#LunarNewYear](#) in NYC, I want to assure New Yorkers that there is no reason for anyone to change their holiday plans, avoid the subway, or certain parts of the city because of [#coronavirus](#). pic.twitter.com/r4gNWklGPX

— Commissioner Oxiris Barbot (@NYCHealthCommr) [February 2, 2020](#)

The same day she appeared on camera preaching likewise, encouraging people to hit the town and, especially, the Chinese parade (video below. Relevant portion begins at 1:01).

To be clear, it’s fine to [question](#) the conventional virus “narrative,” as *The New American* [has been doing](#) repeatedly. There are good reasons to be skeptical about the mortality data being disseminated and the “lockdown” prescription being implemented. What’s absolutely *not acceptable* is to have racial politics and politically correct nonsense shape policy. That is malpractice.

And here’s Mayor de Blasio downplaying the virus on eight occasions:

To be fair, de Blasio might not have been wrong about the virus being much like a flu for many afflicted (one stat holds that 86 percent of carriers are asymptomatic or exhibit mild symptoms). But since he’s transitioned from blow off the threat to blow up the economy — recommending shelter-in-place orders — he doesn’t have much credibility.

Sharing this lack is CBS New York. Here the stations is, from early February, buttressing the notion that people avoiding Chinatown for fear of contagion are guilty of “xenophobia”:

Greenfield notes that Chinatown is one of the most densely populated NYC areas, a place where contagion (this virus, the flu, or otherwise) is of greatest threat. Yet Barbot was playing the race game into early March.

“‘As we confront this emerging outbreak, we need to separate facts from fear, and guard against stigma and panic,’ Commissioner Barbot [signed off](#): warning that the real enemy was prejudice,” Greenfield also reminds us.



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In a way, though, she was right. The real enemy is prejudice — a prejudice making Barbot and her fellow travelers believe that mainstream America is characteristically bigoted. “Just as Marxists had used class as the master theory explaining all the problems of human history,” Greenfield analogizes, “radicals in this country had redefined racism as the explanation for all ills.”

You won’t talk them out of this, either. Leftism to these leftists is their religion (a false one). And just as empowering jihadists would give you jihadist policy and Marxists Marxist policy, electing racist leftists will give you racial policy — *every time*.

Because to them the job is never the job. The job is always the revolution.

Image of Oxiris Barbot: [Screenshot of video by CBS New York](#)

Selwyn Duke (@SelwynDuke) has written for The New American for more than a decade. He has also written for The Hill, Observer, The American Conservative, WorldNetDaily, American Thinker, and many other print and online publications. In addition, he has contributed to college textbooks published by Gale-Cengage Learning, has appeared on television, and is a frequent guest on radio.



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