



Written by [Bob Adelman](#) on January 2, 2014

Bill de Blasio: New York City's "Progressive" New Mayor

When Bill de Blasio was celebrating his mayoral victory last November, [he made clear](#) exactly what his agenda is for New York City:

My fellow New Yorkers: Today you spoke out loudly and clearly for a new direction for our city.

Make no mistake: the people of this city have chosen a progressive path, and tonight we set forth on it, together.



This was predicted by another progressive, President Obama, [when he endorsed de Blasio back in September](#), saying:

Progressive change is the centerpiece of Bill de Blasio's vision for New York City, and it's why he will be a great mayor of America's largest city.

Bill's agenda for New York is marked by bold, courageous ideas that address the great challenges of our time.

Media mouthpieces from the [Associated Press](#) to the [New York Times](#) have signaled their thrall with the new direction. On January 1, 2014, the day de Blasio was sworn in as New York City's new mayor by former President Bill Clinton, the AP hailed de Blasio "as the face of a progressive movement that pledges a significant realignment of the nation's largest city." One day earlier, the *Times* delighted to note that "liberals across the country are looking to Bill de Blasio ... to morph New York City's municipal machinery into a ... laboratory for populist theories of government that have never been enacted on such a large scale."

In his inauguration speech, de Blasio took aim at the "inequality" his progressive policies would supposedly overcome: "We are called to put an end to economic and social inequalities that threaten to unravel the city we love. And so today, we commit to a new progressive direction in New York."

He also stated:

Our city is no stranger to big struggles — and no stranger to overcoming them.

New York has faced fiscal collapse, a crime epidemic, terrorist attacks, and natural disasters. But now, in our time, we face a different crisis — an inequality crisis. It's not often the stuff of banner headlines in our daily newspapers. It's a quiet crisis, but one no less pernicious than those that have come before.

Working quietly for decades for leftist causes including supporting the Marxist Sandinistas in the late 1980s before moving on to head up the city's General Welfare Committee, de Blasio has been forthright and transparent about what he hopes to accomplish from the mayor's chair. He helped pass the Gender-Based Discrimination Protection Act and the Domestic Partnership Recognition law. He has voiced his opposition to charter schools, saying "I won't favor charters. Our central focus is traditional public schools."

He wants to tax the wealthy even more heavily than now in order to expand the role and influence of



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the “traditional public schools” even further into the lives of children. As he explained in his inauguration speech: “We will ask the very wealthy to pay a little more in taxes so that we can offer full-day universal pre-K and after-school programs for every middle school student.”

Last November, when addressing business leaders who would be taxed including the owners of Kushner Properties, SL Green Realty, the Durst Organization and RXR Realty, [he was clear](#) regarding his progressivism:

Everything you’ve heard about me is true.... I am not a free-marketeer.... I believe in the heavy hand of government.

This was music to the ears of progressives who swarmed over his campaign with financing and endorsements, [including](#) Hollywood lefties like Alec Baldwin, Harry Belafonte, Sarah Jessica Parker, Susan Sarandon, and Kathleen Turner.

Just exactly what is de Blasio likely to accomplish, in addition to extorting the rich to fund babes barely weaned and shutting down charter schools? For one thing, [the rebirth of ACORN](#) under the name New York Communities for Change (NYCC) run by the same head of ACORN operations, Bertha Lewis. Already well-funded with \$400,000 from the United Federation of Teachers (UFT) to battle charter schools, Lewis can already see bigger things ahead: [more city funding](#) for “affordable housing units.”

That’s just the beginning. Welfare reforms supported by Mayors Giuliani and Bloomberg have to be rejected and replaced with more lenient requirements and more generous cash payouts to the poor. Wrote Heather MacDonald at the [New York Post](#):

The central idea of [the original] welfare reform was that recipients should work or look for work in exchange for benefits. This principle exploded [progressive] welfare ideology, which held that it was demeaning to require work.

Under de Blasio one can expect the number on welfare in New York City, currently at 350,000, to explode once those onerous work requirements are removed.

And as reported by the *Post*, de Blasio has vowed to “stop efforts to divert individuals [helping them find work first before putting them on the dole] from accessing cash assistance.” And he thinks that the number of those New Yorkers already receiving SNAP assistance — more than one in five — is at least 250,000 too low. In his mayoral “blueprint” de Blasio once again was clear: “Providing basic income and food security to all New Yorkers [is] a key responsibility of government.”

Much of this won’t happen, of course, to the great disappointment of the likes of Sarandon, Baldwin, Obama and Lewis. As Howard Dean, the inevitable liberal candidate for office and former governor of Vermont, asked rhetorically:

Do I expect him to keep every one of his promises? Absolutely not.

This is the truth of mayors and governors: until you sit in the chair, you don’t really know.

He’s going to find out that he can’t keep all of his promises.

That’s not to say that the new hard-left mayor of New York won’t attempt to implement his progressive agenda. But moving the city even more sharply to the left is like turning [the Allure of the Seas](#). There are other political agendas at play in the city and in Albany where de Blasio may just find less willingness to turn New York City into a vast social-welfare experiment to satisfy progressives’ anti-capitalist, anti-freedom agenda.



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Photo of Bill de Blasio after being sworn in as mayor of New York City: AP Images

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