

Eugenics at the Border

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In 2003, George W. Bush invaded Iraq espousing the values of democracy, freedom, and human rights—values that were purported to be wielded by the United States as it reduced the Middle Eastern country to rubble. It is very well-known now that this was a farce, but many Americans see it as a past mistake that has little bearings on the present. This is a very grave misconception.

With a whirlwind of headlines accusing countries outside the West of various crimes that can be readily found in our own backyards, it is important to reiterate the reality of the various ICE migrant detention centers stationed along the U.S.-Mexico border.

Those who are fleeing violence are detained and labelled migrants before given the opportunity to establish themselves as asylum-seekers or refugees. This is a distinction that is central to this issue and is what allows the United States to perpetuate their defiance of international law, particularly the United Nations' 1951 Convention relating to the Status of Refugees. According to Amnesty International, in its "Illegal Pushbacks, Arbitrary Detention & Ill-treatment of Asylum Seekers in the United States" report, the Trump administration have "violated both US and international law, and appeared to be aimed at the full dismantling of the US asylum system."¹

After perpetuating the overthrow and subjugation of countries across the Global South, it's disappointing but unsurprising to see so many Western countries implementing xenophobic policies. The United States has been the most headstrong and unashamed of its fascist tendencies, with the migrant detention centers being numerous and engaging in large-scale human rights abuses. To clarify, the label 'fascism' is often flung haphazardly, but there is no doubt that the implementation of ultranationalist and anti-immigration policies are manifestations of fascism in the West. From the UK's Boris Johnson to France's Marine Le Pen, Donald Trump to former Japanese PM Shinzo Abe, far right ideology has reached the mainstream across the West.² The aforementioned leaders preside over countries that have plundered the homes of these refugees, who run towards the shut shores of their exploiters, hoping in vain their humanity may finally be realized.³⁴ Interventionism and imperialism are not attributed to the oft-glorified West as much as they truly should be, which is why the label fascism seems so extreme when, in reality, it is the most apt descriptor of current political and economic trends. The United States has been the most flagrant—its history of interventionism being far too extensive to be recounted here—as its privatized sectors have become increasingly reminiscent of Nazi Germany's for-profit healthcare industry. In fact, Nazi Germany offered a lot of economic stimulus for private businesses, surely more than any social program for the poor. How much investment is given to public housing and education compared to the military-industrial complex? The slashing of funding for the Department of Sanitation and CUNY is something we're all familiar with, as well as the relatively meager reduction in funding for the NYPD. We've seen egregious bailouts for Wall Street and other large corporations in the United States, notably 2008 and now. Healthcare is for-profit in the US. Hitler promised the top 1% profits at the expense of democracy and many

American companies, that still exist today, flocked to invest in Hitler's economy. The Nazis promised relaxed regulation, not dissimilar to Trump's consistent promises of deregulation. Fascism is not foreign to the United States. It has been a latent but ever-present current driving the actions taken in the Global South as well as domestically. Elsewhere, the UK threatens to dissolve their public health service and France continues to perpetuate Islamophobic laws, despite many of its refugees coming from Muslim-majority former French colonies.⁵ There is a central commonality between the modern imperial core and infamous former fascist regimes, a commonality that lies within the question of who these societies overwhelmingly serve. The concentration camps on the border are undeniably America's fascism rearing its face, no longer hidden from the mainstream. To consider this event isolated and not consider it as a *symptom* would be doing a disservice to all who are forced to flee their homes across the world, who perhaps know our country better than we do.

A letter from Project South, a nonprofit organization advocating for social justice, has uncovered the statements of a nurse at Irwin County Detention Center in Georgia. The nurse, Dawn Wooten, detailed the abhorrent COVID-susceptible conditions people detained by ICE are forced to live amongst. From bug-infested food to no organized social distancing in the facility, every detained individual is at risk of death from disease. Wooten further says, "Hispanics are treated the worst in the facility. I mean literally. They can't speak English. Even though they [ICDC] have the language line there, if they're trying to get understanding of their health it's like take these pills and get the hell on...[Hispanics] hurt and suffer through it."⁶ The letter describes a complete lack of cleaning supplies, increasingly delayed meals, and the forcing of detainees to undergo solitary confinement for no reason other than a complete inability to enforce social distancing otherwise.

If the entire situation wasn't ripe for mass extermination of migrants already, Wooten asserts she had heard from "several detained women" who asked her why they "had a hysterectomy." The case of Pauline Binam, a Cameroonian woman who was sterilized against her will in the same detention center in Georgia that whistleblower Wooten is referring to, clearly demonstrates a widespread occurrence. The doctor responsible for these forced hysterectomies has been recently identified as Mahendra Amin, a gynecologist. If Amin is the "uterus collector" responsible for the countless amount of hysterectomies that Wooten observed among women in the Irwin County Detention Center, there is a serious possibility of what the whistleblower calls an "experimental concentration camp."⁷

More than 160 Democratic lawmakers have signed a letter calling for an investigation into this issue of human rights abuses in ICE detention centers.

Rallies are also being held in Miami, where allegations of "Muslim detainees being forced to choose between eating pork or eating rotten halal meat" have recently surfaced.⁸

A 50-year old Honduran man recently died after being infected with coronavirus at an ICE detention center in Texas, where over 50 detained immigrants have tested positive for COVID-19.⁹

There are countless accusations coming from the United States and its parasitic partners in the West against the countries they subjugate, with the last resort being a manufactured claim to justify the annihilation of life. Saddam Hussein, Thomas Sankara, Evo Morales, Lula da Silva, and Muammar Qaddafi—among many, many others—know this well, but can anyone hold the West accountable?

¹ “USA: ‘You Don’t Have Any Rights Here’ Illegal Pushbacks, Arbitrary Detention & Ill-Treatment of Asylum-Seekers in the United States,” *Amnesty International*, <https://www.amnesty.org/download/Documents/AMR5191012018ENGLISH.PDF>

² *Human Rights Watch*, <https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2019/country-chapters/european-union#>

³ Takudzwa Hillary Chiwanza, “France Has Assassinated 22 African Presidents Since 1963.” *The African Exponent*, 2019, <https://www.africanexponent.com/post/10487-france-has-always-carried-evil-imperialism-with-it>

⁴ Nkrumah, Kwame, “*Neo-Colonialism, the Last Stage of Imperialism*,” 1965, <https://politicalanthro.files.wordpress.com/2010/08/nkrumah.pdf>

⁵ Hassan, Mohamed. “Is French fascism making a comeback?” *TRT World*, 2017, <https://www.trtworld.com/magazine/a-brief-history-of-french-fascism-349923>

⁶ *Project South*, 2020, <https://projectsouth.org/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/OIG-ICDC-Complaint-1.pdf>

⁷ Crump, James. “‘Like an experimental concentration camp’: Doctors performed hysterectomies on migrant women in camps, says whistleblower,” *The Independent*, 2020, <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/americas/aoc-ice-detention-camp-surgery-investigation-whistleblower-b447596.html>

⁸ Molina, Alejandrina. “Activists to hold protest rally after reports of ICE officials forcing Muslim detainees to eat pork,” *Religion News Service*, 2020, <https://religionnews.com/2020/09/17/3850195/>

⁹ “Honduran Man Dies of COVID-19 in ICE Jail,” *Democracy Now!*, 2020, https://www.democracynow.org/2020/9/1/headlines/honduran_man_dies_of_covid_19_in_ice_jail