

US immigration nightmare continues amid media blackout

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Over 570 immigrant children remain in detention centers and foster facilities throughout the United States weeks or months after the government separated them from their parents this past spring.

Some 460 parents have already been deported without their children, many after being coerced into signing forms waiving their right to reunite with their sons or daughters. In many of these cases, the parents will never see their children again.

The government has deemed hundreds of parents “ineligible” to reunite with their children on the grounds that they have criminal records. This deliberate mass theft of children by the government is among the most shameful events in US history.

These crimes are being ignored by the corporate media. Since the beginning of August, the *New York Times* opinion page has featured eight op-ed pieces or editorial board statements relating to allegations of Trump’s ties to Russia or the #MeToo hysteria, but none about the conditions facing immigrants. The *Washington Post* has published seven opinion pieces or editorial board statements about Russia and #MeToo, and none about immigrants.

The children languishing in detention are living a nightmare. On Wednesday, the American Immigration Lawyers Association confirmed a report that a child died of a respiratory illness shortly after leaving an Obama-era family detention center in Dilley, Texas.

This week, reports revealed that guards at different Southwest Key immigrant foster/detention centers were arrested for raping and molesting detained children. One HIV-positive federal contractor forced oral sex and attempted to penetrate a number of boys detained at a facility in Mesa, Arizona. The victims were all unaccompanied children. In a separate case, a second federal contractor at a Southwest Key facility in

Phoenix, Arizona slipped into children’s’ rooms and molested them.

According to a new study by Syracuse University, the Trump administration specifically targeted parents crossing the border *with* children for criminal prosecution at a higher rate than those without children. “The Administration has not explained its rationale for prosecuting parents with children when that left so many other adults without children who were not being referred for prosecution,” the Syracuse report said.

Susan B. Long, coordinator of Syracuse University’s Transactional Records Access Clearinghouse, told *Buzzfeed News*: “It wasn’t like [the prosecutions] were automatic; this was a conscious choice.” She continued: “We have yet to know the number of separations due to them being criminally prosecuted ... We looked really hard for things to suggest data is unreliable or make you doubt it. We were so shocked. The Border Patrol data indicated they referred only one parent, and there were lots of separations.”

On Thursday, the Trump administration filed papers in court seeking to abdicate any responsibility for reuniting children with their parents. The Department of Justice said nonprofits and immigration attorneys should instead be responsible for locating parents.

Nonprofits should use “volunteers” to track parents and children, the court filings said. “Plaintiff’s counsel [the American Civil Liberties Union] should use their considerable resources and their network of law firms, NGOs, volunteers, and others, together with the information that Defendants [the Department of Justice] have provided (or will soon provide), to establish contact with possible class members in foreign countries.”

The filing continues: “Plaintiffs’ counsel should ascertain whether each possible class member wishes to

be reunified with his or her child, or whether he or she wishes to waive reunification.” The ACLU “would then be responsible for providing Defendants with a final, unequivocal, written confirmation of whether each possible class member wants to be reunified with his or her child.”

This document should be introduced as evidence that the US government is committing crimes against humanity. The requirement that parents prove “unequivocally” that they wish to be reunited with their children is the type of malicious demand that could have been put forward by the Nazis.

Judge Dana Sabraw, who is overseeing the lawsuit, issued an order to compel the Trump administration to provide information about the separated children and their parents by August 10. Since the Trump administration has already flouted court-ordered deadlines, the order is little more than a suggestion.

Meanwhile, the administration is planning to drastically slash the total number of refugees it will accept in 2019. According to sources within the White House, the number of refugees seeking to escape imperialist war and persecution who are admitted could fall to 15,000 from its present annual level of 45,000.

Politico reported Thursday that Trump’s fascist aide Stephen Miller is directing the intensification of the anti-immigrant campaign. “Behind the scenes, Miller, 32, has been contacting every relevant Cabinet secretary to convey his interpretation of the president’s thoughts on the refugee cap in an effort to sway the decision, said a former White House official familiar with the discussions,” the publication wrote.

“Inside the country, the Miller cadre intends to make life more difficult for undocumented immigrants already living and working here,” *Politico* continued. “US Immigration and Customs Enforcement, said another Republican close to the White House, intends to continue with its increased focus on worksite enforcement.”

This confirms the *World Socialist Web Site* warning in its July 26 Perspective that an intensification of workplace raids means the administration is fighting to divide growing social opposition in the working class along racial and national lines.

The Trump administration’s attack on immigrants is bound up with the Republican Party’s efforts to mobilize its fascistic base in advance of the 2018

midterm elections. According to a July 18 Gallup poll, the total percentage of Republicans who list immigration as the most important issue in the US increased from 17 percent before the administration implemented its “zero tolerance” family separation policy in May to 35 percent in July.

As a result of this increase, immigration has now overtaken “dissatisfaction with government” as the most important issue on voters’ minds as the election approaches.

Outside of this section of far-right Republicans, Americans overwhelmingly support family reunification and the provision of citizenship rights to undocumented people. But the Democratic Party, working in collaboration with the military-intelligence agencies, the Trump administration and the major tech corporations, has conducted an operation against left-wing, pro-immigrant and anti-fascist views on social media platforms like Facebook.

On Tuesday, Facebook announced that it had banned an event page for an “Abolish ICE” rally called by activists demanding the reunification of immigrant parents and children and the abolition of the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency. Facebook cited an analysis by the Atlantic Council warning of accounts that are “left of the political spectrum” and “sought to promote divisions and set Americans against one another.”

No such censorship is needed for the corporate media, where the attack on immigrants has already been relegated to the back pages.

The corporations, the two major parties, the bourgeois press and the entire political establishment are guilty of horrific crimes against immigrants and are seeking to block opposition among workers and youth to these crimes. The only way to defend democratic rights and ensure that workers have the right to travel from country to country free of harassment is to break with the two parties of American capitalism and build a mass revolutionary socialist movement.



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