

Caging Children in the 'Land of the Free'

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Region: [USA](#)

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Despite what United States government officials and the deluded groupies of President Donald Trump like to proclaim, the U.S. is not now and never has been the 'land of the free and the home of the brave.' Attempting to identify its most disgraceful action in a long history of disgraceful actions, or its most shocking behavior in 243 years of such abominations, is impossible; there are simply too many to choose from.

This writer attempted to determine the nation's worst actions just since World War II. The choices seemed endless:

- The McCarthy witch hunts.
- The Korean War
- Police brutality against people of African descent who were demanding equal rights.
- The Vietnam War.
- Police brutality against people protesting the Vietnam War.
- Any of the following invasions:
 - Dominican Republic
 - Angola
 - Cambodia
 - Nicaragua
 - Laos
 - Lebanon
 - Grenada
 - Panama
 - Iraq (twice)
 - Afghanistan
 - Libya
 - Syria
 - Yemen
- Any of the following situations, where the U.S. orchestrated anti-Communist 'interventions', overthrew democratically-elected governments, or supported brutal dictators:
 - Ghana
 - Indonesia
 - Democratic Republic of Congo
 - Brazil
 - Chile
 - Argentina
 - El Salvador
 - Yugoslavia
 - Colombia

These lists could go on.

Today, however, the focus of this writer's attention is another shocking, brutal and inhumane policy currently being perpetrated, and which the populace seems either to be unaware of, or simply doesn't care about. He is referring to the separation of families at the U.S. - Mexico border, and the caging of children.

Does not this offend the sensibilities of any human being? Families are being torn apart and children as young as infancy are being snatched from their mothers' arms and put in cages. Several have died in U.S. custody.

Does not the phrase 'children in cages' shock everyone?

Occasionally, a sensational news story will appear about some family that kept their children caged. Sometimes the story only comes to light when a child dies. The perpetrators are arrested, charged with a variety of crimes and shamed by everyone. Their victimized children are placed in foster care, where they will hopefully receive better treatment.

Yet when the same behavior is performed by the U.S. government it is perfectly acceptable. Kidnap children by seizing them from their parents' arms, don't let their parents know where they are, and cage them. If they die, well, that's just too bad, isn't it?

This is typical for the U.S., and other nations as well. Something done on an individual basis is a shocking crime, but done by the government, it is perfectly legal and acceptable. Let us take murder as an example. The murder rate in the U.S. is high, but pales in comparison to the rate of murder committed by the United States. As long as someone is wearing a uniform, and the victim isn't a U.S. citizen (although there are certainly exceptions to this bizarre rule), killing someone is not only not a crime, it is an act of heroism and patriotism. Since the end of World War II, the U.S. is estimated to have caused the deaths of 20,000,000 people worldwide. When hijackers rammed jets into three sites in the eastern U.S., killing about 3,000 people, the U.S. began two wars in retaliation. The number of people who died as a result of those wars is, to date, about 1000 times the number who died on September 11. Yet the U.S. populace doesn't seem to care.

In 1995, Timothy McVeigh killed nearly 200 people when he bombed a federal building in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma. This was a shocking and unspeakable action that resulted, ultimately, in his execution (capital punishment is a topic for another discussion). Yet when the U.S. government bombs buildings around the world, or finances and supports the bombings of homes, hospitals, United Nations refugee centers and other buildings in Syria, Palestine, Yemen, Iraq, Afghanistan and numerous other nations, no one is charged with terrorism or murder. McVeigh's death toll is nothing compared to that of the U.S. government.

But let us get back to the caged children of the U.S. The idea of caging human beings is not new for the U.S. government; during World War II, American citizens of Japanese descent were put into cages by the thousands; they, like Mexican children, were somehow considered less than human, and therefore caging them, like stray dogs, was acceptable.

Where is the outrage? One should ask oneself: why am I not demonstrating in the streets against a U.S. policy that seizes innocent children from their parents and puts them in cages? Why am I content to look the other way as these children are maltreated in their

caged environments? What is wrong with me that I condone this by my silence?

This is how Donald Trump 'makes America great again.' These are actions that have the support of his ignorant, racist, misogynist, homophobic, Islamophobic base. This is how the U.S. government makes racism fashionable again, pitting the white, European-descended, uneducated, often older citizens against everyone else. This is why hate crimes are increasing, not only in the U.S., but around the world. The U.S. influence, for better or worse (usually for much worse) is felt globally, and racism approved by the U.S. president gains some legitimacy everywhere.

But it is no more pronounced than right in the so-called 'land of the free and the home of the brave'. It is there that the government officially cages Mexican children, allows and finances the imprisonment for up to 15 years of Palestinian children accused of throwing rocks at heavily-armed, Israeli occupation soldiers. It is the U.S. that condones and finances the slaughter of school children in Yemen, with a U.S.-supplied bomb dropping on a school bus of young boys a few months ago, killing 40 of them, and another bomb killing 13 school-aged girls this a few weeks ago.

And yet, Trump supporters, both within the citizenry and within Congress, get teary-eyed as the president hugs an American flag. They cheer as he attempts to force Congress to pay for the multi-million-dollar boondoggle of a wall across the southern border. They support him as he proclaims that, in a conflict between avowed white nationalists and anti-racists, there are 'good people' on both sides.

What will it take for the U.S. citizenry to awaken from the profound sleep of apathy? If they haven't done so yet, this writer cannot imagine what will be necessary.

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Featured image: Children in immigration detention facilities are required to recite the Pledge of Allegiance each morning, according to the Washington Post. (Photo: U.S. Customs and Border Patrol)

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