

11-2019

Review of *Boats, Borders, and Bases: Race, the Cold War, and the Rise of Migrant Detention in the United States*

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Recommended Citation

Rodriguez, Tyler C. (2019) "Review of *Boats, Borders, and Bases: Race, the Cold War, and the Rise of Migrant Detention in the United States*," *Armstrong Undergraduate Journal of History*. Vol. 9 : Iss. 2 , Article 12.

DOI: 10.20429/aujh.2019.090212

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/aujh/vol9/iss2/12>

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Boats, Borders, and Bases: Race, the Cold War, and the Rise of Migrant Detention in the United States.

By Jenna M. Loyd and Alison Mountz. Oakland, California: University of California Press, 2018.

ISBN 978-0-520-28796-9

In November 1980 during the midst of the American presidential election between incumbent Jimmy Carter and successful challenger Ronald Reagan, a humanitarian crisis was unfolding off the Florida coast. On the tiny island of Cayo Labos in the Bahamas, Bahamian police were engaged in a violent confrontation with Haitian nationals seeking refuge. Media recorded tear gas being shot into the interior of the island. As Jenna M. Loyd and Alison Mountz state in their new book, *Boats, Borders, and Bases: Race, the Cold War, and the Rise of Migrant Detention in the United States*, “this scene on Cayo Lobos occurred only a few months after the spectacular Mariel Boatlift, wherein some 125,000 Cubans arrived in south Florida after Fidel Castro selectively opened travel to the United States from Cuba’s Mariel Harbor. For people familiar with migration in the Caribbean at the time, this protracted crisis on Cayo Lobos was a stark- if not surprising- illustration of the racial politics and geopolitics in the region” (32). The United States played a large role in this seemingly intra-Caribbean conflict, as the United States failed to pay attention to the plight faced by Haitians to the same degree as the Cuban crisis. In the twentieth century, anti-Black racism significantly influenced American immigration policy.

The Cold War and United States intervention in the Caribbean and Latin America displaced scores of people. Loyd and Mountz argue that the American response to Cold War migrants, rather than the terrorist attacks of 9/11, established the legal and institutional basis for contemporary migration detention and border-deterrent practices in the United States. They draw on various

academic disciplines including sociology, criminal justice, and geography to create a cohesive narrative about the racialized context of migration control applied to Afro-Caribbean people during the late twentieth century and how this and the political culture of the United States led to the development and expansion of the largest detention system in the world.

Boats, Borders, and Bases is divided into three parts, which are organized chronologically while tracing the development and expansion of what the authors state to be the world's largest detention system. Each part is divided further into two or three chapters, which each trace a facet of the greater theme the part attempts to take on. The argument and purpose of each chapter is clearly stated in each chapter's introduction, and the chapters themselves are further divided into several subsections that utilize both data and narrative anecdotes to support the secondary arguments made by the chapters. This distinct writing style allows for the text to be accessible to an audience outside academia. For example, those who have a personal or political stake in American migration policy such as activists could easily follow the arguments made in this text. Despite the text's accessibility, it never strays from its historical and geographical roots. This is also supported through the text's distinct writing style, as chapters consistently refer to one another, a practice that helps to strengthen and reinforce the main argument made by the text.

As previously mentioned, the text utilizes both data-driven and narrative anecdotes of multiple disciplines. Congressional and governmental records, including records from governmental agencies such as Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and the Department of Homeland Security (DHS) are also effectively used. These sources hold significant power, as they allow for the reader to understand the official stances of the United States government in the words of government officials. Internal memos are also used to reveal the motives behind detention policy, motives that are often unknown to the American public during the time. The sources used,

particularly the government records, allow for the reader to understand the internal processes that led to the development of the world's largest detention system.

Since the 1980s, the United States sought ways to discourage Afro-Caribbean migration to the United States. This anti-Black racism, as traced through the text, influenced policies of deterrence, detention, and expulsion. In this text, military bases are discussed as agents of the state to enforce migration control and exert power over groups of people, and a secondary argument is made that these too are borderland spaces. The role of boats as significant actors in migration policy is also discussed, as eventually the United States would begin to intercept boats carrying asylum seekers. This book is a significant contribution to the history and geography of migration policy and detention. It sets a precedent for this field to be further studied, and I strongly encourage any person interested in migration policy and detention to read this text. Loyd and Mountz are not hesitant to delve into the touchy politics of the topic, and in their coda they describe the current state of migrant detention in the era of the Trump administration. There is little doubt that this text will inspire future academic research in contemporary migration and detention policy in the United States and beyond.

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Tyler Crespo Rodriguez is a fifth-year undergraduate at Stony Brook University and a member of both The National Society of Collegiate Scholars and Phi Alpha Theta History Honor Society. He

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