

## **Ishmael Reed Interviews James Demby on Neo-Fascist Victory in Italy**

Ishmael Reed: What's going to happen to you guys over there that got Mussolini imitators, The Brothers of Italy, in charge? Are they saying that immigrants are lusting after Italian women, which is how Trump won over here. Scared white women into voting for him by saying that Mexican men were coming after them.

James Demby: Giorgia Meloni wants to build a naval blockade to stop the immigrants. She's just horrible. Horrible.

IR: She's going to link up with the Trump forces here?

JD: She and the other guy, Matteo Salvini, are good friends of Trump, Viktor Orbán in Hungary, Marine Le Pen in France, and good friends of this horrible fascist party in Spain called Vox.

IR: What's going to happen to Black people in Europe?

JD: I can't tell you about France. Germany right now is very multiethnic (but has an uprising Neo-Nazi party); Sweden is also multiethnic (but also has an uprising of Neo Nazis), right? To tell you about Italy- this guy Salvini was trying to take advantage of issues against Colored immigrants. He says they're taking jobs from Italians. His slogan is "Italians First."

IR: Are there hate crimes being committed against Black people?

JD: You can be accosted on the streets. There are a lot of soccer players who are African. They experience racism even if they're famous.

IR: How does it affect you in everyday life?

JD: It's worse in the South.

IR. Why?

JD: Basically a wave of slavery coming from Africa. Men are being used as very cheap labor. It has been going on for many years. That's a problem. And they live in slums that are even worse than plantations. That happens in the South, like Calabria or Puglia. And there is this form of slavery, which is called "Caporalato" (Corporal) because it is controlled by men who are nicknamed "Corporals." This is what this form of exploitation is called.

IR: You have some forms of terrible exploitation of the labor that is imported from where?

JD: Africa mostly

IR: Where are these Africans coming from?

JD: You have huge masses from various countries. They can be from West Africa, Ghana, Mali, Guinea, etc., but they can also come from countries like Syria, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, etc.

IR: Which industries do they work for?

JD: They mostly work for bosses out in the country, in the agricultural industry, you know, they pick up tomatoes, but they also work in the construction industry. Like Black Americans were picking up cotton, they pick up tomatoes, and they don't even have plantations because they live in real ghettos; I mean, the term slums is not even enough to describe the quality of life they're living.

IR: They don't get paid enough.

JD: They work 12 hours a day and are paid next to nothing, like 3 euros an hour. Tomatoes we eat in supermarkets are coming from these fields. So we are all involved. And to tell you the truth, they are migrants (80%) and Italians (20%). These forms of exploitation are illegal but still pretty much active.

IR: Thanks for this because nobody knows what's happening in the world. The media elected Trump because of his entertainment value. His being a con artist and buffoon brings them ratings, and he manipulates them. You have to go to the BBC and Al Jazeera to find out what's happening worldwide because MSNBC and CNN do Trump all day because it's cheap.

JD: Yeah! (laugh) We also talk about Trump because now we're having the same Trump problem. We already have a huge part of the parliament that is Trump-oriented.