“WHEN IN DOUBT, DEPORT!”: U.S. DEPORTATION AND THE LOCAL POLICING OF
GLOBAL MIGRATION DURING THE 1920s

BY

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DISSERTATION

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Abstract

This dissertation focuses on deportation practice throughout the 1920s and its social and cultural ramifications, arguing for the necessity of looking beyond the national policy frame to reveal the full significance of deportation in American society. The project highlights the intersecting ideas about race, political ideologies, civil liberties, criminology and pathology, and gender and sexual transgressions that informed the ways a variety of actors enacted deportation and negotiated its meaning on the ground. In so doing, it reveals how deportation served as a locus through which the politics of inclusion and exclusion was remapped. I illustrate what was behind the steady yearly rise in deportees, from 2,762 in 1920 to 16,631 by 1930, and in doing so, question the dominant periodization of deportation, which has often presented it as a series of hysterical, episodic outbursts of repression. Instead, I argue that it was a far more continuous and momentous process of social policing of the national body, and highlight the 1920s as a crucial period when exclusion and belonging were negotiated, not only through legislation, but in the streets, prisons, hospitals, asylums, and media discourse. As immigration officials and local authorities sought to enforce abstract policies, they ran up against the reality of migrants as embodied individuals and communities, whose national and racial identities, sexuality, mental and physical health did not fit within neatly prescribed legal categories.

My dissertation is organized along the nesting scales of space at which deportation was practiced: global, national, local, institutional, and the body in detention and transportation. Each of these levels allows for a broader understanding of the intersecting points of authority and state control, ideology and pragmatics required for the building of an unprecedented deportation machinery. At the global level, I explore U.S. participation in international networks to coordinate deportations, the complexity of addressing shifting borders and imperial landscapes,
discourses around other nation’s deportation practices, and challenges posed by deportees whose trajectories did not fit simple migration patterns. The national level addresses the ways in which deportation served not only to create new delineations of potential citizen or undesirable migrant, but also to build the power of the state, even as it continued to be plagued by insufficient funding and struggles for greater consolidation. At the local level, I trace deportation into the nation’s heartland, arguing that while the law was federal, the enforcement was intensely shaped by local political agendas and police forces, ethnic and racial biases, and labor needs. The institutional chapter explores how the spaces where deportation operated--prisons, mental asylums, hospitals, juvenile reformatories--were all critical sites in the early twentieth century for the identification, surveillance, and punishment of individuals within hierarchies of racialized bodies. Finally, I go down to the level of embodied experience, as deportees underwent long periods of detention in county jails, private homes, and makeshift holding centers, train journeys to the ports for removal, and the complex logistics of shipping and ground transport abroad. Examined from these angles, deportation becomes far more than a tool of immigration policy at the borders. Indeed, deportation practice during the early 20th century expanded the reach of the bureaucratic state and brought the process of determining inclusion and exclusion into cities, towns, and institutions across the interior of the country.
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I also owe debts of gratitude to many of my other professors at University of Illinois, who exposed me to a range of literatures, ideas, and philosophies of writing and teaching history. I am particularly grateful to the late Mark Leff, in whose seminar on “Red Scares and Hunts for Un-Americans” this project was initially conceived. Even its early stages, Mark’s thorough, incisive comments and questions shaped this project for the better, and many of my most important arguments came out of conversations with him. His passion for the work of teaching history continues to stay with me. Within the UIUC Department of History, I also want to thank the office staff, who have helped me through the program in countless ways, and always done so with great kindness and patience. Special thanks to Tom Bedwell, for all his hard work and reassurances that pragmatic concerns would work out, and to Shannon Croft for all her help, and in particular, her patient and thorough formatting revisions of this project during its final stages.

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During my research year, in the midst of the isolating experience of traveling to new cities and spending day after day sitting alone and poring over documents, the kindness and assistance of the archivists and librarians I worked with was critical. I am grateful to the helpful and patient archival staff at the National Archives in Washington D.C, the YIVO Institute, the New York Public Library, the Tamiment Library & Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives, the Immigration History Research Center at the University of Minnesota, and the University of Illinois at Chicago Special Collections.

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To my parents—I don’t know how to begin to express my gratitude to you, not only for your support during this process, but for instilling in me a love of history and reading, and just as importantly, the political commitment to addressing and working on important subjects. To my father, thank you for your constant encouragement, for your unceasing faith in my abilities, for always listening to me talk about my work with genuine interest, and for always doing everything in your power to help me. To my mother, thank you for all of the deep conversations, for always lending an ear when I felt overwhelmed or stressed, for being a model of great
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Introduction

Following migration from Smyrna, Turkey, Eftikia Perivolas, a young ethnically Greek woman was hospitalized in 1924 for tuberculosis in Springfield, Massachusetts. Four years later, in 1928, her family was still negotiating to prevent her deportation. Originally ordered because of her disease, her deportation was still pending because of her inability to pay the bill, a condition which had rendered her subject to the “likely to become a public charge” criteria of deportation law. One of five siblings residing in the United States, Eftikia (Epychia) had lost her parents to the Turkish army in 1922.¹ The vast I.N.S. file for Eftikia Perivolas and her family is demonstrative of the multifaceted, complex interactions between the different levels of authority involved in enacting a deportation from start to finish. Her apprehension occurred at the point of contact with an ostensibly benevolent institution of the state, while local advocates intervened with the federal government and argued that if the city of Springfield did not initiate it, there should be no action. Meanwhile, the circumstances of her nation of birth (Turkey), and her ethnic nationality (Greek), at a point of violent conflict between the two called into question whether her removal could even be humanely effected, as it would require sending her to Athens, a city she had known only fleetingly as a refugee fleeing violence in Smyrna. Like so many of the cases interwoven throughout this dissertation, Eftikia’s predicament illuminates the vast logistical, international, and political questions behind the abstract policies of deportation law.

Upon the termination of her treatment, Eftikia was more fortunate than many immigrants of the era. She was not immediately deported as a public charge for her reliance on state services, but the family was warned sternly that this relief could be taken away at any moment. Unlike so

¹ Smyrna was occupied by Greece as part of the Greco-Turkish War following the First World War, but after the Turkish army regained control of the city in 1922, the city was subject to mass killings of Greek and Armenian residents.
many other deportees, Eftikia’s family had strong local contacts who intervened on her behalf and helped her eldest brother, Elias, arrange a gradual payment plan with the hospital administration for the overdue bill in order to prevent her from being categorized as a recipient of public welfare. Writing in August 1924 on behalf of the Perivolas family, and Elias in particular, Dr. James A. Seaman explained that after their parents were killed by the Turkish army, Elias brought over his siblings and had demonstrated nothing but the most commendable behavior and qualifications for American belonging. In spite of these endorsements, “the cancellation of warrant of arrest in the case of your sister,” the Commissioner of Immigration at Boston reminded Elias, “is predicated upon hospital expenses being paid. I have also been directed to inform you that deportation proceedings will be instituted in her case if she is allowed to become a public charge.” In a complicated set of negotiations which reveals the manifold points of authority at which deportation might be initiated (or, in this rare case, prevented), the Commissioner at Boston received permission from the Bureau of Immigration at Washington to grant a conditional cancellation of the deportation order, at which point he communicated with the Director of the Department of Public Welfare for the State of Massachusetts, who in turn relayed communication from the Springfield, Massachusetts Board of Health, which passed along the hospital’s bill.

This convoluted network of contact led to the establishment of the fact that $40 had been paid on the original bill, and that a balance of $300.86 remained unpaid as of September, 1924. However, in spite of an arrangement between Perivolas family and the Springfield Board of Health that Elias would pay $10 a month until the hospital debt had been paid off, the family found itself in arrears by 1927, at which point the balance remained at $212.86, with no payment for several months. The family, as well as local advocates wrote in on their behalf, requesting a
reprieve and explaining the unique and tragic circumstances faced by the family. An interview with one of the sisters, Maria (Xantippe) Perivolas, in April of 1928 revealed that Eftikia was living in Springfield, Massachusetts with her sisters Maria and Atina, and her brother Savvos. Both Elias and Savvos had suffered from health issues and been out of work, but Savvos was receiving compensation for his injury of $16 per week, from which he was supporting the family, with the assistance of the third brother, Marinos, who was working as a baker in New York City. Eftikia was taking evening courses at a high school and working as a housekeeper, while Atina and Maria were both minors and full time students.

While Maria’s statement is moving, it is perhaps the letter from Attorney F.N. Newell advocating for the family that is most revealing for this study. It shines light on the persistent confusion over governmental jurisdiction over deportation cases and the various local, state, and federal actors involved in enforcing deportation statutes on the ground. “The City of Springfield by its Health Department knows the circumstances of the case and thus far has not desired to press the matter or even make a bill,” Newell wrote, questioning, “If the city does not call upon the state in the matter then why should ‘The Department’ press the matter.” His inquiry echoed multidirectional conflicts throughout the period between local officials and ‘The Department,’ or the Bureau of Immigration over who should institute deportation proceedings, why, and at whose expense. Beyond the concerns domestically, however, the complexities of deportation also lay in their international dimensions. Immigration officials who investigated the cases concluded that while Eftikia was a native of Turkey, at the moment, “Turkey will not issue passports to its citizens of Greek race to return there.” Thus, the U.S. found itself constrained by the reality that every deportation had another side and their power to deport was far from unilateral. Like so many deportees, past and present, Eftikia’s removal would have been to a “homeland” which
was not, in any true sense of the word, her own. As one of her attorney’s appealed to the sympathies of the immigration authorities, Greece was a land where the family had “no relatives, nor had they any friends… Greece is to them a foreign country and they have there no status, no home, no friends, and no way to live.”

This dissertation focuses on the practice of deportation during the 1920s and its social and cultural ramifications, arguing that it is necessary to look beyond the national policy frame to reveal the full significance of deportation for American society. It addresses how intersecting ideas about race, crime, radicalism, class, gender, sexuality, and Americanism shaped how deportation was practiced and negotiated on the ground throughout this period. Deportation was newly critical in the 1920s in drawing social boundaries, remapping the politics of inclusion and exclusion in American society, and creating the modern discourse of immigrant “illegality”.

Through the policing of Americanism, political ideology, criminality, health, and race, deportation has played a fundamental role in determining how the United States has conceived of who is or can become an American, which immigrants are desirable and undesirable, and what factors pose a threat to the national body. At the same time, as the government negotiated the creation of a nascent infrastructure for actually enforcing and implementing deportation law, it ended the reach of the immigration state into the interior of the nation and redefined the relationship between the state and its foreign-born denizens.

This project explores the different levels of space within which deportation practice was enacted. These spaces extend from the intensely local--the ethnic neighborhood, the urban streets, the local jail cell; to the global--the inter-governmental disputes and agreements, the coordination and communication, and the international and imperial contexts which made U.S.

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2 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4762, File 55211/603.
deportation proceedings a complex subject for those seeking to enforce it. These spaces, rather than the halls of congress, were where national aspirations of deportation became realities. While existing scholarship on deportation has focused largely on legislation, I insist that rather than a history of laws, deportation history must also be an account of deportees. As deportees underwent deportation, their trajectories and experiences were shaped by each of these levels of space. At the same time, as immigration officials and local authorities sought to enforce abstract policies, they ran up against the reality of migrants as embodied individuals who inhabited distinct and overlapping spaces, from the institutions they were gathered from to the global spaces throughout which they had traveled to arrive in the United States. They were also forced to grapple with them as complicated and often confounding individuals and communities, whose national and racial identities, sexuality, mental and physical health did not fit within neatly prescribed legal categories, nor clearly delineated national spaces.

Nor was deportation in practice a mere exercise of American political will. It was also a pragmatic exercise in attempting to catch and capture, examine and diagnose, detain and imprison, and ultimately, transport immigrant bodies, which often depended more on fiscal practicality, local cooperation, and immigrant agency than on criteria for American belonging handed down from Congress. Again and again, deportation rotated around the realities of immigrant bodies and the challenges and complexities of policing, assessing and transporting them. These challenges did not occur solely in policy debates in Congress, but in city streets, homes of raided immigrants, detainee’s holding cells, doctor’s examining rooms, local courts, newspapers, and public discourse, and I explore these critical spaces at the center of an evolving politics of social control and boundary drawing in American society.

My project makes a number of interconnected arguments about the significance of deportation practice during the 1920s, which contribute to a broader understanding of its centrality in American history. I insist that examining post-entry deportation as a discrete topic from exclusions at the point of entry, not only in their legal outlines, but in their practical application is critical to understanding how growing immigration regime increasingly reached all across the interior of the nation. I also demonstrate that the patterns of the actual enforcement of post-entry deportation did not always run parallel to either the application of exclusion laws at the point of entry, or to the goals of the congressional authors of the legislation. Instead, they reflected a range of agendas emanating from local officials, law enforcement, carceral and charitable institutions, and individuals. In doing so, I argue that it is necessary to question the spatial scales at which this process occurred, and to interrogate the idea of the nation as the only or most important determinant of deportation practice. While deportation policy dictates came
from above, their application and thus their lived impact, came from below, from a vast array of actors.

Deportation was more than just a facet of immigration policy—it was an active project of state-building and social policing. The practice of deportation operated at the tense nexus between the stated goals and messy reality of the state’s efforts to determine its own boundaries. Throughout the 1920s, deportation was shaped by efforts to construct stricter categories of exclusion, to more firmly define the exclusionary benefits of citizenship, and to increase the reach of the bureaucratic state. In doing so, it created an increasingly coordinated network of bureaucratic field offices, institutions, local governmental officials, and the federal Immigration Service. However, at every turn, immigration officials were thwarted by the continued fungibility of categories of nationality, race, and race, as well as by the practical, logistical, and budgetary constraints on their efforts to more actively police the nation’s immigrant population. I highlight the fact that the 1920s, rather than a lapsed period between the “red scare” and the 1930s, was in fact, a critical moment when deportation practice developed an expansive practical infrastructure, a more organized and intentional operation, and a wider spectrum of official and unofficial participants. In the process, deportation contributed to the evolution of modern citizenship as it was given meaning through technologies for the control of non-citizens and the consolidation of non-citizenship as a punitive identity.

Most work on deportation tends to give a one-dimensional impression of the process, emphasizing the debates over passage of legislation, the administrative proceedings required to reach the deportation decision in individual cases, and tracing court cases and appeals against deportation. Once the decision to deport is made, whether broadly, in terms of new categories of deportable aliens being added to law, or individually, in terms of individual migrant’s abilities to
negotiate the system and argue their cases against the government, the story tends to end there. It is important to recognize that for the thousands of immigrants caught up within the deportation machinery, the practice of deportation was far from over. Furthermore, for the government, agencies, and institutions involved, deportation was more than a set of decisions—it was a practical and strategic challenge, and often a logistical nightmare. Examining what occurred after the decision to deport an individual came down provides a critical corrective to the impression of the United States government and the INS as merely policy directors, and reminds us that their work was also a complicated administrative and bureaucratic practice on the ground. This practice brought them into new forms contact with railroad companies, prison guards, asylums, hospitals, detention centers and a wide range of other institutions and in the process, created new networks of administrative control and communication.

By studying more than just the congressional debates and formal INS proclamations, it is possible to understand the broader centrality of deportation to American society, and more to fully understand its impact, not only on individual deportees, but on the nation as a whole. Beyond illuminating the history of immigration control, deportation provides new perspectives on other critical subjects. Deportation both reflected and contributed to evolving discourses on race, political ideologies and the limits of civil liberties, ideas regarding crime and criminal types, and fears about gender and sexual transgressions. It also served to shape definitions of citizenship and American identity, as well as to tighten the association between citizenship and the right of belonging in the nation. As Daniel Kanstroom explains, “the modern deportation regime is also based on what has been called ‘citizenship as membership.’ This is the theory that citizens are fully members of United States’ constitutional community, whereas noncitizens are something less.” Deportation, I argue, is not only based on this idea, but is actively constitutive
of it, because it so clearly imposes a threat of non-membership, and the ever-present danger of being expelled from the national community.

Deportation also brought together various strains of social examination, surveillance, and punishment which were uniquely prominent in this period. In the early twentieth century, new social focus and study emerged on criminality and criminal types, deviant sexuality, mental illness, contagious disease, and dangerous political ideologies, all of which converged in discourse around deportation, and were intimately linked with debates around racial and ethnic traits, physical and mental superiority and inferiority, and eugenics. The spaces where the deportation dragnet fundamentally operated—prisons, mental asylums, hospitals, juvenile reformatories—were all critical sites for the identification, surveillance, and punishment of individuals and communities within a hierarchy of racialized bodies. Deportation history, therefore, is uniquely revealing of how, supported by emerging “scientific” studies, local officials gained new powers of examination, regulation, and castigation of bodies deemed unfit within social hierarchies. During the decade, deportation became about more than excluding people at the borders. Instead, it was a process of sorting through bodies all around the interior and choosing which were a danger to the whole, requiring punishment through expulsion.

This project expands upon the limited work on the actual practice of deportation: how local police authorities, political leaders, and INS employees identified deportable immigrants, raided their homes, workplaces, and community gathering spaces, and detained them, with

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varying forms of treatment, legal access, and community support. It particularly emphasizes how deportation was implemented in different localities and how local demographics, racial composition and prejudices, political motivations, labor realities, availability of funding, and social dynamics impacted the process of deportation. Examined from these angles, deportation becomes a far more important subject than has been previously recognized. Instead of an episodic tool of immigration policy at the national borders, deportation impacted the entirety of the nation’s heartland, and brought the process of determining inclusion and exclusion in the nation into towns, cities, farms, and labor camps across the interior of the country.

One of the major interventions of this project is in questioning the dominant periodization of deportation, and highlighting the 1920s as a crucial period when processes of exclusion and American fitness and belonging were negotiated, not only through legislation, but in the streets, prisons, hospitals, institutions, and media discourse. While the scholarship on deportation has often presented it as a series of hysterical, episodic outbursts of repression, it was in fact a more continuous and perpetual process of social policing of the national body. This project focuses on the period between the commonly cited deportation episodes of the first red scare of 1919-1920 and mass Mexican American repatriation in the 1930s. In doing so, it illustrates what was behind the rapid yearly rise in deportees, from 2,762 in 1920 to 16,631 by 1930, a moment that has been noted as significant, but never explored fully.

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When I discuss this rise in deportations, I refer to a specific form of deportation which will be the focus of this project: removals which were effected after a particular immigrant had entered the country (not debarment at the border or port through which they entered), and which were enacted through official government warrant proceedings. This form of deportation was referred to as “deportations of aliens after entry” by the Immigration Service, and was enacted with increased frequency over the course of the decade.\(^7\) In part because of increased border security (including the creation of the Border Patrol in 1924) as well as the Quota Acts of 1921 and 1924, which facilitated mass exclusion without intensive inspections, the Service shifted increasing attention to expelling “threats” which had already taken up residence in the country. In his 1924 annual report, W.W. Husband, the Commissioner General of Immigration explained that “The deportation of aliens found to be unlawfully in the United States is rapidly becoming one of the most important functions of the Immigration Service, and as the laws governing the admission of aliens become more restrictive in character the deportation problem becomes more difficult and exacting.”\(^8\) While this particular form of deportation expanded alongside, and in relation to a variety of forms of coercive or pressured departures, it remains a distinct subject. Much of the best and most thorough literature on deportation, such as Diedre Moloney’s *National Insecurities*, tends to obscure the distinctions between these forms of removals, and in doing so, assumes parallel motivations, processes, and discourses for removals at the point of entry and those after entry.\(^9\) Instead, I insist, the act of removing someone who has resided in the

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\(^7\) Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration to the Secretary of Labor (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1920). The Immigration Service also referred to this at times as “deportation of aliens under warrant,” because the practice required the issuance of an official warrant for deportation, and as “deportations (expulsions).”

\(^8\) Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration to the Secretary of Labor (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1924), 12. In the 1925 and 1926 annual reports the Commissioner echoed this sentiment nearly verbatim, and in 1927, stated “Ridding the country of undesirable aliens found to be unlawfully therein continues to be one of the most important functions of the Immigration Service.”

\(^9\) Moloney, *National Insecurities*. 
nation for a period of time (sometimes many years), is a critically different process than rejecting and removing someone at the moment of their attempted entry.

Daniel Kanstroom explains the idea of social control deportation through his development of an important division between “extended border control,” which rejects immigrants at the border according to immigration restriction policies, and “post-entry social control deportation,” which he argues turned deportation from being an immigration policy to being a public policy of its own, with the opportunity for drawing lines of inclusion and exclusion along various agendas. While scholars such as Kanstroom and Ngai have skillfully demonstrated the ways in which deportation legislation was formative of social understandings of Americanism, desirability, belonging, and outsider status, there is still a need for further research on the ways in which this played out in on-the-ground practice and implementation over the course of the 1920s. Generally parallel policy guidelines existed for the exclusion and return of individuals at the point of entry and for the return of individuals who had resided in the country for some time, but this did not always produce parallel patterns of application.

As this project navigates the various scales of space at which apprehended immigrants encountered governmental power and experienced their removals, it tackles a range of issues which were not part of the removal process for immigrants deported at the point of entry. Because the Immigration Service historically used the term “deportation” to refer to two discrete processes, it is particularly important to draw these distinctions clearly, while still remaining conscientious to how they existed in tandem in public policy, press, public understandings, as well as in the historical literature. For a father of American-born children who had been in the country for years before being removed as a criminal, or a woman who had worked in the

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10 Kanstroom, *Deportation Nation*, 146.
country for months before becoming a public charge when seeking medical assistance, the
experience of deportation was undoubtedly very different than that of an immigrant inspected
and ultimately rejected at Ellis Island or the Mexican land border. This project is concerned with
the experiences of the prior, and to the complicated paths their stories took, through varying
levels of institutional, local, and national power, and across complex and often unclear global
lines.

*Figure 1: Total Number of Individuals Deported from the United States by Year*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Deportations</th>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>4,517</td>
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<td>1922</td>
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<td>1929</td>
<td>12,908</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>16,631</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Compiled from the Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration to the Secretary of Labor (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1920-1930). Note that this chart reflects only post-entry deportations enacted through official governmental warrant proceedings, and does not include debarment at the point of entry or additional exits through repatriation or voluntary departure.*

While it is rare for a decade to neatly bookend a distinctive period, in many ways the
1920s were, in fact, a unique decade in terms of deportation. The immediate postwar period of
1919-1920 reflected a distinctly different moment in terms of migrant control—one in which
anti-radicalism and the suppression of labor organizing were tantamount in the minds of many,
but also, just as importantly, when the United States was finally able to clear its institutions and
detention centers of immigrants whose deportations had been impossible to carry out while the
war was in progress. Following that, and further diverging because of the passage of the 1921 Immigration Act, the rest of the decade had its own distinct characteristics in terms of deportation, marked most clearly by systemization, institutional coordination, and the creation of a discrete infrastructure for post-entry expulsions. With the onset of the financial crisis and ensuing depression at the end of the decade, the nature of deportation practices shifted quickly, and a new, distinctive period of acceleration and transformation of the deportation regime began.

The unique deportation state of the 1920s evolved at the intersection of a number of broader historical trends which enabled its growth, including new technologies of migrant documentation and international coordination, a growing global emphasis on controlling migration, and the legacy of an array of Progressive era institutional developments, studies, and efforts to alleviate the social problems posed by unmanaged migration. As Elliot Young notes, this transformation was not unique to the United States, but was part of a global moment in which “the concept of alien became a formal bureaucratic status linked to increasingly complex immigration restrictions around the globe… Governments developed passports, visas, and residency certificates to track and control the movement of people across borders and within national territory.” Furthermore, he explains, the mere act of entering a nation without authorization and proper documentation “became a crime punishable by incarceration and possibly detention.” While these processes had begun as early as the late nineteenth century, it was only in the 1920s that they were fully systematized and centralized in regards to deportation practice in the United States.

Although much scholarship on early deportation has focused on the congressional debates, court cases, and press coverage regarding deportations, in many ways, what set the

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decade apart from practices that had come before was largely administrative and bureaucratic. With the growth of an effective enforcement apparatus, the deportation regime experienced unprecedented expansion. The Commissioner General of Immigration welcomed this new era eagerly in his 1920 report to the Secretary of Labor, in which he celebrated the fact that “during the past year the deportation work of the bureau has been systematized and coordinated by the organization of a deportation and transportation section.” This new unit, he explained, was headed up by Chief Inspector Leo B. Russell, and oversaw every part of the deportation process, “resulting in a marked degree of efficiency and economy.”12 In fact, he boasted, the “new system” not only coordinated transport of immigrants from their respective districts, but dealt with the securing of passport for return, and coordinated with the local institutions all around the nation in which migrants were a “burden” on the public.13 At the same time that he celebrated the transformative nature of the new system, he also articulated expansive and ambitious aspirations for what could be achieved under it. “Though a new service, it has already proved of great value,” the Commissioner explained, “and bids fair, as experience is gained, to produce practically a perfect system for the carrying out of the purposes for which it was established.”14 While the complications, confusion, and steep learning curve in enforcing deportations that I illustrate throughout the following chapters will make the Commissioner’s goals of producing “practically a perfect system” seem laughable, it is important to take his claims seriously. At the onset of the decade, the chief authority over migration control triumphantly declared a radical new era in immigrant removal, and heralded the initiation of a new system for ensuring its growth.

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13 Ibid, 12.
14 Ibid, 11.
My project expands upon the work of scholars such as Kanstroom, who asks regarding deportation: “How should we understand this system? Is it simply an instrument of immigration policy?” and responds “it is also a powerful tool of discretionary social control, a key feature of the national security state, and a most tangible component of the recurrent episodes of xenophobia that have bedeviled our nation of immigrants. It is a mechanism of scapegoating, ostracism, family and community separation, and, of course, banishment.”

The work of studying how that tool of discretionary social control has been wielded, and what impact it has had, particularly at local sites in the interior of the nation, still needs far more attention in order to create an understanding of how deeply this system has shaped American society. The exercise of social control throughout the nation has never been the sole prerogative of the national government, but instead, drew in a host of actors ranging from local neighborhood vigilantes, to hospital staff throughout the country, to matrons in detention centers, to international activists. To recognize this highlights the centrality of deportation, and how deeply the process of policing immigrant belonging reached into the heart of American society.

Immigration scholar Mae Ngai asserts that “Deportation was not invented in the 1920s, but it was then that it came of age.” Her scholarship on the intersections of race, immigration policy, and deportation during the early twentieth century, along with that of others such as Kanstroom, Deidre Moloney, Torrie Hester, and Rachel Ida Buff, has begun to illuminate the importance of immigration restriction policy and practice in American society. Among their most fruitful contributions has been an increasing awareness that the process by which certain bodies, groups, and racial categories have become marked as illegal, and have, in turn, shaped

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15 Kanstroom, Deportation Nation: Outsiders in American History, 5.
the way in which the nation understands itself, Americanism, and national belonging. Ngai argues, “The illegal immigrant cannot be constituted without deportation—the possibility or threat of deportation, if not the fact. The possibility derives from the actual existence of state machinery to apprehend and deport illegal aliens.”¹⁷ My work provides depth to this conclusion by demonstrating that not only the official state machinery of the INS determined this, but that it was a process negotiated and determined in local spaces around the nation, by authorities ranging from urban police officers, to local vigilantes informing on their neighbors, and globally, by consulates and shipping agents around the globe. Its subject will not be the congressmen and senators who voted on changes in deportation laws, but instead will be those communities living under the threat that Ngai identifies.

One of this project’s most central interventions is reframing the periodization of deportation, which has so often entirely neglected the 1920s, or glossed over it as merely a transition point between episodes of crisis in immigration control. Instead, this decade, influenced by fervent appetite for deportation after World War I, which was often thwarted by the realities of deportation law, but also the capacity for its enforcement, was the moment at which the apparatus of the state for controlling immigrants was renegotiated. If one looks at nothing more than the train schedules for deportation “specials” going east and west across the nation for transport to the ports for removal abroad, it is possible to see the birth and evolution of a modern, streamlined, coordinated machinery for efficient expulsion. There was increasingly regularized contact between the Commission General of Immigration in Washington D.C. and dozens of sub-district offices all around the country, who in turn were expected to be in regular contact with all the local and state institutions of their districts. Together these changes reveal

that during the 1920s, deportation was one area where the state did in fact modernize, expand, and deepen its administrative reach, though in messy and inconsistent patterns.

At the same time, the passage of the Quota Acts served to slowly change the discourse on immigration, as the “criminal alien” now became someone who had done nothing more than enter over quota, or without proper inspection. Once merely being a non-authorized resident in the nation was a deportable crime, and the protections and services of the state became more exclusively tied to national membership through citizenship, it is easier to understand how a discourse of immigrant “illegality” gained traction. The punitive nature of deportation, alongside its increasing visibility in the press, in raids of ethnic neighborhoods, in train depots, and in county jails, reshaped how the nation understood migration and the ever-present possibility of deportation. Because deportation law shifted to allow removal after more years of residence in the nation for certain crimes, it created a more expansive and elastic definition of the immigrant outsider, increasingly one whose perpetual precariousness rendered them unfit for inclusion in society. When combined with the actual apparatus for making congressional dictates a reality, this redefined the power of the state. While the deportations of the 1920s were rarely as sensationalized as those of 1919, and they lacked the sheer numbers of the 1930s (particularly when voluntary or coercive repatriation are considered), they represented a steep and steady trudge toward the modern deportation regime.

While my project emphasizes the rise in deportations throughout the decade and interrogates the forces behind the rapid acceleration of removals, it also echoes the recent stress among historians on the rise of “deportability,” as well as of actual deportations. As Natalie Peutz and Nicholas De Genova explain in their edited collection on deportation, the goal of the state was to create the condition of “deportability” rather than deportation per se. By imposing a
shadow of precarity over the non-citizen population, the state effectively achieved many of the goals of deportation without actually having to expend the resources required for physical removals and cross-oceanic shipping. They explain, “the formulation and emphatic reaffirmation of state sovereignty itself,” is the greater stake of deportation.\textsuperscript{18} The socio-legal production of “deportable” people, they assert, actively serves to reify the divisions of nation states. Creating “deportable” people, scholars argue, has not only normalized the modern nation-state, but has also established various rights and privileges of the state as the exclusive purview of citizens. Walters introduces the additional assertion that deportation in this period not only becomes “nationalized,” by virtue of reinforcing the nation state, but in fact “socialized,” by its agenda of governing the welfare of the population through the removal of foreign labor during economic downturn.\textsuperscript{19}

Other scholars have explored how deportation, along with other forms of migration control led to the construction of “statelessness.” As Linda Kerber explains, this could take the form of either “the legally (de jure) stateless” and the “de facto stateless (those who lack effective nationality),” though these categories often blurred into one another. These categories include varied forms of denizens, from asylum seekers to undocumented migrants. As deportability and other forms of precarious residence were solidified within the modern nation state, Kerber asserts, the age of imperial expansion presented a particular set of ambiguous spaces, which were notable for their “great potential for statelessness.” The territories of American empire in the early twentieth century, I argue in Chapter Two, were particularly striking examples of the ambiguity that Kerber identifies between “the national and the

international, between sovereignty and subjugation.” As the U.S. expanded its boundaries, it felt the need to reinforce those boundaries against the racial threats posed by the peoples of its new possessions. One of the greatest protections lay in the possibility of deportability.

In an expansive article on the historical trajectory of the “deportation terror,” Rachel Ida Buff provides one of the most succinct distillations of the deportation agenda, explaining, “Part of the business of maintaining a nation, then, is instilling terror in people potentially subject to forcible removal by the state.” This point, while remarkably basic, has only begun to be truly explored, and the ramifications of the capacity for removal for the development of the modern nation state have only begun to be outlined. Dorothee Schneider explains that deportation’s importance for the control of non-native populations is far more significant than previously recognized, and its practice was critical to the nation’s ability to present itself as a self-selecting population. “After all,” she argues, “the state’s power to select whom it admitted was at the core of border control, as newcomers knew all too well. But selective admission only worked if it was tied to mechanisms of rejection and deportation.” It is the on-the-ground implementation and utilization of these mechanisms in their formative years which concerns much of this project, particularly the search and establishment of a unified and coordinated machinery for effectively removing deportees once they had been selected for ejection.

As William Walters, Daniel Kanstroom, Gerald Neumann, and others have asserted, deportation may have presented as a clearly national prerogative by the late twentieth century, but its origins as a practice of removing unwanted denizens emerged from outside the category

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of the modern-nation state. Walters argues many historians “fail to appreciate that for many centuries the expulsion of people has played out not across spaces of states but rather within empires, out of parishes and cities, from estates and commons.” Indeed, he explains, what sets modern deportation apart starting in the late 19th century was the fact that it became both a “product of the state system and… one of a number of techniques for the ongoing management of a world population that is divided into states.” Deportation in practice, however, as I explore in Chapter One, reveals that the project of dividing the world into clearly demarcated states and just as importantly, identifying where individuals belonged within those demarcations, was still incomplete by the 1920s (and indeed, has arguably never been completed). As U.S. officials sought to consolidate and reinforce the edges of the nation through deportation by bringing the project of policing immigration into the interior, they built upon earlier traditions of removal.

Deportation must be understood alongside other historical forms of forced migration, not least because that is how historical actors of the time made sense of this still-new variant of state control over individual mobility. In understanding the deportation drives against Sicilian immigrants in Chicago, it is telling that observers, deportees, and officials frequently made sense of these practices against the concurrent backdrop of exile as criminal punishment in Mussolini’s Italy. Furthermore, anti-deportation activists and critics of all political stripes employed comparisons to practices of banishment of dissenters in other nations, most commonly the Soviet Union or Fascist Italy. However, they were not alone in looking outward to understand the nation’s growing penchant for administrative removals. While preparing for escalated drives against foreign-born denizens, U.S. congressmen also debated the possibility of creating a

system of exile and removal of American-born citizens. Quite notably, these schemes were imagined to take place in some of the furthest outposts of the American empire, as Chapter 2 will examine.

As scholarship on deportation has expanded in recent years, so too have studies of other forms of restricted mobility or forced migration, and historians have increasingly put deportation into conversation with topics such as involuntary labor and coercive guest-worker programs, forced statelessness, and indigenous displacement. Richard Bessel and Claudia Haake’s edited collection *Removing Peoples: Forced Removal in the Modern World*, published in 2009, makes the claim that the encompassing term “forced removal”, as opposed to traditionally used terms such as “expulsion, deportation, or forced migration” suggests “that these very same processes have often been shaped by actors and agents other than just the state.”  

Furthermore, they explain, the motivations for the involvement of non-state actors “often diverged significantly from those of governments,” and were also part of a discourse in which targets of removal were more than passive victims. The essays Bessel and Haake bring together highlight an important, and until recently, overlooked aspect of deportation scholarship—the fact that American deportation practice grew up in a global landscape of enhanced emphasis on the removal of undesirable peoples. Across the globe, they point out, the modern world was marked by a rising concern with delineating the boundaries of the population through physical transportation of unwanted individuals and communities in its midst.

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26 Ibid, 9.

Similarly, in explaining the basis for their collection, *Exile and the Politics of Exclusion in the Americas*, Luis Roniger, James N. Green and Pablo Yankelevich argue that “Societies construct various boundaries of membership and participation, build rules of inclusion and exclusion… these vary from society to society, and yet all human societies have created such boundaries, rules, and mechanisms to define themselves and organize interactions and institutions.”²⁸ Ranging across the Western Hemisphere, these essays similarly stress that knowledge about state building through expulsion did not grow up in any single country alone, but was built simultaneously across the region in both similar and divergent ways. Importantly, Roniger, Green, and Yankelevich highlight the organization of “interactions and institutions,” and it is these processes that motivate my attention in Chapter 4 to the development of institutional networks and coordination to identify unwanted denizens. It was at the point of the institution, the nexus of contact between the state and the individual, that deportees were increasingly identified during this period. In doing so, the deportation state renegotiated the privileges of the state and its institutions to be tightly bound up with legal citizenship in new and critical ways.

In *Deportation Nation*, one of the first full-scale treatments of American deportation history, Kanstroom interrogates modern definitions of deportation and puts the evolving practice in conversation with earlier forms of forced mobility within the United States, including the violent removal of Native Americans, and the imposition of restrictions on the freedom of movement of slaves and former slaves. Furthermore, he explores the relationship between the development of early deportation practice and the legacies of British poor law and practices of

controlling the mobility of paupers. Like Bessel and Haake, he undermines the category of the
state actor as the only natural initiator of forced migration, and critically for this project,
questions which state actors were most salient in enforcing migration at different points in U.S.
history. By the 1920s, I argue, though the federal government had staked its claim as the arbiter
of deportation policy, with several decades of legislative success to back it up, it remained
incapable of wielding sole power over the actual application, and thus the impact, of the growing
deporation machinery.

Kanstroom’s work builds off of scholars like Gerald Neumann, who have illuminated
early forms of migration control before the imposition of federal, congressional restriction
legislation during the 1870s and 1880s. As Neumann points out, throughout what he calls the
“lost century of American immigration law,” restrictions were generally not imposed by the
federal government, but instead, a network of state based provisions for restricting entry and for
expelling unwanted migrants (both from abroad, and in some instances, from other states of the
nation) existed and evolved.30 While state and local governments no longer possessed the official
capacity to set the deportation law after the advent of federal deportation legislation in the 1880s
and 1890s, their power to set the agenda for who would be deported, what criteria they would be
deported for, and when they would be deported remained immense. These local agendas, shaped
at every level from state governors to city police forces, from prison and hospital superintendents
to local organized, have been surprisingly sparse in the scholarship on deportation and form one
of the most insistent departures of this project.

29 Kanstroom, Deportation Nation.
30 Neuman, “The Lost Century of American Immigration Law.” See also Kunal Parker, “From Poor Law to
Immigration Law: Changing Visions of Territorial Community in Antebellum Massachusetts,” Historical
Geography 28 (2000): 61-85; Beth Lew-Williams, “Before Restriction Became Exclusion: America’s Experiment in
Diplomatic Immigration Control,” Pacific Historical Review 83:1 (Feb. 2014): 24-56; and Hidetaka Hirota, “The
Moment of Transition: State Officials, the Federal Government, and the Formation of American Immigration
Recent scholarship on deportation has provided crucial attention to how the policing of national inclusion through migration control has served as a process of racial formation. In a myriad of overt and circuitous ways, immigration policy throughout the early twentieth century was motivated by the creation and enforcement of racial hierarchies and a contested national project of demographic control. “When people in the early twentieth century discussed immigration,” Natalia Molina explains, “they perceived races in hierarchies and they made their decisions about which groups to admit and which to restrict based on their past knowledge and experience with immigrants.” Furthermore, she argues, the weight of changing immigration policy reached beyond its actual passage, and even when laws did not get approved, they “shaped daily practices,” and perceptions of not only particular groups of immigrants, but the very nature of the relationship between the state and the non-citizen. However, she points out, while law and policy operated at the federal level, the process of racial formation through immigration control often were negotiated at the local level. Federal laws, she insists, were “implemented quite unevenly at the local level because of regional difference, such as labor needs, varying demographics, localized understandings of race, and proximity to the U.S.-Mexico border. Thus to look just at major immigration landmarks or events only begins to scratch the surface of how the immigration regime shaped U.S. society.” By bringing the process of policing boundaries of immigrant belonging into the interior of the nation through post-entry removals, I argue, the deportation regime shaped U.S. society in related, but distinct ways from other forms of immigration control.


Deportation enforcement provides insight into how immigrant bodies were classed and racialized through the policing of entry and continued residence. The assessment “Likely to Become a Public Charge” was common, and, far from a neutral designation, this decision was racially fraught. Among other groups, Jewish immigrants were disproportionately excluded along these lines, with their bodies described as “weak”, “frail” “prematurely aged”, or displaying a “lack in physical and sexual development.” These bodily assessments were conflated with potential earning power and gender conformity and used as the grounds for demarcating boundaries around appropriate, potentially American bodies, and undesirable, foreign bodies. Impoverished, undernourished bodies from Southern and Eastern Europe were utilized as examples of the weakening of American stock, while Nordic and Anglo-Saxon bodies were often deemed too “well-built” or “wholesome in appearance” to be classed with the rest of the deportable menace and touted as evidence of the need for a more discretionary deportation policy for examining and filtering through immigrant bodies. Often, defenses of higher class immigrants under deportation proceedings focused on their backgrounds, breeding, “noble bearing” and fine bodies, and the disgrace of putting them in proximity with poor, diseased, and dangerously inferior immigrant bodies in detention. Even as it posed a potential tool for sorting immigrant bodies in accordance with hierarchies of racial acceptability, deportation also operated as some of the most racially heterogenous institutional spaces of the nation, and immigration officials were eager to impose order upon these spaces.

The policing of racialized migrant bodies through detention and deportation was not limited to considerations of bodily strength and potential for labor, but also found voice in a rising concern with immigration, ethnicity, and public health. During the early twentieth century,
as disease (both mental and physical) gained traction as a criterion for both exclusion and expulsion, health concerns often came to be coded as foreign, and the imagined menace of the unsanitary, infectious immigrant body loomed large for many. These fears and the subsequent persecution of immigrants were often locally specific to particular ethnic groups. As immigration officials sought justifications for their desired agendas of exclusion and removal, the category of “loathsome and contagious” diseases was frequently questioned and its flexibility and reach was tested and renegotiated.34

Deirdre Moloney, in perhaps the most comprehensive monograph on the general transformation of deportation policy and practice throughout the early twentieth century has illustrated the tremendous rise over this period in the use of the “likely to become a public charge,” clause for not only border control at the point of entry, but also as a tactic for removing unwanted denizens long after their arrival in the nation.35 Moloney and other historians have emphasized the interrelationship between the rise of public dependency and the rise of deportations among women and entire families, and pointed out that dependency was used as an elastic provision to police the sexuality and independence of female migrants as well as to bar potentially non-productive immigrant bodies. Policing public dependency among women was more than an economic practicality for the state, it was also a critical tool for reifying the power

of the nuclear family, the male breadwinner, and the female dependent, as scholars such as Anna Igra have demonstrated.\textsuperscript{36} This process, Natalia Molina points out, was not only gendered, but also heavily racialized, and the flexibility of the category made it particularly powerful for controlling Mexican immigrants, who were not subject to numerical quotas, and thus were apprehended along other lines.\textsuperscript{37} This project will explore deportation both as a system of labor-management on a broad supply scale, but also as a system for managing the laboring body.

Individual states had exercised their own forms of immigration control since the colonial era, but it was not until the 1870s and 1880s that the United States consolidated its first federal immigration laws. The nation did so in line with accelerating and diversifying migration, as well as rising industrialization and increased global mobility of unskilled labor migrants. The 1875 Page Act, the first exclusion law enacted by the federal government was designed as a labor control act, barring “alien convicts,” prostitutes, and “coolies.” In 1882, the federal government extended the excludable classes to include “any convict, lunatic, idiot, or any person unable to take care of himself or herself without becoming a public charge,” as well as creating the first federal legal infrastructure for removing and returning undesirable migrants and banning most Chinese migrants. It should perhaps be noted at this point that in the early decades of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, the authority for immigrant removals was vested with the Secretary of Labor, and that it was not until 1940 that the Immigration and Naturalization Service (formerly the Bureau of Immigration) was transferred to the jurisdiction of the Department of Justice rather than the Department of Labor. While and dramatic deportations of suspected radicals have had the most


enduring grip on the public imagination of immigration control, it is important to recognize that its nature as a system and enforcement mechanism of labor control has been both more mundane and central to its operating logic, and perhaps, therefore, all the more menacing. While migration control and deportation have been critical to the determination of the nation for well over a century, their centrality to the reinforcement, endurance, and functioning of modern capitalism and the nation-state have received relatively little attention.

By the 1890s, additional exclusions were added, including “paupers,” people suffering from “loathsome or dangerous contagious diseases,” polygamists, and “persons whose ticket had been paid for by another.” The inclusion of paupers, physically impaired, and those dependent on others for travel expenses reflects the abiding concern with the exclusion and removal of those who might become dependent on public welfare within the nation. The 1891 act also provided legal grounds for the removal or post-entry deportation of those who were “liable to become a public charge,” or had become public charges after their arrival. By 1903, additional classes included epileptics, the insane, professional beggars, anarchists, prostitutes and procurers, and in 1907, the list grew again with the inclusion of “imbeciles,” “feeble-minded,” persons with tuberculosis, persons found mentally or physically defective, persons having committed a crime of moral turpitude, persons whose tickets had been paid for by a private organization or foreign government, and unaccompanied children. In other words, anyone deemed unfit to be a productive, compliant member of the burgeoning industrial workforce was unwelcome.

Subsequent legislation during the 1910s and 1920s extended the period of time after entry within which deportation could be effected, creating an even more elastic and vulnerable migrant labor force.
As the periodic mass removals of Mexican-Americans during periods of economic downturn have demonstrated, deportation, as a tool in the arsenal of the state, provided an important state mechanism for ensuring the labor pool of the nation could contract and expand at will. This served both corporate interests by guaranteeing a cheap, but vulnerable labor force that faced removal if they spoke out or demanded higher wages, but also government interests by making sure that migrants could be removed when they became public charges, attempted to draw on government services or benefits, or became entangled with governmental institutions such as prisons or hospitals. Beginning in the early twentieth century, the federal government did not just wait patiently for deportees to be rounded up in mining towns, lumber camps, or agricultural fields when economic needs dictated. In fact, it actively reached out to local governments asking for lists of potentially deportable public charges that could be made ready for the next regularly scheduled deportation transport. Deportation has never merely been an enforcement arm of immigration restriction or extended border control. Instead, it has always maintained a more central function at the heart of regulating and maintaining the authority and smooth operation of the capitalist nation-state.38

For many decades, deportation drew little attention in the general scholarship on immigration control in the early twentieth century, with one very notable exception: anti-

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radicalism and political deportations of communists, anarchists, and free speech activists. While political deportations were never, even at the height of the so-called “First Red Scare,” more than a small minority of total removals from the nation, they have had an enduring and highly disproportional representation in deportation scholarship until recently. \(^{39}\) Perhaps it is because few deportees make more heroic protagonists than activists fighting for their beliefs, or because the suppression of dissent through exile provides one of the most striking and obvious illustrations of a repressive state. \(^{40}\) However, the reality is far less sensational. Most deportees were not victims of free speech persecution captured in dramatic raids. They were men imprisoned in county jails for petty theft, children receiving treatment for illness in public hospitals, and women receiving public aid to keep their families fed.

While particular rationales for deportation have drawn the greatest attention among scholars, it is important to remember that many potential deportees met a number of different criteria for removal. Rather than fitting into orderly boxes, deportees frequently blurred the lines between “criminals,” “public charges,” and “diseased” or “insane.” The case of one 1923

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deportee returned to Canada for a variety of causes, including unlawful entry, likelihood to become a public charge, and arson, demonstrates the overlapping exclusionary criteria faced by unnaturalized immigrants throughout the country. The malleability and potential for discretionary pursuance of these deportees is notable in the immigration official’s comment in his case file that along with all of these other issues, “he is reported to bear a poor reputation in the place of his residence.” The year before, another deportee was sent to Canada for a combination of violations including unlawful entry, hospitalization for a chronic nose infection, and imprisonment for riding a freight train without paying fare. Another Canadian deportee around the same time met his fate due to unlawful entry, likelihood to become public charge, and bigamy (a major worry of immigration officials of the era, who were alarmed by already-married foreign-born men taking American wives after immigrating), reflecting another set of overlapping concerns about immigrant threats.

Within each of the major criteria for deportation, the precise guidelines remained expansive and flexible, and apprehensions reflected a wide range of interpretations of deportation law. One of the most visible arenas for this was in apprehensions and removals for crime. In a single set of INS files from 1923 and 1924, deportations for crime ranged from the

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41 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4704, File 55205/868.
42 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4850, File 55218/231.
43 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4704, File 55205/867.
very serious: murder of one’s fiancée, manslaughter (described more specifically in the deportee’s file as “the crime of cutting to kill”), and attempted rape, to the far more mundane: “carrying burglary tools,” “the crime of obtaining money under false pretenses,” and receiving stolen property. More puzzling perhaps, is the range of crimes that fit under the highly elastic and easily manipulated category of “crimes of moral turpitude.” Within the same collection of cases, the crimes that fell under this deportation criterion included forgery, “taking an automobile without the consent of the owner,” larceny, and benefitting from the earnings of a prostitute. As the deportation state solidified its power, and imposed a looming reign of terror over immigrant populations, this capacious, ill-defined, and flexible criterion for deportation was one of the most important tools for creating a newly vulnerable and insecure immigrant population.

While the category of “moral turpitude” was nebulous and encompassing, for many immigration authorities, it was particularly salient when dealing with threats in the form of non-normative sexual behaviors and identities, including homosexuality and adultery. While scholars have fruitfully explored the effort to regulate prostitution through immigration control, there has been less exploration about how this effort intertwined with other forms of sexual exclusions and expulsions in creating a system of morality policing through deportation.

Immigration officials assessed and removed immigrants not only for prostitution, but for profiting off of prostitution, being supported by prostitution, and procuring an individual for prostitution or other “immoral” purposes. Beyond that, deportations were also enacted for pregnancy (which was often used to demonstrate that an unmarried woman would be unable to support herself financially and thus likely to become a public charge), bigamy, “gross indecency,” and the distribution of pornographic images. Through its most flexible and ill-defined provisions, such as likely to become a public charge, “defective,” or crimes of moral turpitude, the immigration bureau was able to effectively police sexual behaviors and enforce a code of sexually normative behaviors as a condition of remaining in the country. As Moloney and others have explored, this was particularly harshly imposed upon women, whose sexual behaviors were guarded more closely, and even more harshly upon non-white women. Concerns about the sexual morality of female immigrants intersected with concerns over their economic roles in the new industrial economy,” Moloney explains, and “when immigrant women did not conform to such American social norms, they became highly vulnerable to exclusion or deportation proceedings.”

In fact, Marc Stein observes, “until recently, the fields of U.S. immigration history and U.S. queer history seemed content to ignore each other.” Stein focuses on later intersections between immigration and sexuality, but he notes that prior to legislation allowing for the deportation of aliens with “sexual deviations,” the “psychopathic personality” provision had been used to exclude homosexuals. However, most treatment of homosexuality and immigration control focuses on mid and late twentieth century practices of removal. One notable exception is

46 Moloney, National Insecurities, 60.
Margot Canaday’s *Straight State*, which addresses “perverse aliens” and immigration law in the first quarter of the century. Canaday explains how prior to an official category for homosexuality, immigration officials found flexible avenues for deporting those deemed “undesirable” on the basis of sexuality. “State authorities relied on the public charge provision to deport aliens who either committed perverse acts or had bodies that were considered perverse,” Canaday writes, and this category derived its efficacy, “in large measure, from the belief that sexual deviance and economic dependence were intertwined.”48 As Canaday explains, this provision and its elasticity allowed for policing sexuality in other ways under the veneer of controlling dependency, including “adultery, fornication, or prostitution.”49

To explore all of these areas of deportation and begin to uncover its actual practice, rather than policy, this project relies on extensive archival research at a number of different sites, as well as research in digitized newspaper collections and government documents. Much of the material was gathered at the National Archives in Washington D.C., researching in the records of the Immigration and Naturalization Services, whose case files, correspondence, and extensive agency records allow for a greater understanding of the actual practice and pragmatics of deportation as they were negotiated by agents on the ground around the nation and through their interactions with local officials of all sorts, as well as into the experience and trajectory and reactions of deportees themselves. To expand the scope of the project beyond government holdings, I supplemented that material with organizational records at several sites. This included work in New York City researching at a variety of relevant archives, including the Tamiment Library, the New York Public Library, and the YIVO Institute, which include the records of a

48 Canaday, *The Straight State*, 44.
range of relevant organizations, such as the American Committee for the Protection of the Foreign Born, International Labor Defense, Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society, and records of individual deportation lawyers and activists. Exploring the various organizations and individuals who protested the growth of a stronger and more invasive deportation regime in the 1920s emphasizes the ways in which the government was not able to exercise its will without challenge, but was instead met by many forms of immigrant agency and activism and outside support. These archives were critical to developing a greater understanding of how varied local and national organizations and communities converged in debates and discourse around deportation. I also completed research at the Immigration Research History Center at University of Minnesota, whose collections include the Immigration and Refugee Services of America and Foreign Language Information Service records, which provide greater insight into the institutions and organizations outside of the INS which played a role in negotiating deportation. Additional research has been completed at the records of the Immigrants Protective League in the Special Collections at UIC, and in local and national newspapers from the period, including foreign language press sources from immigrant communities.

In order to highlight the interlocking scales of space in which deportation was negotiated throughout the decade, this project is organized around the nesting levels of spaces at which deportation was enacted: global, national, local, institutional, and bodies in detention and transit. While deportation has primarily been told as a national story, and was, in fact, critical to the development and evolution of the modern nation-state, I argue that this process was shaped through a multitude of levels of experience. Examining these diverse spaces allows an understanding of how deportation reflects the observations of scholars such as Katherine Beckett and Naomi Murakawa who argue that the penal state has gone beyond criminal justice.
institutions to become far “more legally hybrid and institutionally variegated.” In critical ways, the coordinated efforts to enforce and grow the deportation regime by officials in each of these spaces demonstrates that the punitive reach of the state toward its non-citizen residents expanded far beyond the explicitly carceral.

The first chapter of the dissertation addresses the deportation from a global perspective, and examines the challenges faced by a nascent deportation regime seeking to create its imprint on a complex, messy landscape of migration. This chapter explores the networks of coordination and communication that the U.S. participated in to enact deportations, both formally and informally, the complex shifting borders and imperial landscape that U.S. officials struggled to make sense of while deporting, discourses of emulation and repudiation of other nations’ deportation practices, and the struggles to make sense of deportees whose trajectories did not fit simple migration patterns. While the U.S. immigration service aimed to use deportation to clarify and reinforce national border, they frequently discovered that their ability to determine and define their own population was constrained by forces outside of their control. As they endeavored to impose control over incoming and outgoing migrant bodies, and create neat, orderly categories of removal, officials increasingly faced a whole host of unimagined obstacles: individuals made nationless by war and redrawn borders; the frequent conflict between ethnicity and nationality, and the confusion over whose responsibility for deportees from imperial holdings around the world ought to be placed upon. Therefore, while deportation has been written about largely as a national and an abstract process, this chapter investigates how the

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determination of the national body was profoundly impacted by more pragmatic and global considerations.

Chapter Two, on deportation and the nation, addresses the various ways in which deportation served to both reinforce existing borders and to create boundaries and delineations of potential citizens and undesirable immigrants all over the interior of the nation. I also stress how deportation from sites of American empire was part of the national project of consolidation control and power over these contested spaces. While I argue that deportation was not only, nor even necessarily primarily, enacted or enforced at the national level, its impact for the nation certainly loomed large. Discussions of deportation prominently figured a thoroughly national imagination of what deportation could mean for the United States, and paradoxically, while I argue for looking outside the nation, I also insist that deportation was critical for the strengthening and expansion of the powers of the modern federal state.

Furthermore, while the impetus to deport did not always emerge at the national level, the budget on which it relied did. Without congressional appropriations for the work of deportation, the expansion of its infrastructure would have been an impossibility. Thus, even as local immigration officials and institutional authorities vented their frustration at the federal Bureau and the Labor Department throughout the decade, they never ceased to beg for more appropriations to make that work possible. I also examine how the national shifts in deportation also reflected a shifting relationship between the state and business, and how deportation increasingly became utilized, and recognized, as a means for controlling the labor force more broadly. The chapter goes on to explore another largely unstudied aspect of deportation practice—its ramifications in spaces of American empire, where the state-building through expulsion of deportation collided with a different, but intertwined project of state building. I
insist on the importance of not reifying the category of the American nation as simple or clearly defined. Instead, I emphasize how deportation from sites of American empire was part of the national project of consolidating control and power over these contested spaces. As the government expanded the boundaries of the nation, in uneven formations of colonial control and governance, they were forced to find ways to export and enact immigration control and national determination through expulsion within these imperial spaces. Thus, the ability to deport unwanted foreigners while also displacing native populations was part of the systemic violence enacted against imperial possessions as part of the state-building project of American empire.

The third chapter, on the local level, traces deportation into the heartland of the nation, arguing that while the law was federal, the enforcement was intensely local. Examining how deportation was shaped by local political agendas, ethnic and racial biases, and labor issues will expand deportation beyond a process of selection at the edges of the nation, but one enacted by communities all over the country. The chapter begins with a more generalized discussion of the frequent tensions, collusions, and inquiries between local actors and the federal Immigration Bureau over deportation and deportability. It then analyzes the role of local vigilantes in creating an atmosphere of public, but localized, awareness of immigrant threats and the possibility of removal. In doing so, it examines how the state interacted with such local initiatives, how local actors determined the actual implementation of deportation law on the ground in their localities, and what factors were pertinent to this process in a variety of regions, from Arizona, to Utah, to Minnesota. One of the limitations presented by the scholarship on immigration control and deportation in particular is the tendency to collapse regional and municipal differences into generalized accounts of the nation. The second part of the chapter hones in on one locality in greater depth in order to provide a more thorough depiction of how local agendas and conflicts
shaped the realities of deportation enforcement. By looking at the deportation drives against Chicago’s Italian-American communities in 1926, I explore how a local police force, and overeager press, and an intensely local set of nativist concerns could serve as the driving forces behind expulsions. This section particularly examines the very local logistic concerns of policing immigration on the ground: identifying threats, raiding and apprehending deportees, arranging detention, assessing legal deportability, interacting with public perception, and ultimately, seeking and carrying out deportation warrants.

The fourth chapter, on the institutional dimensions of deportation, explores the different spaces in which deportees were apprehended, surveilled, categorized, and studied, such as prisons, hospitals, juvenile reformatories, and asylums, and show how deportation was an important process for bringing together the agendas of these different institutions for social control and policing. In this way, all of the developing institutions of modern American society in the early 20th century, from explicitly punitive institutions like jails and reformatories, to public welfare institutions like hospitals, were brought together as part of the carceral arm of the government-corporate deportation agenda. The steep increase in deportations demonstrates more than a fervent public sentiment against immigrants—it reflects the development of an unprecedented capacity to surveil, apprehend, and remove unwanted non-citizens. In spite of the emphasis on dramatic raids and violent repression of radicalism, most of deportation was about a far more pedestrian, and, I would argue, a more ominous, form of social control. This chapter traces the evolution of various rationales for deportation: crime, disease, mental illness or disability, and dependency, alongside the institutions that made their apprehension possible: prisons and reformatories, hospitals, asylums, and public welfare services. In the process,

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examines how deportation brought diverse stains of social control into communication and coordination with one another and will explore how even the potentially benevolent or beneficial institutions of the state increasingly fit into the punitive function of the deportation regime.

The final chapter centers on bodies in detention and transportation and descends to the level of individual experience. I discuss the practices which made deportation a logistic possibility, but also a pragmatic challenge which got worked out over the course of the decade—long periods of detention, which put local and federal officials in conflict; long train journeys across the nation to get to the ports for removal, and the complications of eventual shipping to other nations. The chapter begins with an exploration of early detention practices. While immigrant detention has garnered considerable academic interest in more contemporary periods, and scholars have explored detention in the nation’s most prominent points of entry and exit (most notably, Ellis and Angel Island), there has been relatively little attention to detention practices and conditions elsewhere in the nation in the early twentieth century. Detention in the 1920s, in fact, was no single set of practices and federally mandated procedures, but a haphazard assemblage of local solutions to the seemingly insurmountable challenge of

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Keeping up with the appetite for removals. Throughout the decade, authorities worked toward establishing an infrastructure that could house the growing number of immigrant detainees (far greater number than the deportation statistics reveal), but the project proved daunting and the source of major conflict.

The rest of the chapter focuses on deportation trains and the logistics of moving detainees to the ports and borders for removal. Although transportation is rarely discussed in the scholarship, deportation, at root, is the process of putting immigrant bodies in transnational motion. This project addresses the complexity and contestation of the physical act of transporting deportees, revealing much about scales of local and national authority, prioritization of threats, budgetary concerns and legal restrictions. Once an individual was deemed deportable, officials needed a practical plan for moving them to the country’s border and beyond. This necessitated complex deportation parties of trains traversing the nation’s dozens of immigration stations and gathering deportees for travel to the appropriate coast for reshipping. These trains, roaming the country for weeks, picking up immigrants of varied nationalities and locking them into specially designed inescapable cars, were themselves a site of exposure to America. Furthermore, immigrant bodies came under new forms of surveillance and public gaze, as deportation trains passing through towns became a form of public spectacle, with locals gathering to gawk at the expelled immigrants.

Together, these chapters explore the expansion of the deportation regime throughout the period, and illuminate the layered levels of authority which were asserted upon each individual ensnared by the deportation machinery of the state. In doing so, I address the evolving relationship between migration control, the policing of mobility, and the rise of the modern bureaucratic nation-state. Even as deportees were immobilized by the government at the point of
detention, coordination and communication was occurring at each level of space to ensure the reversibility of their migration into the United States. Throughout these chapters and the spaces they represent, I will illustrate what was behind the immense rise in deportations over the course of the decade, and, in doing so, demonstrate how that rise in deportations shaped American society, relations between the state and its residents, and the perception of immigrant belonging within the nation.
Chapter 1 - National Expulsions in a Transnational World: The Global Dimensions of American Deportation Policy

A 1925 Nation article entitled “Italy’s Idea of Housecleaning” discussed political expulsions and Mussolini’s exile of criminals from the nation and criticized the widespread persecution and political oppression of dissenters. Meanwhile, right at home in the United States, government officials were embarking on their own housekeeping mission, which was frequently compared to such projects abroad. By the following year, not only would local press argue in the midst of a deportation drive in Chicago that Mussolini’s tactics of exiling unwanted residents ought to be lauded and emulated for the safety of the worthy citizens of Chicago, but, in fact, the exact same language of “housekeeping” would be used to describe raids against Italian immigrants in Chicago. Looking across the ocean for a model of how to create social stability through exile of criminals, the author went on to proclaim of the Italian case that “the task of completely cleaning them up is nearly at an end… when the opposition was wrecked and Premier Mussolini could laugh at his rivals, the task was again undertaken,” and argued that the immigration authorities in Chicago stood to learn from such practices.

Deportation has been largely understood as the process of a single nation-state asserting and enforcing its borders through the expulsion of “undesirable” non-citizens. But as the example above shows, during the 1920s, as beyond, it was never executed without one eye looking outward. The policy enacted in this period, which provided a foundation for the rest of the twentieth century, was shaped not in national isolation, but within global networks of communication on immigration restriction, with the collaboration of officials stationed around

54 “Italy’s Idea of Housecleaning,” The Nation, August 5, 1925.
56 Ibid.
the world, and with a fundamentally global imagination. Those responsible for turning
deportation law into a reality during the 1920s and early 1930s both repudiated the practices of
some nations and aspired to those of others. At the same time, they struggled to identify,
document, and enforce the national belonging of immigrants who were often thoroughly
transnational individuals whose lives, families, and experiences could not be compartmentalized
into any single nation. The nascent deportation regime faced severe criticism, which was framed
in a language of internationalism. As the U.S. government sought to enforce its political will and
police its own borders, it gradually became clear that it could not accomplish this merely by
stationing guards at the ports and patrolmen on the border—it would be required to send officials
abroad, coordinate with foreign governments, and communicate with a wide range of global
actors. Furthermore, the U.S. discovered, it would not be able to enact its laws as they were
written on paper; it would have to develop coping mechanisms of flexibility and discretion to
deal with the untidy global realities outside their borders.

As with this project as a whole, this chapter delineates the wide and critical divergence
between deportation as policy, and deportation as practice. Deportation as a plan on paper
already bore the imprint of a broader global reality, if only in the obvious fact that deportation
might have begun in the United States, but it required a receiving nation to be completed.
However, deportation in its implementation was a much more complex terrain of transnational
actors, discourses and politics. Congressional figures, though undoubtedly informed by global
conversations and the development of parallel legislation abroad, have been the most noted, and
also the most unambiguously national, figures in most scholarship on deportation.  

57 Historical scholarship on deportation as its own discrete topic of study, rather than simply a facet of the enforcement
of immigration restriction, has only begun to emerge over the last several years. In his groundbreaking book,
*Deportation Nation*, Daniel Kanstroom asserted that “Deportation, in sum, is now—and always has been—about much
more than border control,” 19. In “‘Protection, Not Punishment,’” Torrie Hester makes important claims regarding the
multiplicity of other actors, both state and non-governmental, were undeniably shaped by their era of great migration and emerging networks of communication and debate. A wide range of factors shaped the actual implementation of deportation as profoundly as legal outlines ever could. These factors included, among many others, foreign citizens who turned in neighbors as previously deported individuals abroad in order to prevent their return to the U.S., the governments denying passage of deportees through their borders, the weather patterns in Latvia and Esthonia preventing deportation for many months of the year, the non-governmental organizations conducting extensive public opinion campaigns spanning many nations, and the deportees themselves, with their complicated, non-linear, transnational lives.

Because accounts of deportation are so often studies of national policy, they have tended to overemphasize federal power and to characterize deportation as a process which is determined solely within the borders of a single country. The practice of deportation in the early twentieth century, however, presents a much more complex set of decision-making authorities, practical considerations, and ideological frameworks for expulsion. Because deportation is about placing constraints around who can belong and remain within a nation’s borders, it has been easy for historians to assume that the process of marking out those constraints has been predominantly a national one. This chapter complicates that assumption and reveals the ways in which the global international nature of deportation laws, but stays so concretely within the framework of federal state actors and their policy development that she neglects the wide range of formal and informal global discourses touched upon in deportation practice. While Deirdre Moloney’s National Insecurities makes the broadest claim to placing U.S. deportation policy within a global context, she often relies simply on comparing developments in U.S. immigration policy to parallel developments in settler nations around the world.

Mae Ngai provides a compelling presentation of transnational border relations and deportation policy with Mexico and Canada, arguing that deportation drew on racial knowledge and imaginations about national communities. While she makes critical claims about the development of deportation policy in the American borderlands region, and argues that “Immigration restriction was part of a new global age. World War I marked the consolidation of the international nation-state system, based on Westphalian sovereignty, hardened borders, state citizenship, and passport controls,” her work does not fully dive into the ramifications of this global age, nor recognize how disorganized, incomplete, and often unsuccessful such efforts to manage the international nation-state system through immigration restriction were. See Mae M. Ngai, “The Strange Career of the Illegal Alien: Immigration Restriction and Deportation Policy in the United States, 1921-1965,” Law and History Review 21:1 (Spring 2003).
context, by way of policy and legislation, exchange of ideas, transnational individuals, communities, and organizations, and the shifting imperial landscape, was crucial in determining the operation of America’s nascent deportation regime.

While immigration might seem to be among the most transnationally shaped aspects of American history, scholars of the subject have been slow to embrace the possibilities for examining the networks of communication, contact, and political engagement which have shaped its trajectory. As late as 1990, Robert Tucker argued that “the dogma that the regulation of immigration was solely the prerogative of the sovereign state went unquestioned. In consequence, the tradition of unilateralism with respect to immigration was if anything, even more pronounced than it was in U.S. foreign policy generally.” Indeed, he claimed, this remained true throughout American history up until the 1960s, an assertion that this chapter seeks to undermine with an exploration of how global immigration policy and its implementation were from at least the late nineteenth century. In recent years, there has been a growth of scholarship engaging with the realities of migration as a complex and multi-directional process, focusing on subjects such as return migration, the global economy of remittances, and cultural continuity and hybridization across nations. Additionally, there has been an increased interest in the relationship between foreign policy and the ostensibly, though not truly, domestic policy of immigration.

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60 Scholarship on the transnational nature of immigration history has developed in a number of ways in recent years. As Jorge Duany notes, “Migration studies have recently experienced a semantic explosion of key terms such as diaspora, transnationalism, exile, and exodus.” The dawning recognition that immigration is a not a unilaterally decided process capable of being explained simply through a single state entity has also prompted a call for work which reconceives of the meaning of borders, in ways that prove useful for the study of deportation. While focusing on more recent migration history, Joseph Nevins captures the multivalent levels at which borders can be understood in his statement that “Frontiers, borders, and boundaries are not merely social phenomena in a material sense. They are also ‘ways of seeing’: metaphors for and manifestations of how we perceive the world and act within it.” Legal scholar Daniel Kanstroom further elaborates the idea of deportation as a global process, though in a modern context, using the idea of a diaspora of deportees. The number of deportees has reached such a level, Kanstroom explains, that they form something of a diasporic community abroad in many nations, often with pronounced transnational identities, close networks of contact, and even jobs with American corporations abroad because of their acquired
One of the most important developments in migration history for the understanding the global aspect of deportation history has been scholarship on the development of passports and other forms of institutionalized record keeping on the movement of individuals across global spaces. At a very basic level, deportation is about the physical transportation of a migrant from the state of his or her current residence to another state, most commonly that of his or her birthplace or nation of citizenship. While exile and other forms of forced removal have existed for centuries, the late nineteenth and early twentieth century represented an important departure in states’ abilities to track the movements of individuals, and to record and trace their legal status from nation to nation. Scholars in recent decades have emphasized the rise of the passport system as an important marker in the rise of transnational deportations, and argued that the new capacity for tracking, surveillance, and documentation led to an unprecedented use of exclusion to construct the desired population of the national body.

Daniel Turack explains that while it is commonly accepted that a state has the “right to expel aliens through deportation”, this process, which may seem like a “unilateral act” because the power to deport is in the hands of a single state, is actually a much more international quandary. Stating the obvious, but remarkably overlooked, Turack explains, “Of consequence, English skills. This effort to trace deportation as an experience that extends beyond the borders of the American state provides a critical intervention in a field which has tended until lately to start and end its tales at America’s boundaries. Donna Gabaccia’s Foreign Relations: American Immigration in a Global Perspective does some of the critical work of expanding knowledge about the relationship between immigration and foreign relations, thoroughly refuting the idea that the United States operated in isolation and unilaterally through most of its history. Furthermore, she objects, in light of the tendency to view U.S. foreign policy and immigration as isolationist, it is important to note that immigration was always part of the expanding global economy and empires of the nineteenth century, and the domestic political struggles over restrictionism rose not because of isolationism, but as a reaction to growing internationalism. See: Jorge Duany, Blurred Borders: Transnational Migration Between the Hispanic Caribbean and the United States (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2011); Joseph Nevins, Operation Gatekeeper: The Rise of the ‘Illegal Alien’ and the Making of the U.S. Mexico Boundary (New York: Routledge, 2002); Daniel Kanstroom, Aftermath: Deportation Law and the New American Diaspora (Oxford University Press, 2012); Donna R. Gabaccia, Foreign Relations: American Immigration in Global Perspective (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2012).
the deportee has to be deported somewhere… In any case, the consent of the country to which
the deportee is to be sent must be obtained before the act of deportation can be consummated.”
This emphasis on the point at which deportation is consummated, rather than just decided upon,
is notably absent in most scholarship on American deportation. Too often, scholars of
immigration restriction and deportation have focused almost exclusively on the process within
the United States, therefore reifying the state’s presentation of itself as an all-powerful
determiner of who may remain in its borders. This chapter will detail how immigration
authorities grappled with the sometimes insurmountable challenges of actually placing
immigrants in other states after determining they were unwanted within the borders of the U.S.

Another recent development in the scholarship on deportation has been the shift towards
placing it within a globally comparative framework of various kinds of forced removal or exiles.
Richard Bessel and Claudia Haake make the claim that the encompassing term “forced removal”,
as opposed to traditionally used terms such as “expulsion, deportation, or forced migration
suggests “that these very same processes have often been shaped by actors and agents other than
just the state.” Furthermore, they explain, the motivations for the involvement of non-state
actors “often diverged significantly from those of governments,” and were also part of a
discourse in which targets of removal were more than passive victims. The essays highlight an
important, and often overlooked aspect of deportation—across the globe, the modern world was

62 In his newer work on the passport, John Torpey expresses the legal basis for some of the global constraints on
American deportation practice that this chapter elucidates. He argues that passports and other controls on movement
not only enforced the will and boundaries of state identity, but actually were part of the solidification of states as
“‘really-existing’ entities.” “What is remarkable about the contemporary system of passport controls,” he points out,
“is that it bears witness to a cooperating ‘international society.” See John Torpey, The Invention of the Passport:
63 Bessel and Haake, Removing People, 6.
64 Ibid, 9.
marked by a rising concern with delineating the boundaries of the population through physical transportation of unwanted individuals and communities in its midst.65

While such works represent an important departure from the tendency to see American practices of exclusion and exile within a national vacuum, they continue to focus largely on a comparative level of analysis. This chapter seeks to do more than just compare American deportation practices with those in other nations. At every level from public opinion to federal law, American deportation practice was the product of an already global world. It reflected global labor migration patterns, an expansive and growing international system of documentation and tracking, and contentions around state sovereignty and national borders. I assert that deportation practice in the United States was a collaborative process between government authorities, a wide range of non-state actors, including the press, independent commissions and researchers, political activists, and potential deportees themselves and their immigrant communities. At each of these levels, not only were these individuals and groups acting in ways that ran parallel to other nation’s actions, they were acting with an eye upon them, defining their own actions in terms of them, and shaping their discourses around the realities of the world outside American borders. From the intense and unexplored set of global realities which constrained the early enforcement of newly stringent deportation laws, to the powerful outward-looking language of anti-deportation protestors, to the complex, transnational lives of immigrants themselves, deportation, in practice even more than in its explicit legal conception, was a massively global undertaking in the early twentieth century.

It is a misrepresentation of deportation to think of it as a process that is primarily or exclusively rooted in the creation of stronger American borders, and the implementation of

65 See also Roniger, Green, and Yankelevich, eds., Exile and the Politics of Exclusion in the Americas; Lake and Henry Reynolds, Drawing the Global Colour Line.
American political will regarding who could belong within the national body. While the rise of deportation during this period certainly represented a renewed desire to cordon off the boundaries of inclusion and exclusion along lines of race, class, sexuality, political orientation, and morality, this goal had to be effected in a global reality in which American authority was internationally challenged and redirected. Even as American officials, ideologues, business interests, and nativist organizations pushed for more expansive deportation laws aimed at creating their idealized American populace, their goals repeatedly fell short because of global constraints. Sometimes, this inability to control deportation was rooted in something as basic as not being able to acquire a passport from the receiving nation for the deportee to be sent back. Other times, the difficulty rotated around confusion in even identifying the nation of origin of the immigrant or family in question. Transportation was another complication, and authorities faced the reality that even if a nation agreed to receive deportees, it was not always possible to effect their deportation because of the nations they would have to cross through en route to their ultimate destination. While the American immigration service stubbornly continued to imagine migrants as national subjects, they continued to be plagued by the realities of migrants as thoroughly transnational individuals and communities in a global world.

However, the global ramifications of deportation in this period were not only apparent in the practical struggles over how to enforce new policies. They also captured the imagination of the American public, immigrant families and communities, and activists of all sorts, who understood deportation within its broader global context. While such advocates and commentators recognized that deportation was about expulsion from the nation’s boundaries, they were also aware and concerned with what happened to potential deportees beyond the borders, and much of their discourse rotated around the fate of deportees after leaving the United States. Examining
the challenges faced by the global application of national laws, as well as the debates and discussions around the broader context of deportation undermines traditional depictions of American deportation as a nationally determined and enforced policy. In exploring these complications, this chapter demonstrates the insufficiency of a national narrative in which the American government believed itself to be the sole and all-powerful arbiter of its own immigration policy, and reveal how heavily constrained by global realities this policy has always been.

This chapter, along with the project as a whole, will contest and challenge the category of the nation as the proper and only scale at which to examine the practice of deportation. Looking at the various ways in which the United States was constrained, inspired, contested, and communicated with other nations in the process of enacting new deportation legislation reveals how deeply deportation reflected America’s striving to map its power onto the rest of the world, and how imperfectly this goal was realized. I begin by tracing the complicated global landscape in which Americans struggled with the fact that deportees had to be sent somewhere. Because of this, officials encountered unexpected, confounding, and often embarrassing cases in which they either could not determine the proper nation to send an individual, or, for a wide variety of reasons, they could not get the international cooperation required to turn their will into action.

Beyond a practical challenge, however, I go on to explain that the global element of deportation was also about self-definition and national imagination. Though seeking to define and delineate their own borders through deportation, Americans could only understand their actions as a deporting nation through frequent engagement with a language of foreignness—and the most powerful discourse used to denounce deportations was that it resembled foreign regimes and tyrannies. Furthermore, deportation was also a way of informally enacting foreign policy
through discretionary implementation of national law. Facing complaints that deportation acted as a danger, or even a death sentence, officials and the public weighed such claims for reprieve differentially based on whether the supposed danger came from fascist nations they faced with ambivalence, socialist regimes which they sought to discredit, or imperialist states whose interests they shared. Early deportation historian Jane Perry Clark wrote in 1931 that while “the power of the United States in deportation cases cannot legally extend across the seas,” there were still “serious questions of policy… on humanitarian grounds.” In fact, she explains, the U.S. was in “grave danger” of using deportation as a sort of “back-handed extradition process” which operated outside of the law regarding political extradition.66 While deportation was ostensibly about removing people considered dangerous to national purity and security, this vision of controlling what was within the nation was both a reaction to an increasingly global world, and a grasping attempt to maintain authority over the boundaries of the nation. In this attempt, deportation officials ran up against other nations’ security concerns about returning national subjects (many of whom had tenuous ties to their “homeland”), about transports of deportees crossing their borders, and about deportation’s potential use for abdicating national responsibility for dangerous or burdensome individuals.

**Delineating Belonging, Enforcing Policy: The Challenges of Transnational Subjects and the Limitations of American Political Will**

One of the many challenges of enforcing deportation in the early twentieth century was the geopolitical reality of a rapidly shifting world in which national borders were unclear, permeable, and often impermanent. Determining which individuals could be expelled from

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America’s borders required determining where those individuals belonged, often a formidable feat. As the United States sought to reiterate its borders and their exclusivity through deportation, they repeatedly ran up against immigrants whose national origin were impossible to pinpoint. Some migrants either refused to share their residence history with immigration officials, lacked sufficient knowledge of their origins, or hailed from nations who refused to issue passports for deportees to be returned. In other instances, individuals, particularly those of European heritage, protested against efforts to deport them to their nation of ethnic origin, instead of to their nation of prior residence (often in Latin America) in order to avoid return to an unfamiliar or hostile nation.

At other times, immigrants pleaded for special permission to be sent to join family in other nations, or begged for political asylum outside their nation of birth. In the 1923 Board of Review report for Andrew Mazzone, who was under deportation proceedings after a three-year imprisonment for grand larceny, the layers of global negotiation were clearly visible. Mazzone, who had been born in France, claimed to immigration officials that he held Italian citizenship by virtue of his father, who had never renounced Italian citizenship in spite of moving to France as a child. However, when faced with deportation, Mazzone introduced an entirely new wrinkle for authorities to grapple with when he requested special permission to be sent to Brazil, where his wife resided. Ultimately, unable to prove Italian citizenship and unwilling to deport according to the immigrant’s own choice, officials sent Mazzone back to France, although they allowed him to reship as a foreign seaman in order to save the immigration service money and expedite the process of removal.67

67 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4071, File 55205/739.
In other cases, multigenerational families of labor migrants struggled for the right to be deported together despite the fact that members of the different generations had been born in entirely different countries as the family traveled across the globe for work opportunities. The 1922 case of a family arriving from Honduras reflected the complex paths taken by many migrants, and revealed the deep confusion about the application of quotas. They were a “rather high class family of Russians,” made up of adults who had been naturalized as citizens of Australia, and two minor children born in Australia, before selling their property there and moving to Tegucigalpa for the opportunity to settle on free land. After deciding the U.S. would be “a more satisfactory country to live in,” they attempted to migrate, with $7,500 and a plan to buy and operate a dairy farm. However, in spite of the officials’ note that “the aliens are far above the average European immigrant in point of education, native intelligence and general appearance and bearing,” they ultimately departed voluntarily to Honduras rather than appeal the deportation order.  

While the grandparents, Alexandria and Nicolas Illin, and their son Romelio were considered eligible under the Russia quota (immigration officials made note that while Romelio was born in Siberia, unlike his parents, this fell under the same categorization within the Act), which was not yet exhausted for the year, Romelio’s niece Nellie McKay and nephew Hector McKay had been born in Australia and the hearing board thus ruled that they should have been initially excluded. This was in spite of a testimonial from the Sergeant of Police at Atherton, Australia, vowing that the family had excellent character, and “take no active part in any political matter, but they are very antagonistic to Bolshevik ideas.” The family’s case was further complicated by the fact that the children’s parents were residing in Colombia with their two younger children. While the case of the Illin family is unusually complex, it demonstrates

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68 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4560, File 55178/5.
69 Ibid.
the deep challenges that immigration officials met with in attempting to effectuate deportations during a period of great mobility.

The insufficiency of national policy was often a frustration, or even an embarrassment as officials regularly discovered they could not make sense of where individuals fit into geopolitical boundaries, and therefore struggled to administer their expulsion from the United States. For instance, immigration authorities debated during this period how to make sense of immigrants from imperial sites such as Rhodes, in which case officials questioned whether immigrants should be considered part of the quota for Italy or as part of “Other Asia”. In 1921, the Assistant Secretary of Labor turned to the Secretary of State for assistance in sorting out the matter, explaining that while “several aliens claiming birth at Rhodes and carrying Italian passports,” had demanded that they be allowed in under the Italian quota, the Department of Labor believed that Rhodes had not been definitely transferred to Italy under the Act of May 19, 1921, therefore “the classification of the island as a part of Other Asia is correct.”

Facing a deportee from Zara, officials pondered the unconsidered question of how to handle expulsion from the city, which had gone from Dalmatian to Italian jurisdiction in 1920. However, as officials realized, the situation was even more complex, as immigrants from the District of Zara outside of the City of Zara actually fell under Jugoslavian jurisdiction.

These confusing cases were far from isolated outliers, but were indicative of a fundamentally flawed deportation system unequipped to handle a world where war and empire caused such rapid shifting of borders and control. More fundamentally, this system rested on flawed expectations about identifying legible national identity, and controlling people’s movements within clearly bounded nation-states. As the United States attempted to impose simple

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70 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4317, File 55079/338C.
71 Ibid.
definitions of citizenship (often relying on the incorrect assumption that other nations adhered to
the same system of birthright citizenship as the U.S.), national identity, and ethnic belonging,
they repeatedly ran up against cases which proved just how indecipherable national belonging
could be.

Sometimes action was blocked by an immigrant’s refusal or inability to provide the
necessary personal history. In the 1926 case of Eushebio Jimenez, in custody at Sing-Sing, the
Immigrant Inspector from Ellis Island complained that the immigrant was unable to give any
information about his date or place of birth, and had no known relatives or visitors to give
information. All they could determine, he explained, was that according to the immigrant’s own
testimony, “when 6 years of age, following the death of his parents, he was taken to Cuba by his
uncle, who has since disappeared, and for this reason the alien is unable to state precisely the
name of the locality where he was born.” 72 Even in a new age of documentation, the debates
over belonging continued to be messy, complex, and dependent on individual disclosure, multi-
step processes of migration, and unclear determinations of origins. As Turack has explained of
the constraints upon state power to deport, both the individual deportee, and the potential
receiving state could thwart efforts at expulsion. He posits that “states may intentionally
frustrate the deportation through deliberate procrastination. If the deportee refuses to render
sufficient information regarding his nationality, he can cause the deportation to be delayed
indefinitely. The inability of a state to secure a passport to effect a deportation order against a
stateless person might result in complete frustration of the deportation.” 73

In other cases, it was not the movement of migrants which complicated their legal status, but
the movement of nations-- or at least their borders. Particularly in the post-WWI period,

72 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 6703, File 55475/70.
73 Turack, The Passport in International Law, 234.
immigration agents often encountered migrants from nations which no longer existed in their pre-war form, or whose borders had been significantly shifted by the outcome of the war. For instance, those from certain cities, such as Danzig, faced a home which as of 1920 was no longer part of Germany, but instead an independent quasi-state under the leadership of the League of Nations with mostly Polish controlled external affairs. While deportation scholarship largely leaves the category of the nation-state as an unchallenged and unchanging entity, the turbulent reality of the early twentieth century demonstrated how little control the United States had over determining citizenship and national belonging of individuals from other parts of the globe.

One of the most striking examples of how geopolitical instability during the post-WWI period impacted the enforcement of American deportation law resulted from the movement of the Curzon line, which served as the post-war boundary between the Second Republic of Poland and Soviet Russia. As the dividing lines between nation states shifted, American officials fumbled to deport immigrants who fell under the confusing status of no longer belonging to the nation state in which they had been born. In other cases, immigration officials found they could not return Turkish-born, ethnic Greeks to Turkey because “Turkey will not issue passports to its citizens of Greek race to return there,” leaving such deportees at the mercy of the INS for removal to Greece (for many, an entirely unfamiliar homeland) instead.74

Not infrequently, after the upheaval of Europe during the war, deported migrants faced returning to an unfamiliar homeland with a new language, a government hostile to their political orientation, and an unknown social and political environment. The seemingly simple category of nation of origin became blurrier at times, and called into question the meaning of “home” for immigrants in a tumultuous world order. Did it mean birthplace, regardless of what nation that

74 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4762, File 55211/603.
place was now officially part of? Did it mean the nationality one was born into, even if that nation no longer encompassed the location of birth?

In the 1922 case of Jacob Wolwelski, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) was contacted by the Baltic America shipping line for help in deciphering proper action in the individual’s case. They explained that after arriving in the United States, Wolwelski was excluded by Ellis Island authorities and deported on the S.S. Lituania, but upon his departure, they discovered that “the passenger was erroneously deported, he having been born east of the Curzon line.”75 A letter from the Ellis Island representative of HIAS explained that as a native of Yanowa, in the county of Kobrin, Wolowelksi, aged 27, actually should have been admitted under the Russian quota, in spite of the fact that the territory he came from was now claimed by Poland. Indeed, they explained, “this alien had little opportunity to have his rights properly defended… we strongly feel that every effort should be made to have authority obtained that this alien should be returned to the United States.”76 HIAS, a transnational organization, advocating for migrants on both sides of the Atlantic, pressured the American government to come to terms, and adjust its policy as necessary, with the rapidly shifting global terrain onto which they sought to execute deportation orders. Such global shifts, so completely out of the hands of American officials, were often at the heart of the most successful efforts to fight deportation, and were a serious constraint on the ability of the government to enforce its will in selecting the population allowed to stay within the United States.

Even where officials were able to successfully ascertain the national origin of an individual, they were not automatically able to transport that person, even in the not infrequent instances where the individual was willing and volunteering to go, in order to escape the prospect of

75 Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society Records, Legal Briefs, 1905-1923.
indefinite detention in the United States. For instance, officials found themselves thwarted in some instances to deport to Norway, after discovering that “the Norwegian Government holds that a citizen who has been absent from Norway more than ten years forfeits his citizenship and deportation could doubtless not be effected.”  

The challenges of passport procurement were most notable with the Soviet Union during this period, because of the lack of diplomatic relations between the nations in this period. In 1923, authorities responded to an inquiry by Judge Samuel H. Sibley, explaining that the unfortunate delays in deporting immigrants were due to the lack of passports. It was difficult to establish proof of citizenship, the official explained, and that because there is no treaty between the Soviet and American governments and “As a result, neither country issues passports for its nationals to travel to the other. Rare exceptions are made. Quite often, the Russian Soviet Government issues passports for deportees, upon showing that such deportee is an adherent of the Soviet Government and in harmony with its principles.”

While small numbers of Russians were deported to the Soviet Union throughout the decade, and others were allowed to voluntarily depart for other sites outside of the United States, most Russian citizens (including those from other Soviet-controlled regions) were essentially undeportable.

However, while officially the lack of diplomatic relations precluded deportations to the Soviet Union except in special cases, the confusion over this policy left openings for manipulation and deceit, most commonly of immigrants, but sometimes extending to government officials. In 1924, the Secretary of Labor was in conversation with the American Civil Liberties Union about the “Ukranian Diplomatic Mission,” a fraudulent organization issuing false passports for the return of deportees to the Soviet Union. This transnational

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77 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4703, File 55205/788.
78 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351B.
organization had offices in New York and Washington D.C., but also in Canada, where their agency office had recently been discovered and closed. The Director of the ACLU wrote to the Secretary of Labor to explain that the Department of Labor had deported numerous people to different European countries with these fraudulent passports, and that “All persons so deported have either been returned or in a few cases are in desperate straits in European countries where they do not belong,” a fact which he went on to explain “put the Department of Labor in a very unenviable light before the country.”

This embarrassing instance of official failure demonstrates that while deportation authority was consolidated on paper during this period, it remained a chaotic, uncontrolled terrain in which international criminal elements could still undermine the authority of federal officials.

Immigration officials hoped that once they managed to acquire passports for individuals to be deported back to their countries of origin, their struggles over transporting these bodies would be completed. Travel arrangements, however, were often complex and multilayered authority struggles. In 1923, the U.S. Commissioner of Immigration at Montreal received word from the Canadian Pacific Railway Company that their Hamburg office had advised them on behalf of the Hamburg passport authorities that “in the future, all deports landing at a German port of other than German nationality, will be turned back if they are not in possession of the German transit [vise].”

This multi-step transfer of knowledge about international regulations reflects both the transnational nature of the transportation corporations benefitting from the rise of deportation, and also the difficulties officials faced in trying to enact deportation to eastern European sites.

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79 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351C.
80 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, Files 54933/351B.
Among the many complex transnational subjects whom immigration officials struggled to property identify, document, and remove were seamen and stowaways, whose transnational life experiences and lack of national identity papers made them difficult to deal with. Undermining simplistic narratives of singular migration and clear uni-directional travel patterns, such lives revealed the confusion of an era defined by global migration. As the Commissioner-General of Immigration wrote to the Commissioner at Ellis Island on November 5, 1920, “These men, as you know, are not admissible. They have no passports and we deport at the first opportunity… Stowaways are the source of a great deal of anxiety.”

However, the global economy of shipping was not always a hindrance for immigration officials. By the end of the 1920s, authorities were engaging in the process of “reshipping foreign” instead of officially conducting deportation transportation in the cases of many of the young, healthy men they sent away. By sending deportees back as seamen on vessels looking for laborers, they often prevented longer waits for deportation transports to be ready. Because it relieved the government of the need to pay for the return passage of the deported migrant, this option was seen as financially responsible. For immigrants themselves, because the actual logistics of deportation were extremely complicated, and often required long periods of detention waiting for the next deportation transport heading their way, reshipping foreign was often a way to get out of prison more quickly and to earn a bit of money before going to live in their country of origin. As the Director of Immigration at Galveston wrote to the Commissioner General in 1924, “In reshipping deportees foreign one way in lieu of deportation, we are disposing of aliens whose deportation, in many instances, could not be effected, as passengers, because passports could not be obtained for them, and without cost for trans-Atlantic transportation, in addition to which the cost of

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81 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/262.
maintenance terminates with their departure foreign. “To prevent escape, he explained further, deportees on vessels which would touch again at American ports before leaving for foreign lands would take special precautions to ensure that deported seamen would not be able to disembark.

As the rise of documentation and more official guidelines for international travel began in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the possibilities for the United States and its ability to design its own national population both increased, and became more complicated. While the centralization and institutionalization of Immigration Service power increased, as scholars have noted, the need for official evidence of citizenship, legal migration status, and for passport permission for deportation to other nations impeded the U.S. authorities from enacting their will freely upon their immigrant population. In a period of rapid industrialization, frequent labor migrations, shifting and unstable imperial expansion, and increasing mobility, agents for the enforcement of deportation struggled at every level to identify and comply with national boundaries and to delineate them on their migrant populations.

**Deportation at the Borders: The Enforcement of American Boundaries in Transnational Spaces**

Where scholars have paid attention to the international dynamics of deportation policy, it has largely focused on the border regions between the United States and other nations. Although scholars have demonstrated the fluidity of American national borders, and the ways that deportation practice was carried out differently at the Mexican and Canadian land borders, such scholarship has largely implied that these border actions were merely the intersection point of two sets of national subjects and interests, while in reality, border disputes and policing were part of a far more global landscape. Deportees were disproportionately apprehended at the nation’s

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82 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, File 55608/134.
borders, but immigration proceedings at the nation’s land ports were indicative of far more than America’s international relations with its nearest neighbors. Throughout the early twentieth century, as quota restrictions narrowed immigration from Europe, but exempted the Western hemisphere, many immigrants crossing at the nation’s land borders came from beyond Mexico and Canada. Like other migrants whose paths to the United States were decidedly non-linear, labor migrants often spent time in multiple nations before working for a time in Mexico or Canada in the rapidly developing industries or extractive processes, and then eventually striking out across the land border into the United States. Others never fully committed to a single nation, carrying on lives of seasonal labor and family relations in both nations simultaneously, and making the crossing regularly (sometimes with the assistance of deportation proceedings, which provided them with free passage back if they were able to manipulate the system to their advantage).

During the 1920s, officials encountered new anxieties about the use of Mexico, Cuba, and to a lesser extent Canada, as “back doors” for European and Asian migrants who would otherwise have been excluded at the nation’s ports. In his 1922 annual report, the Commissioner General of Immigration discussed these circuitous routes into the country, and explained the particular ramifications of recent policy changes. In light of the common practice of European immigrants entering Cuba with the “assumptions that when they had lived there one year they would be exempt from the quota act,” he explicated, the length of residence required for exemption had been changed to five years, leading to a great deal more surreptitious entry from the island. In the

previous year, the Commissioner explained, as many as 7,000 European immigrants had gone to Cuba when “the real and ultimate destination of most of whom was the United States,” but only 2,500-3,000 remained in Cuba. The rest had “disappeared,” he asserted, and many had likely gone to Mexico, “apparently in the hope of working their way to the border and smuggling across.” The depth of this problem was evident in his assertion that, although “to the uninitiated it may seem strange that aliens are not subject to the operation of special exclusion legislation (as are the Chinese) would adopt this roundabout, expensive, and somewhat uncertain method of reaching their objective—the United States,” quota act and other migration regulations made this the only option for many.84 For immigration officials seeking to impose clear national origins on transnational subjects, these circuitous, “roundabout” paths posed challenges, delays, and at times, even unsurmountable obstacles. The discourse around deportation at the Mexican and Canadian borders reflected these patterns of multiple migrations and indirect entry. While apprehension at the border sometimes thwarted back-door entrants, many European immigrants lived for years in the United States before being caught and admitting to having crossed illegally through Canada, Mexico, or Cuba.

The process of deportation at the nation’s borders caused considerable tension between the United States and both Mexican and Canadian authorities, who often expressed resentment at the practice of expelling people over the land port they entered, even if they had no national resident status in that location. In November of 1922, the Assistant Commissioner of Immigration in Charge of Appeals wrote to the Commissioner General to explain that permission was often given to European deportees to go to Mexico if they did not want to go to Europe, and that “In some instances the alien was refused admission to Mexico upon his arrival and not only

was this office subjected to considerable work and inconvenience but the alien suffered from
great inconvenience.” While the federal government seemed unconcerned with the
inconvenience or insult to Mexican authorities, the Mexican government’s anger comes through
in extensive correspondence between American and Mexican officials, and they fought for a ban
against the landing of any deportees except Mexican citizens in the country.

U.S. immigration officials in the 1920s increasingly revealed their stress over the
apparent permeability of the Mexican border and their inability to clamp down on border
movements, which severely interfered with deportation practice. In 1923, the Immigration
Inspector in Charge at Tucson, Arizona carried out extensive correspondence with the
Commissioner at El Paso, discussing the challenges of policing the borderlands. In one
November letter, the Tucson Inspector argued that Mexican criminals deported at Nogales
actually used deportation to their benefit for cross-border criminal activities, “slipping back and
forth across the international line for that purpose.” Furthermore, he argued, these deportees
actually sought repeated imprisonment in the Arizona State prison, due to the high standards of
clothing, food, amusement, and the lack of manual labor. He went so far as to explain of this
captivity “that the environment and conditions are rather inviting compared with the conditions
of aliens of this class in their native country.” Shortly before, the Immigration Inspector in
Charge at Phoenix expressed the same sentiment, arguing that “these people have no special fear
of imprisonment on account that their lives within the prison is easier than freedom in their own
country, and a deportation across the land boundaries of the United States means nothing to
them.”

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85 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351A
86 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351B.
87 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351B.
88 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351B.
United States were preferable to freedom elsewhere, and in doing so built on the rhetoric and myth of uni-directional migration in which American belonging was the only goal.

The frequency of such claims reflected both the racialization of Mexican migrants as used to subhuman conditions and criminal by nature, as well as the messiness of policing borderlands where new deportation laws meant very little against the realities of a landscape in which the border was so immensely porous. In extensive discussions on this subject, local officials from border immigration stations, national immigration authorities, and the Mexican government quarreled throughout the 1920s about where Mexican deportees would be sent. Local border officials and Mexican authorities agreed that the INS should be responsible for sending Mexican deportees to wherever they originated in Mexico rather than simply the border town at which they crossed, in order to make their repeat crossing more difficult. Mexican officials added that the tendency to return deportees from all over the nation to a handful of border towns led to overcrowding, joblessness and high crime rates in these areas, while Arizona and Texas immigration officials complained of how frequently such deportees returned, often as early as the day following their deportation. However, U.S. government officials, aligning themselves against their own local officials, argued that the practice of sending Mexican deportees into the interior was far too expensive.

In spite of the considerably more respectful relationship between U.S. immigration authorities and Canadian officials, Canadian representatives also felt the strain of unequal expectations between the nations. Reflecting frustration about the assumption that Canadian institutions would continue to support American immigrant residents, while their Canadian counterparts would be deported from the United States, the General Medical Director of the Hospitals for Insane, Reformatories, and Industrial Schools in Montreal wrote to the Secretary of
Labor in 1923. “Very often I am asked by the United States authorities to receive in our Hospitals for the Insane persons who have become insane, even after these persons have lived twenty-five years in the United States,” the Director explained. His complaint was a common one among international figures who felt that it was wrong of America to blame other nations for the deficiencies of individuals even after they had spent most of their lives being shaped by American residence. He went on to inquire incredulously, “Do I have to understand that any alien living in the United States, no matter what length of time, is always deportable unless such alien has acquired citizenship through naturalization?”

Throughout 1927, the United States and Canada debated, collaborated, and maneuvered their policies in relation to mentally ill immigrants in conjunction with one another. The United States, complaining of the expense of maintaining mentally ill Canadian migrants in American institutions, demanded passport permission to deport numerous individuals from American hospitals, asylums, and mental institutions. In response, Canadian officials pointed to the numerous American citizens residing in Canada and argued that if the United States would no longer take responsibility for the support of immigrants of Canadian birth, many of whom had lived in the United States for decades, Canadian institutions could no longer be expected to support Americans with mental illnesses requiring public support. This led to the establishment of diplomatic relations with Canada in which the United States executed what amounted to the swapping of deportees from Canadian and American mental institutions, and each nation agreed to take particular lists of individuals in return for the other doing the same with their own citizens.

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89 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351B.
The Commissioner of the Canadian Department of Immigration and Colonization wrote to the United States Commissioner General in June of 1927 regarding the case of a man named Jolicoeur, stating that the inability of the Canadian authorities to effect the return of this U.S. citizen and others had become “embarrassing for the Government of the province of Quebec.” Indeed, he went on to threaten, “…if this United States citizen cannot be returned to the United States the Provincial authorities will be inclined to deal with similar cases where institutional treatment is required in the Province of Quebec on the same principle.”90 In the midst of these debates, the United States was forced to grapple with a number of the same complexities of other receiving nations for deportees, and a number of new questions arose. If an American citizen had lived in several states before migrating to Canada, which state bore responsibility for their institutionalization and expenses upon their return through deportation? If the American citizen under deportation proceedings from Canada was a naturalized citizen, rather than a native born one, did the government bear the same responsibility for accepting and supporting the individual? Which government’s procedures of testing and evaluating the mental fitness of individuals was to be accepted? If the immigrant institutionalized for mental illness in Canada being returned to the United States was a veteran, did the social services responsibilities differ from an ordinary citizen, and did more responsibility rest with the federal government in such instances? The need to grapple with these questions demonstrates that no matter how desperately the American state wanted to view itself as only a deporting nation, rather than a place that could be a punishment to be returned to, in truth, it was neither as powerful in its relations with its neighbors as it hoped to be, nor as unquestionably the prized destination it imagined.91

90 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4638, File 55203/177.
91 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4638, File 55203/177.
Deportation as Foreign Policy, Deportation as Death Sentence: Uneven Enforcement and the Use of Deportations as an Informal Tool of International Relations

While deportation in the early twentieth century was not officially an arm of foreign policy, or an explicit referendum on the human rights abuses of other nations, in practice, it often operated as one. Through selective application of seemingly neutral immigration legislation, government officials, not only nationally, but also locally, took foreign policy into their own hands and used expulsion to demonstrate their respect for, disdain for, or cooperation with other nations. The lenience expressed toward migrants seeking to avoid repression or state violence in Soviet Russia took on an entirely different tone, for instance, than the generally rigid rejection of claims of persecution and human rights abuses in Fascist Italy. Because deportation allowed for such a great degree of discretion on the part of individual immigration officers, often low level governmental agency employees had the power to enact their own commentary on foreign governments through their deportation decisions. As scholars have noted, the Immigration Service had a large amount of discretionary leeway in comparison to other governmental agencies of the early twentieth century, and the decisions of local outpost offices acted as an informal referendum on what immigrants deserved mercy, what foreign states posed true threats, and what geopolitical conflicts were worth protecting people from.

In an extensive “Document on Deportation”, one politically radical author identified only as “Honig,” elaborated the argument that the United States selectively enforced its own laws as an informal commentary on global politics, and through discretionary power, demonstrated sympathy or disdain for foreign governments based on who they deported. Explaining that honest labor activists were deported to dangerously oppressive nations, while the government spared others, he stated, “Notice, again, how the bill protects the white guardists, enemies of the Soviet Union, the rats who ran away from Russia because they [night] have to work for a living.
instead of sponge on the toiling masses.” In contrast, he observed of the government’s uneven implementation of deportation law, in other cases, “It sends them back to countries where the fiercest fascist terror holds sway, where imprisonment, torture, and death awaits the brave working-class fighters…”

It was understood by many opponents of the system that in ordering deportations from the United States, the United States was not merely protecting its own national security or interests, but was reflecting its investment in broader networks of imperialism, capitalism, and global racism and inequality. In 1919, a group called the Friends of Freedom for India published a pamphlet entitled “Doing Britain’s Dirty Work,” in which they accused the United States of deporting Indian agitators for the benefit of their alliance with British colonial power. Indictments of the immigration service for punishing foreign dissidents were common throughout the era, coming from immigrants themselves, political groups, immigration advocacy organizations, and at times, even from self-declared conservatives who nevertheless found the deportations overreaching.

As one observer commented regarding the case of Li Tao Hsuan, the immigrant was penalized at Ellis Island with solitary confinement after joining a protest against terrible conditions and segregation and discrimination against Chinese deportees on the Island. However the broader cause for the deportation was his radical speech, although “Li refuted all these charges and declared that his persecution was only due to his propaganda against imperialism.” Furthermore, his attorney argued that “deportation was a literal death sentence for the prisoner”, and requested that the prisoner be allowed to depart for the Soviet Union if he was to be deported

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93 Ibid.
An even harsher assessment of the case concluded that the interests were not merely of the government, but that “Wall Street wanted to hand Li over to the Kuomintang butchers in China”, for his anti-imperialism work. The observer noted the international outcry over the case, explaining that “meanwhile floods of telegrams from workers and workers organizations poured in to Secretary of Labor Doak. These protests forced the Department of Labor to grant Li the right of voluntary departure to the Soviet Union, and thus save him from death at the hands of the Kuomintang murderers in China.”

For activists and protestors, deportation policy which endangered the lives or freedom of immigrant subjects was not merely unethical, it was a violation of the American creed. Instead, they argued, if the government was to insist on deportations, a right which some, though not all protestors conceded, it was their duty to global standards of civilized societies to arrange for shipment to a neutral nation where the deportee’s safety would not be in jeopardy. In certain instances, the United States did attempt to find ways to circumvent deportation to an individual’s nation of origin, but these efforts led to their own set of complications and geopolitical maneuvering: decisions about whether to honor the deportee’s own choice of nation, navigation of paperwork demands, and growing international resentment over the United States treating foreign nations as a “dumping grounds” for their “undesirable aliens.”

Most often, deported individuals who successfully claimed danger, and escaped deportation to their own nation of birth were sent to locations throughout Latin America or the Caribbean upon their request. In particular, conflicts reemerged throughout the 1920s with officials in Cuba, who resented U.S. authorities for allowing a variety of European nationals, to be deported to

96 Tamiment Library, Record Group 129- Labor Research Association Records, Box 4, Folder 26- Deportations.
Cuba, where they had briefly resided as a jumping-off point before migrating to the United States. F.E. Menocal of the Cuban Department of Immigration reported in 1924 that he had been frustrated by the arrival of four more immigrants expelled from the United States, and reminded U.S. officials that from Cuba, they would only attempt reentry. Indeed, he stated, “it is the best practice to return them to Europe.” In another instance, the Commissioner in Charge of Immigration at New Orleans was severely chastised by the Commissioner General of Immigration for allowing a family to be sent to Cuba rather than be deported to Mexico in spite of explicit denial of permission. The 1922 letter to the Commissioner at New Orleans states sternly that “the assumption indulged by you was entirely unwarranted, and has placed the Bureau in a decidedly embarrassing position,” demonstrating the pressure officials were under to avoid international conflict with receiving nations.

Many immigrants were not successful in their efforts to stake out their own chosen national belonging, but were instead bound by administrative process to their nations of birth. An Indian man who entered the United States through Mexico, and claimed to have been naturalized there, though a British citizen, requested to be returned to Mexico after he was detained for deportation. However, Mexican authorities objected to his being sent there, and he was eventually deported to India, in spite of extensive efforts to establish a claim to belonging in multiple other national bodies. The instability of national identities for many migrants of the period demonstrate the insufficiency of reducing deportation policy to a simple equation of transporting an immigrant from one location to their rightful nation of belonging, as scholars have tended to do.

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97 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 7592, File 55608/123- General File re Deportation of Aliens to Cuba.  
98 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4560, File 55178/8.  
99 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4107, File 55205/716.
In the 1928 case of an Italian citizen by the name of Girambolo Cimbalo, or Cimbolo, Congressman Sol Bloom intervened to assist the family after his voluntary departure from the United States. Cimbolo left prior to the date set for his official deportation, voluntarily, for Mexico, after having “received information that his life was in danger if he returned to Italy, on account of the information he had furnished the immigration authorities with reference to his having been smuggled into the country.” Having come under danger for cooperation with the immigration authorities, Cimbolo assumed that “the main intent of the deportation order was to insure his leaving the country,” and therefore was startled to find that in spite of his arrival in Mexico being verified by the American Consul there, he was not being returned his $500 bond for reporting for deportation. While Bloom bolstered Cimbolo’s claim that he deserved to start a new life in Mexico with his life savings intact, the authorities refused, causing Cimbolo to remark in an angry letter to the Commissioner of Immigration at Ellis Island that his case brought to mind a tale, noting, “As you recall, Shylock was insistent upon having his pound of flesh and wanted to cut it himself from Antonio’s body and nearest to Antonio’s heart.” The intense reaction of immigrants unable to negotiate and maneuver their own solutions to deportation and the transnational dangers posed to their bodies and livelihoods demonstrates the vulnerability and uneven footing upon which deportees themselves attempted to use their own migration to fight the constraints of American law.

By the mid-1930s, while some cases of deportation which posed a danger to the individual’s safety were still being carried out in spite of protests, increasing attention was being paid to demands for sensitivity to the political atmosphere across the globe. This shift was facilitated in part by progressive political figures who added their voices to those of protestors and political

100 New York Public Library, Sol Bloom Papers, Box 56, Special Bills A-M. 101 Ibid.
activists in demanding that deportation consider the world outside American borders, and who
demanded that the United States held a global responsibility not to subject deportees to undue
threats to their well-being. In response to an appeal from Congressman Vito Marcantonio,
Deputy Commissioner of Immigration Shaughnessy agreed in 1935 that in the case of Srul
Goldband, since it appeared if he was deported to Poland he would indeed be subjected to
persecution, the department was going to permit “his voluntary departure, without expense to the
United States, to any country of his choice, except to contiguous territory or adjacent islands.”

Throughout the 1920s and beyond, as deportation increasingly became a common
government tactic for handling political protest, challenges to authority, and ideological dissent,
immigration officials and public figures were forced to reckon with the global repercussions of
their acts. While deportation was ostensibly, according to the letter of the law, not a form of
punishment, but merely an administrative process, many onlookers and subjects of the
deporation regime were quick to argue that it was in fact, a highly punitive process. In
particular, many activists, potential deportees, and legal representatives argued that deportation
in many cases actually served not only as punishment through removal, but actually as
extradition. The fervor of U.S. officials to deport political dissidents often led to the removal of
people who would run up against hostile authorities in their countries of origins after return,
including those who feared that the requests for their deportation visas put them on the radar of
these authorities before they even arrived. Radicals, communists, anarchists, free-speech
advocates and other activists were often at great risk for persecution, imprisonment, and even
death in their home countries, and this created a great deal of discourse in the United States over
the ethics of their return.

102 New York Public Library, Vito Marcantonio Papers, Box 3, General Correspondence, Folder- Immigration A-B.
Though deportation was not legally deemed a punishment, lawyers of potential deportees argued, in many cases, it could mark a sure death sentence for the deported individuals, and in some cases, consisted of the return of individuals who had fled persecution for the supposed liberty of the United States already. Furthermore, the perception that deportation could potentially endanger lives was not isolated to the arguments of legal professionals, but frequently made its way into public discourse and press discussions of deportation. In a novel based on the experience aboard a deportation train, one of the protagonists dramatically utters to his fellow passengers, “And in this country it is said that deportation is not a punishment. No, of course not! But for me it is a death sentence, all right.”

This critique was a common one of the era, and many declared that deportation could serve as an endangerment of lives on both ends, both putting the deportee at risk for persecution abroad, and, in many cases, leaving his family destitute and unable to provide for themselves in the United States.

These discourses again often revolved around the foreignness of this form of expulsion, arguing that extradition was something unimaginable in an American democracy, but typical of tyrannical foreign regimes. In the highly publicized 1935 case of Italian deportees Vincent Ferrero and Dominic Sallittoo, public outrage centered on the danger to these two men in Italy, and argued that deportation was against the ethical obligations of an American democracy. One appeal to the Department of Labor exclaimed that, “…If they are deported certain execution awaits them on their arrival in Italy. May I ask, is this government, which is at least theoretically just, allowed special criminal privileges that it can break the spirit and letter of its own law in order to cause the brutish disposal of innocent individuals?”

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104 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 13307, File 55860/459.
Among the many accusations that these deportations represented a barbaric form of extradition, one flyer argued the case in terms of global examples, explaining that in recent and parallel cases of deportation to Italy, “Political exiles from Argentine were immediately seized upon arrival in Italy and sentenced to long terms in various islands. The most recent case is that of Hugo Fedeli, deported from Uruguay.”

Further highlighting both the accusations of foreignness as well as the global nature of these discourses, the International Bureau Against War and Reaction wrote from the Netherlands to argue that, “Except in fascist countries, nowhere in the world persons, who belong to the class of political refugees, are exiled on account of their opinions. And we do not know of any democratic country where an extradition order of political refugees to the home country, where their lives would be endangered or where they would be prosecuted, would not raise a storm of public indignation.”

Accusations of fascism in deportation practice were among the most powerful rhetorical attacks levied on immigration officials by activists and radicals, but they also reflected a genuine collaboration with fascist governments to repress political activity of foreign nationals living in the United States. As scholars such have Fraser Ottanelli and Kenyon Zimmer have examined more recently, there were in fact transnational efforts to control the Italian population in the United States. Ottanelli explains that, “Mussolini’s takeover of Italy was followed by a concerted campaign orchestrated by Fascist authorities directed toward the United States to gain the support of and establish control over the Italian American community, ensure a sympathetic public opinion, and repress antifascists and their activities.”

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105 New York Public Library, Rose Pesotta Papers, Box 36.
106 Immigration and Naturalization Services, Record Group 85, Box 13307, File 55860/459.
out, could include controlling passports of family members attempting to reunite with relative in the United States, a set of circumstances which severely impacted Italian radicals in the United States. The potential danger for the deported Italian is confirmed by Ottanelli’s assessment that “On specific orders from Mussolini, the Italian consulate in New York routinely provided U.S. immigration officials with names and whereabouts of any politically active illegal immigrant, who would then be arrested and held for deportation back to Italy… a practice that had tragic consequences for many.”  

Thus it is clear that the experiences and anxieties of Italian American detentions and deportations were not happening within the national frame alone, as they have often been pictured, but in a context in which domestic concerns over immigration were intertwined with political developments, state authority, and transoceanic movements of ideology, political power, and people.

While government officials, public leaders, and the press showed ambivalence towards Mussolini’s Italy, denouncing him as a tyrant and a danger to the world order on one hand, and as a beacon of competence on the other, others took a much more determined stance of opposition. Instead of taking a congratulatory stance towards Mussolini’s repressive measures against criminals, dissenters, and others, and calling for American emulation of his hard stance against crime, many Italian Americans and other Americans expressed concern that actions like the deportation drive could quickly deteriorate into Fascist repression in America. Ottanelli argues that for antifascists in the United States, critiques of Italian fascism were often based in “denouncing it as threat to U.S. democracy and to the acculturation of Italian migrant workers.”

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Ottanelli, 182-183.

These critiques, he explains, were further applied by antifascist activists to what they deemed to be repressive and “Fascisti” deportation practices. Still others focused on the fact that deportation back to Italy would only release detained immigrants to certain death or brutal exile in Italy and pled for protection for America to protect even its undesirables from the reach of fascism.

Sometimes, attempts to plead the danger to the health and wellbeing of deporting particular individuals were successful, and demonstrated the wide leeway for administrative discretion within the deportation process. In 1922, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (HIAS) intervened on behalf of young Sora Zezombek, aged 14, arguing that due to the “white plague”, and the fact that she had no relatives left to care for her abroad, “deportation might possibly prove fatal.” Both the relative wealth of the family which was to receive her and her youth served her case, as did the fact that her older brother served the American army for 16 months in France during the war. As a result, HIAS reported, her brother “now prays that the Government show him some courtesy by permitting his sister to obtain the required treatment in the United States, and which she cannot possibly obtain abroad.”111 In this case, appeals based in patriotic service abroad were strong enough to convince authorities, and her deportation was stayed by Harry Landis, the Assistant Commissioner in Charge of Board of Special Inquiry and Appeals.

Other appeals succeeded because of their arguments about the dangers of conditions in the old country, but again, were bolstered by pointing out the wealth of their families in the United States. In the 1922 case of 16 year old Moische Zeltzer, who had a limb amputated en route to the United States, HIAS argued on his behalf that with his artificial limb and restored good health, he was sure to be employable anyway. It is hard to know what was more convincing for

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110 Ottanelli, 184.
the immigration agents who granted his appeal, the fact that he was coming to join his “mother and grandparents as well as other near rich relatives”, or the reminder of the dangers of his home country, of which they explained, “it would therefore be a tragedy to deport him back to the old country [Russia] where social and economic conditions are at their lowest ebb…”112 Likewise, in the case of 35 year old Beila Zilberman and her three children under the age of 6, her legal representative was able to convince the Board of Appeals that because the husband and father had died, and the parents of the woman had been killed in Russia, “It would be a tragedy to deport these aliens back to dark Russia, where they have no surviving relatives left…”113 As in so many other instances, expressions of sympathy for victims of “dark Russia,” amounted to a form of de-facto foreign policy through deportation, as officials implemented the increasing power of the state deportation machinery to serve global political agendas of the nation.

Understanding American Deportation Through the Outward Gaze: Networks of Communication and International Discourses on Deportation

While scholars have explored the growth of concern over family reunification and immigration policy over the twentieth century, the impact of deportation on families has been largely neglected. In the wake of deportations, which often disproportionately were enacted for men, particularly when the rationale for deportation was political or criminal activity, the results were broken families and transnational struggles for reunification, whether in the United States or abroad. Following the infamous Buford deportation “ark”, in which Emma Goldman, Alexander Berkman and hundreds of other political agitators were suddenly deported after long periods of detention, struggles emerged over the fate of their families. Dismayed at the prospect

112 Ibid.
113 Ibid.
of women and children abruptly deprived of their main financial support, as well as their family stability, the American Women’s Committee appealed to Immigration Commissioner Byron Uhl, for the reunification of these suddenly international families, exclaiming that “the suffering among the wives and children, deprived of the bread-winner in the dead of winter, is beyond words.”\textsuperscript{114}

Meanwhile, radical activist Elizabeth Gurley Flynn engaged in extensive correspondence about the tragedy of families split by thousands of miles, and political figures such as Norman Thomas argued that deportation proceedings were not only a betrayal of civil liberties, but argued that they were the emulation and repetition of mistakes made by other, less democratic nations.\textsuperscript{115} By the following decade, this practice had been so thoroughly condemned as un-American that the government itself began to withdraw. As Jack Wasserman explained in “The Challenge of Our Immigration Laws”, published by the American Committee for the Protection of Foreign Born, “In 1936 the Commissioner of Immigration and Naturalization found close to three thousand cases pending in the department which were of such ‘incredibly cruel family separations… so repugnant to every American principle of justice and humanity’ that deportation was temporarily stayed so that Congress might take some action.”\textsuperscript{116}

Speaking to the role of deportations in perceptions of America abroad, Flynn highlighted the injustice of the process and argued that it would shape opinion abroad, as well as at home. Addressing the case of a New Orleans deportee detained for over six months as a socialist and labor activist, she wrote to the Commissioner General of Immigration, disparagingly pleading,

\begin{footnotes}
\item[115] Tamiment Library, Record Group 118- Elizabeth Gurley Flynn Papers, Box 1.
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“Mr. Caminetti, I wish you would begin to realize that American justice the world round, is being weighed through your Department and is being found wanting. I realize, of course, the flood of cases that your office has to handle. I realize that your machinery moves slowly, but it also grinds exceedingly small… Apparently jails of America are to break the health of individuals as the wheels of old were to break their bones.”117 Protestors of deportation, both at home and abroad, repeatedly reminded authorities that the world was watching (and judging) as a supposedly democratic and inclusive society stripped the rights of individuals, subjected communities to invasive raids and separation of families, and stifled dissent and free speech through expulsion.

Activists such as Flynn also operated outside of national boundaries as well as within them, and organizations designed to fight deportation often stressed their international nature. The labor and radical activist Rose Pesotta, residing in the United States, was frequently in correspondence with the “Mutual Aid Group of Paris,” whose members included such transnational protest activists as Alexander Berkman and Mollie Steiner, whose continued work against deportation even after their own expulsion from the United States speaks to the global nature of challenges to the American deportation regime. Explaining that national boundaries frustrated the need of helping exiled individuals who would be endangered in their own countries, the group disparaged the national constraints of some relief organizations, complaining that, “The Russian Relief Fund, for instance, is intended only for the aid of Anarchists and Anarcho-Syndicalists imprisoned or exiled in Russia. Therefore that Fund cannot help the refugees in France. The same refers to the Italian, Bulgarian and other prison funds.

117 Tamiment Library, Record Group 118- Elizabeth Gurley Flynn Papers, Box 1.
Thus we are compelled to turn for help to you, comrade… in our efforts in behalf of our Anarchist refugees from the countries of white and red terror.”¹¹⁸

Flynn may have been approaching the question of international perception of American deportation practice through her experiences with global networks of radical activists, but radicals were far from the only observers to declaim the unfortunate impact of deportation on America’s image in the rest of the world. A 1921 letter from the American Consulate at Melbourne, Australia to the Secretary of State reported that “there has been much, [altho] unorganized and friendly, criticism of the administration and effect of the provisions of the recent Immigration Act.”¹¹⁹ Further highlighting the tension with territories of the British Empire, the Melbourne Age feature an article entitled “American Exclusiveness” in the same year, which proclaimed that “Much indignation has been caused by statements of the scandalous treatment accorded South African families on Ellis Island.” The secretary of the YMCA of South Africa expressed rage at being treated like a common foreigner rather than a respectable traveler from the British empire and explained that he was “herded for three days with a horde of filthy aliens… His wife said she felt like committing suicide to escape the horrors. Finally, through the good offices of the Canadian representative, he managed to get deported.”¹²⁰ Departing from the self-congratulatory narrative of America as an inclusive haven of the oppressed, it became apparent in international discourse throughout the period that foreigners looking in noted not a sanctuary, but a horrifying system of detention, exclusion, and uncivilized brutality.

After asserting her credentials by stating that “I am not an imperfectly assimilated alien,” and explaining to the members of the congressional hearing before which she appeared that “all

¹¹⁸ May 27, 1927 letter, New York Public Library, Rose Pesotta Papers, Box 1, Folder- General Correspondence, 1922-1928.
¹¹⁹ Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4317, File 55079/338C.
¹²⁰ Ibid.
of my ancestors came over here at least 50 years before 1776, so I feel that I have a right to speak as an American citizen,” Edith Spruance explained her perspective on the stakes of deportation proceedings by saying that it was for the protection of American values that she opposed deportation proceedings as they had been occurring. ¹²¹ A representative of the Women Voter’s League, American Civil Liberties Union, and the National Society of Colonial Dames, Spruance argued that what was endangered by deportation proceedings was American respect for freedoms, stating: “The reason I have come here is less on account of the alien than on account of our own American citizens,” and proclaiming that the recent drives in her eyes seemed “to shovel and generally push the country into what I can only term Prussian and Latin and general Fascisti methods of government.”¹²² Similarly, the Reverend W.L. Darby, Secretary of the Federal Council of Christ in America, spoke out against the repressive elements of U.S. deportation proceedings, likening them to those of another tyrannical regime. Speaking as the representative of the council’s 28 denominations and their 20,000,000 million constituents, Darby argued that “there should be no taint of a ‘star chamber’ in connection with deportation proceedings. This provision of the proposed law is too reminiscent of the universally condemned practice of the czarist government of banishing to Siberia objectionable individuals by secret bureaucratic procedure.”¹²³

However, it is also critical to examine the way in which discourses around deportation often focused on other nations not only as negative reference points for American practices, but also at times as models for emulation. As circulation of knowledge and expertise about the policing of non-citizen populations spread during the early twentieth century, the United States joined in

¹²¹ Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, House of Representatives, Sixty-Ninth Congress, First Session, March 25, 26, April 13, 1926, 55.
¹²² Ibid, 56.
¹²³ Ibid, 31-32.
global conversations and study about the most effective mechanisms for keeping subversive elements (foreign born and otherwise) suppressed. To build their arguments for more stringent deportation enforcement, advocates of the practice often pointed to examples from abroad of other governments who successfully eliminated threats to their own national body. For instance, as the opening of this chapter suggests, when local officials and police commanders in Chicago sought to rid the city of supposed Sicilian “gangsters” and “mobsters” in 1926, they repeatedly referred to the success that Mussolini had in “cleaning” up Italy through exile of similar agents, and urged the federal government to act more quickly to emulate his tactics.

Observers pointed out during the 1926 deportation drive, from various standpoints of approval or disapproval, the consequences that deportation to Fascist Italy could hold for Chicago’s Italian-American immigrants. The Deputy Chief of Police in Chicago stated approvingly that, “the terror of deportation will be the greatest deterrent of crime that could happen to them,” because, “when they are sent back to Sicily they are kept under surveillance there for ten years. Every night a gendarme goes to their home and they must come to the window with a light to show themselves.”124 Others recognized that for certain deportees, a deportation order could be synonymous with an execution order and appealed to the United States for recognition of the tyrannical treatment of such prisoners in their own lands. The Anti-Fascist Alliance of North America wrote to Albert Johnson, head of the Congressional Committee on Immigration and Naturalization pleading with him to spare political refugees from the violent repression of Mussolini, writing of one prominent political refugee currently held at Ellis Island for deportation, “His deportation means sure death. We appeal to you in order to

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stop this murder by Mussolini Government.”"  

Even Chairman Johnson, one of the prominent leaders in the struggle for immigration restriction, seemed swayed by such appeals, and stated in questioning that, “We are met right now with cases of men complaining that if they should be deported to certain countries, to Italy or to Mexico, they would be sent to probably execution. If there was a matter like that, it should be considered, and leeway provided.”

Other restrictionists and proponents of deportation expressed far less sympathy to the conditions in the home countries of deportable aliens and argued that should have no bearing on American treatment of them. Walter H. Shaffer, writing to Chairman Johnson regarding a petition which had been sent to him on behalf of Italians detained for deportation argued that, “personally, I do not believe these Italians are political refugees at all… They should be made to understand that the Anglo-Saxon asylum for political refugees does not apply to scores of men, but only to certain individuals.”

Responding to a petition by a large number of Italian detainees which “states that they are in danger of being executed by Mussolini if the deportations are carried out,” Shaffer concludes that it would be a dangerous precedent to spare them this fate, because “there are also thousands more in Italy waiting to break our laws.”  

Others agreed that the United States had no responsibility to treat deportable aliens with any greater leniency because of the political system within their own nation of origins and the possibility of political execution upon return. Madison Grant, the famed restrictionist, proponent of scientific racism, eugenicist, and author of *The Passing of the Great Race*, wrote in to Chairman Johnson to express his dismay at such proposals of reprieve. Grant asserted that “These foreigners are not

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126 Ibid 62.
127 Ibid, 168.
128 Ibid.
allowed to carry deadly weapons in their own country, but do so freely here. I believe that the alien who has been caught repeatedly carrying a dirk or a revolver should be deported without regard to the length of his sentence,” echoing the sentiments of many, who stated that Italy’s harsher policies towards criminals were not in fact a reason to protect Italian criminals, but a reason to send them away to their proper punishment in Italy.  

Whether or not individuals supported the right of asylum in deportation cases, whether their images of expulsion and imprisonment abroad reflected accurate information or propaganda, it remains salient that to describe the threat of deportation in America, the public looked outward, and held a well-formed if heavily disputed imagination of affairs across the Atlantic, which informed their beliefs about the enforcement of American policies. In a fascinating twist in the transnational relationship between deportation in the United States and Italy, the Commissioner of Immigration in 1931 went so far as to speculate that the troubles with Sicilian gangsters in Chicago were actually the result of the efficiency of exile procedures by Mussolini’s government. Commissioner Doak’s stance was explained in an article which detailed the situation: “The second factor is the widespread racketeering of the gangster type… The Chicago racketeering game, he suspects, is peopled largely by Sicilians expelled from Italy by Mussolini”.  

Beyond simple comparisons to Fascist Italy, the most compelling way protestors found to describe American deportations continued to require looking outward beyond the nation itself. Not only was deportation conducted in conjunction, conflict, and cooperation with other nations, it was also understood by many in America by using a discourse of foreignness. When critics of the deportation regime sought to highlight its cruelty, the separation of families, endangerment of

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129 Ibid.
dissenters, and police-state features, their most salient language for conveying these aspects was to say that the United States was acting as a foreign power would. Arguing that the practice of deportation undermined the American national creed of personal liberty, tolerance to difference and dissent, and opportunity for outsiders, activists and immigrant spokespeople often couched their criticism by labeling deportation as a practice typical of a more “tyrannical” nation, most often Soviet Russia, or Fascist Italy. The common language of why deportation was wrong centered on the claim that it resembled the practices of a foreign tyranny. As a reporter aboard a deportation special observed, “Hundreds of humans gathered up as if by a gigantic continent-wide net, herded into prison cars and ridden under guard to Ellis Island and other Government stations, there to be place on ships bound for their natal-homes. How like Russia that sounded!”

At a 1926 “Conference in Opposition to the Registration of Aliens and Deportation Bills,” held in New York, Governor Alfred Smith delivered a statement in which he argued, “This proposed law would give the kind of power to an administrative body that would inevitably lead to tyranny and abuse,” and like many of his co-critics, referred to the “tyranny of czaristic Russia” as the potential outcome of such legislation. Mirroring his sentiments, the stated position of the Immigrants’ Protective League to the conference was that, “First, we oppose such legislation because we believe it to be un-American in principle, since it introduces into our American life the discredited Russian and Prussian Imperial systems of espionage....”

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133 Ibid, 63.
In other instances, the public outrage over the dangers of deportation focused not on the actual political death sentences signified by deportation orders, but the deadly process of transport and what it would mean. For instance, the dangers of the Soviet transport by “étape,” or guarded walking transport, greatly captured the imagination of American activists, who traced the geography that deportees would be subjected to cross once reaching the Soviet Union, and argued that the United States could not in good conscience allow deportees to be subjected to such a trek upon return to their nation of origin. George Kennan, a noted explorer of Russia, and the distant cousin of diplomat George F. Kennan, expressed his dismay in a public letter on the subject. He decried the fact that deported immigrants being sent from arrival at Archangel to their places of origin in Southern Russia would “would have to go on foot at rate of fifteen miles a day. They would march under guard with common criminals and would be herded with the latter in dirty infected prisons at night with inevitable delays. Journey would occupy three to four months and would be attended with great hardships privations and risks. Most of weaker members would probably die from exposure and disease.” While the American government might have the legal capacity to deport these individuals in spite of their fate on the other side of the globe, he implored that “I doubt very much our moral right to subject human beings to such an experience. We are trying to relieve suffering and prevent death in Russia but by returning those people we should increase both.”

Strong consternation was also expressed by Progressive era social service and immigrant aid organizations, who saw the excesses of American deportation practice as tarnishing their reputation abroad, and departure from civilized, reformed modes of institutional control over the population. In their insistence the American state could be organized, rationalized, and perfected, Progressive era thinkers and social service advocates were dismayed at the disarray and disgrace brought on by extreme enforcement of deportation policy. Read Lewis, the Director of the Foreign Language Information Service wrote in 1929 that new deportation measures were becoming “unjust and contrary to American traditions,” and remarked that “After an alien has resided in the United States for a certain period of time, deportation amounts to exile, a punishment abandoned by all civilized peoples,” going on to quote the Circuit Court of Appeals in its statement ‘That our reasonable efforts to rid ourselves of unassimilable immigrants should in execution be attended by such a cruel and barbarous result would be a national reproach.”

In a 1933 letter received by Lewis regarding the enforcement of immigration practices, the fear that the world’s opinion of the United States would be colored by deportations was stated even more explicitly: “Ellis Island represents to immigrants, visitors and deportees their first and often their last contact with the Government of the United States. The impressions they obtain there color their opinions of our Government and its institutions and spread widely exercise an influence on world opinion as to the equity of our laws, the humanity of our Government and the efficiency of its administrators.”

Similarly, progressive-era agencies and individuals of the period commonly denounced a system which failed to approach immigrants with reason, moderation, sympathy, or consideration for family structures. Many

135 Immigration History Research Center, Immigration and Refugee Services Collection, Folder 6, Minutes 1929.
136 Immigration History Research Center, Immigration and Refugee Services Collection, Folder 3, Articles, Memos, Clippings, etc., 1923-1931.
such figures supported deportation in theory for worthy rationales, but attacked its excesses, particularly with respect to their role in tarnishing opinion of American abroad.

Both protesting activists, who tapped into international solidarity networks to raise funds and pressure public officials, and governmental officials themselves, who engaged in international communication networks, participated in the global circulation of knowledge about potential deportees. With the growth of communication between nations in the early twentieth century, the United States became part of various networks of communication regarding migrants and their dangers to the global community. Sometimes, these took the form of explicit conferences and meetings among diplomats about immigration restriction, as scholars like Lake and Reynolds have noted. At other junctures, international communication took the form of messages between nations that shared the same individual immigrant threat as deportees moved through multiple borders. In October of 1920, the State Department wrote to the Bureau of Immigration to warn of a criminal, in the process of being expelled from Sweden, who it was believed would need to be apprehended next in the United States. Tovia Uusoiksa, aged 25, “described as a pianist, but who is really by profession a plumber, is understood to be the chief agent for the smuggling of Russian jewelry into America,” the State Department official wrote, going on to explain that “I send you this information in order that you may balk any plans which he may have to enter this country.” Through the global transfer of knowledge about individual cases as well as broader potential threats, officials around the world participated in the policing of thoroughly transnational subjects, who traversed multiple borders, took part in varied economies, both legal and illicit, and faced expulsion across a range of nation-states.

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137 Lake and Reynolds, *Drawing the Global Colour Line.*
138 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 3986, File 54910/79.
The American government was not satisfied with spreading knowledge of its legal structures throughout international official circles, but also wanted its deportation regime known to the general public, and it made efforts to spread broader warnings. In a December 1923 letter, the Commissioner of Immigration at Montreal wrote to the Commissioner General noting that, “If we were only able to disseminate the information throughout Canada that imprisonment and fine awaits those apprehended after violating our Laws, I am sure such publicity would have a wholesome effect.”139 While the U.S immigration authorities successfully created a regime of terror and threat nationally, and achieved a discourse around the criminality of immigrants, individuals in the system also aspired to spread this threat as an international reputation of exclusivity and legal restriction. Efforts to create global awareness of the limitations of American inclusion included stationing of American officials abroad, release of foreign language press dispatches, and the cultivation of relationships with state agents around the world.

Scholars of immigration history have begun to take note of the fact that the migrant population which reached the American ports was itself a globally pre-determined group, having been selected through inspection and screening at ports of exit in European nations. As Congress ramped up immigration restriction and deportation legislation throughout the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, the immigration officials responsible for turning these laws into enforceable practice were daunted by the task of policing immigration both at home and abroad, and realized that to simplify their jobs at home required taking a more active intervention in migrant departures abroad. During the early twentieth century, and particularly after the advent of stricter restriction laws in the 1910s and 1920s, a system for screening immigrants before they reached American shores became necessary. For years, the United States debated in the courts

139 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, Files 54933/351A.
who was responsible for the cost of reshipping immigrants who were marked for restriction, either for various deficiencies, or, later, merely for being in excess of quota. As a result of the turmoil caused by the returning of excluded immigrants from America, European nations began creating their own screening points before departure of would-be migrants, often in conjunction with American officials and shipping representatives. As Donna Gabaccia points out, the transportation of migrants to the United States, was, in addition to being a cultural and political process, an economic transaction firmly rooted in a transnational shipping industry, and immigration policy was not immune to the concerns of this industry’s interests.\footnote{Gabaccia, \textit{Foreign Relations}, 50.}

However, what has gone largely unacknowledged and unexplored is that the functioning of the growing American deportation apparatus also required contact with overseas powers for the maintenance of its success. The sheer difficulty of documenting and institutionalizing records of who had already been deported from the United States was an immense challenge, and immigration authorities found themselves creating new tactics for tracking deportees after they left the country. Indeed, by the end of the 1920s, a practice had been put into limited use whereby the U.S. Bureau of Immigration would send out “black list cards” to European nations to ensure that they not allow these previously deported migrants to attempt to depart to the United States again. As the American Consular Office in Bremen, Germany explained to the Commissioner General in early 1930, the black list cards had “proved of great value”, but required a quicker transmission of information. “From two to six months elapse between the date of an alien’s deportation and receipt of his black list card by consulates,” they deplored, continuing on to state, “it is obvious that a deported alien who intends to attempt reentry is most apt to make such an attempt within that period of time.”\footnote{Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4590, File 55608/210.}
The need for this kind of systematic global transmission of deportation records was argued by the Office of the Technical Adviser in Belfast to the Commissioner General in 1928 as well. In this instance, the correspondence related to several deportations which were only related to the office by family members or acquaintances who exposed them as deportees. The officer wrote that while it was lucky to have informal reporting, “such an unreliable safeguard is all we have to insure our knowledge of such deportations” when the deportees attempted to reapply for a visa. Playing into some of the worst fears of American officials regarding the types of deportees who needed to be prevented from returning, they cited an example of an immigrant deported a month earlier for having committed bigamy in the United States, whose first wife had called to inform the Consul of the deportation, thus halting his chances of securing a return visa. Attempting to seek non-governmental solutions to the failure of authorities to prevent deportation of migrants coming over quota, the Vice President of the Inter-Racial Council wrote to the Secretary of Labor in 1921 to inquire of how they could be of service in informing potential migrants abroad about quota fulfillment. As an organization, he explained, “We are in a position, through cooperation with the foreign language papers, to issue a warning to the immigrants in the own language, urging them to make certain that the quota is not complete before they arrange to bring their relatives to the United States.” Such examples reveal the centrality of global communication and information networks, the rise of international migration restrictions, and the global cooperation required for deportation enforcement.

142 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4590, File 55608/210.
143 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4317, File 55079/338D.
Conclusion

H.T. Tsiang, in his 1939 “Deportation (A Poem)” written during his detention on Ellis Island, expressed the transnational realities of many of the immigrants caught up in the machinery of the deportation regime in the haunting lines:

“Polish Passport, Portuguese visa, Italian ship, no landing at Lisbon.

Brought here.

No visa, no parents, no home, no country to go to.”

Tsiang’s words encapsulate the inadequacy of a national frame to examine the lives of individuals whose experiences did not fit neatly within categories of statehood and belonging. For families and individuals facing deportation, migration had often been a multi-step, transnational process and affinities did not always neatly line up with citizenship or nations of origin. For those seeking to exile those individuals from the national body, the practicalities of passports, visas, shipping permission and numerous other challenges impeded their ability to impose their will of simple belonging and foreignness upon people whose statehood status was a complex and sometimes undecipherable map of experiences. Deportation was a key site of clashing between national desires and global realities in a period of upheaval, mass migration, imperialism, and war. Examining this demonstrates that deportation has always operated as far more than a simple enforcement tool of immigration policy, and has instead been a fraught battlefield between levels of authority, modern regulation and recordkeeping and continued unmanageability of controlling movement of peoples, and divergent uses of discourses of nationalism within a broader global context. Instead, it is revealing of the limits to national

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144 New York Public Library, Vito Marcantonio Papers, Box 46, Folder- Civil Liberties- American Committee for Protection of Foreign Born.
power, as well as the densely networked world within which the state sought to exercise this power through migration control.
Chapter 2- Defining the Nation Through Removal: Financing and Expanding the Growing Deportation Apparatus

In a February 1925 congressional hearing over a proposed deportation bill, which would expand the length of time after which an immigrant could reside in the country and still be deportable, Congressman William Bacon Oliver highlighted much of what made deportation such a central topic for the time. Congressman Oliver, of Alabama, added another layer to many of the critiques raised in the hearing, arguing that deportation provided more than a restructuring of the punitive relationship between the state and the non-citizen. Instead, he explained, deportation also represented a renegotiation of power between the legislative and executive branch of the government, and granted an unprecedented and dangerous degree of power to an executive agency. He stated:

“I am opposed to this bill because I believe it will create a reign of terror among the aliens out of whom we are trying so hard to make good citizens… a man might be ripped out of his home, from the bosom of his family, ripped out of his business, and sent back to his own homeland, no matter how long a time has elapsed between his offense and his so-called trial.

Now, we often argue here about the autocratic power we are giving to the executive power of the Government. I say that when you give autocratic power, give it reluctantly to responsible officials, give it to men high in the departments; but here you are giving it to the lowest kind of official you can find in the department, and you are giving him a greater power than that given any of the judges of the United States, the power to banish men from this country of ours.”

Deportation, as Oliver and many of his contemporaries noted, did more than regulate immigration. Instead, it restructured the administrative powers of the state, and acted as an impetus for the evolution of a powerful, centralized agency, often quite independent from oversight, which established itself with an unprecedented presence throughout the nation. Indeed,

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145 Congressional Record, February 11, 1925.
as Oliver noted, the impact of deportation, far outweighing what can be understood by its statistics, lay in the imposition of a reign of terror—a pervasive identity of deportability among the non-citizen population. But the rise of the deportation state did more than this. It also reaffirmed that the rights, protections, and benefits provided by the state were to be the exclusive privilege of its citizen populations, and that the state was going to invest its resources into drawing stricter delineations between denizens and citizens. The expanding national project of state-building through removal must be seen not simply as the enforcement arm of existing immigration policy, but as a distinct and aggressive agenda, one facilitated by a rapidly growing infrastructure for its enforcement.

This chapter begins by exploring the establishment of this growing power, and a discussion of its vast and growing reach across the nation. It then traces the reach of the state and the areas where it exercised these growing powers, as well as who it exercised them against. Following that, I explain the economics of deportation, and the immense strain over the financing of the deportation state. As many of the immigration officials of the time argued, deportation held almost endless promise for reshaping and controlling the national population—if only sufficient funds were made available. The chapter then examines the expansion of the national project into the imperial peripheries of the country, explaining how deportation transcended the borders of the continental United States and became part of the process of claiming and consolidating sovereignty in ambiguous territorial spaces. Finally, it will explore resistance against these developments, particularly focusing on the critique that deportation practice was an integral tool of modern American capitalism by providing an elastic and expendable labor force.
While much of this project emphasizes the critical necessity of looking beyond the national frame to understand the broader project of enforcing deportation policy, this chapter interrogates the category of the nation. Deportation practice did more than simply enforce and strengthen the existing borders of the nation during this period. It both reified understandings of national sovereignty and the power to exclude, and acted as a conscious form of state-building through removal. Responding to inquiries over the proposed Deportation Act of 1926, Albert Johnson, head of the House Committee on Immigration explained, “The courts have held that the United States has that right; that it is our sovereign right to decide summarily as to who among the alien peoples of the United States may be thrown out.”

In a different hearing on the matter of deportation, Johnson warned against allowing notions of “tolerance” to conflict with the assertion of state authority, arguing that “you can be sure that if we get so tolerant in the United States that we lose all ideas of sovereignty,” the nation will be overtaken by foreign ideologies.

As the Bureau of Immigration knit together an increasingly coordinated web of participants in the project of deportation, from sub-district directors to institutional wardens to local police, it simultaneously grew the power and reach of the federal government into the lives of individuals and communities throughout the nation. This growing power was far from uncontested, even from within the federal government. In the same 1925 congressional hearing on deportation, several congressmen both reiterated and critiqued the power of removal. Congressman Dickstein argued, “I recognized the wisdom of having a clear or unambiguous codification of the law on this subject,” and explained that despite impressions to the contrary he

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147 “Deportation of Alien Criminals, Gunmen, Narcotic Dealers, Defectives, Etc.” Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, March 25, 26, April 13, 1926.
supported deportations at times, but explained, “it should not be harsh or tyrannical or contrary to the best traditions of America.”

In hearings before the House Committee on Immigration about the proposed 1926 Deportation Bill, Chairman Johnson’s inquiries highlighted the shifting basis of the deportation state, explaining the Committee was looking not for how to eliminate specific threats or racial groups, but, more simply, to “greatly enlarge the number of deportations.” This major reframing of the agenda of deportation represented one of the greatest departures from previous decades. The idea of increased deportation as a goal in and of itself, rather than as a means to respond to a more specific threat or social problem, is a critical shift which requires more examination. As Gary Gerstle argues of the growth and unprecedented autonomy of the Immigration Service, “Unrestricted control of immigration and naturalization gave the federal government the power to profoundly shape the composition of the American population and polity.”

Within a matter of only a few decades during the late nineteenth and early twentieth century, the regulation of immigration transformed from being a small-scale, state controlled effort to one of the most powerful and far-reaching bureaucracies of the era. This growth, and the establishment of the practical mechanisms to support it, stands as one of the most notable and long-lasting legacies of the period. Gerstle notes that “the central government was making full use of the free hand it possessed in designing immigration and naturalization laws,” and I would add, in designing the enforcement mechanisms, institutional networks, and labor force

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148 Congressional Record, February 11, 1925.
149 Ibid.
required to make these laws matter. In her examination of the Immigration and Naturalization Service during the later period of the Bracero program and the mass removals of guest laborers, Kitty Calavita highlights the unique authority and autonomy of the INS, explaining that it had long held far more power than most federal agencies. The story of immigration control, she explained, was “a story about informal lawmaking and the ability of one federal agency not just to interpret and implement the policy agenda handed down by Congress, but in fact to set the agenda.”

Throughout this project, I examine the various ways that immigration authorities and other interested parties on the ground set the agenda of the early deportation state, but it is critical also to note what this meant for the early expansion of the centralized administrative nation-state. Although deportation scholarship has long been dominated by an emphasis on policy debates and congressional or judicial decision-making, it is clear that for many governmental figures of the period, what was striking about deportation was how thoroughly within the hands of the executive agency it was.

To understand the new centrality of deportation to the evolving American nation during this period, it is necessary to examine what the power to examine, control, and remove immigrant bodies from the nation truly meant. Amy Fairchild touches on the increasing power of immigration control during the Progressive era and beyond and argues that this shift “is dependent both on a physical ordering of bodies, creating hierarchies of belonging and worth, and on a very practice, real-world need to control bodies, to make them perform as demanded and expected. Finally, it is dependent on excluding bodies…” While she powerfully explores the immense control the immigration authorities had to impose their visions of fitness and worth on individual immigrant bodies, she also notes that this effort held not only “coercive” elements, but

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in fact “productive,” ones, in the establishment of a norm of industrial fitness and health that was easy to police through the removal and exclusion of those who deviated from it.\footnote{Fairchild, Science at the Borders, 16.}

However, this expanded federal power went beyond even the effort to control immigrant bodies and to examine and regulate them within established hierarchies. Eithne Luibheid highlights this eloquently in her study of exclusion on sexual grounds. “Immigration control is not just a powerful symbol of nationhood and people,” she states, “but also a means to \textit{literally} construct the nation and the people in particular ways.” Immigration control, she argues, has been critical to both the production of the “racial, ethnic, and class compositions” of the United States, but also “equally integral to the reproduction of patriarchal heterosexuality as the nation’s official sexual and gender order.”\footnote{Luibheid, Entry Denied, xvii.} While Luibheid focuses only on border control, rather than post-entry social control deportations, I would argue that it was these conjoined projects that were so vital for the expansion of federal power in the 1920s. The growth of the deportation state provided the immigration service to engage in a perpetual policing of that composition, not only at the borders, but after entry. Between the imposition of the Quota Acts (with their clear authority for selecting the desired ethnic and racial composition of the nation), and the development of a more powerful, stringent deportation regime with new enforcement strength, the federal government gained an unprecedented set of powers during the 1920s, with tremendous ramifications for the future of the nation-state.

To explore what this meant for the state during the 1920s requires examining how it actually wielded these expanded powers. As I will explain, the immigration service was always strapped for cash at this moment, and whom it chose to deport reflects a great deal about its priorities. When questioned before Congress about how deportation officials confined
themselves to “emergency cases” because of the lack of funds, Assistant Secretary of Labor White explained, “we must live within our appropriations.” As such, we might ask—why were these the cases officials attempted to pursue with their limited funds? The rationales for deportation, particularly health (both physical and mental), crime, sexual transgressions, and economic dependency are addressed in Chapter 4, but it is also critical to explore the racial dynamics of deportation priorities. Because deportations were tracked by both the nation to which an immigrant was sent, as well as the “race or people” of an immigrant, it can be challenging to get a full understanding of the actual racial project enacted by deportation. Thus, for example, in the chart below, it should be noted that large numbers of the English and French populations deported were not removed to England or France, but to Canada, which was the largest recipient of deportees for much of the early 1920s.

Figure 2: Number of Immigrants Deported by “Race or People” and Percentage of Overall Deportees, 1921-1929

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>“Race or People”</th>
<th>1921</th>
<th>% 1921</th>
<th>1923</th>
<th>% 1923</th>
<th>1925</th>
<th>% 1925</th>
<th>1927</th>
<th>% 1927</th>
<th>1929</th>
<th>% 1929</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>African (black)</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>2.2</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>167</td>
<td>1.8</td>
<td>266</td>
<td>2.3</td>
<td>247</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
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<td>9</td>
<td>0.2</td>
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<td>27</td>
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<td>19</td>
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<td>Bohemian and Moravian (Czech)</td>
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<td>7</td>
<td>0.2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>0.3</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>0.4</td>
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<td>Bulgarian, Serbian, and Montenegrin</td>
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<td>105</td>
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<td>121</td>
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<tr>
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<td>16</td>
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<td>0.3</td>
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155 “Deportation: Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization,” House of Representatives, Sixty Ninth Congress, First Session, January 12, 1926.
Figure 2 (cont.): Number of Immigrants Deported by “Race or People” and Percentage of Overall Deportees, 1921-1929

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Race or People</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Number</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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<tr>
<td>Dalmatian, Bosnian, and Herzegovian</td>
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<td>264</td>
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<td>236</td>
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<td>490</td>
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<td>847</td>
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<td>158</td>
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<td>192</td>
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<td>Italian (South)</td>
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<td>(1)</td>
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<td>(1)</td>
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<td>(1)</td>
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<td>512</td>
<td>5.4</td>
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<td>265</td>
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<td>10</td>
<td>0.1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>0.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Immigration scholars have tended to assume that the patterns of post-entry deportation followed those of exclusion during this period, with a strong emphasis on curtailing Southern and Eastern European migration, Mexican migration (of the more permanent variety), along with, more fully, Chinese migration. In fact, however, the deportation statistics displayed above suggest a quite significant divergence from these patterns. While Mexican immigrants were, especially by the end of the decade, a high proportion of the number of total deportees, they were also a very high proportion of the overall number of immigrants. Furthermore, the years in which their removals were highest corresponded closely with the years of economic downturn and large-scale layoffs of laborers, and in the middle of the decade, dipped to only about 10% of overall deportations. Notably, while it has received so much less attention in the scholarship on deportation, for the first half the decade, Canada was the largest recipient of deportees in most years, not Mexico. By 1925, Canada still surpassed Mexico in number of deportations, with a total of 1,914 Canadian nationals removed that year.\(^{156}\)

Furthermore, as the chart reveals, some of the groups which nativists, eugenicists, and many in Congress felt posed the greatest threat to the national well-being were in fact, not particularly large proportions of the overall population of deportees. Italians, for instance, even in combination between Northern and Southern, never surpassed 9% of total deportations, even as their policing gained particular attention in the press and public eye. Polish deportations

\(^{156}\) Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration, 1925.
ranged between 1.7 and 3.1% throughout the decade, while Greek deportations never rose above 3%, and neither “Bohemian and Moravian (Czech)” nor Lithuanian deportations ever crept past 0.4%. Particularly considering that these groups were often the most deeply connected in the public imagination with perceived threats of crime, mental inferiority, and economic dependency, it is striking that their removals never occurred at a higher rate.

Simultaneously, the high rates of deportation among many of the “worthy” Northern and Western European populations which many restrictionists championed (and which the Quota Acts had been rewritten for 1924 to favor), are also noteworthy. Scandinavians, who were so often celebrated as superior “Nordic” peoples, were more than 5% of deportees by mid-decade, while German deportees composed nearly 8% of total removals at the same point. Perhaps what stands out most is that English deportations remained high throughout the decade, ranging from 7.3% to 15.0% of total removals, and in 1923, even composing a larger percentage of the total deportations than Mexicans. When combined with relative high rates of Irish and Scotch deportations (peaking at almost 5% by mid-decade, quite considerable for a relatively small overall immigrant population), the total deportations for nationals of the British Isles were high indeed.

While it is impossible to know with certainty what the removals of these populations, generally deemed “desirable” and fit for contribution and commingling with the American public, actually can be attributed to, these patterns demonstrate the need for more study. They also suggest that more established immigrant populations with more English-language skills and more knowledge of the services of the nation might have been more likely to end up in the institutions of the state, where they could be more readily apprehended for deportation. What these number also might denote is an increasing concern with perfecting the populations that had
been accepted as worthy citizens-in-waiting. By that I mean, in order to more fully integrate these populations into the national body, they had to be cleansed of their social problems—their insane, their criminals, their deviants, while other populations needed a more blanket rejection. By removing those who threatened the well-being of the accepted segments of the social body, immigration officials paved the way for their more complete integration into a particular vision of the American nation, and protected the very “desirability” of these populations. Perhaps most importantly, these numbers demonstrate quite clearly the critical importance of not mapping the agendas and priorities of immigration restriction more generally over the practice of post-entry deportations.

To understand the priorities of the growing deportation state, it is also necessary to examine where immigrants were deported from. Immigration control is so commonly told as a story of Angel and Ellis Islands, of the Mexican Borderlands, and perhaps, on occasion, of the northern border. In reality, however, the expansion of post-entry deportations broadened that story to include the entire nation, involving local, state, and federal officials, institutional employees, and the broader public, in to the project of determining the population of the nation. The following chapter more thoroughly explores the local dimensions of the deportation regime, but it should be noted here that one of the most remarkable achievements of the deportation state in the 1920s was in connecting and streamlining communication between the different immigration stations around the country. As post-entry deportation increasingly became a viable option for controlling and disciplining immigrant populations during and after the 1920s, the infrastructure of the newly empowered immigration service expanded. It is particularly notable that this happened alongside the development of the Border Patrol in 1924, demonstrating the parallel concerns with excluding and removing unwanted peoples.
In 1923, to keep pace with the growth of the internal policing of migrants, the Immigration Service underwent a major reorganization of its field service. “In order to effect a closer cooperation between the Bureau of Immigration in Washington and its field service,” the Commissioner General explained, “a readjustment of district boundaries was made on January 1, 1923, based upon a careful consideration of geographical aspects and transportation facilities.” This reorganization led to the creation of new district offices, and, notably, of a new supervisory staff, tasked as “representatives of the department and bureau in visiting the various districts,” to make recommendations on creating a more streamlined and efficient service.157 After the reorganization, the district had 35 districts, plus a special district in New York and New Jersey for “Chinese matters only.” Of these 35 districts, two were in Canada, one was in Alaska, one in Puerto Rico, on in Hawaii, and the rest throughout the continental United States. The map below suggests the ways in which the federal immigration service had gained a remarkable reach, and visually traces the network of spaces in which deportees were apprehended and gathered to await deportation. Within each of these marked districts, smaller sub-districts operated, which sent deportees to the attention of the district offices for investigation.

Figure 3: Map of District Offices of the Immigration Field Service, 1923


1. Montreal, Canada
2. Portland, ME
3. Boston, MA
4. Ellis Island, NY
5. Buffalo, NY
6. Gloucester City, NJ
7. Pittsburgh, PA
8. Baltimore, MD
9. Norfolk, VA
10. Jacksonville, FL
11. Detroit, MI
12. Cincinnati, OH
13. Atlanta, GA
14. Chicago, IL
15. St. Louis, MO
16. Memphis, TN
17. New Orleans, LA
18. Winnipeg, Canada
19. Minneapolis, MN
20. Omaha, NE
21. Kansas City, MO
22. San Antonio, TX
23. Helena, MT
24. Denver, CO
25. El Paso, TX
26. Spokane, WA
27. Salt Lake City, UT
28. Seattle, WA
29. Portland, OR
30. San Francisco, CA
31. Los Angeles, CA
32. Ketchikan, AK
33. San Juan, P.R. (To include the Territory of Porto Rico and the Virgin Islands)
34. Honolulu, HI
35. Galveston, TX
36. Special District, NY and NJ-“Chinese matters only”
Examining this map, it is possible to see that the immigration service played a critical function not only in ensuring that “undesirable” immigrants could be identified, detained, and removed from all over the interior of the nation, but also that these processes could occur at some of the farther reaches of the nation, as is explained later in this chapter. Furthermore, the apprehension and deportation of immigrants from all of these disparate national spaces was not so telling in isolation as is the increasing coordination and centralization within which this was made possible. By initiating networks of reporting and documentation not only with these district offices, but with all public and private charitable, medical, and carceral institutions within these districts, the immigration service established a massive bureaucracy which surveilled and tracked immigrants in a previously inconceivable way. As Commissioner Hull himself noted, the work “I hardly think any one has yet been able to visualize the magnitude of the problem that confronts the Immigration Bureau,” which faced the immense challenge, he explained, of over 5,000 miles of land border, and 10,000 miles of water borders.\footnote{First Deficiency Appropriation Bill, 1926. Subcommittee of House Committee on Appropriations.}

It is also necessary to examine, as best as the available sources allow, where immigrants were actually departing from after their initial apprehension in these districts around the country. Unfortunately, the Immigration Service did not keep statistics of the number of deportees at the district offices around the country before they were transferred to a port or border station for removal. Thus, there is no record of the number of immigrants ordered deported under the jurisdiction of the various interior districts (i.e. Omaha, Chicago, Denver, etc.). However, these statistics do give some sense of the distribution of deportees around the country, and certainly undermine the tendency in scholarship to think of immigration control as something that occurred at Ellis and Angel Islands alone. Deportations took place not only through the largest
ports of entry, but all around the edges of the country. The expansiveness of the deportation state, I insist, brought the project of deportation into the public eye in this way, as did the trains discussed in Chapter 5, which brought deportees from the interior to their many points of exit. As the following section details, one of the greatest challenges of this expanded infrastructure was its expense, which often thwarted the accomplishment of the Immigration Service’s full aspirations

*Figure 4: Immigrants Deported by Port or District, 1929*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Port or District</th>
<th>Aliens Deported After Landing</th>
<th>Port or District</th>
<th>Aliens Deported After Landing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Atlantic Total</strong></td>
<td>2677</td>
<td>Other Gulf</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New York, NY</td>
<td>1839</td>
<td>Pacific Total</td>
<td>582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston, MA</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>San Francisco, CA</td>
<td>246</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia, PA</td>
<td>191</td>
<td>Portland, OR</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore, MD</td>
<td>139</td>
<td>Seattle, WA</td>
<td>125</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadian Atlantic</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Canadian Pacific</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portland, ME</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Mexican Border Seaport</td>
<td>143</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Bedford, MA</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>Canadian Border Total</td>
<td>3401</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Providence, RI</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>Montreal District</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Newport News, VA</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>Buffalo District</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk, VA</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Detroit District</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Savannah, GA</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>Grand Forks District</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miami, FL</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>Spokane District</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Key West, FL</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>Mexican Border Total</td>
<td>5618</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Atlantic</td>
<td>121</td>
<td>San Antonio District</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gulf of Mexico Total</strong></td>
<td>595</td>
<td>El Paso District</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tampa, FL</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>Los Angeles District</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pensacola, FL</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>Other Total</td>
<td>35</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile, AL</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>Alaska</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Orleans, LA</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>Hawaii</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galveston, TX</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>Porto Rico</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Compiled from the Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration, 1929.*
Financing Removal: Federal Appropriations and the Debates over the Cost of Deportation

Although few aspects of deportation figured more prominently in the minds of immigration authorities during the 1920s, scholars have largely neglected a deep discussion of the economics of the growing deportation state. As the department responded to congressional, local, institutional, and public pressures to increase deportations, they strained against budgetary limitations, and throughout the 1920s, Congressional records are filled with hearings over increased appropriations for the Bureau of Immigration. Particularly after the creation of the Border Patrol, the Bureau struggled to balance the costs of securing the borders against the unauthorized entry of migrants, and of removing “undesirables” after their entry. In a 1926 appropriations hearing, Commissioner General Hull was asked directly whether deportation or border work was more important, and waffled on his response, unwilling to say one took precedence over the other. “Sometimes you can make a good argument that the most important work is the border-patrol work, and it is very important because it is cheaper to keep people out of the country than to let them come in and send them out,” Hull explained, but concluded, “On the other hand, the importance of deporting people is very pressing.”

Throughout the decade, officials began to reconceptualize deportation as more than a selective mechanism for ridding the country of specific threats and “dangerous” individuals. Instead, officials discussed what would be required (in terms of infrastructure, coordination, and budget), in order to remove all identifiable unauthorized immigrants from the nation. Robe Carl White, the Assistant Secretary of Labor made a highly revealing assessment of the situation in a hearing before the House of Representatives Committee on Immigration and Naturalization in 1926. Speaking on the proposed Deportation Act of 1926, White explained deportations were

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159 First Deficiency Appropriation Bill, 1926, Subcommittee of House Committee on Appropriations.
limited primarily not by insufficient legislation on the matter, but in fact by limited funds for enforcing that legislation. Asked by a congressman whether there could be a “tremendous increase in deportations” even without new legislation, White responded “Oh, yes. We could make the deportations almost anything you wanted, until we rid the country of the aliens who are illegally here.” In fact, he explained, the department had already begun to study the calculations of what “complete deportation” might look like, and had reached a “conservative” best estimate that there were between 250,000 and 275,000 unauthorized aliens in the country, the “greater proportion” of whom would be deportable.\textsuperscript{160}

As the Bureau of Immigration set out to exercise that “power to banish men,” they encountered a number of challenges, including the logistics and expense of actually enacting this power. One of the most under examined aspects of deportation practice in the early twentieth century is the economics of what Commissioner Hull called that “very pressing” agenda. One of the many ways that deportation practice was fundamentally reshaped in this decade was budgetary, as the Department of Labor negotiated for greater and greater appropriations to bolster the project of expelling unauthorized immigrants from around the interior of the nation. The rise of the border patrol in this period has received attention, but there has been less focus on the attendant rise in funds for policing immigration beyond the edges of the nation, and well after initial entry. Of the many logistical facets of creating and enforcing the growing deportation regime during the 1920s, arguably none were more squarely within the power of the national government than its budget. Deportation appropriations were determined by Congress, after which the Bureau of Immigration, within the Department of Labor, would allocate resources to the various sub-distRICTS of immigration, and after 1924, to the Border Patrol.

\textsuperscript{160} “Deportation: Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization,” House of Representatives, Sixty Ninth Congress, First Session, January 12, 1926.
By 1924, the Immigration Bureau was becoming more insistent in its reports to Congress about the centrality of post-entry deportation of immigrants, those guilty of crimes, but also those in violation of immigration law, signaling a broader agenda of deportation. “The deportation of aliens found to be unlawfully in the United States,” the Commissioner General explained in his 1924 Annual report, “is rapidly becoming one of the most important functions of the Immigration Service, and as the laws governing the admission of aliens become more restrictive in character the deportation problem becomes more difficult and exacting.”  

Because of this, he went on to report, the Bureau had deported 6,409 aliens the previous fiscal year, which number was “far in excess of any previous year.” In the following year’s report, the Commissioner again boasted, “this is the largest number that has been deported in any one year in the history of this service.” He explained that just under 9,500 immigrants had been removed, of which, nearly 2,000 were sent to Canada, and over 1,800 more to Mexico, and that “minus a small percentage of South Americans, Asiatics, and Africans,” the rest were sent to various European countries.

Hull again urged Congress to recognize the difficulty and immensity of deportation in a 1926 request for greater appropriations, declaring “It is a very difficult and wonderful work.” Hull’s request reflects the logistical challenges presented by escalating to such a massive infrastructure for removal over such a short period of time. In response to congressional pushback against allotting the requested funds, he asserted, “You can not build this service up and build it up economically and efficiently in so short a time,” reflecting the intense balancing act immigration officials felt between their goals of greater removals and their budgetary

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162 Ibid.
163 Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration, 1925.
164 First Deficiency Appropriation Bill, 1926. Subcommittee of House Committee on Appropriations.
The 1920s thus clearly represented a critical turning point in the construction of the modern deportation state, not only in its ideological underpinnings, but also in the negotiation of its pragmatic application.

However, as the frequent frustrations of the Bureau of Immigration reflected, this project was far from completed and it continued to face major budgetary obstacles. When facing Congress to demand greater appropriations for deportation, the Commissioner General was sure to highlight what the project of deportation could achieve if it only had sufficient funding. The department was taking such an active program of deportations, Hull explained in 1926, that they ran out of funds within the first seven months of the fiscal year, and were forced to suspend their work until more funds became available. When asked by Chairman Johnson whether he was “obliged at any time to delay the matter of deportations for lack of funds,” Hull stated, “Why, we certainly do,” and detailed these delays in greater depth. As of January 15th of 1926, he showed, there were at least 2,835 immigrants waiting in detention because of the lack of funds to activate their deportations. By later in the year, in a hearing requesting further appropriations, Hull reported that the number awaiting deportation had surpassed 5,000, of which roughly 800 were detained at government expense, while most of the others were detained in state and local institutions.166

These limitations were echoed by Assistant Secretary of Labor Robe Carl White, who explained that in addition to those already served with warrants of deportation who could not be removed physically for lack of finances, there were so many more immigrants throughout the country who could be searched out and apprehended. The Bureau of Immigration, he explained, had never been able to fulfill its promised goal of going out to all of the Immigration Districts of

165 Ibid.
166 First Deficiency Appropriation Bill, 1926, Subcommittee of House Committee on Appropriations.
the nation and surveying to determine how many “aliens are in that district unlawfully.” Instead, he lamented, in spite of frequent requests from around the country for them to come do surveys and identify deportable immigrants, the Bureau has been forced to limit itself to “what we call the emergency work—the work that is right in front of them, the deporting of aliens who are reported to the Immigration Service through various sources, civil authorities and individuals.”\textsuperscript{167} While Chapter 3 delves more deeply into the local reporting of this “emergency work,” it is critical to note here the ongoing conflict between the state’s desire for increased deportation and its inability to keep pace through a fully funded apparatus for carrying out these aims.

When negotiating for additional funds, immigration authorities were careful to demonstrate that they were being thrifty and making the most of the funds that they had. The Commissioner General reported that the Immigration Bureau’s efforts to reduce costs while increasing deportations through the practice of allowing aliens to reship one way foreign as seamen were wildly successful. This practice gained in popularity throughout the decade, and often served the interests of both the government and the deportee. The Bureau saved money by not having to pay the deportee’s passage, while for many immigrants, it provided an opportunity for a quicker departure for detention and also allowed them to earn some money before having to start their new lives in their home nation. While many worried about the possibility that aliens could escape or desert their ships and reenter the U.S., the Bureau insisted that its protections (most often not letting deportees travel on ships which would dock again in the U.S. before transatlantic passage) were strong enough to make the benefits of the system worthwhile.\textsuperscript{168} By

\textsuperscript{167} “On Proposed Deportation Act of 1926,” Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, House of Representatives, January 12, 1926.

\textsuperscript{168} As I address later in this chapter, debates ensued over whether Hawaii, as a territorial possession counted as a domestic port and thus made certain voyages ineligible for the purposes of deportees reshipping foreign.
1925, the Commissioner reported that 958 immigrants chose this option, which saved the government over $148,000 in shipping expenses.169

Figure 5: “Aliens Permitted to Reship One Way Foreign in Lieu of Being Deported,” 1925

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Port</th>
<th>Number of Aliens</th>
<th>Saving</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Montreal</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$575.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boston</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>$515.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ellis Island</td>
<td>146</td>
<td>$16,060.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Philadelphia</td>
<td>268</td>
<td>$51,716.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baltimore</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>$1,078.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Norfolk</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>$6,575.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jacksonville</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>$2,678.51</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Orleans</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>$4,900.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Galveston</td>
<td>355</td>
<td>$48,635.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Los Angeles</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>$3,798.44</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>San Francisco</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>$5,800.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seattle</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>$5,950.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>958</strong></td>
<td><strong>$148,281.56</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Compiled from the Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration, 1925.

Throughout this period, in addition to the savings created through allowing immigrants to reship foreign upon the execution of their deportation warrants, there was also an increasing trend toward the use of “voluntary departures,” or “repatriation.” By employing repatriation, the government saved itself a great deal of money on detention, warrant proceedings, and labor. Additionally, they were able to pressure the departure of many immigrants who would not have, legally speaking, been eligible for deportation. Deportation increasingly became integrated into a broader range of opportunities for expulsion from the nation, which reshaped the state by establishing a permanently vulnerable class of non-citizens. While not reflected in the official statistics on deportation, practice of encouraging potential deportees to return voluntarily rather

169 Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration, 1925.
than undergo formal deportation warrant proceedings was one of the most critical initiatives for financial expediency (as well as a powerful way to circumvent the inconvenient limitations of deportation law.

**Figure 6: Forms of Deportation and Removal, 1928**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deported at Government Expense</th>
<th>Deported at Steamship Expense</th>
<th>Reshipped Foreign</th>
<th>Departed Voluntarily</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7,313</td>
<td>2,032</td>
<td>887</td>
<td>1,393</td>
<td>11,625</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Compiled from the Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration, 1928.*

This practice was particularly common for Mexican immigrants, partially because of the ease of removal over the border. Although its use in the 1930s has garnered most attention, it was already frequently employed by the preceding decade. Zaragosa Vargas notes this in his study of Mexican workers in the Midwest, stating, “A total of 21,400 Mexicans were deported [repatriated] by the Immigration Bureau in 1921. The government deportation drives undertaken in January of the previous year, which targeted radicals, had been a dress rehearsal for these removals.” While I would argue that these statements ignore the broader growth of the deportation state and its agenda, which stretched far beyond targeted removals of radicals, the point that deportation practices served as a training ground for more flexible, unrestricted forms of removals remains salient and critical. As Assistant Secretary of Labor White explained before a hearing on new deportation legislation in 1926, during the previous year, over 3,000 Mexicans had been “voluntarily” returned to Mexico from the San Antonio district of the Bureau of immigration alone. Congressman Box of Texas inquired about how this practice work operated,

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“You carry them back across the Rio Grande in truckloads, then?” and upon receiving an affirmative response from White, crudely joked, “A sort of holiday trip.”\footnote{\textit{On Proposed Deportation Act of 1926}, Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, January 12, 1926.}

Repatriating immigrants and reshipping immigrants foreign as seamen was not, however, the only form of economy practiced by the Bureau. Other tactics included careful coordination of deportation parties “with a view to maximum economy,” a practice which states argued only shifted the burden of expense to the detaining locality, rather than truly eliminating costs. As Commissioner Hull explained before Congress, when a deportation could not yet be effected, the immigrants were held “at the points of deportation, or they may be detained back in the country, or they may be left in jail. We do not start after a party, that is all; we just let them stay.” Therefore, by January of 1926, he stated, there were at least 2,835 readily deportable immigrants waiting for deportation in detention around the country because of insufficient funding, a fact which frustrated institutional officials burdened with their care to no end.\footnote{\textit{On Proposed Deportation Act of 1926}, Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, House of Representatives, January 12, 1926.} However, the increasing power of this administrative agency of the executive branch is visible in the Assistant Secretary of Labor’s assertion at this point that although “the courts repeatedly have held we have no right to hold an alien an unreasonable amount of time,” the service had been able to ignore that in many cases. “It is true that we have held aliens as high as two years,” White explains, but lists a variety of reasons that would occur, including passport and nativity issues. Most tellingly, he states, “or we carried them on because they were generally bad ones and we figured they should be confined.”\footnote{\textit{On Proposed Deportation Act of 1926}, Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, House of Representatives, January 12, 1926.}
Other attempts to save money included the use of the port of Galveston instead of New York, which provided cheaper transatlantic rates, saving the department almost $21,000 in 1925 alone.\textsuperscript{174} In order to maximize deportations, the Bureau actively encouraged competition between different railroad and shipping companies, and companies rose to the occasion, offering incentives such as free guards and complementary passage for officials and matrons. By 1926, the average cost of deportation per individual was $87. This number included a variety of expenses for detention, rail, and water transport (all of which depended on site of apprehension, complexity of case, and destination of removal), but which did not include the departmental overhead, which as officials pointed out, was significant, even with a severely understaffed Bureau.\textsuperscript{175}

Delaying deportations until a larger party was ready for removal did not truly reduce the cost of deportation as much as the Bureau claimed. Instead, it merely shifted the burden onto the state and local institutions which were forced to detain them longer until their removal could be effected. Chapter 5 explains the costs of rail transport in greater depth, and explores how the ability to deport in bulk by running fewer and larger deportation parties was one of the most critical bureaucratic innovations of the period. While some deportees were detained in facilities operated by the Bureau of Immigration, most were left waiting for transportation at the point of their apprehension in prisons, hospitals or asylums, or were detained in local jails. This issue became hotly contested over the course of the decade.

Local officials reported tremendous costs incurred either by deportees whose travel was stalled by the federal Bureau, or institutionalized immigrants who never even were put into

\textsuperscript{174} Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration, 1925.
\textsuperscript{175} “On Proposed Deportation Act of 1926.” Hearings Before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, House of Representatives, January 12, 1926.
deportation proceedings because of a lack of funds. A 1925 census of the Penal Institutions of New York revealed startlingly high costs. Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization in 1926 revealed that “the State Hospital offered to the immigration authorities 400 insane for deportation, and that of that number only 241 were deported... the cost of confining the criminal and insane aliens in this State is running close to $7,000,000.” The range of institutions involved is visible in the fact that beyond the high number in the hospitals, the New York Institution for Defective Delinquents alone housed 85 potential deportees, while the New York State Reformatory held 41, and the Matteawan State Hospital for the Insane reported 317 male and 33 female aliens.  

As critics of the day noted, the actual mechanics of deportation were enacted by private companies, who were contracted and overseen by the federal government, and deportation was, from this early moment, a profitable business. Its growth, they recognized, would aid companies from the perspective of having easily disciplined, controllable and terrorized labor forces, but for some companies, would also bring the much more direct profits of government contracts for transportation. From early on, transportation companies realized that the rise of deportation would mean potential income, and throughout the 1920s, such companies increasingly competed for government contracts for detaining, feeding, and moving deportees. Within the criticism of the private profits of deportation, complaints also emerged about the tendency of private companies to provide substandard food, unsanitary conditions, and the hiring of unprofessional or abusive guards for detention and transport in order to save money. Throughout the period, the allotted meal budget for deportees was generally 50 cents a head per meal, but because

176 “Deportation of Alien Criminals, Gunmen, Narcotic Dealers, Defectives, Etc., Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, House of Representatives, March 25, 26, April 13, 1926.”
provisioning deportees was outsourced to private companies, efforts to cut costs and profit at the expense of deportees were rampant.\textsuperscript{177}

While the for-profit prison industry in its modern incarnation is a new phenomenon, the profit margin in immigrant removal has deep roots, and expulsion has long been an enticing business opportunity for private companies. Throughout the 1920s, railroad lines, steamship companies and food suppliers competed for the growing government appropriations for deportation, and in doing so, established deportation as a tantalizing business endeavor. The particular combination of racial nationalism and economic competition involved in enforcing deportation practice in the 1920s is evident in the 1928 correspondence between the Commissioner General of Immigration and the Panama Mail Steamship Company, in which the Commissioner states that “The Bureau acknowledges receipt of your letter of the 24\textsuperscript{th} ultimo, requesting that aliens destined to Mexico, Central and South America, be deported on vessels of your line or other American vessels when available, even though the rates are higher than either the Mexican or Japanese Lines which are now utilized. While the Bureau would be glad to patronize American Lines in deporting aliens, it must of necessity effect deportations at the lowest rates and unless you can compete with foreign lines, it is regretted that nothing can be done in the matter.”\textsuperscript{178}

In other cases, companies realized deported immigrants would make convenient replacement workers for deserting seamen, and asked government officials to keep them informed of immigrants who might be allowed to ship foreign as laborers upon vessels in lieu of deportation. Throughout the 1920s, the Immigration Service took advantage of this system, which saved the government the cost of shipment, and provided cheap labor for transportation

\textsuperscript{177} Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351A.
\textsuperscript{178} Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 7592, File 55608/129.
companies. In August of 1923, the Lloyd Royal Belgian Line wrote to the Immigration Commissioner of New Orleans, complaining of their labor shortages on steamers currently loading in Galveston and New Orleans, and stating that “Should it be possible at any time to assist this company in procuring necessary seamen and which might also be a matter of saving in the expense of deporting these aliens, we would be glad to cooperate with you.”179 The frequency of such requests demonstrates how quick both government officials and individual corporate interests were to see the potential profitability of their collusion around deportation.

Policing Migration in the American Empire: Deportation and the Determination of National Belonging in Contested Spaces

A 1923 article with the headline “EDITOR BANISHED” in the *New York Amsterdam News* told a story which was by then familiar to American readers in the aftermath of radical repression during the post-World War I period.180 The radical editor of a labor newspaper had written against the administration and by doing so, had landed himself in deportation proceedings. What was less familiar about this editor’s banishment, however, was the setting—the Virgin Islands. Morgena Bonaparte, British subject from the Island of Tortala and editor of the labor paper *The Emancipator* in St. Thomas, Virgin Islands had been “charged with criticizing the Naval administration of the Virgin Islands.” In the debates that followed, the American Civil Liberties Union and the NAACP intervened to fight Bonaparte’s deportation order, arguing that it was American Governor Captain Hough’s “dirty plans of revenge” against protest to the administration of the Islands. In a striking response to repression from the

179 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351B.
government, one commentator argued on behalf of Bonaparte’s case, stating, “Americans respect fighters. They hate weaklings. It pays to be men. Never be door-mats.”

As this chapter has emphasized, deportation served, in many ways, a very critical state-building function throughout the period, in which it acted not only to shape the population of the nation, but to expand the powers of its government. This section focuses on the role of deportation practices in spaces of American empire, such as Hawaii, Alaska, and Puerto Rico, during the 1920s. I argue that the process of determining the borders of “American” belonging through exclusion, detention, and deportation of migrants, in spaces still tenuously national (both legally and in the popular imagination) reveals the power of immigration to reflect as well as reshape national identity and political imagination of United States borders. Immigration officials on the ground at I.N.S. stations in Ketchikan, Alaska, federal immigration authorities, and Japanese labor migrants deported from Honolulu all sought to negotiate the complex and shifting terrain of immigration policy to their strategic advantage, but also to construct their particular vision of American identity and the boundaries of belonging.

Examination of such spaces demonstrates the instrumentality of immigration policy as not only a bureaucratic process intended to determine the composition of the national population, but also as a tool to assert national identity over contested spaces. By exercising the power to police migration in territories where American identity and authority was far from established or unchallenged, immigration policy helped the state to consolidate a sense of national imperial dominance and to expand the scope of the American national body, in both physical space and the national imagination. Ejecting unwanted migrants from the margins of the United States was more than an immigration priority, it was an act of state building and self-definition.

Throughout the 1920s, debates raged through congressional hearings, public protests, and the press over the agenda of the emerging deportation machinery, and how deportation should be implemented and for whose interests. Congressmen, judges, immigrant advocates, and community leaders fiercely questioned the role of deportations expanded range- Was it about policing the racial composition of the national population in response to the demands of nativists? Was it about controlling the workforce of the nation and creating a transient, easily-expelled excess labor pool for capitalist interests? Was it intended to help expand the administrative and executive power of the American nation-state? Furthermore, while deportation law was federal, who really wielded the power to enforce deportation on the ground, and who bore the responsibility and expense of its implementation? Deportation from American territories was central to each of these questions, and such debates are central to our understanding of deportation as a state function and administrative process, the policing of race and immigration, and the 1920s as a time period.

Frequently, American officials seeking to implement deportation laws ran up against practical complications and the realization that multiple levels of authority and interest were involved, and nowhere was that more true than in the case of imperial deportations. The interests of the federal government, federal immigration officials in territorial field offices, territorial officers, and the business community of colonial territories often clashed over the goals of deportation. The 1920s was a critical period for the redefinition of deportation as a central function of the state, as the numbers shot up throughout the decade. Spaces of American empire, while at the periphery of the nation, were important, if partially symbolically, in the renegotiation of deportation from a small, selective state function for identifying unwanted
individuals to a broad, encompassing power that swept the interior of the nation and both created a regime of terror for immigrant communities, and controlled the flow of labor migrations.

As the federal government debated the future of imperial spaces, and struggled to ascertain how these holdings and their indigenous people could fit within the American nation, they simultaneously engaged in disputes over the terms of belonging for foreigners. These dual discourses were in interplay in debates over the nation’s power to delineate its own boundaries, in terms of both territory and population. Although scholars have begun to fruitfully explore the relationship between U.S. empire and controlling and limiting the national population through immigration restriction, they have largely failed to conceptualize how deportation intersected with American empire. At the heart of anxieties of integrating new territories into the America nation, scholars have explained, was the tension over the “dangers” posed by being forced to integrate their “inferior” peoples alongside their profitable resources. As Matthew Frye Jacobsen explains of the various territories acquired by the United States at the end of the nineteenth century and the start of the twentieth, “In each of these cases then, where it was tempered at all, the impetus to acquire new territories and their peoples was tempered primarily by a pervasive fear among American whites that the people themselves, by their very degeneracy or savagery, held the power to bring the self-governing republic down in ruin.”182 While the threat of these peoples abroad loomed large in the public imagination, perhaps nothing seemed more menacing was the possibility that after incorporated as territories, they would migrate to the continent republic and disturb the “white” republic.

As Mae Ngai has explored, the contours of the American empire also played an indirect role in determining immigration restriction and deportation through the determination of national

quotas. Because the quota counts “left out the populations of Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and Alaska, which American immigration laws governed and whose native-born inhabitants were United States citizens,” she explains, the quotas reflected considerably smaller non-white populations that their inclusion would have reflected. In effect, she concludes, the delineation of the quota count by only continental United States inhabitants “excised all nonwhite, non-European peoples from that vision, erasing them from the American nationality.” However, with the exception of limited scholarship on labor deportations in these spaces, historians have been slow to examine the impact and symbolic meaning of immigration restriction within these imperial spaces. In spite of the small numbers, territorial deportations reveal that immigration officials believed that they could not only protect the center of the nation from particular immigrant threats through deportation, but the periphery as well.

While immigration officials lamented the fact that they could not, officially, deport imperial subjects from the continental United States, this did not mean that these spaces were exempt from the reach of the expanding deportation regime. As the Commissioner General reported in his 1920 annual report, immigration from the insular possessions had been tracked yearly since 1914. “It will be understood, of course,” he explained, “that these figures do not include citizens of the islands themselves, who are not classed within the meaning of the immigration laws.” One of the major concerns was that immigrants were migrating from these territories into the United States. In 1920 alone, the Commission General of Immigration noted, 2201 immigrants had arrived from the insular territories—1004 from Hawaii, 891 from Puerto Rico, 137 from the Philippines, 169 from the Virgin Islands.

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Furthermore, while citizens of the imperial territories could not be designated as “aliens,” and thus could not be deported from the United States, foreign nationals could be deported from these imperial spaces. While the numbers of deportees removed from Alaska, Hawaii, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands are harder to track because the immigration service did not keep statistics of removals by district office, it is likely that these numbers were never large in this period. However, the case files of the service suggest that while low in numbers, these removals were a significant enough concern of the service to generate a fair amount of debate and extra effort for coordination. In the case of the Philippines, however, the Immigration Service tracked removals throughout the decade, which in some years reached significant levels. These removals were largely of Chinese nationals, with a small number of “East Indian” immigrants, and assorted other nationals. The service did not document the rationales for their removal consistently throughout the decade, but in 1923, the year they were most thoroughly tracked—of the 234 total deportees, 184 were removed as criminals, while another 20 were removed for narcotics violations. Such removals may well have contributed to anxieties over the dangers of integrating the Philippines into the national body, particularly because of the recognition that immigrants were migrating to the continental United States after time in the insular territories.

Alfred McCoy discusses earlier deportations of Chinese “criminals,” from Manila in 1909, and explains that this identity demonstrated the divergent understandings of the local community and the imperial government. In the raids against supposed members of the “Highbinder Tong,” Governor General Forbes, McCoy explains, rounded up deportees “in the name of security.” “While the colonial government depicted the deportees as lethal Chinese criminals who could plunge Manila into dread tong warfare,” he asserts, “most of the press portrayed them as respectable merchants who had been branded criminals, secretly and falsely,
by their rivals in Manila’s Chinese community.”

Though McCoy focuses largely on earlier deportation drives, he mentions that by 1921, deportation was still being utilized as a way for individual criminal disputes to be settled within the Philippines. He describes the case of Gan Yong, who was deported after he was unable to pay a protection fee and was therefore arrested by authorities on drug charges that led him to be deported to China.

Figure 7: “Aliens Deported From the Philippines Islands”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total Number Deported</th>
<th>Breakdown of “Races or Peoples”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>117</td>
<td>100 Chinese, 17 East Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>454</td>
<td>424 Chinese, 25 East Indian, 1 Japanese, 1 Scandinavian, 3 “Other Peoples”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>51 Chinese, 2 East Indian</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>234</td>
<td>230 Chinese, 3 East Indian, 1 Japanese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>103</td>
<td>Not Available</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>66 Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>25 Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>28 Chinese</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>27 Chinese, 1 English</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>37 Chinese</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Compiled from the Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration, 1920-1929

Immigration historians have addressed the fact that as a U.S. territory, the Philippines had been exempt from the Quota Acts in 1921, and 1924, and discussed the tensions between the integration of territorial spaces filled with “undesirable” bodies, and a growing immigration regime designed to exclude such bodies. Most who discuss deportation jump ahead chronologically to the passage of the Tydings-McDuffie Act 1934, which created a ten-year path to Filipino independence, but immediately transitioned Filipino-born migrants from “nationals” to


187 McCoy, Policing America’s Empire, 280.
“aliens” in the eyes of immigration law. This allowed for their inclusion in the quota system, being brought in at a paltry 50 immigrants per year. Furthermore, as scholars have explained, the government was not satisfied with excluding potential future Filipino migrants, but conducted an active campaign to coerce the departure of those who had already resided in the United States before the passage of the law. As Erika Lee explains, “The new policy of treating Filipinos as aliens rather than nationals worked in concert with the U.S. government’s new use of repatriation, or removal, of undesirable immigrants in the country, as another method of international immigration control.”

The Filipino Repatriation Act, passed the following year in 1935 stated that any Filipino-born resident of the United States could have their repatriation expenses to the Philippines paid by the government, on one very large condition: they could never enter the United States again.

While these repatriations were ostensibly voluntary, Mae Ngai demonstrates that they were in fact, highly coercive, and a continuation of the deportation practices of the period. INS officials targeted Filipinos who had ended up in state institutions, attempting to round up “convicts, the insane, and persons with leprosy, tuberculosis and other illnesses.” In spite of the criticism this practice received from observers, some of whom argued that it turned the Philippines into “a dumping ground for parole prisoners,” these practices were quite in keeping with the institutional emphasis of deportations more broadly in this period, as discussed in Chapter 4. “The inclusion of inmates from state institutions in the repatriation program reflected the historical practice of the INS and state authorities in matters of deportation,” Ngai explains, “and indicated the extent to which officials conflated repatriation and deportation. If the country

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could be rid of Filipinos, so too would the institutions be relieved of the burden they imposed.”

Looking at this practice alongside that of mass informal deportations of Mexican Americans during the Great Depression, Rick Baldoz observes that lawmakers “got creative in their efforts to facilitate a mass exodus of Filipinos.” “Lawmakers came up with a novel legislative solution that might achieve the result of a large-scale deportation without the political fallout,” he explains, which featured “federal policy aimed at convincing Filipinos to leave the country voluntarily, with Uncle Same providing financial and logistical assistance to facilitate their departure.” While opponents of this bill viewed it as “a thinly veiled deportation act,” the practice solidified the understanding of imperial subjects as cost-effective and easily displaced laborers who nevertheless presented a racial threat to the nation if allowed permanent residence. Over time, this removal of Filipino subjects from the United States became a source of conflict between the U.S. and Philippine officials, who were concerned with the cases of Filipinos being threatened with legally unfounded deportations.

In the case Puerto Rico as well, even as foreign subjects were being deported out of contested sites of American empire, it is important to note that natives of those territories, marked by their insecure status within the national body, were also being removed through unofficial means from the continental United States back to such sites. A 1929 report by the Immigration and Refugee Services of America expressed concern that of the 500 “deportable” Puerto Ricans in New York, less than 200 were actually repatriated. Arguing that because of

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191 Ibid, 188.
192 Ibid, 193.
their citizenship status, which prohibited their outright restriction from the country, careful attention to their migration was needed, the organization explained their fears that “in addition to all the other social problems they present, including the language problem, the colored Porto Ricans present a racial problem.” As it practiced forms of non-deportation removal of imperial subjects, the United States claimed its sovereignty both at home and in the territories—demanding both the right to enact expulsions from such spaces, but also the right to continue to treat natives of those spaces as expendable national outsiders.

Although scholars have explored the importance of Chinese and Japanese deportation from Hawaii for understanding the broader story of Asian exclusion policies and racist nativism in the United States, there has been little study that places these practices within the broader context of deportation from imperial holdings during the 1920s. Doing so reveals that Hawaiian deportations were formative and central to much more than Asian immigration policy, but were part of a much broader effort to enforce racial exclusivity for belonging by deportation. They are also critical to understanding the growth of the nascent deportation state in the 1920s, the renegotiation of state power in relationship to immigrant bodies, and parallel efforts to re-delineate the national body both geographically and demographically.

While the public debated the place of the territories within the nation, and many bemoaned the racial unassimilability of their populations, they simultaneously culled through their populations and deported those deemed to create even greater threats to integration of these spaces. They also reflect the deep and growing power of deportation as a tool of labor regulation, both within the

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193 Report on Porto Rico, Folder 14, Box 36, Immigration and Refugee Services Archives, Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota.

continent United States, but also in its non-continental territories, where labor-heavy extractive and agricultural industries created a particular premium for cheap, vulnerable, and easily expelled workers from around the world.

Scholars have briefly examined deportation practices in singular imperial locations, generally in discussions of the creation of an exploited and repressed labor force in new colonial industries. Gary Okirhiro argues in his work on the anti-Japanese movement in Hawaii that after the 1920 strike of Japanese sugar workers, strategies for a controllable workforce included introducing Chinese laborers under terms of easy deportability. In The Canal Builders, Julie Greene points out the utility of deportation for both corporate and government interests in the Panama Canal Zone, where it was logical to choose expulsion over hospitalization or institutionalization because, “the U.S. government had unlimited powers of deportation; if a laborer or family member proved troublesome, it would be far easier and cheaper to deport him.” However, such plans must be understood within the broader context of shifting American deportation law. In the interior of the nation, as well as spaces at its edges, deportation was intimately connected with labor needs, economic conditions, and the burden immigrants posed to public financial assistance.

As federal officials sought to crack down on foreign-born migrants in the nation’s imperial possessions, territorial officials possessed a more complex vision of the immigrant threat. Not only foreign-born immigrants, but U.S. citizens from the continental states raised questions and challenges from territorial government agents. The chain of correspondence between the Commissioner General of Immigration and the Territorial Governor of Hawaii in early 1927 indicates the frustration with unwanted residents of the islands, not only from foreign

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nations, but also from the U.S. itself. After inquiries from the Commissioner about reporting foreign-born charges in public institutions within the territories, the Governor asked about the feasibility of not only expelling foreign-born public charges, but U.S. citizens. Governor W.R. Farrington questioned the Commissioner on the “prospect, not only of returning those alien public charges to the countries of which they are subjects, but also of the return to the separate states of United States citizens who are public charges in Hawaii.”

This exchange was prompted by a January 12 letter from the Secretary of Hawaii, Raymond C. Brown to Governor Farrington describing the state of public-charges in the institutions of the territory, and explaining that it would serve both the states and the territory to rectify this situation. This arrangement of forced removal of U.S. citizens would be “highly desirable,” he argued, as the “territory undoubtedly will find a number who belong to states of the Union.” Thus, while the federal project of deportation in the empire was designed to remove unwanted foreigners and claim firmer power over these spaces, resistance against U.S. citizens continued to mark the incomplete success of this effort. The territories had been successfully incorporated into the duties of the Bureau of Immigration, but this governmental jurisdiction did not preclude a territorial perception of the continued threat posed by U.S. citizens in the territory.

Deportations from the territory of Alaska, as from Hawaii, were deeply intertwined with broader negotiations over the place of the territory within the nation and the navigation of new administrative powers. Federal officials, who called for increasing deportations around crime, race, and illness clashed with advocates for greater labor migration to the territorial outposts of the nation. Boosters for new industry and development in Alaska recommended that deportees from elsewhere in the nation ought to be “directed to Alaska, to participate in the exploitation of

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196 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4638, File 55203/177.
197 Ibid.
her natural wealth and in building up of her industry, railroads, etc.\footnote{198} Indeed, as a representative of the Foreign Language Department for the Republican National Committee argued in a letter to the Governor of Alaska that in light of the Quota Acts, “It seems to me particularly of great importance… there should be left fully open door to the immigration to Alaska, so that the immigrants who want to leave Europe at any price, might go there in quest of new life and new prosperity.”\footnote{199} While smuggling and surreptitious entry in Alaska were prominent anxieties for federal authorities, officials on the ground negotiated their own strategies for taking advantage of migrant labor. Arguing that most illegal entrants crossed over from Canada in order to work in highway construction, the Director of the Alaska District of Immigration explained these men were dealt with by the Inspector at Hyder who generally allowed them to depart voluntarily.\footnote{200} As Washington debated the merits of voluntary deportation, with immense ramifications for Mexican laborers in the 1930s, immigration agents in the territories were already enacting such policies on their own initiative.

While scholarship on migration to Alaska has largely emphasized European labor migrations, migrants from throughout the western hemisphere, as well as Asia, were also apprehended by the nascent deportation machinery in the territory. The 1921 case of Frank Reina, a Mexican citizen who had entered through Canada and resided several years in Alaska before being arrested for deportation, is demonstrative.\footnote{201} While Reina’s trajectory shows the trans-hemispheric migration patterns that brought immigrants to spaces of American empire, the fact that he was not deported until after being “in trouble with the city and federal police

\footnote{198} Letter from Joseph Jarusek, Rep. Nat. Com. To Governor Scott C. Bone of Alaska, February 18, 1922. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4317, File 55079/338D.
\footnote{199} Ibid.
\footnote{200} Letter from District Director of Immigration, Alaska District to Commissioner General of Immigration, February 16, 1931. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 8335, File 55639/731.
\footnote{201} Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4432, File 55131/258.
authorities a dozen times on charges of violating the liquor law, assault and battery, drunkenness and petty offenses” also indicates the difficulty, and even the unwillingness of local authorities to deport from the labor-starved remote corners of the newly expanded American nation.\(^{202}\)

Federal officials, however, were more deeply concerned with the economic burden that institutionalized immigrants in the territories posed for the government. They not only removed foreign “aliens,” when possible, but also engaged in “deportation” of migrants to Alaska from other parts of the United States or American empire. In a 1926 “Second Deficiency Appropriation Bill” on the “Care and Custody of Insane, Alaska,” officials noted that $5,400 had been appropriated for the care and custody of insane individuals from the Alaskan territory, as well as the “expense attendant upon deportations,” for those for whom that was possible. Because there were no insane asylums in the territory, they needed to be brought to Oregon for institutional detention. In the past, the officials noted, they had been successful in removing immigrants not only abroad, but to the states and territories whose financial burden they officially were—2 patients to California, 2 to Washington, and 6 “insane Filipinos to Manila,” the total cost of which was approximately $850.\(^{203}\)

Immigration officers in Hawaii and Alaska clashed frequently with federal authorities over competing agendas for territorial deportations, but, it seems, relations in Puerto Rico were more closely aligned. Explaining that “In so far as the Insular Police authorities are concerned there has always existed the closest cooperation,” the Commissioner of Immigration at San Juan reported in 1923 that information on deportable aliens “has always been cheerfully furnished, especially from distant places in the interior or the neighboring islands of Vieques and Culebra.”

\(^{202}\) Ibid.
\(^{203}\) Second Deficiency Appropriation Bill, Interior Department, Thursday, April 22, 1926, Care and Custody of Insane, Alaska.
Pleading for more funds and officers for investigations, the San Juan Commissioner detailed the efforts underway to comb local jails, hospitals, and other institutions of the island for potentially deportable residents.204 There were a variety of interactions with colonial authorities, ranging from antagonism towards plans for mass deportations, to welcome encouragement of removals, and these responses were colored by local political dynamics, labor needs, and individual officials.

Even as a way station for deported immigrants, territories figured prominently in the efforts of immigration officials to make sense of the new deportation regime and its limits. During the 1920s, officials often offered deportees the option of reshipping foreign as seamen on a ship in lieu of actual deportation, which both saved the government money for transportation and allowed deportees to earn money for return. However, among the many cases of official befuddlement about where colonial possessions fit into immigration enforcement, the 1921 case of Jen Young was revealing. When Young was ordered deported at Gloucester City, New Jersey, local INS officials had to inquire of the federal government whether he would be able to reship foreign on a ship stopping in Honolulu. Responding to the request over whether Honolulu was to be considered “a foreign port or place’ for these purposes, the Commissioner General responded that in this instant “the word ‘foreign’ includes the insular possessions and the Canal Zone in all cases and also Hawaii in Chinese cases.”205 In these ambiguously ‘foreign’ or ‘domestic’ spaces, the United States sought to impose processes of determining the foreign and domestic onto individual immigrants.

204 Letter from Commission of Immigration at San Juan, Puerto Rico to Commissioner General of Immigration, October 17, 1923. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4038, File 54941/General-A.
205 Letter from the Commissioner General to Commissioner of Immigration at Gloucester City, New Jersey, January 20, 1922. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 3302, File 54607/16.
While the rise of the modern deportation state in the 1920s was contingent upon a simultaneous rise of documentation and bureaucratization to trace immigrant movements and legal status, the increasing paper trail required for deportation was particularly critical in territories, where few local officials were clear on either the exact dimensions of the laws, or the exact national identities of many of the transnational subjects whose movements they policed. A 1924 letter from the ACLU to the Secretary of Labor decried the fact that “the Virgin Islands are a part of the United States,” but natives of the Islands who had migrated to the US prior to the transfer from Denmark in 1917 were now considered deportable. As Martha Gardner notes, Japanese women suspected of prostitution remained indefinitely deportable from Hawaii even if they had migrated to the territory before its annexation in 1898. Therefore, deportation was about more than just asserting expansive state power over still not fully national spaces in the present. Instead, it was also about creating a broader, if imaginative, historical and cultural claim to such sites.

The relationship between deportation and empire was both a reality of the 1920s, and figured prominently, and sometimes surprisingly within the national imagination. At a November 1919 lecture responding to Alexander Berkman described the role of the American Sugar Refining Company in the war with Spain over Cuba and Puerto Rico, and explained that this, along with the exports of the Philippines, were major factors in controlling labor and migration. Then he went on to conjecture, in line with a common trope among radicals of the time, that when the American government had solidified and exhausted their powers of deportation of the foreign-born, they would move to deporting citizens to sites of American

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206 Letter from the Director of the American Civil Liberties Union to Secretary of Labor Davis, July 25, 1924. Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351C.
empire, specifically the Philippines and Alaska. Berkman’s fears, while extreme, were a response to existing congressional proposals and debates about exiling Americans to the Philippines. In October 1919, Senator McKellar of Tennesse introduced a bill providing that anyone found guilty of advocating overthrow of the government would not only be subject to heavy fines or imprisonment, but “a jury may order such a persons deported to a portion of the Philippine islands set off for this purpose.” He dismissed this plan as the end goal, saying that because it was a warm climate, they sought “merely not to antagonize very much the liberal element and the people at large, not to create too much resentment all at once”, but would soon proceed to exiling to “a Russian Siberia in Alaska”. At another mass meeting, anarchist speaker Cassius Cook echoed these concerns about the potential uses of territories for exile, stating his fears that “I might wind up in the Philippine Islands or be banished to Alaska.”

American immigration officials were not only confounded by their own national boundaries when it came to enact deportations, but were also continuously struggling throughout the 1920s to make sense of the broader imperial landscape of the early twentieth century. While Progressive era initiatives like the quota acts sought to regularize and clarify permissible immigrant groups and quantify the desired composition of the national immigrant population, those implementing these laws on the ground regularly ran up against much messier imperial realities. One of the biggest challenges presented by the shifting empires of the era was the question of what passports and permissions were required for subjects of European empires, as well as determining which quotas these migrants fell under. As borders changed rapidly,

208 Speech by Alexander Berkman, November 26, 1919, United Automobile, Aircraft, and Vehicle Workers of America, Local Number 127 Hall. Emma Goldman Papers, New York Public Library.
209 “Bill is Radical Against Radicals,” Urbana Daily Courier, October 24, 1919.
210 Speech by Alexander Berkman, November 26, 1919, United Automobile, Aircraft, and Vehicle Workers of America, Local Number 127 Hall. Emma Goldman Papers, New York Public Library.
211 Speech by Cassius V. Cook, November 30, 1919, West Side Auditorium, Chicago. Emma Goldman Papers, New York Public Library.
particularly following World War I, officials sometimes found themselves baffled what to do about migrant from nations with different boundaries or sovereign powers than at the time the migrant departed their homeland. For many deported migrants, empire and war meant expulsion to an unfamiliar homeland, an unknown language, or a new ruling power. Though this section largely focuses on the expansion of American empire in the Pacific and Caribbean, we should also begin to conceptualize how the history of deportation fits within the history of American settler colonialism and expansion across North America. The process of moving large numbers of “undesirable” peoples deemed to be racially unfit for the American republic across large expanses of the country cannot help but resonate with earlier practices of widespread forced removal. As scholars have begun to explore, deportation functions as a specific state mechanism for the enforcement of immigration laws in the service of specific social and geopolitical agendas, but it also relates to other forms of forced removal, including the displacement of indigenous populations under settler colonialism.

The spaces of American empire, while in many ways the spaces most marginal to the nation-state, were in other ways, critical markers of the expansive development of the modern American deportation regime during the 1920s. Deportation in these spaces helped consolidate a sense of U.S. federal authority, control, and state reach over distant territories. But these sites also demonstrated the reach of deportation as a modern, federal form of forced removal. Even as debates raged over whether the territories and their populations could fit culturally or racially within the space of the nation, deportation provided a prospective opportunity to regulate and curtail the boundaries of these populations. This chapter only touches upon some of the ways in which deportation operated in conjunction with national efforts to establish and reinforce claims of legitimacy and national control throughout America’s empire. Territorial sites were
instrumental to the growth of the nascent deportation state, and suggest the need for further exploration of the relationship between the dual processes of determining which territories could fit and remain within the national body, and which individuals and groups of people could.

“An Important Spoke in the Capitalist Wheel of War”: Anti-Deportation Discourse and Critiques of the Deportation Regime

As the practice of deportation reached new prominence in the actual functioning of the nation-state, it gained a simultaneous prominence in public discourse and debate, and increasingly became the site of intense criticism. I trace resistance to deportation in many of the individual deportation cases discussed throughout this project, and explore in Chapter 1 how a language of globalism was used to elaborate some of the harshest critiques of deportation, but it is also important to note how deportation led more broadly to critiques of the modern American state. Describing the efforts of immigration authorities to terrorize unemployed seamen in New York, one deportation critic described the following scene:

They are kicked and punched to waken them. They are grilled. They are accused of being [some] criminal for whom the dicks and police pretend they are searching. The birth certificate of a South American seaman is examined by a dick. ‘That ain’t yours!’ the dick shouts. ‘Whose is it!’ ‘When did you get out of jail!’ All this is punctuated with blows. This goes on all that particular day up and down the waterfront. As much as 5,000 in a particular day are ‘given the works’ by the dicks and police. Then the dicks and police take in the seamen’s boarding houses before they call it a day… This mass deportation terror is intended to drive the seamen to accept jobs at any terms or to drive many of the unemployed seamen out of the country… It is a weapon forged by government, to make it a lot easier for the bosses to reduce the workers standards, as a way out of the crisis. It is an important spoke in the capitalist wheel of war.212

While this colorful description likely draws on unsubstantiated rumors and speculation about the volume of raids, it reflects the growing sentiment among working-class immigrants by the start

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of the 1930s that deportation was a critical tool of labor control. Throughout the period, critics reflected a growing concern that deportation would be used not only for the narrower aims of eliminating radical immigrant voices, but also that it would be used to keep the labor force regulated and pliable. While previous activism against deportation had centered on government tyranny and the effort to stamp out “subversive” political identities, increasingly, throughout the 1920s, anti-deportation discourse attacked deportation as a strategy of business and corporate powers, facilitated by government.

In the commonly studied period from 1919 to 1921, often referred to as the “First Red Scare”, deportations have been perceived as being centered on communist, anarchist, or labor activism. However, while these were by far the most visible and discussed deportations of the era, they were not the most numerous. Even in peak years, deportations for political activity were a relatively small fraction of total deportations, and broadening our understanding of how class itself was targeted through deportation is more revealing. Actually proving and enacting a deportation based on subversive ideology could be legally challenging, but what became increasingly common was the use of the “likely to become a public charge” criteria to remove individuals who had ceased to be deemed valuable laboring members of society. Far beyond the numbers who were successfully deported, the amplified local and federal efforts at searching out, raiding, detaining, and catch-and-release policing of immigrant communities made deportation a looming reality in the lives of everyday working people in far greater numbers than enacted deportations.

Over time, activists moved away from simpler denunciations of deportation as attacks on civil liberties and free speech, and began to identify deportation as a variation on capitalist attacks on working-class people, connecting it with other racialized oppressive tactics such as
lynching. Deportation, they argued, was more than just the enforcement arm of immigration law—it was part of something broader, indeed, “another spoke in the capitalist wheel of war,” or another arm of the oppressive capitalist state. Even beginning in the early 1920s, it is important to recognize that while scholars have largely focused on the fear of subversive political ideologies, workers themselves often insisted that a larger national project of controlling labor was transpiring. In discussing the proposed removal of laborers, the Workers’ Defense Union argued that deportation was primarily for the benefit of corporate interests, rather than government: “The forces of greed have found in the deportation laws a whip of effectiveness against dissatisfied foreign workers.” Critics argued that government officials, working in tandem with corporate interests, made a calculated decision that deportation could be a tool for the strengthening of capitalism, not only through the curtailing of labor dissent, but also by providing a mechanism for controlling the flow of labor in and out of the nation.

By the start of the 1930s, resistance against the corporate-led push for deportation was beginning to take on a more clearly anti-corporate language, concerned less with free speech and ideological liberties, and more focused on the use of deportation to control the labor flow. A 1931 letter from the Seattle Unemployed Council to the Labor Secretary argues that the deportations were motivated by corporate interests, who “are concerned only with their profits, proven by the $12,000,000 wage reduction in 1930.” They argued in their letter of protest that deportation in fact were not motivated by government needs, crime, or threats to national security instead, but were prompted by the needs of capitalist leaders, stating, “It is these very

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213 This trend has largely been attributed to the 1930s, while the earlier period is considered to be a period of more targeted attacks. The literature on the use of deportation to control the labor flow (as opposed to eliminate radicalism) during earlier periods, has largely focused on Mexican immigrant removals. See Weber, “Homing Pigeons, Cheap Labor, and Frustrated Nativists;” Molina, “The Long Arc of Dispossession;” Reisler, “Always the Laborer, Never the Citizen.”

214 Tamiment Library, RG 044- New York Bureau of Legal Advice, Box 12, Folder 12- Deportation- Cases.
bosses who lured the foreign-born workers to this country with promises of prosperity, who hired them to build, mine, and raise the crops while they reaped profits from their toil, who are to-day backing the drive of registration, finger printing, autographing and deporting these workers.”

Furthermore, they explained, while the bosses had successfully convinced many American-born workers that deportations were designed to protect their interests as laborers, that was not the case. Instead they argued, “It is not a means of bettering the condition of the American workers by creating more jobs thru the deportation of aliens, but rather it is a means of weakening the labor organizations and struggles of the working class. Thereby the bosses can more easily carry out [their] program of wage-slashing and mass lay-offs…”

Repeating the argument of a government for the bosses, enforced through deportation, another advocate against deportation, Honig, argued that “Deportation, it is thus seen, has become one of the main weapons of the bosses and their government…” Discussing 1929 raids in Hackensack, New Jersey, Honig asserts that “the deportation and terror campaign in its sharpest form arose out of the fear on the part of the boss class.” The Hackensack raids were far from an anomaly, he argued, listing other deportation raids held on behalf of Singer Sewing Machines, Standard Oil, Western Electric, Bethlehem Steel, Sparrow Points, and Locowana Mills. The collusion went so deep, Honig claimed, that it was U.S. Immigration Authorities who attempted to force textile workers in New Bedford to take a wage cut in April 1932, upon threat of deportation should they refuse it. The belief that individual capitalists so thoroughly controlled the entirety of the INS permeated protests of the early 1930s, and reflected a shifting consciousness of the agenda behind deportations. In “The Case of Edith Berkman,” Emanuel

215 Immigration History Research Center, United States INS Files 71-42, Reel 4.
216 Ibid.
Pollack argued that Berkman’s arrest was part of this control. Asking why she was arrested by immigration authorities rather than the ordinary police during the 1931 strike against American Woolen Co., he answered, “Because the textile barons of Lawrence, New Bedford, Pawtucket, Central Falls, Paterson, dealing mostly with foreign-born workers, have long called in the immigration authorities to act on their behalf.” If corporations could use deportation to thin out their work force as needed in slow moments, to effect wage cuts, and to ensure a docile labor pool, critics pointed out, they were gaining a new control over society as a whole.

Those opposing the ramping up of deportations also commented on deportation as a commercial transaction, decrying that profits were being made at the expense of people being ripped away from their families. Vito Marcantonio, a New York Congressman who was active in advocating for immigrant constituents under deportation proceedings throughout the decade, argued of a bill for the deportation of alien seamen that, it “is a dangerous piece of legislation fostered by ship-owner interests to perpetuate indecent working conditions and starvation wages. The purpose of the bill is to drive these seamen into the hands of greedy ship-owners.”

Elizabeth Gurley Flynn, one of the most vocal anti-deportation protesters throughout the 1920s often argued that if deportations were to take place, they needed to provide time for individuals to consolidate their financial interests, sell needed property, remove money from accounts, and settle debts and lawsuits, rather than being exploited (and left penniless in their new countries) by the government’s hasty removal plans.

Perhaps even more troubling, critics noted, was the fact that the government appropriated large amounts of immigrant property because of rushed deportations and a lack of time for

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219 New York Public Library, Vito Marcantonio Papers, Box 4.
220 Tamiment Library, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn Papers, and Immigration History Research Center, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn Papers.
settling of legal matters. Emma Goldman, famed anarchist on the Buford deportation ship declared that, “Our good American democracy refused them even an opportunity to take their personal effects, and deliberately robbed them of the few hard-earned dollars they had saved by year-long toil and strict economy.” She went on to explain the efforts to tally up the total confiscated by the government by virtue of unclaimed assets of deported individuals and concludes astoundingly that, “The list prepared by the Committee, a copy of which was turned over the representative of the Immigration Department on the Buford, shows that $45,470.39 in Postal and Bank Savings, and in pay due, was left by the deportees in the United States.”

If a single ship of a few hundred deportees netted such a large loss of personal property, the uncalculated totals left behind by deportees over the course of the decades might well equal a staggering sum.

Conclusion

In response to a 1921 inquiry from Joseph Saulnier, a concerned citizen, about the ways the immigration law was applied differentially, Assistant Secretary of Labor B.J. Hennings explained, “so far as I am concerned, all the people of the world are divided into two classes”: aliens and non-aliens. In fact, he claimed, while his department housed the Bureau of Immigration, it had “no control” over policy regarding immigrants. “Our function,” he went on, “is merely to administer the law as Congress gives it to us… with strict impartiality as against all foreigners and playing no favorites except the United States of America.”

So what did an immigration and deportation policy which played no favorites except the United States look like in the 1920s? The topics throughout this chapter belie how untrue Hennings’ statement was—as

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221 New York Public Library, Emma Goldman Papers, Reel 65.
222 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4317, File 55079/338C.
the growth of a newly powerful agency expanded the reach of the federal government with quite a great deal of partiality, and to serve a wide range of agendas. Furthermore, as the complicated debates over immigration control and deportation in regards to the insular territories and Alaska demonstrates, the divide between “aliens” and “non-aliens” was far from crystal clear. The final section demonstrates that while Hennings claimed to “play no favorites,” critics of the deportation regime sharply denounced what they saw as favoritism toward corporate interests.

In the period following WWI, when the national government had gained what was in some ways, an unprecedented degree of power, as well as repressive reach into the lives of both citizens and non-citizens, deportation was central in determining the disciplinary capacity of the state. As Gerstle explains of the changes brought on by WWI, “these initiatives, in combination, amounted to an extraordinary effort to reshape the nation in ways that would exclude the unwanted reform those regarded as social and political degenerates, and punish those who continued to engage in un-American behavior.” Each of these initiatives, I would argue, were powerfully illuminated by deportation practice, which reshaped the nation in critical ways throughout the 1920s. As Nathalie Peutz and Nicholas De Genova explain, deportation has never been merely about removing particular unwanted. Instead, they insist, it is about the “reformulation and emphatic reaffirmation of state sovereignty itself.” Deportation, they argue, normalizes the divisions of nation states and the exclusive rights of their citizens as members. The goal, in this process, is not merely deportation itself, but the creation of the condition of deportability. This condition, I argue, was not created merely by federal policy, but by a laborious and evolving effort on the ground by a wide array of state actors, and by the

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(unfinished) development of an infrastructure and bureaucracy for its enforcement. The growth of deportation allowed the modern nation-state to do more than simply police its own boundaries (although it continued to struggle to do that). It also, allowed it to aspire to compose its own population, control its residents, and enact discipline on those who did not fit within given parameters of American belonging. In doing so, deportation impacted far more than those several thousand immigrants deported during each year, and instead, took on a central role in the heart of the modern nation-state.
In a 1923 letter to the Commissioner General of Immigration, the Supervisor of Immigration at El Paso made a stirring call for maximizing local cooperation for the project of expanding deportations. In doing so, he encapsulated the stakes of creating a system of enforcement for federal law, and reflected the frequent commodification of deportable migrants. He explained of his local approach that:

“…Our officers have been impressed with the necessity of carrying on our propaganda; they become missionaries and never let up in endeavoring to sell the Service to the public generally… Police officers must be given to understand that by helping us, they help themselves; they rid themselves of troublesome problems, and in return secure much valuable aid from immigration officers. Institutions generally are glad to be rid of maintenance expenses. In other words, if we cannot appeal to a man’s patriotism, loyalty, etc., we appeal to his self-interest… Our officers go even further; they cultivate the good will of ranchers, stage drivers, garage keepers, automobile service station owners; in fact, there is almost no limit to the propaganda…

If the Bureau will regard the Immigration Service as having something to sell and the immigration officers in the field as salesmen, and other officials and the public generally as customers, it will have the idea that the writer has in mind.”

Local cooperation was more than a convenience for immigration officials, it was a necessity for a young and perennially underfunded immigration service. Even as the federal bureaucracy exhibited an unprecedented capacity and infrastructure for removal, they continued to rely heavily on voluntary assistance from localities around the country to do their work, and the varying cooperation and motivations of these localities determined the range and impact deportation ultimately had. Immigration officers recognized that they would be unable to apprehend potential deportees without the participation of many local actors, and in many cases, they pursued this assistance actively. To do so, they sought to create a sort of public stake in the deportation project, an effort which met with varying success depending on the locality. From
police officers to garage keepers, the work of identifying and apprehending potential deportees integrated a wide cast of locals, and cannot be reduced to an arm of federal immigration policy. The work of “selling” the growing deportation regime was a complicated and intimate project, reliant on deep local relationships.  

Daniel Kanstroom notes that starting in the Progressive era, “deportation completed its transformation from a primarily instrumentalist tool of extended border control into a ‘major public policy in its own right.’” What has often escaped the attention of deportation scholars, however, is the fact that such public policy was not necessarily or always national, but in fact, could manifest as intensely local public policy, in line with highly specific local agendas. Deidre Moloney’s work notes that deportation has been “shaped at multiple and often conflicting levels of government: local, state, federal, and international, as well as the competing interests and agendas of government agencies and federal branches,” but her study of policy and rationales for deportation is limited in its close examination of these local, on-the-ground dynamics. Ethan Blue has noted that deportation was, critically, a process by which “undesirable aliens would be filtered,” from within, and thus distinct from than debarment, but focuses largely on immigrant transportation and shipping. As such, the scholarship on early twentieth century deportation leaves unanswered a number of important questions: How did this “filtering from within” take place? Who initiated the filtering, and who carried it out on the ground? What factors motivated the filtering, and why did it begin at particular points? Who challenged this process, and what

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225 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4038, File 54951/General-A.  
226 Kanstroom, *Deportation Nation*, 146.  
local factors impacted their success? How did it draw public attention and reframe the relationship between the state, citizens, and denizens?

While the 1920s was marked by an unprecedented growth of federal infrastructure and bureaucratic machinery for the apprehending and removing of “undesirable” immigrants from the nation, this project would have remained out of reach if it had not been for the cooperation (and in some cases, eager initiative) of local governments and communities. Throughout the decade, new deportation legislation played out unevenly across the country, as some localities took active advantage of enlarged legislation to get rid of their own local “burdens” or “threats,” while other localities were slow to act and, at times, required prompting from federal officials to gather and report potential deportees to the immigration bureau. These local efforts were a shared project of a wide variety of local actors, from the local press (in cities like Chicago, the media played an important role in stirring up sentiment in favor of deportation), to doggedly persistent individuals who saw themselves as vigilantes protecting their local communities from dangerous outsiders, to district immigration officials who came up with creative strategies for reaching out to local institutions and creating cooperation amongst local figures. Very often, their motivations were not those of the congressmen passing deportation legislation, or the federal commissioners of immigration. Instead, they were driven by diverse impulses, including racial hostilities, overcrowding at local institutions, personal vendettas, and public image maneuvers.

The rise of a hyper-local network of policing practices designed to target deportable immigrants gained particular traction in the southwest, where anti-immigrant sentiment was high, and local law enforcement and civilian vigilantes played an active role in tracking down deportees. After a request from the Inspector in Charge at El Paso for cooperation from officers,
sheriffs, deputies, and state rangers for their “every aid” to “apprehend any alien unlawfully in the United States,” the Inspector in Charge at Tucson reported the strength of local efforts. Officials from the Phoenix INS office, he explained, would travel monthly to the state prison at Florence to check for deportable immigrants, and the local peace officers at the sub-stations of the region had “at all times expressed themselves to be willing and anxious to be of assistance.” However, it was not only law enforcement officials who played a part in these intensive local roundups. Instead, the Inspector explained, in the mining camps at Globe, Miami, and Ray, Arizona, the project was undertaken by employment agents and special mining company employees who had aided in identifying and reporting “various contraband Europeans.”

The sub-station at Douglas, Arizona reported even closer attention, reporting that the Mounted Guards of the INS call at the local jail “at least once daily” to check on whether there are new immigrants. Belying how insufficient official deportation numbers are for understanding the reach of the service as far back as the early 1920s, the Douglas inspector goes on to explain that “practically all of the aliens that can be handled from jail are permitted to voluntarily return to Mexico from this Port.”

Throughout the decade, the Mexican border region was under particular scrutiny, not only for control of Mexican migrants, but also of European and Asian laborers using the border as a “back-door” into the nation, particularly after the passage of the Quota Acts increasingly created obstacles for seaport entries. While labor-motivated deportations of Mexican migrants have been most visible after the onset of the Great Depression and throughout the 1930s, the practice of deporting unwanted Mexican agricultural laborers reached further back. What was often at stake in the debates over their deportations was who was responsible for footing the bill

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229 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4038, Folder 54941/General.

From a geographic standpoint, the actual enforcement mechanisms of the growing deportation agenda were a particularly local challenge in the southwest, and public officials in Arizona were among the most regularly in contact with the federal government about the subject. In response to queries from the Department of Labor about pardons and the potential efficacy of early conditional release from prison for immediate deportation, Governor George W.P. Hunt of Arizona argued the uselessness of deportation in the unique geography of the southwest. Hunt echoed the frequent complaints of immigration officials in border states when he explained “our principal difficulty here of course comes with the deportation of Mexicans who reside so close to the border. Your department, in deporting these men, as a rule sends them to Nogales or some other border town, and all they have to do is to walk across the street to re-enter the State.”\footnote{Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4038, File 54951/General-A.}

Throughout the 1920s, as officials weighed the expense of deportation against its effectiveness, the practice of transporting Mexican deportees just over the border rather than to the cities and towns of the interior where they originated from, was one of the greatest obstacles. As discussed
in the second chapter, the ambitious deportation agenda of the period was often at odds with the limited appropriations available for deportation, and as such, localities were constrained in both their numbers and their tactics.

Throughout the decade, perhaps no organization outside the immigration service was more aggressive in pursuing vigilante activities against potentially deportable immigrants than the Arizona Peace Officers’ Association (APOA), a group of sheriffs, deputies and police officers throughout the state. As the decade progressed, state and federal Commissioners of Immigration found themselves alternately aided and plagued by correspondence from leaders of the APOA, particularly John Crowley, Chief of the Jerome, Arizona police force, and J.B. Wilkie.\textsuperscript{233} The organization did not limit its contact merely to officials of the Immigration Bureau, but finding their demands unmet, escalated to lobbying congressmen and even the President. In a disdainful May 1930 letter to President Hoover, the President of the APOA shamed his record of deportations, stating that “Inasmuch as you were elected to the presidency on a rigid law enforcement plank… I cannot but feel that it would be your personal policy to pursue a stringent course in seeking to effect the deportation of alien communists.” Instead, he accused, “The high officials of the Department of Labor quite obviously choose to pursue an entirely opposite course of action—or perhaps inaction, as it might more properly be termed… Throughout the past three years the Arizona Peace Officers’ Association has waged a continuous effort to induce the Department of Labor to assume a more definite policy as regards the deportation of alien communists.”\textsuperscript{234}

\textsuperscript{233} Like other southwestern mining towns, Jerome had a longer history of expulsion, as the site of a 1917 “deportation” of about 60 I.W.W. members, and the efforts to remove unwanted immigrant laborers fit within ongoing industrial conflicts. See John H. Lindquist, “The Jerome Deportation of 1917,” \textit{Arizona and the West} 11:3 (Autumn, 1969): 233-246.

\textsuperscript{234} Immigration History Research Center, U.S. INS Files 71-42.
Crowley and the APOA cast their nets wide, and angled to bring in as much political support as they could for the local project of deporting suspected radicals in the southwest. In a letter to Davis of the Labor Department, Crowley expressed his frustration that “your department is not in sympathy with the idea of deporting alien Communists.” By the end of the decade, their persistence had clearly grated at the nerves of federal officials, who found themselves answering not only to Crowley, but to Congressmen he had engaged on his behalf. Senator Carl Hayden reached out to the Secretary of Labor on Crowley’s urging to find out why the department had been so inactive on deportations, and received the response that “The Department is not unmindful of communistic activities in this country… we have not however, believed that it would be the part of wisdom to adopt spectacular methods merely with a view to making a brave showing when the circumstances clearly indicate that such efforts would end in failure.”

Similarly, the Commissioner General was forced to reassure Congressman J.V. McClintic that “that the Department is not unmindful of communistic activities,” but that various practical challenges were posed in Arizona, including the impossibility of deportations to Russia and the secrecy of radical organizations.

Crowley and the rest of the APOA crusaded for greater deportations for years, but it is revealing to note the particular threats they identified. Indeed, Crowley argued, the Department “ignored” alien communists while “preferring at the same time to deport large numbers of harmless peasants and peons, who, though they may obviously be subject to deportation, do not constitute a definite menace to the peace and tranquility of our industrial and political life as does the alien communist…” It is notable that the peace Crowley advanced first is the “industrial,” and indeed, in other correspondence, the concern with preserving labor order from the influences

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235 Ibid.
236 Ibid.
of “outside agitators” becomes clear.\textsuperscript{237} The desire for preserving industrial order and a steady supply of cheap labor without the threat of protests and workers organizing is evident in Crowley’s letter to the Secretary of Labor. Specifically, he explained of local conditions that “At the present time many of our Mexicans are engaged in both agricultural and mining work in Arizona. We feel that they are given a living wage… and we do not feel that they should be bothered by outside communists.”\textsuperscript{238} As the head of an influential local law enforcement organization, Crowley’s positions signal the deep collusion between industrial interests and immigration policing from early on in the decade. One of deportation’s most important and enduring functions throughout the early twentieth century had been to ensure that labor organizing could not gain traction in immigrant-heavy industries and localities, and Crowley’s words demonstrate a firm unwillingness to let this function fall aside at the local level, even when federal cooperation was hesitant.

In fact, the APOA was not content with staying within the boundaries of the state, but took its unofficial immigration investigating efforts to Los Angeles in 1930. A letter from the Commissioner General to Hull explained that Wilkie had taken a trip to the area and found that there was no cooperation between local police in Southern California and the Los Angeles Immigration office, which was affirmed by the head of the radical squad in the L.A. police department. Wilkie reported back that, as a result, “Southern California is virtually alive with alien communists and unless the United States government takes some steps towards curbing their activities, this locality will soon experience grave political and industrial disorders.” Although Crowley had clearly begun to wear on the patience of the federal officials, his accusations gained traction, and the Commissioner General demanded a response from the

\textsuperscript{237} Ibid.
\textsuperscript{238} Ibid.
District Director of Immigration at L.A. Commissioner Hull explains that after discussion with
the Assistant Secretary of Labor, it seemed “that there may be some truth or foundation for the
complaints made,” and requested that the Director respond to Crowley’s accusations and make
changes as needed.239

What is more noteworthy, perhaps, than that an association of fervent local vigilantes
pestered the government for greater deportation activity, is the extent to which the government
responded earnestly, and in many cases with action on the basis of tips and warnings from local
private citizens. Crowley’s letter to Senator Hayden begged that he “take this matter up and
endeavor to ascertain the reason why the Department of Labor refuses to concern themselves
with the cases of aliens who are active in affairs of the Communist Party,” and Hayden
responded by doing exactly that. Throughout the decade, the government continued to take
action based on tips from random private citizens, and to show a strong willingness to trust the
local public’s word on potential treats to the nation. While the avid activity of Crowley and his
associates certainly shows some tendency to paranoia and exaggeration (as well as to
manipulation and self-interest), it is important to note that there was some basis for concerns
about labor organizing and radical activity in the southwest. There were, in fact, large numbers
of IWW organizers throughout Arizona, and there had been multiple IWW-led strikes in Globe
alone. During and immediately following the war, hundreds of Wobblies were arrested
throughout Arizona.240 These organizers, scholars have explained, seemed to pose a particularly
dangerous threat to the nation because they often brought together Mexican laborers with white

239 Ibid.
240 Benton-Cohen, Borderline Americans. See also David R. Berman, Radicalism in the Mountain West, 1890-1920:
Socialists, Populists, Miners, and Wobblies (Boulder: University of Colorado Press, 2007); David R. Berman,
Politics, Labor, and the War on Big Business: The Path of Reform in Arizona, 1890-1920 (Boulder: University of
Colorado Press, 2012); and Phylis Cancilla Martinelli, Undermining Race: Ethnic Identities in Arizona Copper
workers in their actions, giving some credence to the APOA’s panic that the Mexican workers of the area might be influenced by “outside communists.”

While these tips came most urgently from residents of the southwest, private individuals around the nation saw themselves as an integral component of the growing deportation regime. In regards to Finnish immigrants in Minnesota, both private citizens and the government investigated the possibility of a threat. William Leppala of Ironwood, Minnesota contacted the immigration authorities to question whether the bureau was “reliable enough to investigate Finns arriving to America.” His question, he explained, was shared by “many Ironwood residents” who were concerned by the suspicion that Finnish Bolsheviks in the region were interrogating and intimidating not-radical Finnish immigrants upon their arrival. The acting Commission General, I.F. Wixon wrote to Hoover in 1922 regarding “alleged Finnish Communist organizations operating in the State of Minnesota,” and requested assistance from the Federal Bureau of Investigation as the Bureau of Immigration didn’t possess the capacity to conduct such investigations on their own.\(^{241}\) As was the case in Arizona, while the individual reporters may not have been drawing on reliable evidence for their identification of deportable radicals, these anxieties were rooted in the realities of local Finnish political activism. By 1918, Rhoda Gilman explains, there were nearly a thousand members of the Socialist Party in Duluth alone, which also was home to a Finnish Socialist Federation.\(^{242}\) By 1924, she notes, as much as 40% of the Communist Party Membership of the state was composed of members of the Finnish Socialist Federation.\(^{243}\) Finnish radicals in the United States were a tiny fraction of those deported, even in areas like Minnesota where they were prominent in the public eye and anxieties (and the real

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\(^{241}\) Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota, INS Files 71–42.


\(^{243}\) Gilman, *Stand Up!*, 1923.
source of conflict between “red” and “white” Finns in the region). But, like radical labor
organizers in the southwest, they had a disproportionate impact on public pressure for escalating
deportation.244

Washington state also drew attention for local investigations of Finnish immigrant
communities, and a spate of correspondence in 1928 reflected how a local tip could compel an
entire immigration investigation. On the tip of John Finta, “a loyal Finn and reputed good
Finnish citizen of Winlock,” immigration officials engaged an investigation into local Finnish
radical organizations in Winlock, Washington. Finta had informed the immigration service that
the organization was receiving money from the Soviet Union for its work, but after an
investigation into the group, with the cooperation from Lewis County peace officers, the
Commissioner of Immigration at Seattle decided there was insufficient evidence for any
deportations. However, he wrote to the Commissioner General, “the inquiry and investigation…
has evidently had a wholesome effect and I am sure that the tendency to circulate propaganda
and advocate radical remedies will be much less in the future in this particular community.”245

Not only private citizens, but political officials from other branches of government took
an active interest in the work of the Bureau of Immigration, and often wrote to the Commissioner
General or the Secretary of Labor to advocate for a deportation policy which would reflect the
local needs of their constituents. After receiving contact from Mrs. M.M. Ruffor of Donna Texas
in 1928, regarding mass deportations of Mexican laborers from the Donna area, Representative
John M. Garner contacted the Commissioner General in the matter. He explained that “with a

245 Immigration History Research Center, University of Minnesota, INS Files 71-42.
tremendous cotton crop coming on,” if this deportation was actually occurring, it would be “ruinous.” Upon receipt of the correspondence, the Commission took up the matter with the District Director at San Antonio who investigated the matter and shared his findings that the conditions at Donna were normal and that they were just expressing their “usual annual complaint about anticipated shortage of cotton pickers.” Indeed, he said, none of the people he interviewed would make a statement to identify the source of the rumors, and concluded that “this office is convinced that the Border Patrol men at Donna have not been unduly active in their operations in that vicinity.” The Commissioner thus relayed that message and let the Congressman know that a thorough investigation revealed this story to be “very largely rumor and hearsay.”

The growing concern, both supportive and anxious, about deportation as a tool for regulating labor migration was reflected in the attention paid by both politicians and the general public, and contributed to the discourse around repatriation at the start of the Depression era.

The high profile tensions in Arizona notwithstanding, in many cases, the local spaces where deportation became heavily contested were not those along the border, or even those generally identified with immigration. With enforcement of federal deportation law largely in the hands of local enforcement, a particularly vigorous anti-immigrant sentiment could transform even a small town or city into a hotspot of deportation activity. Saginaw, Michigan was one such town during the 1920s, and local police took an energetic and proactive approach to the control of local migrant labor. As Linda C. Noel notes in *Debating American Identity: Southwestern Statehood and Mexican Immigration*, the city and county of Saginaw coordinated to send 200 Mexican laborers not all the way to Mexico, but “to the border in the hope that the Mexican

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246 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 7596, File 55609/358.
government would pick up the cost and administration from there.”

While scholars such as Rodolfo Acuña have noted the prominence of repatriation efforts from industrial and agricultural hubs in the upper Midwest, including Saginaw and other towns in Michigan during the 1930s, it is important to recognize that the mechanisms and political will for apprehending, gathering, and transporting such migrants had begun even earlier. By early 1921, the Wabash Railway company was advertising its rates to the Bureau of Immigration for the movement of Mexican laborers from Saginaw to the Mexican border, and arguing that their experience in sugar transportation made them well-qualified to transport human cargo.

While scholarship on immigration policy and deportation have often neglected the reach of the Immigration Bureau throughout the interior of the nation, some historians have provided critical attention to the policing of immigrant communities throughout the Midwest, including in the Michigan sugar fields. As Zaragosa Vargas explains, the efforts to remove laid-off sugar beet workers from Michigan began during the 1920 season, when the sugar companies refused to pay the return passage of the more than 4,000 Mexican workers who had been brought in for the season. This process, he explains, was very locally grounded, as local relief officials refused to offer aid to the migrants, and the federal government largely denied responsibility for their removal. Indeed, he explains, “government removal of destitute Mexicans was for the most part minimal despite repeated demands by city officials… this federal inaction resulted in locally initiated plans in lieu of relief.” One of these local initiatives took place in Saginaw, where roughly 200 beet workers were repatriated to Mexico in early 1921, outside of official

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249 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351.
deportation proceedings.\textsuperscript{250} Kathy Mapes echoes the designation of these efforts as locally-driven, explaining that the first major repatriation drive after the war took place in rural Michigan, where “local residents sough to import and deport Mexican workers according to their own racist ideals as well as their alleged economic needs.”\textsuperscript{251}

These locally-initiated removal campaigns, emanating from the rural Midwest, Mapes and Vargas explain, were formative to the much broader repatriation campaigns of the 1930s, which scholars have documented more extensively.\textsuperscript{252} Vargas argues that while unprecedented in their scope, these repatriation drives were a “preview of the methods the United States would later use to rid itself of these surplus workers.”\textsuperscript{253} By 1931, Mapes describes the local enthusiasm over the removal of 300 Mexicans from the area (and notes the lack of concern over the fact that only fifty had entered the country without authorization), part of which was driven by the fact that many had been on the city’s poor list.\textsuperscript{254} “By linking the right to employment and the right to receive relief with perceived citizenship and race,” Mapes explains, “communities throughout the United States blurred the lines between legal and illegal immigrants, turning all Mexicans and Mexican Americans into ‘outsiders.’”\textsuperscript{255}

Appolonio Ramires and his family were among the Mexican migrants who became well acquainted with the Saginaw police force’s racial project of deportation. The Ramires family had

\textsuperscript{253} Vargas, \textit{Proletarians of the North}, 83.
\textsuperscript{254} Mapes, \textit{Sweet Tyranny}, 218.
\textsuperscript{255} Mapes, \textit{Sweet Tyranny}, 239.
crossed the river into the country at Laredo in 1922, after previous deportation proceedings in 1921. They worked for some time “for some sugar concern,” in Iowa, and then went to Saginaw to visit relatives and seek work. The INS report reveals the strain between the deportation agenda and the limited local appropriations for detention, stating that local officials were in contact with the Inspector in Charge at Port Huron about the possibility of releasing the immigrants until their deportation could be effected in order to save the expense of detention. By this point, a system for deporting not only male laborers, but entire families had clearly been established, as evidence by the fact that Appolonio and his son Concenciano were being detained in the County Jail, while his wife and minor children were detained in a facility referred to as the “Homestead.”

Police vigilance in Saginaw clearly acted as a form of racial profiling against Mexican laborers in the region, but ethnic discrimination was not the only pertinent component of local anti-immigrant sentiment.

In late 1927, the Commissioner General of Immigration responded to a recent inquiry by Emanuel Rusch, citizen of Saginaw. Rusch had notified the Commissioner of a purported recent “mass meeting… of the Communist Party wherein they advocated the overthrow of the Government of the United States,” and inquired as to their deportability. The Commissioner referred Rusch to the nearest regional district office in Chicago, and suggested he bring them any available evidence. The blurred boundaries between perceived racial, labor and political threats are visible in the anxieties of small cities across the interior threatened by expanding and diversifying immigrant populations. By the end of the 1930s, Saginaw was still a common migrant destination, particularly for sugar beet workers, and by 1939, as many as a quarter of the beds in the Saginaw Tuberculosis Hospital were occupied by Mexican migrant sugar beet

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256 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 5220, File 55247/277.
workers. Along with other small cities far from the border, these hospitals and town governments demonstrated the importance of an infrastructure designed to identify deportable denizens not only at the point of the workplace, but through a broad practice of institutional coordination.

Vigilante reporting, however, sometimes emerged from a more intimate, personal set of motivations, and in some instances, families used the immigration service as a mechanism for settling familial disputes or reuniting with family members across borders. D. Edmond Leblanc of Canada called the U.S. immigration authorities in 1922, seeking to report his daughter’s lover, C.J. Ruggles, and in the process, gain her deportation back to Canada. The officials intervened and after discovering that “it would appear that Ruggles induced the girl to have sexual relations with him, in Canada and also in the United States, under promise of marriage, although apparently he is already married,” they referred the case to the INS office at St. Albans, Vermont, at which point officials apprehended the couple in Burlington. Although it was presumed that Ruggles himself was a U.S. citizen and therefore only subject to a jail sentence, rather than deportation, Annette Leblanc was detained at the Franklin County Jail in St. Albans at the expense of the immigration service. Satisfying both her father’s wishes to have her out of the clutches of the adulterous, possibly bigamous Ruggles, and the INS proceedings, Leblanc was scheduled for deportation to Canada, although the authorities requested that her deportation be “held in abeyance, however, until such a time as her services as a witness against her importer are no longer needed.”

While deportation is often understood as a massive, impersonal

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258 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 5220, File 55247/262.
apparatus of the state, such tales remind us that behind the legislation and statistics were deeply local and even intimate, human mechanics at work.

Local vigilantes did not always intervene only to assist with deportations, but at times, reached out to the Immigration Bureau seeking to prevent removals. Though there has been greater attention to the networks of radicals who organized on behalf of political deportees, often both within the U.S. and abroad, individuals advocated for deportees for a wide range of reasons. While most advocates wrote in on behalf of friends, acquaintances, and community members, and INS case files often featured unsolicited testimonials from individuals close to the potential deportees, sometimes complete strangers sought to intervene. The 1923 letter from G.C. Urlin of Columbus, Ohio to the Secretary of Labor about the repeated deportation of Canadian citizen Leo Castle demonstrates the extent to which deportation proceedings had become a visible part of public discourse by the early 1920s, and how even relatively mundane cases could capture the imagination of citizens with no personal stake in the removals. Having read of Castle’s repeated efforts to reside in the United States in his local newspaper, Urlin felt compelled to intervene on his behalf. “I do not know, and have no interest in this man,” Urlin explained, “but because of his persistency, feel that he would make a good citizen.” He further offered to pay the immigrant’s entrance fee, his transportation expenses to Columbus, and to maintain him financially for a month or until he found him employment, and requested permission from the Secretary to do so. Not only was Urlin’s offer a remarkable sign of public engagement with deportation proceedings, but it actually garnered a response from the Second Assistant Secretary of Labor, who explained that it would not be consistent to allow him reentry because he “has shown a disregard and contempt for law.”

The project of demarcating the boundaries around those with

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259 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4920, File 5525/246.
the potential for good citizenship went beyond congress, and was in fact something that unrelated individuals took an active interest in.

In other instances, an even more locally specific set of criteria shaped how deportation was enforced on the ground, and prevented the more widespread and even-handed application of the laws on the books. After being asked to report back on the cooperation of local institutions and law enforcement officials, the Acting Inspector in Charge at Salt Lake City wrote to the Commissioner General in 1923 that deportations were very low because of the influence of the Mormon Church. He explained that in Utah and parts of Idaho, the Church “is dominant and controls the public officials,” and that their policy had been not to report its converts for deportation. However, he went on, if a “Gentile,” or non-Mormon, was a drain on local public institutions, then officials cooperated for their removal. Relating a conversation with a local church official in which he was told that “We don’t have public charges among our people,” this officer’s experiences reflect the fragmented nature of deportation in its early era of growth, when local political or religious concerns could determine either an exceptionally jealous, or a remarkably lenient deportation practice. While scholars have tended to treat varying deportation numbers around the country as a reflection of immigrant density and racial hostility, a more expansive set of criteria shaped its regional and local impact.

While Utah elicited frustration among immigration officials for its unwillingness to expel immigrant residents, it also captured the attention of the national press as the potential recipient of unwanted migrants. In 1922, stories circulated about British debates over the potential deportation of Mormon Missionaries at work in London. As many as 7,000 missionaries were reported to be resident in Britain, attempting to gain converts to move to Utah, particularly among young women. In particular, the Bishop Savage came under scrutiny, and as one
journalist explained, “marked antagonism is developing and deportation is being urged as the only remedy.” While American immigration officials sought to deport for “crimes of moral turpitude,” including polygamy and bigamy, officials in Britain attempted to sort out whether Mormons in England were deportable on the basis of encouraging women to emigrate for immoral purposes. The Bishop attempted to fight the charges of immoral behavior and argued “we have nothing to hide… if this country can show a single case of wrong doing by a Mormon here we will help you to turn him out of the country.”

At the same time, Utah repeatedly grabbed the national spotlight around deportation, as Democratic Senator William H. King of Utah weighed in vocally and fiercely debated the practice of expulsion. Deportation again acted as a proxy battlefield for foreign policy debates, in the case of the deportation of Ludwig C.A.K Martens, and King became one of the principal combatants. In a heated public debate between King and Senator Joseph France of Maryland in March of 1921, the congressmen battled over foreign policy regarding the Soviet Union, with a prominent deportee as one of their main bantering pieces. While France advocated for an opening of doors in regards to trade with Russia, King denounced the value of cooperation with Russia and argued that the United States should not interact with a Bolshevik nation. As to Marten’s deportation, King argued that because he was a representative of a non-recognized

261 Martens was a Russian immigrant and member of the revolutionary movement, and in 1919 was tasked by Moscow with establishing an American agency of the Soviet regime. He opened the Russian Soviet Government Information Bureau. As Theodore Draper explains, “There were no precedents for Martens’ bureau. It was set up as a diplomatic mission, without diplomatic recognition… Couriers constituted the only method of communication, but they were so slow and uncertain that it took two months for Martens to get in touch with the Soviet government. Meanwhile, the greatest confusion reigned over what his mission was or even where he was supposed to get his orders. Martens himself preferred to emphasize commercial and trade relations with American capitalism and to stay out of the stormy battle for control of the Socialist Party and the Left Wing.” See Theodore Draper, The Roots of American Communism (1957. Reprint, New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 2003).
government, he ought to have been granted no protection from expulsion. Martens, who was deported in January of 1921, was part of a deportation party of 45 Russian citizens being expelled to Russia by a long, complex journey from New York to Gothenburg, Sweden, to Libau, Latvia, then overland to Moscow. King argued against France and others who called the deportation un-American, insisting that “Martens was ordered deported because he had engaged in spreading dangerous propaganda in the United States and not because he was a trade agent.”

Several years later, King once again drew attention in the debates over expulsion, though this time arguing for more lenient practices of deportation and political asylum. In the heavily contested 1926 case of General Torres, a leader of the Mexican Revolution, King condemned the plan to deport Torres back to Mexico for entry without examination. Accusing Federal officials of sending Torres back to a certain death, King was reported as having called the deportation a “violation of the American policy of 100 years which has made this country an asylum for the politically oppressed.” The Torres case, in which the Secretary of State wrote that “deportation to Mexico constitutes an indirect method of bringing about the extradition from this country of political offenders,” and in which the Commissioner General of Immigration admitted the deportation proceedings had been “unfair,” brought King into the fray as one of the most vocal critics of the act. He denounced the deportation as a “cowardly act” and demanded a full-scale investigation of immigration officials on the border. Indeed, King asserted, the deportation was done secretly at night, and the behavior of the immigration officials, especially the head of

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264 “Deportation of Torres Assailed by Senator King,” Baltimore Sun, February 16, 1926, 13.
the San Antonio office, “was reprehensible in the highest degree,” and that these officials ought to be held responsible for collusion with this “cowardly, brutal murder.”

While many local officials and directors of institutions were eager to get rid of their immigrant charges, and thus eagerly cooperated with INS authorities for their removal once prompted, others were hesitant to engage, for less spiritual reasons than the Mormon officials of the Salt Lake City area. A 1923 letter from the Inspector in Charge at Portland, Oregon to the Commissioner General reminded the service of the need to pay attention to the more pecuniary motivations of local officials. Explaining that local officials often showed a level of indifference about reporting deportees, he explained that their practice had been that “officers who go out of their way to serve us are, when possible, shown our appreciation,” in some cases by being given lucrative attendant positions on deportation parties, and in other cases, posting a $25 reward in collaboration with shipping agencies for the apprehension of smuggled Chinese or Japanese migrants. “This has been a great incentive,” he argues, “not only to police officers but to civilians to report such cases.” However, the profit margin for participating in the project of deportation was not always limited to the individual levels. Not only were law enforcement and local citizens in the area benefitting from reporting potential deportees, but local institutions were profiting from failing to report such migrants. The Morningside Hospital, a private insane asylum in the Portland suburbs, was criticized by the inspector because “this institution is operated for profit and we cannot depend on whole-hearted cooperation therefrom.” The hospital, he explained, was the repository for the insane rounded up in the territory of Alaska, who were maintained at Morningside at the expense of the U.S. Department of the Interior. Without INS efforts to investigate the alien insane periodically, it would have been impossible to

deport immigrants who “otherwise would have been charges upon the government for the remainder of their lives.”

Officials in Ohio also reported a lack of coordination with local authorities, and echoed the argument that it was the lack of financial incentive that made this work more challenging. “It has been my observation that the Police do not display the same interest in deportation that they do in criminal cases,” wrote the Inspector in Charge at Cincinnati, “the reason is that they do not get any witness fees in deportation cases as they do in criminal cases.” The inspector continued on to assert that rather than spending large amounts of money to care and treat “insane aliens” who could be deported “except for the lack of diligence on the part of the municipal officials,” the service should incentivize the work of reporting deportees. Because of the unwillingness to take on expenses for one’s own department, he explained, the police often choose to allow greater public expense in institutions rather than expend smaller amounts of money from their own budget for the services of a translator to ascertain whether immigrants are potentially deportable. As a result he explains, “rather than pay a few dollars to secure the services of an interpreter, (which this Service has to do many times), they prefer to keep the alien for months and months in the hospital at public expense.”

These enforcement challenges of local coordination crossed national boundaries and led the Commissioner of Immigration at Montreal to remark on the communication from his office north of the border all the way to Albany, Utica, and Syracuse. The Commissioner explained that although exchange of information on immigration apprehensions between border inspectors ran smoothly, incentivizing the work could bear even greater results. He reported that “I have to say that if a small fund could be put aside for the specific purpose of compensating peace

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267 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4038, File 54941/General.
268 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4038, File 54941/General.
officers… I should consider such arrangement an important step in the way of strengthening our entire border inspection work.” 

Unlike localities in the interior of the nation such as Cincinnati or Chicago, district commissioners in border regions faced unique local challenges of coordinating with peace officers not only for identifying potential deportees among the residents and institutional populations of the area, but also tracking potential deportees at the point of entry or reentry.

In Los Angeles as well, complaints were lodged about the difficulties of enacting deportations when government officials stood to profit from more lackadaisical approach. While explaining that the relationship between the immigration officials and county and city peace officers in the Los Angeles district had been largely pleasant, the Inspector in Charge at Los Angeles reported to the Commissioner General that this did not necessarily extend to them taking initiative to search for “smugglers or smuggled aliens.” However, he asserted, the Sheriffs’ department had engaged for years in a racket profiting from prisoners, and while this “worked to the advantage of the Immigration Service,” it seemed a “procedure of doubtful propriety.” Indeed, he explained, some sheriffs had even gone so far as to give bonuses to their deputies for each immigrant they brought in, due to the fact that they profited tremendously from the feeding of government prisoners. Government contracts for feeding, housing, and transporting deportees were a frequent topic of criticism from anti-deportation activists, and the corruption involved in provisioning the growing deportation machinery was lucrative and engaged in by both public officials and private companies.

For some localities, cooperation and success at identifying deportable immigrants was a particular point of pride, and many reports to the Commissioner General bragged about their

269 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4038, File 54941/General.

270 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4038, File 54941/General.
outstanding local records of apprehension. In October of 1923, both the Commissioner at Portland, Maine, and the Commissioner at Portland, Oregon reported their unparalleled success at local collaboration. On October 3rd, the Commissioner at Portland, Oregon reported to the Commissioner General, that “it is often said by various officials visiting this location that nowhere else in their travels had they found the general cooperation between law enforcement officers that existed in Portland.”271 “I feel there is not a State in the Union where State, County, City and Town Officials work more in harmony with the Immigration authorities than the Officers of the State of Maine,” wrote the Commissioner at Portland, Maine, just one day later.272 As local officials sought to distinguish themselves within the Immigration Service, the most compelling argument many could pose was that they had set up efficient, synchronized mechanism for finding deportees.

Simultaneously, while localities competed to prove that they could deport rapidly and efficiently, the federal government kept tabs on the success of local offices. A 1926 memorandum from the Chief of the Warrant Division of the Bureau of Immigration to Commissioner General described his findings about unserved warrants of deportation throughout the country. In total, he explains, there were 2498 unserved warrants as of March 13, but then went on to detail where that particular problem offices were. At the top of the list was Chicago, which was “farthest arrears with 224 unserved warrants.” Most of these, he noted, were quite overdue—123 had been issued more than three months ago-- and their lack of attention reflected deep issues within the department. Similar issues were identified at Philadelphia, which was noted to be a “remarkable parallel” to Chicago, with a total of 201 unserved warrants, of which

271 October 3, 1923 Letter from Inspector in Charge at Portland, OR to Commissioner General of Immigration, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4038, File 54941/General.
272 October 4, 1923 Letter from Inspector in Charge at Portland, ME to Commissioner General of Immigration, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4038, File 54941/General.
152 had been received over three months earlier. While Boston came in third in delinquent warrants, the Chief noted that its numbers of long overdue warrants was so much smaller that it was in a different league.\(^{273}\)

Naturally cities such as Chicago and Philadelphia, by virtue of their size and immigrant demographics were more likely to top the lists, but the Chief also pointed out several smaller localities with disappointing deportation records when considered in terms of proportion of population. In spite of their boasts about local cooperation and successful apprehension of deportees, the office at Portland, Maine was one of the major concerns among smaller locales. Thirty-eight unserved warrants were out in Portland, the Chief noted, all of which were over three months old. Furthermore, in spite of District Director Howe’s claim that there was a ‘lack of help,’ the Chief concluded that he was “not prepared to concede that this excuse is entirely valid.” However, the issues were not limited to Portland, and the Chief asserted that there were numerous other districts around the country that “are turning in far less work than the size of their districts indicates to me ought to be forthcoming,” including Helena, Montana; Spokane, Washington; Denver, Colorado; St. Louis, Missouri; Cincinnati, Ohio; and Norfolk, Virginia.\(^{274}\)

State and local governments, however, did more than influence deportation practice through the actions of individual local officials or the cooperation or disagreement of local institutions. In some cases, in spite of the political will to assist with deportations, local laws actually hindered the ability to enact certain provisions of deportation practices. State laws themselves could stall or prevent deportations from taking place, and state governments found themselves denying the recommendations of the federal Bureau because of local legal guidelines. Len Small, Governor of Illinois responded to Assistant Secretary E.J. Henning of the Department

\(^{273}\) Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4214, File 55208/General.  
\(^{274}\) Ibid.
of Labor in 1924 regarding his inquiry about early parole for immigrant inmates on the condition of deportation. Small expressed that his office was “perfectly willing to cooperate,” but “there is no way under the Illinois law to make that condition a part of the executive act, and pardons and commutations of sentence once granted are absolute. It is not possible under the Illinois Statutes to re-arrest an alien upon his return and incarcerate him to serve out the remainder of his sentence for violating the agreement not to return.” Thus, even where the will for local cooperation with the federal agenda existed, state law might intervene to thwart the expansion of deportations in a particular region. In Nevada, on the other hand, the Governor was able to reassure Henning that while a pardon for deportation was not an option under state law, parole was used to release prisoners for deportation. This process was only put into place when they received notice from the Immigration authorities at San Francisco that a deportation warrant was in hand, and that because they were able to designate these individuals as parolees, they were still subject to return to prison if they were to somehow escape during deportation proceedings.

As the more extensive examination of local deportation enforcement in Chicago will demonstrate, local law and jurisdiction could prove remarkably influential on the deportation project. The Chicago police force, for instance, found that it lost the ability to actually round up potential deportees to hand over to immigration officials during a 1926 drive because so many of the targets of the raids merely crossed city lines into suburban jurisdiction to avoid apprehension. Because the early immigration bureau lacked the personnel, resources, and funds to implement a full-scale dragnet effort to find deportees, the authorities were forced to rely on both local law

275 February 12, 1924 letter from Governor Len Small of Illinois to Henning, Department of Labor, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4038, File 54941/General-A.
276 November 22, 1923 letter from Governor of Nevada to Assistant Secretary of Labor Henning, Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4038, File 54941/General.
enforcement officials, as the remainder of this chapter will demonstrate in greater detail, and institutional coordination and a wide network of public employees, as the following chapter will explore. Throughout the nation, among the most transformative elements of the growing deportation machinery was the constellation of local participants building the project. These active agents in the national agenda for removal went far beyond those generally identified in deportation scholarship and included suspicious neighborhood busybodies, bumbling local police officers, distraught family members, and a wide range of crusading vigilantes and institutional employees.

Local Policing and the Chicago Deportation Drive of 1926

On February 23, 1926, the front page of the Chicago Daily Tribune declared that,

“Strongholds of Sicilian gangsters were crashed without warning last night in a sudden concerted hunt for deportable aliens. It was the zero hour for the city police and United States immigration inspectors, and their drive resulted in 121 arrests. Deputy Chief John Stege of the detective bureau commanded the selected squads which within a few minutes after the order was given had brought in seventy-five prisoners.”

Proclaiming the success of the raids, evidenced by both the mass arrests, and the flight of many more Sicilians from the area, the article went on to state that, “when their labors were over for the night the United States inspectors had designated twenty one men as government prisoners, all of them to stand trial for their right to remain longer in this country. It was said most of these would probably soon be on a boat Sicily-bound…” In what came to be known as the Chicago Deportation Drive of 1926, newspapers featured similar stories for several weeks


278 Ibid.
throughout February and March, with sensationalistic headlines such as, “‘Raiders Find Old Haunts of Gunmen Dark: U.S. Speeds Action to Deport Gangs,” “Plan to Deport 12,000 Aliens this Year,” and perhaps most tellingly, “House to Help in Clean-up—Willingness Shown to Provide Funds for Deportation Proceedings Action.”

So what form of ‘clean-up’ was underway in Chicago during these weeks of raids, detentions, and deportations? The Chicago drive illuminates the local dimensions of deportation in greater depth. To do so, it examines the actual events of the drive, which have received little attention, but also the motivations behind the events, the rhetoric used to describe and explain the raids and deportations, and the reactions of various segments of the community in Chicago.

Examining the drive for deportations in a specific urban space provides a vantage point for viewing the interactions between various levels of governmental power in the process. I analyze how the Deportation Drive of 1926 represented both continuity in its identification and treatment of unwelcome foreign-born outsiders with the years preceding it, but also shifts and changes in attitudes toward immigrants which reflected changing national circumstances, the development of new immigration legislation, and complex transformations in the perceptions of race, crime, and radicalism in the course of the 1920s. This process did not occur solely in policy debates in Congress, but in fact played out on the streets of Chicago, in the holding cells for detained immigrants, and in the local courts, newspapers, organizational activities, and public discourse, and can be seen more fully by attention to these sites.

Ngai argues, “the application of the deportation laws gave rise to an oppositional political and legal discourse, which imagined deserving and undeserving illegal immigrants and, concomitantly, just and unjust deportations. These categories were constructed out of modern

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279 *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 25, 1926, February 27, 1926, and March 2, 1926.
ideas about social desirability and particularly with regard to crime and sexual morality, and values that esteem family preservation.” In Chicago, these constructed ideas were in a state of formation and flux throughout the period, particularly in regards to notions about political radicalism, criminality, and race, and came to a head under very particular local circumstances and agenda in 1926. I argue that constructions of criminal foreign-born danger and political ideology, each of which were often informed by assumptions about race, did not function separately from one another in public perception or policy, but were instead tightly intertwined. Together, they contributed to the processes by which un-Americanism was identified, projected onto immigrants, and used to police their degree of belonging and freedom. From early on, the suppression of radical political thought has been justified and rationalized as a suppression of dangerous criminal thought. Hong brings this collapsing of ideology and criminality out in quoting Theodore Roosevelt’s 1903 state of the union address in which he asserted, “Anarchy is no more an expression of ‘social discontent’ than picking pockets or wife beating. The anarchist, and especially the anarchist in the United States, is merely one type of criminal, more dangerous than any other because he represents the same depravity in greater degree.” The deportation drive of 1926 functions as a particularly sharp example of the ways in which those utilizing this legal machinery manipulated immigration policies to serve the interests of local political figures. While the primary intervention of this work is in the scholarship on deportation and its progression, it is also necessary to position it within the extensive literature on Italian Americans, particularly in regards to crime and the locality of Chicago. Many of the major works in this field, such as Humbert Nelli’s classic *The Business of Crime: Italians and Syndicate Crime in the United States* pay a great deal of attention to the ways in which local setting and politics shape

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280 Ngai, “The Strange Career of the Illegal Immigrant”, 71
the experiences of immigrants, but very little to the ways in which the enactment of immigration restriction and deportation policies impacted the populations which they studied. Even while discussing the measures taken by the city of Chicago and the Chicago police to interfere with the activities of the Italian-American gangsters and bootleggers of the city during the 1920s, Nelli does not recognize the role that police terror of the broader Italian American population through the threat of deportation played in shaping the experiences of this community.²⁸² Likewise, while scholars such as John Diggins have examined the political dynamics of Italian American communities, and in particular, their interactions with the ideology and state mechanism of Fascism,²⁸³ it is not until recently that scholars have begun to examine the ways in which the movement of Italian people between Italy and America, through both voluntary migration and forced deportation, impacted these political currents.²⁸⁴

Indeed, scholarly attention to the transnational migration of both Italian workers and their political ideologies around the world highlights their forced migrations through deportation. In the growing literature on global migrations of Italians, Donna Gabaccia, Fraser Ottanelli, and Kenyon Zimmer and others have examined the unique mobility of Italian workers as they migrated throughout the work in a range of transitory and permanent patterns.²⁸⁵ Thus, as both Italian and American officials were quick to explain during the deportation drive, it was difficult to provide evidence for the entry conditions of the Italian American immigrants being examined

for deportability, because they often migrated to the United States not directly from Italy, but from Mexico, Latin America, or Canada. This made deportation proceedings complicated for U.S. immigration authorities and led to a series of exchanges over the origins, arrival, and deportability of many of the immigrants detained in Chicago’s deportation drive.

In February of 1926, the month in which the deportation drive and its attendant rhetoric of immigrant danger and expulsion began, the number of deportations nationally was 342. By the following month, the number had jumped to 938, by April it had reached 1052, in May, deportations numbered 1063, and by June, the number had made the tremendous leap to 1924, the highest in history at that point.\footnote{286 “Chicago’s Deportation Drive of 1926,” Immigrants Protective League Papers, Box 2, Folder 21.} As growing legal categories of “illegal” immigrants became prominently visible, as immigrants from a variety of nations sought to circumvent restrictions by a variety of means, debates and discourse over how to deal with these immigrants became fierce sites of contention. In the case of Italian American deportations, in particular, the international context also holds a critical potential for answering, why now? As fascist forces under Mussolini increasingly silenced their enemies, often through detention and deportation, Americans watched and alternately admired and vilified such actions.\footnote{287 Michael R. Ebner, \textit{Ordinary Violence in Mussolini’s Italy} (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011): 73.}

The mid-1920s also present an important juncture for an examination of the rhetoric of crime in deportation policy and practice. Following the intense persecution of radicals in the post-war period, crime, along with mental disability, public charges, and illegal entry became dominant criteria in public debates over deportability. While arguments regarding crime had always marked hostility toward immigrant groups, particularly of certain nationalities, in the 1920s, prohibition-era bootlegging, syndicate crime, and sensationalistic journalism featuring chilling tales of murder, violence, and sexual deviance hastened the utilization of accusations of
criminality as a primary motivation for deportations. Substantial evidence disproving rationales about higher crime rates among the foreign born had been available at least since the research of the 1911 Dillingham Commission reports. But it was not until the early 1930s, in particular with publication of the Wickersham Commission findings and a variety of Chicago-based studies of crime among foreign and native born populations, that arguments regarding criminality as the predominant basis for deportation became more untenable in public perception. As the 1920s progressed, the idea of the “illegal” immigrant became more solidified, and increasingly, the distinction between criminal behavior and criminal identity became blurred.

To explain the origins of the deportation drive, mainstream newspaper accounts pointed to a single quote in regards to a single incident, but in reality, the origins lay in a complex web of anti-immigrant sentiment, changing immigration policy, local and national political agendas, and international developments. According to contemporary accounts, the raids were inspired by the growing realization that Sicilian criminal power had grown so great in Chicago as to terrorize the citizenry and prevent the enactment of legal justice. In an article entitled “City Asks End of 20 Years of Gun Terrorism Here,” the Chicago Daily Tribune declared: “When Orval M. Payne of Maywood told Judge William V. Brothers that he believe he would have to carry a gun the rest of his life if he were accepted as a juror and should vote for the conviction of John Scalisi and Albert Anselmi, the machinery of government was set in motion…” 288 This claim is indicative of the popular rhetoric about the need to protect citizens from criminal Italians, and more specifically Sicilians, “gangsters,” “gunmen,” and “murderers,” which concealed the larger project of deportation efforts during this drive: that of demarcating and policing the boundaries of un-

288 “City Asks End of 20 Years of Gun Terrorism Here,” Chicago Daily Tribune, February 12, 1926, 1.
Americanism, foreign danger, and undesirability along lines of ethnicity and race, and political ideology.

In her extensive report on the deportation drive of 1926, Adena Miller Rich, director of Chicago’s Immigrants Protective League, concluded:

> Whether raiders from the offices of the States Attorney and Sheriff were really looking for crime and attempting to apprehend law-breakers; whether the anti-alien drive partially diverted attention from really deep seated sources of trouble in the community or whether the ‘foreign-hunt’ was not rather an ‘emotional release’ for those who participated and those who watched it with admiration, was something of an open question as the raids progressed.²⁸⁹

Rich encapsulated a number of the major issues at stake in the deportation drives of 1926, which they took a central role in defining social boundaries, political dynamics, and power relations between the local, national, and international authorities, beyond the actual number of deportations carried to fruition in the drive. The question of whether the drive was really, as it claimed, aimed at discovering true criminals and rooting out their hold in American society is a necessary one, for the targets of the drive went far beyond actual suspected criminals as police engaged in door-by-door invasion of particular ethnic neighborhoods. Reports on the raids remarked with frequency that, “all we’ll need to do is to find aliens who are deportable,” a clear sign that more was at work than a simple desire to decrease crime, and that in fact, it was not just crime that was being policed through the cooperative efforts of the city and the national authorities, but immigration and foreignness.²⁹⁰

The question of “whether the anti-alien drive partially diverted attention from really deep seated sources of trouble in the community” also reveals a great deal about the nature of the

deportation drive, which was in some ways as much about proving to the national public and national authorities that Chicago’s reputation as a criminal city was undeserved as it was about actually solving any real troubles that plagued the city and its inhabitants. Supposedly begun over the trepidation of a number of potential jurors to serve on a particular criminal case for fear of violent repercussions, the drive was hatched partially for publicity-seeking drama. It was, among other social agendas, aimed at salvaging Chicago’s national reputation by attempting to show that it was not Chicago that was criminal, but a small portion of its population, who were outsiders to not only the national, but also the local polity, and could thus be forced out. Whether it really addressed the challenges the city of Chicago faced: high crime rates, collusion of local political figures with organized crime, or expelled the most dangerous of the criminal element in Chicago was fiercely debated. While national figures initially expressed eagerness over joining this cause, as its course continued and its challenges and failures became more apparent, Chicago officials were left to their efforts by the Federal authorities who had initially rushed to their assistance. Though supported for a short period by a burst of federal assistance and extravagant hopes for future federal funding, by the end, the drive had returned to its roots as a fundamentally local process of social control. While deportation scholarship has focused on the determination of national boundaries at ports and points of entry, the course of events in Chicago demonstrates that the process of deportation practice also played out in the local sphere, shaped only partially and intermittently by interaction with national figures.

Who was deportable during the deportation drive of 1926? In order to more fully understand the dynamics of the deportation drive and the series of events by which mass deportations were planned, proposed, and carried out, it is essential to understand the legal criteria by which an immigrant could qualify for deportation proceedings. As a number of
observers pointed out, the criteria were often distressingly unclear. Throughout the mid-1920s, officials worked toward clearer and stricter guidelines regarding deportability of aliens. In the Congressional Hearing on “Deportation of Alien Criminals, Gunmen, Narcotics Dealers, Defectives, etc.” an attorney from Philadelphia, representing the American Civil Liberties Union, pointed out that in fact the strictures on deportability were so vague as to have “embarrassed” the Department of Labor in its attempts to define and enforce such criteria as “moral turpitude,” which in the words of Congressional Chairman Albert Johnson, “covers a great many things other than morality.”

From the perspective of those pursuing the drive, the task of determining the legality of deportations was daunting, indeed. Regarding the situation in Chicago, Secretary of Labor Davis, the ultimate authority of all deportation proceedings in the United States, explained, “To what extent Chicago can be delivered from its terrorization by the deportation of the alien gangsters will depend on the status of each individual of the gang. The deportation laws are the growth of decades of legislation and are extremely complicated.”

In response to this challenge, Chicago authorities identified their target broadly, so broadly in certain cases that it encompassed whole neighborhoods, and sifted out the legally deportable from those who were not only after the arrests had been made. Their targets were detained, as this process was carried out, for hours, days, or weeks. Concerned about the implications for civil liberties and the disregard for basic rights, Rich explained that, “Wholesale dragnet arrests do not wait upon the issue of legal warrants. The net is cast in the hope that within the large numbers caught, those actually sought will be found.”

However, officials also

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291 Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, House of Representatives, Sixty-Ninth Congress, First Session, March 25, 26, April 13, 1926, page 25.
had to hope that when their desired targets were discovered, hunted out, and captured, they would in fact be deportable under current immigration law.

At the time of the deportation drive, American deportation legislation fell into three major categories-- those cases which qualified for deportation within three years of entry, those which qualified within five years of entry, and those which qualified “irrespective of time of entry.” For those who had entered the country within the previous three years, the legal grounds for deportability consisted of illegal entry by land or water. The other provision of the three-year legal category was for the repatriation of aliens in need of public aid who chose to return to their native countries, and thus, qualified to be voluntary repatriation rather than deportation. For immigrants who had entered the United States five years or more previously, the provisions allowing deportation included immigrants with mental disabilities (including “idiots, imbeciles, feeble-minded epileptics, persons of constitutional psychopathic inferiority), paupers or vagrants, immigrants afflicted with certain contagious diseases, immigrants physically mentally incapable of supporting themselves, or liable to be a public charge (an often contested vaguely constructed category), contract laborers, stowaways, underage children without their parents, natives of certain Asian nations, illiterates, and polygamists. While certain criteria only remained relevant for deportability within time constraints of three or five years from entry, other criteria allowed for deportability at any time. Such factors included immigrants who had become public charges, anarchists (a broad field including a wide range of political ideologies and actions), members of organizations which advocate overthrow or violence of the American state, or who write or publish on such subjects, “war-time undesirables,” immigrants who have been charged with
crimes of “moral turpitude” (including, but not limited to prostitution, slave trading, narcotic trafficking, or other felonies), and “alien seamen.”

Another fiercely debated point was the deportability of alcohol smugglers, a relevant point during the deportation drive, which occurred in the midst of the Prohibition era. While smuggling was widespread and often conflated with immigrant crime during this period, it did not constitute legal grounds for deportation. The lines which demarcated deportability, therefore, were both restrictive of the deportation drive, but simultaneously broadly and vaguely enough constructed to provide many openings for potential deportability. During the course of 1926, legislators battled over the proposed deportation legislation that would eliminate some of the temporal restrictions on deportations, remove some of detained immigrants’ legal protections, and expand the categories of crimes eligible for deportation. Such debates included the placement of the burden of proof upon the immigrant to demonstrate their status as ineligible for deportation, the placement of high bails for detained immigrant facing deportation proceedings, and matters of conditions of detentions.

It is in this context that Chicago and national authorities not only had to search out immigrants for deportation, but also struggle with the lengthy process of determining whether a particular detainee met the qualifications for deportability, a process which left detained immigrants facing long, uncertain stints of detention. In planning the raids on Chicago’s Sicilian population, Secretary of Labor Davis declared that, “It is my opinion that we shall never be able to put an end to the smuggling of criminals and other undesirable aliens into this country until

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295 Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, House of Representatives, Sixty-Ninth Congress, First Session, March 25, 26, April 13, 1926.
the registration of aliens is required. It is the criminal class of aliens that has the most to fear from registration.”

While leaders of the drive efforts lauded registration as the best way to ensure the safety of the American people, others denounced it vehemently as an oppressive and dangerous precedent, which would destroy the democratic and egalitarian foundations of the nation. While debates raged on around the nation, the proceedings of the deportation drive in Chicago were shaped both by intensely local dynamics, and by this wider controversy and discourse over the future of deportation and immigration policy, and what such a future would portend for the definition of Americanism itself.

As immigration officials and local law enforcement operated within the constraints of particular criteria and restriction on deportations, their positions were also shaped by the shared historical memory of previous deportation efforts. One of the common reference points for those arguing for a deportation of Sicilians in 1926 was the deportation of Chinese immigrants during the so-called “Tong Wars” the previous year. Defending the need for appropriations for deportation, the Chicago Herald Examiner proclaimed at the start of the deportation drive that, “The Department of Justice last summer made a raid in New York on Tong men and arrested 250 and found that 198 were deportable.”

Another popular point of comparison as planning for the raids progress, from both a perspective of admiration and dissent, was the argument that these raids resembled those in which political radicals and dissenters were rounded up in the first Red Scare following World War I. Officials argued that deportation had a strong record of eliminating social problems, and could be used to alleviate issues with crime. “Wholesale deportations are the best cure for organized alien lawlessness,” Secretary of Labor Davis

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asserted, going so far as to claim that “anarchy was stamped out when Emma Goldman and a whole shipload of her kind were sent back to Russia.”

Among the most dominant features of the rhetoric surrounding the deportation drive of 1926 was the imagery of the drive as being a measure of “house cleaning.” “He is a poor householder who will not get rid of the rats that ravage his larder and endanger the health of his family,” wrote one Chicago editorialist in February of 1926. This emphasis on municipal “housekeeping” was particularly notable in light of the efforts of reformers throughout the Progressive era to make “good citizens” out of immigrants through promoting domesticity and homeownership. Almost daily during the drive, articles and cartoons appeared calling for a clean-up of Chicago’s criminal element through deportation of dangerous or undesirable aliens, frequently depicted as rats. But whose house required protection? Cleaning house in Chicago demonstrated that deportation was often seen as a fundamentally local process, in which local motivations sparked a drive, local political dynamics necessitated a cleanup, local police authorities carried out the raiding phases of the drive, and upon the disintegration of the drive, local authorities were left responsible for their own house-cleaning efforts, deserted by the once-fervent support of national leaders and immigration services.

As the plans for the deportation drive took shape in mid-February, local papers stirred up hysteria, pointing to expressions of fear from citizens who refused to serve on the jury for two Sicilian Americans accused of murder. In doing so, they initially found a great deal of enthusiasm about the clean-up mission from Federal authorities. President Coolidge himself claimed to be “100%” behind the war on foreign crime, and stated that “the American people are

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facing a national problem of the greatest character.” The following week, U.S. Immigration Inspector arrived from the capitol with similar declarations, swearing that “I will go to the limit in cooperating with the Chicago police… President Coolidge directed that we do everything in our power to clean up Chicago, and that’s just what we’ll do.” Within weeks however, most national political figures were denouncing their involvement in the deportation drive, now seen as a failure and decrying any responsibility for its efforts. Senator King of Utah once more weighed in on deportation proceedings, and gave voice to this shifted balance between national and local responsibility: “You should take this message back to the people of Chicago and Illinois. They must clean their own house, not ask the federal government to do so. It is the fault of the decent people of Chicago and Illinois if they do not have a decent government.”

The importance of looking at the local framework for understanding the dynamics of the deportation drive of 1926 can be seen in the fact that when Chicago authorities were faced with the reality that they were not in fact apprehending their most desired targets, but instead were only succeeding in chasing them out of the city, they declared their efforts a wild success. Deputy Chief of Detectives John Stege commented on the desertion of “Little Sicily,” declaring with pride, “If our men can’t find them it’s a good sign they have jumped town… Either the Sicilians are afraid to be out or they have gone, and we don’t care which. If we can chase them out, it’ll be a job for some other city to have them deported. We’ve had our share of Sicilian murders.” Such statements evidence the local nature of the deportation drive, and demonstrate the utilization of national policy for local purposes. They reveal deportation to be a feature of

American life which in policy may have existed on a national level, in practice, operated on a localized, geographically specific level, a fact neglected by much of the scholarship on the subject.

Not only were the ambitions of Chicago officials bounded by city limits and a desire to chase undesirable aliens beyond them, if they could not be gathered and removed to Italy. The legal reach of Chicago’s deportation drive was also bounded by city limits. Despite the support and cooperation of national immigration officials in the raids, the jurisdiction of the Chicago police force ended at their own city boundaries. Although Chicago was part of the District 14 Branch of the United States Immigration Service, along with the rest of the northern half of the state of Illinois, deportation practice depended on the actions of the police force of Chicago, whose reach only extended throughout the city, leaving the District and Federal authorities of the United States Immigration Service largely irrelevant in greater Chicago during the raids so long as other municipal governments could not or did not engage in their own raiding activities. Although the Chicago police were aware that a number of the highest profile criminal targets they sought had gone no further than neighboring Cicero, “In Cicero they are safe from the drive that is on in Chicago… The Chicago police are without jurisdiction in Cicero, and the government men there have not a sufficient force to make their own raids.”

A February 24 cartoon entitled, “The Pied Piper and the Rats” encapsulates the significance of local versus national authority more succinctly than the numerous articles on the subject. While angry housewives labeled “local roundup” do the real work of beating away the rats (“alien gangsters”) from the city, the Federal Government stands, idly triumphant,

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trumpeting the “national campaign to rid America of menacing aliens.” Numerous other cartoons depict the roles of both the local and federal government, fraught with diverging agendas and varied methods. Thus, the centrality of deportation to American history can be seen not only in relation to its role in policing immigration policy, but in its navigation of power dynamics between local and federal authorities and in their diverse efforts to effect social change.

Figure 8: Cartoon - “The Pied Piper and the Rats”

Meanwhile, a dialogue over criminal roundups and the presence of deportable immigrants in the midst of American society developed between representatives of the Italian state and Americans. The question of who was to blame for the criminal nature of the Sicilian ‘gangster’ in Chicago was central to this debate. While many Americans and the majority of the mainstream American press depicted the issue as being one of inherently criminal ethnicity, Italians argued that those being apprehended for crimes in America could not be taken as representatives of Italian nature or traditions. As Thomas Gugliemo has demonstrated, the conflation between crime and Italians in the United States, and particularly in Chicago, was so dominant that by 1926, this link seemed to be natural in the minds of many Americans. “Both the type and quantity of crime coverage marked Italians unmistakably as racially distinct and problematic in a variety of ways,” Gugliemo explains, and in a process of “subtle racialization,” created a discourse which “emphasized Sicilian and Italian criminality so unrelentingly that, to many of its readers, these undesirable traits must have seemed immutable, and thus, rooted in something more constant than customs and culture—something like heredity.”

During and after the events of the deportation drive of 1926, many seemed to subscribe to this perception of the Sicilian as an innately criminal other, arguing vehemently that the expulsion of these dangerous ethnics was the only way of saving the nation from devolving into the hunting-grounds of “alien terrorists.” While this perspective emerges quickly from an examination of the media attention given to the deportation drive, its counterpoint is perhaps more unexpected and certainly more revealing of the transnational context in which these events played out. As many Americans pointed across the ocean for the origins of criminal behavior, so too did Italians. An interchange between Ernest Freund of the University of Chicago Law

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School, and Congressman Samuel Dickstein of New York, in the investigations of the Congressional Committee on Immigration and Naturalization provides insight into this debate. In questioning by the committee, Freund queried, “Now, the question is where they were made criminals—in this country or abroad? Who is responsible for their being criminals after they have been here 10 or 15 years?” Dickstein responded, “You could not charge very well that the Government had made them criminals.” In a response which revealed the growing debate over the origins of criminal behavior, a debate with significant implications for deportation in the United States, Freund replied, “Well, it is sometimes said that society is responsible for all criminals. That is, of course, a theory.”

The American consul at Rome agreed that the social environment of the United States could be identified as the source of criminal behavior, stating, “I want to point out that many young Sicilians who grow up in America are products of their surroundings.” However, the misplacement of blame was not only due to the fact that Sicilians came under the influence of “rowdies” when reaching America, the consul argued. He pointed out that the Italian government did not choose the emigrants to the United States, but instead, these populations were chosen by American representatives themselves. Subsequent reports from the Italian consuls expressed similar sentiments, and pointed to the fact of lower crime rates in Italy than in the United States as evidence of the lack of foundation of claims against Italian ethnicity and nationality as the sources of criminal behavior. The Italian consul general, Leopoldo Zunini incisively critiqued the raids posing the pointed question, “If the Sicilians and Italians are

308 Hearings before the Committee on Immigration and Naturalization, House of Representatives, Sixty-Ninth Congress, First Session, March 25, 26, April 13, 1926, 17.
310 Ibid.
responsible for this criminal situation, why aren’t they responsible for similar situations at home? Crime does not exist there on the scale it does here.”

Zunini’s follow-up to his own question reveals another element of the international character of the crackdown on crime in Chicago. While newspapers continued to declare the war on crime at home in Chicago, they also provided a revealing glimpse of crime fighting in Italy itself. While there was, in fact, extensive organized crime and violence in Sicily during this period, the reason for lower crime in Italy was, Zunini insisted, “because the measures against crime in Italy are stern. When we order life imprisonment, life imprisonment is carried out.”

At a historical moment when the American position on Mussolini and the rise of fascism in Italy was still ambivalent, and often colored by a fair amount of admiration for the strength and power of the Italian state, examinations of the war on crime in Italy were, unsurprisingly filled with admiration for its success. The Chicago Daily Tribune praised the impressive accomplishment of the Fascist government in its work against the “Sicilian Mafia.”

“The task of completely cleaning them up is nearly at an end,” the Tribune noted, celebrating that, “when the opposition was wrecked and Premier Mussolini could laugh at his rivals, the task was again undertaken. This time no mistakes were made. Sufficient funds were provided to employ army agents… Today the power of the Mafia is utterly broken. The final dissolving of a once powerful secret society is only a matter of days.”

While political ideology was a less prominent feature of public discourse around deportations during the mid-1920s than during the first Red Scare, it retained a great deal of

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311 “Mystery Four, Ruling Sicilian Gunmen, Known- Police Seek Evidence Against ‘Quarto,’” Chicago Daily Tribune, February 14, 1926, 1.
312 Ibid.
314 Ibid.
importance in the actual motivations of deportations, even as it lost some of its rhetorical significance. Although they were not the detentions that made the headlines any longer, detentions of labor activists and radicals continued in the deportation drive of 1926. As Chicago police raided buildings and sought out deportable aliens, they were quick to apprehend those who were associated with labor unions or radical politics, even with no ties to organized crime.

The story of Giuseppe Caruso provides a compelling example. Newspaper accounts which mentioned him said nothing more of his political activity than a buried reference to his being an “anarchist.” However, an interview with Caruso revealed the full story. After arriving in Chicago, he joined the Socialist Party, and “on the evening of February 22, 1926, while he was working with others in the office between 7 and 8 in the evening, police entered looking for a man named Martino, and not finding him, took Caruso and two others without warrant.” After two and a half weeks of detention, it took an inordinately high $2,500 bail to gain Caruso’s release. During this time, “He was given no blanket, water ran on the floor… He became ill and was refused a doctor. He complained of treatment and was put in a punishment cell.”

While the search of the offices of the Socialist Party, and the warrantless detention and severe conditions revealed enough of the dynamics of the raid, the significance of Caruso’s case does not end there. Knowing the risks of his deportation to Fascist Italy, Caruso sought a visa for either France or Latin America in order to engage in a voluntary deportation to one of these locations and prevent forced deportation to Italy. While it is difficult to identify the full motivations behind many of the detentions and eventual deportations, such evidence suggests

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315 “An Italian Taken in the Alien Deportation Raids of February and March 1926,” January, 1927, Immigrants Protective League, Box 4, Folder 50.
316 Ibid.
that political activity and radical ideology continued to be significant grounds for the identification and attempted expulsion of “un-American” elements during the 1926 drive.

Although ethnicity was certainly the most dominant criteria for arrest and detention in the deportation raids of these months, the publicly-imagined, and inherently local space of the Sicilian neighborhood was also a crucial determinant. In the raids of February and March 1926, terms like “Little Sicily,” and “gangland,” or “bad lands” were markers for public mobilization of a particular spatial imagination. Donna Gabaccia illuminates the processes by which spaces became marked as Italian, and the complex internal relations, migration patterns, and negative sentiment towards Italian immigrants which shaped and named these spaces.317 While the category of space commonly known as “little Italy” was generally perceived to be a clearly bounded and static phenomenon, it is in fact, Gabaccia argues, a construct which was created in the midst of a web of global Italian migrations, and took a wide range of distinct localized shapes. In describing why “little Italies” took hold in the imagination of some localities in particular ways, she explains, “A comparative exploration of neighborhoods, Little Italies and Italo-phobia within and beyond the English-speaking world helps us to see the complex elements that so often led English-speakers to mark urban spaces with national labels, providing us with a more nuanced understanding of Italo-phobia itself.”318 The deportation drive of 1926 emerges as a clear instance in which what Gabaccia calls “Italo-phobia” was shaped within a spatialized understanding of how the ethnic composition of the criminal underworld can in fact be mapped onto the street geography of a given section of urban space.

318 Ibid, 2.
That this space was assumed to be Sicilian and thus the “hunting-ground” for criminals was certainly the understanding of many of the leaders of the Italian American community, who in the aftermath of the raids expressed their concern at the practice of searching particular geographic spaces without any targets beyond the inhabitants of a particular community. One Italian American lawyer stated that, “You can take any house in the Miller Street and Taylor Street intersection and ask the people living there, because the whole block was raided. Every home was invaded, without exception.”

He argued that such wholesale round-ups violated civil liberties and proper procedure, and “admitted the guilt of ‘the so-called authorities’… in breaking law, disregarding grossly all civil rights of men, their brutality in terrorising, torturing, and antagonizing people who were innocent, since only a few could be deported.”

Matching these accusations, George Spatuzza, President of the Justinian Society of Advocates, an Italian American legal organization, said of the raids, “All the Italian colony between Harrison and 12th Street was terrorized. People were afraid to step out on the street in a fear that they may be taken prisoner. Places where they used to meet for social affairs and recreation were deserted.”

As scholars such as Harvey Zorbaugh have explored, distrust of police among Sicilian immigrants was already high, and these round-ups undoubtedly increased suspicion of authority figures. Zorbaugh notes that this distrust is rooted in the immigrants’ experiences of danger and reprisals when informing on others within the community.

Deputy Chief of Police Stege mirrored this assertion gleefully as evidence of the success of the raids, stating that “Halsted Street was filled with men carrying carpet bags within a half

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319 “Interview with Mr. Gerard M. Ungaro,” December 24, 1926, Immigrants Protective League, Box 2, Folder 24.
320 Ibid.
hour after the police had marched through Little Sicily.” Soon afterwards, remarking on the success of raiding the “haunts” of Sicilian gangsters, and noting the desertion of an entire neighborhood as a mark of accomplishment, Stege asserted that, “North Halsted street is like the deserted village tonight. So is everything west of it and South of Van Buren street to Roosevelt Road. Pool-rooms, coffee shops, cigar stores—everything dark.” As Gabbacia and others argue, the process of native-born Americans reacting to a foreign born population, and the mechanisms by which this produced an “othering” of the spaces which they inhabited in large numbers was what generated such understandings of the immigrant neighborhoods in cities like Chicago.

Gabaccia explains that, “the transformation of immigrant neighborhoods into Little Italies might seem innocuous enough—it was little more than a spatial expression of the myriad forms of ethnic segmentation characteristic of English speaking lands.” “Only recently, Gabaccia concludes, “has the burgeoning new research field of ‘whiteness’ studies forced enthusiasts of multiculturalism to consider alternative explanations.” Thomas Gugliemo shows the ways in which this historiographical trend has begun to develop in his argument that, “If most Italians arrived in Chicago with little sense of their belonging to an Italian racial/national community, constant criminalization, like immigration restriction and neighborhood relations, helped change this in the 1920s.” Not only did each of these factors shape the creation of an Italian American identity, but they were in fact not distinct and separate factors. When it came to the discourse and practice of deportation, they were intensely intertwined. Certainly, during the deportation

326 Gugliemo, White On Arrival, 77.
drive of 1926, the “othering” of Italian neighborhoods as a spatialized expression of anti-immigrant sentiment emerged clearly in the targeting and rhetoric surrounding the Sicilian “bad lands” of Chicago, alternatively known as “gangland,” or in its most neutral incarnation, “Little Sicily”.

Although the deportation raids were portrayed and generally perceived as being entirely focused on Italian or Sicilian immigrants, the nets were in fact cast more widely. The most highly publicized raids took place in the neighborhood commonly known as “Little Sicily” and featured building by building invasions of largely Italian homes and business, but Italians were not the only population targeted. The Immigrants Protective League noted that, “The raids were announced as an anti-Sicilian move.” But the League added that, “it is known that among those apprehended were a few Greeks, and a few more Mexicans.” 327 The league’s own interview records, however, imply that “few” is an understatement of the magnitude of raiding against Greeks and Mexicans. When Rafael Trejo was interviewed along with a number of other leaders of the Mexican American community in December, he revealed that in fact, on the night of February 28th alone, 97 Mexicans were taken into custody. In a raid conducted on Ashland Avenue, between 41st and 47th Streets, a largely Mexican neighborhood near the Stockyards and of those 97 detained that night, seventeen were eventually deported to Mexico. 328

Completely absent from the headlines of mainstream newspapers are any accounts of Mexican American detentions, and though mentions are rare, they appear occasionally in the final lines of a long article detailing the raids on Sicilian American “gangsters.” Because in Chicago, unlike elsewhere in the nation, Mexicans posed a less sensational target for deportations and were not easily conflated with recent spates of murders, Mexican detentions

327 “Report: Chicago’s Deportation Drive of 1926,” Immigrants Protective League, Box 2, Folder 22.
328 “Interview with Mr. Rafael Trejo,” December 23, 1926, Immigrants Protective League, Box 2, Folder 24.
we re almost entirely eclipsed in press coverage of the events. In one of multiple lengthy accounts on detention and dealings with Italian criminals in the *Chicago Daily Tribune* on March 3rd, only a small final paragraph, stating, “Detective bureau squads, led by Sergt. John Mc Veigh, raided a poolroom at 8923 Burley avenue last night and arrested twelve Mexicans, who will be turned over to the immigration authorities for deportation,” exposed the fact that the targets were broader than the Sicilian American communities.\footnote{329} While the experiences of Mexicans at risk of deportation were largely overlooked by the media attention during the deportation drive, the fear of deportation was prominent within these communities and the events of these raids must be contextualized within the reality of the threat. As Gabriela Arredondo explains, the attempts of Mexican immigrants to build communities and find stable working environments in Chicago,

It is clear from the aftermath that the deportation raids left the city, and specific neighborhoods within it, with a far greater impact and atmosphere of fear than what is measurable from deportation statistics alone. It is also evident that these effects mapped onto specific local populations in unique patterns due to residential concentrations and specific local prejudices. The report accompanying the interview revealed that not only had Mexican Americans suffered from the raids in large numbers, but that indeed they continued to live in fear of unknown authorities as did members of the Sicilian American community. The IPL interviews discovered as they had when interviewing Italian Americans that there was great deal of caution and hesitancy to discuss the events of the deportation drive until the interview subjects could be fully convinced of the nature of the interviewer’s organization. The recorder of the interview reported that “He was about to go further with our inquiry when suddenly Mr. Trejo interrupted us. He still wanted further proof about who we were. He had his doubts that Mr.
Horak was just a school teacher. He thought Mr. Horak must be a detective. Trejo’s uncertainty about the wisdom of discussing the deportation drives, and the noted discomfort of the men with him at the meeting of the Sociedad Mexicana Protectora del Cautivo, of which Trejo was Secretary, mirror closely the fear of further persecution that interviewers noted in interactions with Italian Americans.

In a similar instance of anxiety over discussing the deportation raids with an outsider to the community, in an interview with Peter Maggiore, a grocer in the neighborhood of the raids, the Immigrants Protective League discovered that, “He could probably tell us much more than he did, but the men who were around, evidently argued with him in Italian, telling him not to say anything.” Maggiore tried to claim a lack of political knowledge, and when queried on the reactions of the Italian press to the incident, claimed he did not read Italian newspapers, though the major Italian daily was spread open in front of him. Maggiore, like others interviewed, attempted to allay the suspicions of his peers and, “explained to the others that we are not a governmental organization. He was showing them our card which the visitor gave him and was explaining the word ‘protective.’”

“The greatest difficulty will be to get people to talk,” Italian American attorney Gerard Ungaro explained. “Even with an Italian interpreter, he thinks, people would not give us information. They were so terrorised at that time that it is almost useless to do anything now.” Thus, if they were not successful in ridding the city of crime, the raids at least accomplished the goal of muzzling the reactions of immigrant communities by imposing an atmosphere of fear of repercussion.

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330 “Interview with Mr. Rafael Trejo,” December 23, 1926, Immigrants Protective League, Box 2, Folder 24.
331 “Interview with Mr. Rafael Trejo,” December 23, 1926, Immigrants Protective League, Box 2, Folder 24.
332 “Interview with Peter Maggiore, Grocery at 948 W. Polk Street,” December 27, 1926, Immigrants Protective League, Box 2, Folder 24.
333 “Interview with Mr. Gerard M. Ungaro,” December 24, 1926, Immigrants Protective League, Box 2, Folder 24.
While Trejo commented upon the drives of February and March more specifically, an interview with the Mexican Vice-Consul, A.C. Amador shows a larger picture of the circumstances of Mexican American deportation. He explained that the situation of Mexican American deportation was somewhat different than that of other nationalities, because passports were not required for deportations to Mexico, thus making tracking the numbers of deportations much more difficult for the consulate. Because Mexican immigrants more often “cross the border as ‘contraband’”, Amador said, they do not go through processing at an immigration entry point, and thus have no legal documentation to show when detained for possibility of deportation.334 While Amador was noted as having no complaints about the maltreatment of Mexicans by U.S. authorities, Trejo related bitterness towards treatment of Mexican-Americans not only by the police, but also by the Italian American community itself. In one incident he related, an “old Mexican gentleman,” was walking in the vicinity of Halsted and Taylor streets when he was attacked by a group of young Italian men who beat him profusely. When the man appealed to a police officer for help, Trejo explained, “he took the man to the nearest alley, and once there, he clubbed his head and finished the job which the Italians had begun.”335 Such an experience supports Arredondo’s observation that, “Mexican experiences with their immigrant neighbors increasingly solidified their positioning outside the ethno-racial hierarchies of Chicago.” She goes on to reflect that it was the same localized law enforcement which shaped the practices of deportation during this drive and created this process, noting that, “these structures, particularly the police and the courts, influenced the everyday life of Mexicans, and they reflected the mounting discrimination against Mexicans at the hands of their immigrant

334 “Interview with the Mexican Consulate,” December 21, 1926, Immigrants Protective League, Box 2, Folder 24.
335 “Interview with Mr. Rafael Trejo,” December 23, 1926, Immigrants Protective League, Box 2, Folder 24.
neighbors.\textsuperscript{336} These developments, I argue, were profoundly shaped by deportation practice itself, which contributed to the evolution of inter-ethnic relations and patterns of violence within the city.

Trejo’s tale suggests that an understanding of the ways in which deportation practice affected Chicago’s Mexican American community would be incomplete without a broader understanding of the treatment Mexican immigrants received in interactions with authorities and police officers. Jacob Horak argued that because of their weak political position and lack of protections, Mexican Americans were frequently intimidated by the police and forced into false confessions. “When arrested, the police use the third degree and ‘beat them up’ to induce them to confess,” he explained. “A great many receive slight injuries. Some told the investigator that the police stuck guns in their mouths and threatened to shoot them. It is also customary to put a man in a tub of ice-cold water until he confesses… Some were beaten by police on the street.”\textsuperscript{337} Though they were less the face of sensationalistic press attention, Mexican Americans were no less the subjects of deportation frenzies during the 1920s. They were in fact subject to even greater racialized violence. Though a substantial literature has developed on the deportation efforts against Mexican immigrant workers during the 1930s, as well as on later deportations during the 1950s and beyond, there has been much less attention to deportation and the surveillance and policing of Mexican immigrant communities during the 1920s.\textsuperscript{338}

There is somewhat less information available on the experiences of Greek Americans in the deportation drive of 1926, though it is clear that they too, suffered from raiding during the

\textsuperscript{336} Arredondo, \textit{Mexican Chicago}, 64.


\textsuperscript{338} Notable exceptions include John Weber, “Homing Pigeons, Cheap Labor, and Frustrated Nativists,” and Ashley Zampogna, “The Forgotten: Transnational Migrants and Deportees in the 1920s and 1930s,” \textit{Spaces and Flows}, Vol. 1, No. 2 (2011), but these continue to focus on Mexican deportations primarily from the borderlands regions during this period, rather than throughout the interior of the nation.
weeks of late February and early March. Greek deportations did require passport processing by the Greek consulate, so the Secretary of the Consulate expressed with certainty that he knew the number of Greeks who had been expelled from the country, which he placed at 30, but was less certain as to the number who had faced arrest and detention. However, whether from lack of information or distrust of the interviewer, he neglected to explain any of the criteria used for the expulsion of these Greek immigrants, claiming that they were all “justified in terms of the law.”

George Spatuzza, attorney for the detained Sicilian Americans during the drive commented when interviewed that there were no defense representatives for the detained Greek immigrants and that those Greek men who could not speak English were without defense.

As the major Chicago dailies continued to blast headlines about the dangers of crime and the raids, one major newspaper provided notably little coverage of the subject: *The Chicago Defender*, the main newspaper of Chicago’s African American population. In the weeks of the planning, enactment, and aftermath of the raids, *The Defender* featured only one article on the deportations, which suggests the ambivalence scholars have noted as defining African American perspectives on immigration legislation throughout this period. David Hellwig explains the multiplicity of perspectives expressed by African American leaders, arguing that the range of responses was impacted by a number of factors. “As Americans,” he writes, “they worried about the nation’s capacity to continue to welcome whoever arrived. As blacks they resisted demands that racial criteria be used to select immigrants.” Most importantly, “they feared the consequences of alien labor competition for their well-being.”

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339 “At the Greek Consulate,” December 21, 1926, Immigrants Protective League, Box 2, Folder 24.
340 “Interview with Mr. George Spatuzza, Attorney for the Sicilians Arrested in the Deportation Drives of February and March 1926,” December 21, 1926, Immigrants Protective League, Box 2, Folder 24.
other scholars of the topic of African American viewpoints on immigration restriction and
nativism suggest the particularly complex political, economic, and emotional investments
African Americans held regarding immigrants to the United States. Deportation, in particular,
highlighted the punitive nature of the state toward immigrant populations and brought out strong
sentiments among African American observers.

On February 27, 1926, the Defender featured an article entitled, “Plans to Deport Sicilian
Gunmen,” which presented a viewpoint on deportations which diverged sharply in its logic from
that of either the mainstream press or radical critiques. Though too fragmented to be conclusive,
this evidence and the literature on the subject suggest that African Americans watching the
roundup of Sicilians in Chicago might have witnessed the events from a perspective different
than that of Chicago’s native-born white residents. The article began with what seemed to be a
condemnation of the raids, opening with the bold assertion that, “One more the United States
authorities have blundered and sent their government agents barking up the wrong tree.” What
followed however, diverged from the arguments of most proponents or most opponents of the
deporation measures. Instead, it argued that because of the timing of the raids, they were
useless shows of authority which did little to address the real social problems inherent to the
situation. It argued, “Now that these foreigners have loll around Chicago to their hearts’
content, piling up riches and repaying the city by defying its laws and shooting down its citizens,
Uncle Sam arrives on the scene to deport them. Most of them are perfectly willing by now to be
deported. Their pockets are bulging…” The article shared the widespread conviction in the

Land: Patterns of Black Nativism, 1830-1930,” American Studies 23:1 (Spring 1982); Jay Rubin, “Black Nativism:
The European Immigrant in Negro Thought, 1830-1860,” Phylon (Fall, 1978): 193-202; Arnold Shankman, “The
Arnold Shankman, “This Menacing Influx: Afro-Americans on Italian Immigration to the South, 1880-1915,”
criminality of the foreign-born, but denied the popular claim that deportation was the appropriate solution for this problem. Instead, the article made the impassioned cry for a different solution:

The action that fair-minded Americans want Uncle Sam to take in behalf of those native-born Americans of darker skin who have never had a chance to pile up fortunes and who have no homeland but this to look to, after what little money they do make is acquired. Lynched, disfranchised, and discriminated against, these citizens by birth have never had a chance. Before Uncle Sam turns to organizing personally-conducted Atlantic voyages for wealthy ex-citizens, why not look to the needs of 12,000,000 citizens, who are only too eager to build up American institutions instead of tearing them down, prepared only to be given a man’s chance.\footnote{343 “Plans to Deport Sicilian Gunmen,” \textit{The Chicago Defender}, February 27, 1926, 2.}

For some African Americans, the primary issue at stake was the distraction such raids created from the real social problems and inequalities of Chicago and American society.

While the predominant discourse around the danger of Sicilian immigrants in Chicago was centered around crime and violence, an undercurrent of sexual danger ran through many of the accusations. In addition to the threat these immigrant men posed as supposed gangsters, murderers, and bootleggers in the rhetoric of the mainstream press, they also presented a danger to normative sexual conventions of monogamy. The newspaper accounts focused on the lives of those rounded up for deportation, or murdered in the midst of the deportation drive, and thus legitimate its necessity. Such articles were packed with sensationalistic details about the sexual deviance of the “gunmen,” a number of whom were rumored to have multiple wives, or a combination of wives and lovers that were used as further evidence of their lack of adherence to “American” lifestyles and behaviors. Women appeared rarely in accounts of the deportation drive, imparting the impression that its subjects were entirely male, an inaccuracy which fueled media construction of the image of the Sicilian immigrant as synonymous with the “gunmen.”

In what little historical scholarship mentions the deportation drive of 1926, the role of women is overlooked as well. Gugliemo has argued that “the many popular books, movies,
pulps, and newspapers spoke only of male gangsters and continually stressed their masculine traits—their aggressiveness, toughness, strength, and virility. If much of organized crime was racialized as Italian, it was just as surely gendered as masculine.  

Though Gugliemo is correct in identifying the gendering of the criminal as male, his determination that the role of women within the deportation drives was therefore nonexistent, except as extensions of their male family members, reveals that he too fully subscribes to the public rhetoric about crime being the only criteria for detention. Thus he is compelled to conclude, as the popular newspaper portrayals would suggest, that, “the local and federal authorities during the deportation drive of 1926 apprehended only men,” and that the feelings of women regarding the drives were determined primarily by the fact that, “After all it was their husbands, fathers, sons, and brothers who were apprehended in dragnet sweeps in their neighborhoods.”

When they did appear in the mainstream press, women generally played the role of bereaved widows of criminals slain in retribution for their own murderous deeds, often not alone in their bereavement, but sharing the grief with another wife or girlfriend. In the case of Orazio Tropea, the “imported gangster” was proclaimed to have not only two wives but an additional girl he had been living with out of wedlock.  

Though Tropea claimed to be single when investigated, the police determined that he was a bigamist. The perceived deviance of his multiple marriages and extramarital affair was likely enhanced by the fact that only his first wife, still residing in Sicily, appeared from her name to be Italian, while both his second wife, Helen Brown of Buffalo, N.Y., and his current cohabiter, Beatrice Gould of Michigan invoked not only fear of bigamy but of cross-ethnic relationships between native-born women and Italian-born

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345 Ibid.
346 “Deportation or Death Seen as Gangster Fate: Orazio Killing is Called Sign of Sicilian Revolt,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, February 17, 1926, 2.
“imported gangsters.” Similarly in its depiction of the murder of Vito Bascone, an event said to have “given new proof to our contention that we must drive the lawless Sicilians out of America,” the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, presented Bascone’s extramarital “sweetheart” Mrs. O’Leary as being naively taken in by a man not only criminally but sexually deviant and dangerous. A so-called “man of two lives,” Bascone was credited not only with giving the raids legitimacy for their crackdown on gang violence, but also for their efforts to eliminate those who would interfere with sexual order and propriety as well.

While newspapers focused on the sensationalistic charges of bigamy and extramarital cohabitation, there was another role for women in the deportation raids: that of victims of the round-ups. In an interview late in the year of the raids, Gerard Ungaro explained that not only men, but also women and children were targeted in the widespread raids. “Several mothers were taken from their beds, at night with children and driven to the jail, without the police having any writ, without any charge being made, and without any slightest cause for suspicion, or provocation,” he stated. Describing the events of the raids, in which, he explained, the largest criteria for detention were ethnicity and neighborhood, women were not protected from police detention. In fact, “The mothers who were captured with children were imprisoned for 12 to 24 hours in the most abominable conditions.” While the raids were represented by the press and police to be hunting down a male criminal type: the violent ruthless, unscrupulous gunman, the target was in fact much more inclusive. Such evidence undermines claims by authorities that the drives were not in fact against a particular ethnicity, but only the criminal element.

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347 Ibid.
349 Ibid.
350 “Interview with Mr. Gerard M. Ungaro,” December 24, 1926, Immigrants Protective League, Box 2, Folder 24.
351 Ibid.
The popular construction of the depraved, base, degraded male criminal, dangerous to the public, the city, and the nation, found its counterpoint in a concurrent case regarding deportation. As newspapers continued to feature daily headlines about criminal Sicilians and the gangster menace to society, they heavily publicized the deportation case of the Countess of Cathcart, whose femininity, class, and British nationality won her a very different reception. The subject of a scandal over an affair with the Count of Craven, the Countess of Cathcart was found deportable under the terms of the ‘moral turpitude’ clause of deportation guidelines. But when the United States undertook efforts to deport her, the indignation of the public demonstrated that her behaviors, while more fully within the guidelines of deportation legislation than many of the Sicilian detainees, were not categorized in the same manner. Despite the characterization of arrested and detained Sicilian “gunmen” as vile, brutal, undesirable, and un-American, not all those facing deportation met with such negative portrayals. According to the *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, “Chicago, if the comments of a number of its men and women leaders in various endeavors, including the church, can be taken as a criterion, looks with strong disfavor on the government’s order to deport Countess Cathcart.” 352 The same people simultaneously called out loudly for the government to deport Italian Americans, showing the underlying prejudices of class, race, and gender which operated to form the nature of the raids.

Having countenanced the mass round-ups and detentions of Italians, with little regard for their civil liberties, many Chicagoans were outraged at the threat of deportation of a single member of the British nobility. Widespread sympathy was mobilized on her behalf. In fact, to help salvage her from what was seen as the unjust and overzealous hand of deportation law, the Countess received offers of financial assistance and even marriage proposals to assist her in

352 “Cathcart Exclusion is Criticized Here,” *Chicago Herald and Examiner*, February 20, 1926, 2.
fighting for her right to remain in the country.\footnote{353}{“Writ Halts Cathcart Deportation: Countess to Get Hearing Next Tuesday- US Judge Will Consider Her Plea,” \textit{Chicago Herald and Examiner}, February 20, 1926, 1.} Not only did the mainstream press extend her far greater sympathy, but in fact expressed great shock and dismay that such a high-class, Anglo-Saxon, emblem of educated femininity could be subjected to the outrages designed for the more common deportable immigrant. “The immigration authorities permit assassins to enter, but, with a great blowing of trumpets, exclude for ‘moral turpitude’ a woman like the Countess of Cathcart,” the \textit{Tribune} wrote. “The immigration bureau is subjecting the country to ridicule and worse when it treats her as a moral leper and at the same time neglects to keep out criminals of the lowest type.”\footnote{354}{“Alien Terrorism in Chicago,” \textit{Chicago Daily Tribune}, February 12, 1926.} Through photographs, cartoons, articles, and editorials, the media reminded its readers that the label of “undesirable immigrant” was one which was to be selectively applied and that the boundaries of Americanism ought to be drawn not around strict adherence to the legal statutes on the books, but according to dominant hierarchies of class, ethnicity, and respectability. The idea that this process could be effectively achieved through largescale, but targeted, deportations grew throughout this era, and circulated widely in the press.

\textbf{Conclusion}

“In the past few years,” Deidre Moloney argues, “tensions between federal agencies such as Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) and local authorities have intensified throughout the United States.” In fact, she asserts, this trend is rooted in the 1980s, when state and local governments became “increasingly unwilling to cede immigration control to federal authorities.”\footnote{355}{Moloney, \textit{National Insecurities}, 1.} I would insist, however, that this reality of local importance has been one of the most indelible traits of the modern deportation state (and, indeed, one of its most obvious...
continuities from earlier, state-based forms of migration control before the creation of federal immigration law). Even as the nation consolidated its deportation machinery under an increasingly streamline federal bureaucracy, it continued to be at the mercy of the initiatives and assistance of local governments and communities. Officials in localities around the country used knowledge to use deportation enforcement to their own purposes, serving the interests of local business leaders, local police forces, community organizations, or racial agendas. Throughout the 1920s, deportation practice reflected a paradoxical tension between the local and the federal. The federal government reached into local spaces throughout the country with unprecedented vigor, relying on local officials to identify, gather, detain potentially deportable immigrants. But at the same time, local officials actively initiated deportation drives on their own and were often stifled by the lack of federal appropriations and cooperation in enacting their local removal agendas. As in so many cases, the 1920s represented a vast expansion of the deportation state, but reflected how this project was far from finished, and, in many respects, aspirational rather than achieved.
Chapter 4- The Systemization of Removal: Institutional Coordination and the Policing of Class, Crime, Health, and Morality through Deportation

In July of 1922, Grazia D’Agostino, born in Bagheria, Italy, a mother of seven who had moved to the United States in 1920 to join her husband in Buffalo, where he had resided for 10 years, was deported. When questioned by immigration officials as to her means of financial support, she explained that her husband had been out of work for over a year, and that they were a year overdue on rent, and had been receiving assistance from the City of Buffalo for the past two months. Although D’Agostino explained that she had never had any serious illnesses or been dependent on assistance before, because she became destitute and required public support within five years of entry, she was a deportable immigrant and was removed, while her husband, though similarly dependent (and further stigmatized in the official hearing for his inability to support his wife), was safe by virtue of longer residence in the nation. Her story was an increasingly common one throughout the 1910s and 1920s, as “likely to become a public charge” became the most commonly used provision of deportation law. By the start of WWI, roughly 60% of excluded and deported immigrants were removed on these grounds. Institutional dependency had become a carefully policed status, and increasingly came to be tightly associated with the idea of immigrant undesirability. In a very fundamental way, these removals represented a new era in the deportation of working people, in which the state possessed the ability to police immigrant communities not only for class-based politics, but for class itself. As the state expanded certain public benefits, deportations for dependency and institutionalization demonstrated that these benefits were, in a critical way, dependent on them not being universalized.
The evolving deportation machinery of the state was premised on growth of more systematized, rationalized communication and cooperation between states, localities and the federal government, and between increasingly, but still often poorly, coordinated institutions—hospitals, asylums, prisons, and juvenile reformatories, where immigrant bodies were evaluated and reported for removal. Coupled with more centralized, efficient networks of trains routes, ship schedules, and detention centers for the streamlined gathering and removal of identified deportees, the rise of this institutional cooperation allowed deportation to shift from a small-scale, haphazard practice to a centralized state mechanism for controlling immigrant workers. The steep increase in deportations reflects the development of the capacity to remove unwanted non-citizens in a newly systematized way. To acknowledge this makes deportation a far more central topic, revealing of the development of new technologies of control, exercised through both carceral and (seemingly) charitable institutions, with powerful ramifications for the decades to come.

Throughout the 1920s, as public figures, the press, and the government set goals for the expansion of deportations, there was an increased effort to not only wait for deportees to be reported to the immigration officials, but to actively go out searching for deportable immigrants. The most productive hunting grounds for deportees were, unsurprisingly, the various institutions of the state charged with the housing and maintenance of individuals deemed medically, mentally, or morally unfit for belonging within the general population. In these spaces, most notably hospitals, mental asylums, and prisons, institutional staff could easily search through their already assembled populations to find those who might be eligible under one or more condition of deportation law. Examining the institutional spaces at which deportation was conducted serves multiple purposes. First, it highlights the enduring Progressive era concern with
the “scientific” management and categorization of immigrant bodies and behaviors. While local poor laws and practices of chancing out public charges and burdensome individuals goes back much farther, this period marked a modernized, bureaucratic process for identifying and dispensing with these individuals. Second, it illuminates the growing coordination and bureaucratic reach of the nation-state. Third, it emphasizes the impact of the modernization of documentation and coordination between government and non-state institutions. Finally, it demonstrates the rise of deportation as a tool for sorting and castigating non-citizen populations, and for the redefinition of rights and social services as the sole purview of citizens and, in some cases, of long-term residents.

This chapter will explore the prominence of institutionalization and discourses of institutional knowledge during the 1920s and will explore how deportation operated at the heart of these various conversations. As deportees were culled from hospitals, asylums, prisons, reformatories, and other institutional spaces, deportation was positioned at the nexus of developing and evolving technologies and ideologies for the surveillance, categorizing, disciplining, and removal of “unfit” bodies. Throughout the period, pseudoscientific studies relating immigrants and ethnic groups to various kinds of pathological forms of bodily deficiencies and fitness, criminal mentalities, substandard intelligence, and non-normative moralities, and deportation united these conversations alongside debates over race, assimilability, and un-Americanness. However, the role of institutions in the consolidation of deportation was not merely theoretical or discursive, but happened in a very practical fashion. Throughout the period, immigration officials increasingly communicated and coordinated with these institutions at regular intervals to gather information on deportable immigrants residing in them and to set up planned schedules to transport them for removal.
Although the scholarship on deportation in the early twentieth century has focused largely on the so-called “first Red scare” and the deportation of suspected anarchists and communists, throughout the first decades of the century, a more extensive apparatus for removals emerged, one that did not merely target a small segment of the immigrant left, but instead, coordinated removal from across different forms of institutions, making it possible to expand the deportation state to an unprecedented size. Beyond the actual deportations enacted, this period represented a new era in the reach of the state into the lives, homes, and communities of immigrants around the country, with increased surveillance, tracking, reporting, and intergovernmental cooperation designed to ensure deportable immigrants could be identified, apprehended, and removed. The ever-present threat of state action against immigrants ushered in a phase in which immigrant lives were shaped more than ever before by fear, uncertainty, and recognition of the looming shadow of government action. Looking beyond the political deportations of the era allows us to see not only how class was policed through deportation, but also the expanded capacity for racialized deportations through a variety of official rationales, laying the stage for the racially-based mass deportation of Mexican workers in future decades.

Scholars of the Progressive Era have explored how the Industrial Commission of 1898, the Dillingham Commission of 1907, and other efforts at rationalizing the study of immigration shaped the legislation that developed in the first decades of the 19th century and beyond, including the 1917 Literacy Act and the 1921 and 1924 Quota Acts. Faced with a rising and rapidly diversifying immigrant influx, leaders and policy makers of the Progressive era viewed immigration as another “social problem,” whose solution could be identified and enacted through study, reform, and government intervention. As Robert Zeidel argues of the shift taking place at the turn of the century, “Gilded Age nativism had not disappeared—perhaps it had not even
abated—but it alone had not been enough to prompt the passage of a general restriction law. Even passionate xenophobes were coming to realize that they needed more convincing ways to make their arguments.”\textsuperscript{356} While many of the era’s leading reformers devoted their efforts to alleviating the conditions of working-class immigrants, many simultaneously advocated for stricter, though ostensibly fairer, immigration policy which would curb the overall numbers of immigrants entering the nation. However, while historians have argued that in the progressive era, immigration policy coated its racism and discriminatory aspects with a sheen of rationalization, bureaucratic procedure, and scientific study, until recently they have not extended their analysis from restriction and exclusion to deportation.

Kanstroom argues in \textit{Deportation Nation} that deportation in this period was more than an adaptation of an existing policy, but was a “central feature of Progressive state building, and the ‘recasting of official power relationships within governmental institutions.’”\textsuperscript{357} He goes on to explain that for this arm of the state, like others, “social cohesion, order, and organization,” were key, but leaves largely unexplored the actual processes of instituting order and organization to implement deportations.\textsuperscript{358} Examining implementation allows us to see that the on-the-ground dynamics and motivations for deportation did not always mesh with official dictates, and often took on local motivations, personal vendettas, and institutional priorities. While Deidre Moloney has fruitfully discussed the rise of Progressive Era thought in the rationales and discourse around deportation, particularly in terms of concerns about ethnicity, public health, and bodily fitness for citizenship, she continues to ground her analysis of deportations in the period in policy debates and intellectual arguments about the criteria for deportation, rather than in the practical dynamics

\textsuperscript{356} Zeidel, \textit{Immigrants, Progressives, and Exclusion Politics}, 20.
\textsuperscript{357} Kanstroom, \textit{Deportation Nation}, 97.
\textsuperscript{358} Ibid, 131.
necessitated to actually make mass deportation a reality. Her focus on the “classification and categorization,” that preoccupied the “scientific and medical communities, eugenicists, and Progressive reformers,” fleshes out our understanding of how thinkers and activists of the time shaped understandings of deportation, but glosses over the operational mechanisms they instituted.359

Scholars have recently begun to provide more insight into the tight connection of attitudes toward the mental and physical health of immigrants, and the concept of economic dependency. While much of this work has focused on the process of exclusion at the borders, there has also been a renewed interest in how deportation officials found value in the “likely to become a public charge” provision. Hidetaka Hirota provides an important dissection of the roots of this legislation and explains how it was first used by the states, particularly New York and Massachusetts, rather than the federal government, to regulate poverty. The idea of eliminating the social problem of poverty through expulsion was not new, Hirota notes, but was based on earlier European practices—including, ironically, the practice through which “governments, landlords, poorhouses, and private philanthropists had repeatedly sent paupers to the United States with minimal cash and clothes to reduce local poverty.”360 As this practice grew, it increasingly encompassed a wide range of other threats to the social well-being, and allowed for the removal of immigrants who were ill, insane, criminal, disabled, elderly, too young to work, or, more simply, racially undesirable.

While some scholars, such as Cybelle Fox, have downplayed the immensity of the LPC provision during the early twentieth century, I argue that its expansion during the Progressive era had one of the most critical impacts on deportation policy throughout the 1920s, creating the

359 Moloney, National Insecurities, 107.
basis for a state of perpetual “deportability.” “While there were public charge provisions built into immigration law that allowed for the deportation of some recent immigrants, such provisions were rare until the 1890s, unevenly applied during the first third of the twentieth century, and hardly ever enforced after FDR took office in 1933,” Fox writes. However, I would argue, each part of this statement demonstrates an incomplete understanding of the role deportability played in deportation practice. As Hirota, Gerald Neuman and others have explored, early deportation statistics elide the full extent of the practice of dependency expulsions because of how much these efforts took place on the state level, rather than through federal government actions. Although Fox is correct to note that there were significant fluctuations in deportation for the LPC provisions during the early twentieth century, her work minimizes the reality that by World War I, this provision made up more than one half of all removals. By the 1930s, when she notes the sharp decline, much of this decline was due to the massive repatriations through avenues other than official federal warrant deportations, rather than any decreased effort to regulate foreign-born dependency.

These tactics for removal, centering around a cynical desire to remove the fiscal burdens of institutionalization, did not exist in isolation from the more thoroughly explored racism and eugenicist movements of the time, but often worked in close tandem with these ideas. As Fox explains, for many eugenicists, “it was never solely about the high costs of dealing with defective immigrants; it was also about their biology,” meaning that even as they worried about institutional dependency, this did not preclude a genuine concern about the physical and genetic

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361 Fox, *Three Worlds of Relief*, 5.
dangers of immigrant populations.\textsuperscript{363} However, she explains, eugenicists did often employ the argument of dependency to bolster their arguments about the “biological costs” of recent immigration, which they argued were just as critical as the “fiscal costs of regulated immigration.” To do this, “they argued that the foreign born were overrepresented in the nation’s institutions for the insane, the feebleminded, the sick, and the poor and therefore represented a tremendous fiscal burden to ‘American taxpayers.’”\textsuperscript{364} Furthermore, as Ian Dowbiggin explains in his comparative study of mental illness and immigration restriction of the United States and Canada, this concern was deeply rooted in a fear that unwell immigrants posed a danger not only in the present as institutional burdens, but because of their reproduction. Eugenicists, psychiatrists, and other medical officials warned, he explains, that “the feebleminded were not only uncommonly promiscuous but also dangerous because of their hereditary traits,” which prompted them to push for immigration control, but also simultaneously, for reproductive control.\textsuperscript{365}

Emily Abel echoes this point, explaining that when it came to tuberculosis control in Los Angeles, the instigators of the drives to deport diseased Mexican immigrants were shaped by intertwined perceptions of both biology and dependency. She explains that officials at the forefront of the drive truly believed that “the biology of Mexicans… made them especially vulnerable to tuberculosis,” and connected this to high incidences of tuberculosis among African Americans and Native Americans, which they used “as evidence that they were ‘primitive’ people who lack prior exposure and thus never had developed immunity.”\textsuperscript{366} However, while

\textsuperscript{363} Fox, \textit{Three Worlds of Relief}, 99.
\textsuperscript{364} Fox, \textit{Three Worlds of Relief}, 5.
these “scientific” beliefs in innately inferior biological traits among workers were generally prevalent, she explained, they were particularly heightened because the disease often left its patients disabled, which led many to describe Mexicans “not as disease carriers but rather as economic burdens.” Throughout the era, the distinction between a physical or biological threat and an economic one became increasingly blurred. In the immediate post-World War I era, when immigrants had steadily accumulated in state and local institutions because their removals could not be executed, there was a fervor among institutional administrators for financial relief which often gained popularity as a racial project.

Deidre Moloney expands on this blurred line between dependency, race, and health in her discussion of the development of diagnoses and ideas of fitness for American belonging. While “classification and categorization were preoccupations of the scientific and medical communities, eugenicists, and Progressive reformers,” she explains, “concern for immigrants’ physical condition was often related to their economic roles and their class status.” Joining scholars such as Douglas Baynton, who explore the development of the control of disability, rather than just disease, among immigrant populations, Moloney points out that over time, the immigration service developed new categories for exclusion to provide biological “legitimacy” to the efforts to regulate labor and race. Because of the “intersection of public health measures and eugenics ideology,” she argues, there was an impetus for the creation of “new, non-medically based diagnoses, such as a poor physique and presenility, that were used to keep out those perceived to be physically unfit for strenuous manual labor or those who arrived from regions where the population was deemed unfit for U.S. citizenship.” Even more importantly, she notes, even where diagnoses were “medically well established,” they were assigned “through

367 Abel, “From Exclusion to Expulsion,” 825.
368 Moloney, National Insecurities, 107.
the prism of racial and ethnic hierarchies… medical diagnoses became an effective proxy to regulate immigrants on the basis of racial and religious differences.”

While this institutional coordination was often veiled in concern for the care and well-being of immigrants with physical or mental challenges, many scholars have challenged this notion and revealed how economic underpinnings undermine these claims to charity. As Hidetaka Hirota explains, while “contemporaries also advanced a humanitarian defense,” in reality, the “core principle of policy, however, was to make immigrants bear the expense of those institutions.” Describing the later efforts to deport Mexican immigrants in the Imperial Valley in the 1940s, Natalia Molina notes that while the drives were ostensibly launched with the aim of ameliorating disease, “it does not require much analysis to scratch the veneer of the professed goal of protecting public health and expose a different, and much less laudable, aim.” In fact, she explains, these deportations should instead serve as a “primary on the power that can be wielded by industry and government under the auspices of public safety.” While the Progressive era scientists, institutional officials, and social workers had created a broad interest in the study and improvement of social issues including disease and mental health, these ideas were often tightly intertwined with hierarchies of bodily and class fitness, and with efforts to control the issue not through study, but through expulsion.

Some scholars have taken the statements of Progressive era advocates of immigration control to be more genuine, such as Robert Zeidel, who explains in his study of the Dillingham Commission, that “the nation’s turn-of-the-century response was more than simply a matter of institutionalization of national bigotry.” Unlike many other scholars, Zeidel is concerned less

369 Moloney, 133.
372 Zeidel, Immigrants, Progressives, and Exclusion Politics, 5.
with finding an economic ulterior motive to the study and policing of migration, than with resuscitating the reputation of Progressive era social scientists and reformers. Indeed, he argues, “many of those who supported more stringent [immigration] restriction… failed to exhibit hostility toward the foreign-born.” Instead, many were genuine reformers, who “exhibited an almost religious faith in their ability to engender social betterment, a resolute trust in what they considered to be scientific objectivity… they believed that investigation and analysis carried out by properly trained experts would equip policy makers with the means to eradicate social blight.”

However, while he draws needed attention to the extensive and carefully orchestrated studies that bolstered the creation of restrictive legislation, he fails to recognize the extent to which these reformers, while perhaps sincere in their belief in the studies which they put forward, in fact were shaped not only by the racial prejudices of their era, but by an agenda of institutional control that was premised upon not only social improvement aims, but also economic motivations.

To understand deportation practice in the 1920s more deeply, it is critical to understand that it was not motivated by a single set of motivations or rationales. In fact, one of the greatest significances of deportation during this period was its drawing together of a wide range of forms of social surveillance, institutionalization, and public policing. Deportation, as a national project of state-building and redefining American belonging, brought together seemingly discrete threads of social issues: health, crime, mental illness, sexuality, and economic dependency, into a single and in many ways, unprecedented, machinery for state control. Its expansion as a tool of social control united diverse projects around policing non-citizen fitness for belonging. In doing so, it brought seemingly unrelated institutions, such as orphanages, tuberculosis sanitariums, 

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373 Ibid, 3.
poor farms, and county jails into a conjoined web of communication and coordination. This process not only expanded deportations, but in fact, expanded the power of the federal government, and gave it new reach and bureaucratic coherence. The immigration service, in effect, not only monitored the boundaries of the nation-state, but elevated its powers of social control.

This institutional coordination grew from the earlier state-based precedents for removal, such as the system instituted in New York State in 1880, whereby the State Board of Charities could order the return of “any crippled, blind, lunatic, or other infirm alien paupers’ in charitable institutions in New York whose emigration had been financed by foreign governments, charitable organizations or landlords.”\(^{374}\) As the Progressive Era evolved, Ian Dowbiggin notes, this process became increasingly streamlined within New York. Because “New York City was the main U.S. port of entry, and about one-quarter of all insane immigrants were hospitalized in New York State,” he writes, “these circumstances triggered a good many complaints” from physicians, who were frustrated that “immigrants were steadily filling up not only the state’s asylums but its prisons, hospitals, and jails.”\(^{375}\) It is important to note that even public health officials fixated on more than their own institutions, but on what they increasingly imagined as an interconnected web of institutions for the social control of the population.

The coordination of different institutions also enabled a new chapter in the state’s ability to surveil, discipline, and enact punitive action upon its residents. As immigration officials regularly prompted local officials to report their institutional immigrant populations, they were, in a way, prompting them to get on board a much broader project of surveilling, controlling, and wielding power over individuals in society. Amy Fairchild thoughtfully notes this process in her


\(^{375}\) Dowbiggin, *Keeping America Sane*, 143.
study of medical examinations at the border, although she does not extend this analysis into the interior of the nation and post-entry removal. “The immigrant medical inspection,” she explains, “represented a new technique for discipline in the new social and economic order, signaling a transformation in the nature of discipline and power.”376 Her assessment that these new forms of regulation marked a shift from “corrective to preventative” state power, and from “violent to normative” disciplining of individuals is critical, to understanding the expanding power of the state during this period.377 However, her emphasis on exclusion at the borders, rather than expulsion from the interior, leads her to underestimate the extent to which “normative” state power was built throughout the nation, through the creation of a punitive network for identifying and expelling those deemed unfit for the nation.

As early as 1920, the Commissioner General of Immigration was sending regular memoranda to the District Immigrant Commissioners and Inspectors in Charge, requesting lists of all of the public and private charitable institutions in their jurisdiction. In part, officials explained, this project was needed because of the immigrants who had “accumulated during the war,” when deportations were nearly impossible for many locations.378 These institutions, the Commissioner explained, included those that cared for “indigents, or other persons, either adults or minors, who have become public charges in such institutions,” and explained that this list might contain: “hospitals, almshouses, homes, sanitariums, asylums for orphans; for deaf, dumb, blind and feebleminded; for juveniles and all other institutions of a charitable nature, public or private, except asylums for the insane maintained by the state.” The list should not only provide the names of the institutions, he wrote, but whether they were under federal, state, county,

377 Ibid.
378 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351.
municipal or private control, and if under private control and receiving government funding, from what source. However, the Commissioner specified, the list should not contain “penal or reformatory institutions maintained wholly under Governmental authority.”

Within five years, the form of this institutional policing had also changed in notable ways, if not the basic impetus behind it. A decisive shift had taken place towards a concern with identifying potential deportees among the populations of the criminal institutions of the nation. By 1926, the Commissioner General was requesting information not only about “alien public charges” in hospitals, asylums, orphanages, almshouses, etc, but also the immigrants confined in “federal penitentiaries, state prisons, reformatories, jails, and other correctional institutions.” He further suggested that district commissioners and inspectors should search this information out with prison commissioners or boards of parole if needed, and that they should consult with the department if this search would “incur any unusual expense” in identifying the necessary information. It is striking to see how clearly the deportation statistics demonstrate the fruits of this process: In 1921, only 51 immigrants were deported as criminals, but by 1926, that number had reached a remarkable 793 individuals. These numbers would only continue to climb as the immigration service and the various penal institutions of the state tightened their coordination and streamlined their processes of reporting and passport securing. By 1929, the number of criminals deported had risen to an astounding 1409, far out of proportion with the general rise in the number of deportations over the course of the decade.

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379 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4038, File 54941 General.
380 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351.
381 Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration, 1921.
382 Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration, 1926.
383 It should be noted that these statistics regarding crime do not include individuals deported for prostitution or of procuring the services of a prostitute, which were categorized separately in the records of the Immigration Bureau.
It is important to note, however, that while the efforts of the immigration authorities and local officials during the 1920s far surpassed any previous institutional coordination for immigrant removal, it continued to fall short of both official aspirations and the public demand. A 1921 memorandum from Leo B. Russell, the Immigrant Inspector in Charge of Transportation and Deportation to the Commissioner General highlighted this tension. He celebrated the fact that in the previous year, almost 4,000 individuals had been deported, noting that it was over 1,000 more than the year before. On the prompting of the State Hospital Commission, the matter had been taken up in Congress, and appropriations had increased. This helped, he explained, to alleviate the “congestion” in institutions, which had put the department in a “very embarrassing position on one or two occasions, owing to the fact that on account of aliens becoming public charges the State Institutions were overcrowding and so much so that Americans could not be admitted to these institutions.” However, Russell explained, this was far from sufficient. Indeed, he argued, Section 23 of the Immigration Law designated that the Commissioner “shall detail officers of the Immigration Service from time to time to secure information as to the number of aliens detained in the penal reformatories and charitable institutions (public and private) of the several states and territories,” a directive which had been woefully neglected due to insufficient funding.385

Russell was not alone in these critiques, which emerged not only from the disgruntled local immigration authorities or zealous public observers, but also from the institutional officials themselves, who frequently railed against how immense the burden of upkeep of indigent non-citizens was. The Commissioner of Immigration at Ellis Island relayed a message from the New York State Hospital to the Commissioner General of Immigration in 1922, which protested the

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385 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351.
fact that their hospitals were a shocking thirteen thousand patients overcrowded. While the Hospital Commissioner obsequiously explained that “I hesitate to find fault with an official who is as helpful and desirous of the speedy execution of the Immigration Law as to deportation as yourself,” he explained that the conditions had become truly “appalling.” His commission, he explained, received daily contact from hospital superintendents throughout the state, begging to release deportable aliens who crowded their institutions. Acknowledging that the Commissioner at Ellis Island had been undoubtedly “poorly provided with a force requisite” for the work, he nevertheless demanded that “the least” the Immigration Bureau could do would be to “relieve us of the incubus of these undesirables as promptly” as possible.\(^{386}\)

Authorities reported the ambitious effort to clear out institutions which had been overcrowded with large foreign-born populations since the war as a modest, but incomplete success. But by the following year, they were already bemoaning the inability to take that project to its logical conclusion, as they saw it, and completely clear the charitable institutions of their non-citizen charges. Officials at the highest level of the Immigration Bureau expressed frustrations, which were generally levied at Congress for the failure to provide adequate funding. “The lack of a sufficient appropriation to carry on the work will prevent a systematic or extensive combing over of the penal reformatories and charitable institutions in the present year,” concluded the Commissioner General in his annual report in 1921, “although as much work will be done in this direction as our limited financial resources will permit.”\(^{387}\) Over the course of the decade, despite continued constraints of budget and staff, much work was done indeed. Fox explores the collusion between immigration officials and providers of public assistance, and argues “in certain times and places, the welfare state may best be viewed as an

\(^{386}\) Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, Files 54933/351.

\(^{387}\) Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration, 1921.
extension of the Immigration Service, where one of its functions becomes not the provision of assistance, but rather the expulsion of individuals or even segments of an entire population from the nation.” 388 What is particularly critical about this point is the elasticity of this capacity— at different times and places, this nexus between welfare and migration control could be used for distinct agendas or practices of expulsion. While Fox very briefly mentions the practice of district directors reporting immigrants among the institutional populations of their region in 1923, she fails to note that this process evolved throughout the decade, noting only that it occurred again in 1934. She makes the important distinction, however, that this process targeted only “charitable institutions” where immigrants were in residence, not with “charitable organizations” which provided “outdoor relief,” and thus focused on those populations which were seen to pose the largest burden financially (as well as those who were most conveniently captive for enforcing deportation warrants). 389

As the number of real deportations grew and evolved in nature, the number of potential deportees expanded as well, along with the institutional dragnet capable of identifying and documenting them. A report for the Commissioner General of Immigration in 1926 included a chart of potentially deportable aliens residing in institutions in each of the districts, which had reached a staggering number. “The foregoing figures,” he notes, “indicate that there are now in the United States (exclusive of the Montreal and San Francisco Districts which have not yet been heard from) 57,896 deportable aliens.” While this number included those immigrants already under deportation proceeds, he concluded that “this estimate is extremely conservative for the reason that at least six Districts have failed to estimate the total number of deportable aliens therein.” The fact that the six outstanding districts included San Francisco and Montreal, which

388 Fox, Three Worlds of Relief, 124.
389 Ibid, 132.
were among the largest, suggest that the estimate was “extremely conservative” indeed. However, the report explained, this effort to identify removable immigrants was facing a severe obstacle—“the depleted condition of the Immigration Appropriation,” which had led to some districts being required to defer or even “practically discontinue” their deportation work because of insufficient funding.\footnote{Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351.} However incomplete these efforts were, the mere fact of assembling these numbers was a staggering accomplishment for the growing bureaucratic state. The unprecedented bureaucratic regime support Foucault’s conclusion that record-keeping and documentation cultivate a “means of control and a method of domination.”\footnote{Foucault, \textit{Discipline and Punish}.} Without the new capacity to assemble lists of institutions, coordinate contact with their officials, and match that information with the immigration status and history (and thus the deportability under law) of each individual, and then to track their movement out of these institutions, across the nation, and over borders, the deportation state could never have been solidified into the massive social institution it became over time.

Through both mail and telegraph, immigration officials in Washington checked in regularly with commissioners and inspectors at Immigration Service field offices throughout the country to request lists of immigrants. Once a case was selected for warrant proceedings, officials would trace the immigrants through their own assembled case files from entry, voluntarily submitted identity documents, documentation from local authorities or institutions, and, frequently would reach out to the consul of the receiving nation for passports and further identifying information. Where necessary, the Immigration Service would engage with other governmental offices, such as the State Department, to ensure the necessary information was assembled to put the deportation warrant into motion. Beyond this, arrangements had to be made
with local institutions for detention until transport, between different field offices to arrange an efficiently scheduled train pickup, with officials at the ports and steamship companies to secure overseas passage where necessary, and with foreign governments when permissions or travel needed to be arranged after landing. All of this reflected a tremendous degree of documentation, coordination, and institutional tracking, as well as the creation of a massive paper trail for the lives of ordinary non-citizens.

This institutional coordination did not occur solely in relation to immigration control, but was part of a larger trend toward institutionalization, surveillance, and disciplining of individuals deemed to be “unfit” for the social body. “The desire to keep out immigrants deemed defective was not an isolated development,” Douglas Baynton explains, “but rather was one aspect of a trend toward the increasing segregation of disabled people into institutions and the sterilization of the “unfit’ and ‘degenerate’ under state eugenic laws.”392 This was true not only of disabled individuals, but of those deemed to be racially, intellectually, morally, or economically inferior and unworthy of American citizenship. This process of bringing together these disparate sources of social threat and controlling them through institutional expansion can be illuminated by an examination of Foucault’s explanation of the discipline and punishment within the social body. As Eithne Luibheid explains of how he illuminates immigration control, “Foucault’s work particularly contributes to our understanding of how immigration inequalities are institutionally reproduced by drawing attention to supposedly neutral, mundane practices of inspection and regimes of knowledge that actually discipline and subject immigrants in racializing, sexualizing, and other ways.”393 I delve into the various interconnected “practices of inspection” in the

393 Luibheid, Entry Denied, xxiii.
diverse institutional spaces where deportees came to the attention of immigration authorities, which represented a significant expansion of the bureaucratic capacity. In doing so, I emphasize the tremendous power of the mundane (which has been so heavily overshadowed in deportation history by the dramatic) in the creation of a regime powerful and expansive enough to greatly accelerate the rise of deportations in the nation, and even more vastly increase the spread of a shadow of deportability over the nation’s immigrant population.

**Deportations for Physical Health and Defects**

On May 9, 1923, Menotti Kocioncic, alias George Rocanbold set sail from the New York Harbor aboard the S.S. “America” for deportation to his native Italy. The charge against him for deportation was that at the time of his entry, he was afflicted with syphilis, “a loathsome, contagious disease” and “that he was a person likely to become a public charge at the time of his entry.” Kocioncic had been apprehended in Colorado Springs, under the jurisdiction of the sub-district office at Denver, Colorado before being delivered to Omaha, Nebraska, then conveyed to Chicago to be joined to an Eastbound deportation party. The month before, the district office had written to the Commissioner General asking for haste in securing a travel plan for the immigrant, explaining that “he is being held at our expense and is suffering with some heart trouble which is brought on by living in this altitude which might possibly cause his death if he was held here too long.”

“This seems to be a clear out case,” stated the report regarding his deportation warrant. “His different venereal diseases and hospital treatments as well as his imprisonments and vagrancy plainly show that he was likely to become a public charge at the time of his entry. The only point where there could be a question is that he does not seem to positively know whether
he had syphilis at the time of his entry.” In fact, the immigrant inspector admitted, he could not
definitely prove that Kocioncic was suffering from syphilis when he entered the country. He
explained that he found “so far as the judgement of a layman can be relied on in such a matter”
that he had been afflicted with syphilis when he entered the country, and that this finding had
been based on the fact that he had been treated for syphilis at Gibraltar, where he had been
deemed cured. However, he had broken out with some disease which had been treated with
“606” or “Salvarean treatment” within a few months of entry. Though the inspector admitted that
“it is possible that this treatment is used for other diseases than syphilis,” he was sufficiently
convinced by the treatment and his medical history that Kocioncic had been afflicted with
syphilis once more. When questioned during his hearing, Kocioncic admitted that he had been
giving 606, but explained that his doctor had never specified the disease it was meant to treat,
stating that “he said my blood was getting bad and he would give me the ‘606’ to keep it from
getting worse.”

Kocioncic’s case was far from unusual during the period, when immigrants regularly
were charged with illnesses without clear proof of a solid medical diagnosis, and very frequently
without proper knowledge of their own medical condition. Medical deportations for both
“loathsome and contagious” diseases and other physical conditions, such as blindness, hernias,
and a wide range of other deficiencies, were a prominent cause for removal during this period,
and demonstrate the pervasive influence of what Alan Kraut has called the “double helix of
health and fear.” Immigrants with health issues posed not only an immediate danger to the well-
being of citizens, but also threatened to undermine the stability of the industrial labor force.
However, to look at the statistics along during the decade gives the impression that concerns with

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394 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4920, File 55225/278.
physical health declined throughout the 1920s. However, as scholars have noted, this reflected 
the permeability of deportation categories, which allowed those apprehended for their health to 
be slotted for removal under a provision that was easier to prove and document according to the 
law.

While there has been an extensive literature on the medical examination of immigrants 
upon their entry at the land borders and sea ports of the nation, as well as of the racialized 
discourses around the health threat posed by immigrant communities in major cities, there has 
been less attention to how those medical criteria were extended to post-entry deportation 
practices. This section looks at how deportable immigrants were identified and selected for 
removal at hospitals, mental institutions, and other health institutions and were referred to 
immigration officials for apprehension. It also engages with the literature on non-native born 
residents, ethnicity, disease and pathology, health and sanitation, and hierarchies of bodily 
fitness. As medical removals were enacted throughout the interior of the nation, as well as at its 
edges, debates ensued over what kinds of diseases and mental deficiencies were deportable, as 
well as regarding at what point in an individual’s medical history the nation of origin ceased to 
bear responsibility and the United States in fact must be held responsible. I also explore the 
invasive, highly questionable physical and mental examination which potential deportees were 
forced to undergo.

395 See Fairchild, Science at the Borders; Amy L. Fairchild, Ronald Bayer, and James Colgrove, Searching Eyes: 
Privacy, the State, and Disease Surveillance in America (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007); Kraut, 
Silent Travelers; Lorie Conway, Forgotten Ellis Island: The Extraordinary Story of America’s Immigrant Hospital 
Health (ABC-CLIO, 2015); Howard Markel, “The Foreignness of Germs: The Persistent Association of Immigrants 
### Figure 9: Deportations for Physical Health and Deficiencies, 1920-1930

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Deportations</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Deportations during that Year</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>114</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1922</td>
<td>75</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>56</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>1.0</td>
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<td>204</td>
<td>2.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>183</td>
<td>1.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>164</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>129</td>
<td>1.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>.13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The physical illnesses and deficiencies represented in the chart above changed slightly in their wording throughout the decade, but generally included tuberculosis, trachoma, and “other loathsome or dangerous contagious diseases,” and the expansive “other physical conditions.” The low rates of post-entry removal, never surpassing three percent during the decade, stand parallel to Amy Fairchild’s observations about exclusions at the point of entry. The expulsion rate for medical causes at the point of initial entry never exceeded 1%, she explains, despite their prominence in the historical record and the public imagination of exclusion at the ports of entry, but instead, far more medically suspect immigrants were rejected for economic dependency and likelihood to become a public charge. Deportation officers’ debates around health and the dangers posed by immigrant bodies were, in fact, about very real fears about infections disease, they were also, as Fairchild explains, about “a very practical real-world need to control bodies, to make them perform as demanded and expected,” and when they didn’t they threatened the

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396 Fairchild, *Science at the Borders*, 10. She notes that the conditions that could render one “likely to become a public charge” on medical grounds could include hernias, heart disease, and a wide range of deformities.
modern industrial order. While they were only successful in rejecting immigrants in a small number of cases, the intensive and invasive physical screenings and exams that immigrants underwent at ports of entry worked to build the condition of “deportability.” This perpetual fear of removal should their health or other characteristics not live up to the standards of American belonging would continue to hang over immigrants even after months or years in the country, as they recognized that even a short hospital visit could render them vulnerable to expulsion.

While Kocioncic was fortunate enough to survive his detention prior to deportation, not all immigrants destined for deportation were quite so lucky. Vito Santorsola, an Italian immigrant who had been detained at the U.S. Naval Hospital in San Diego, California in September 1924 had a harsher fate within the system. It took nearly three months after his detention for the formal warrant for his deportation to be issued, and after another three months of detention, Santorsola died in detention, having been determined by his doctors to be too ill to be deported. Santorsola, who immigration inspectors described as having black hair, dark brown eyes, a round face, a rather large nose, and a scar on the left side of his forehead, had worked for six months at the California Beef Co. in Los Angeles before falling ill. His detention had originally been ordered because he was deemed likely to become a public charge, as well as having entered over the border at “Tia Juana,” California rather than through a designated port of entry. However, the broader case file reveals that it was his medical history which brought him to the attention of the authorities after he became afflicted with dropsy and spent a variety of long stays at the Los Angeles General Hospital. During the last of those stays, he became a public charge at the hospital, and was shortly thereafter apprehended by the immigration service. His story, like that of so many other deportees demonstrates the insufficiency of examining only the

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397 Fairchild, *Science at the Borders*, 16.
398 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 6166, File 55426/39.
statistics regarding what criteria immigrants were deported under. While Santorsola was
ostensibly deported for his unauthorized entry and likelihood to become a public charge, it is
clear from the paper trail attached to his departure that it is the medical threat he posed that he
was targeted for removal.

Some of the most prominent scholarship on deportations for medical causes has focused
on Mexican deportations in the Southwest, where public health scares often bolstered broader
projects of racial control and labor regulation. As Emily Abel explains of the efforts to deport
Mexican immigrants afflicted with tuberculosis in the Los Angeles area, federal agents saw
public hospitals, like mental institutions and prisons, as a prime location to search out
“deportable aliens.” She explains that “just as welfare officials used the threat of deportation to
encourage voluntary departure, so health authorities used that threat to compel compliance with
medical regimes.” Deportation, like concurrent Americanization efforts, supported the
regulation and imposition of particular standards of health and daily life among immigrant
populations. By attaching certain health behaviors and adherence to the demands of the medical
establishment to the right to stay in the country, public hospitals contributed to the growing and
ever-more-powerful condition of deportability. In order to avoid the punitive reach of the state,
immigrants were compelled to obey state-sanctioned public health norms.

Unlike exclusions at the border, where immigrant inspectors had only to determine
whether a particular immigrant was afflicted with a loathsome or dangerous contagious disease

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399 While statistics do not exist tracking the number of deaths of immigrants awaiting deportation, they emerge in the
case files with some regularity. Because deportations were often complicated to enact, even when the orders went
through, and because federal officials often chose long detention sentences in order to maximize the economic
streamlining of deportation parties, immigrants were vulnerable to long stays in harsh institutional conditions. While
deaths in hospitals of those diagnosed with illnesses are hardly surprising, deaths were not uncommon for deportees
awaiting removal from prisoners, as in the case of Frank Miliwski, alias Milinski, an inmate of the Marquette State
Prison whose deportation was cancelled on account of him dying in prison. See Immigration and Naturalization
Service. Record Group 85, Box 6703, File 55475/99.
400 Abel, “From Exclusion to Expulsion,” 842.
or a physical condition that rendered them “defective” or unfit for work, immigration officials involved in post-entry deportations often had to determine whether their condition had originated before their entry into the country. This process often involved vast speculation, as institutional officials attempted to cobble together scant evidence to prove that a particular immigrant had likely entered the country under false pretenses because of a pre-existing condition. The 1923 case of a Mexican couple and their two children who were deported because of syphilis (in the case of the adults), and likelihood to become public charges (in the case of the entire family).

“The evidence shows that the adults are afflicted with syphilis,” wrote the inspector in charge of their case, “and reasonably indicates that such affliction existed at the time of entry.” Furthermore, he noted, “the family has received public assistance last winter, and it appears that the man is unable to work continuously.”\textsuperscript{401} In spite of the uncertainty implied by the assertion that this was “reasonably” clear, because the burden of proof fell upon immigrants in deportation cases to prove their fitness to belong in the country, the family’s removal was enacted.

In other cases, immigrants volunteered the necessary information for officials to prove their pre-entry conditions, such as in the case of a 20-year-old Canadian citizen deported in 1920. The young man, of the “Irish race,” had been identified as a public charge at multiple different institutions over his time in the United States, including having spent 30 days in jail for a vagrancy arrest. Prior to that, he had been hospitalized in Troy, New York “because of frozen ears.” While his frostbite was enough to render him a public charge, he also had a more serious medical strike against his maintenance in the country—epilepsy. Because he admitted that he had been suffering from this disease for two years, before his most recent entry into the country from Canada, the officials in charge of his case concluded that “the evidence sustains the charges,”

\textsuperscript{401} Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 5220, File 55247/253.
and ordered his deportation.\textsuperscript{402} His case is highly representative, as deportee’s case files often featured a wide array of charges and potential immigration violations levied against them before eventually narrowing them down for the official deportation warrant to those which could be most readily supported by evidence and actual adherence to deportation law. Around the same time, other deportees were returned to Canada for similarly eclectic combinations of transgressions, including one 1922 deportee who was accused of being mentally defective, a user of morphine, receiving public assistance during hospitalization, likelihood to become a public charge and having been in jail.\textsuperscript{403} Another 1922 removal to Canada was enacted for having been imprisoned for riding a freight train, hospitalization for a chronic nose infection, and unauthorized initial entry.\textsuperscript{404} Once an immigrant was brought to the Service’s attention for potential removal, often by an institutional employee, the Service worked to verify their immigration status and often amassed as many possible criteria for removal by examining their entry records, other institutional documentation, through interviews with local officials, and through the deportee’s hearings.

As the immigration service groped its way towards greater systemization, such cases reveal that paradoxically, the lack of clearly defined and differentiated criteria for removal actually facilitated its growth. Local immigration officials often referred deportation cases to the federal bureau based on erroneous legal understandings, and even more frequently, maximized their chances of success by including anything problematic or potentially concerning about the immigrant, in order to ensure that some charge might stick. Perhaps no category of deportation embodied a stronger veneer of objectivity, due to the weight of “scientific” knowledge and

\cite{402} Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 5220, File 55247/278.
\cite{403} Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4850, File 55218/243.
\cite{404} Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4850, File 55218/231.
medical examinations behind it, but as the preceding cases demonstrate, medical deportations were often far from clear-cut. Furthermore, while ostensibly about protecting the public from the spread of infectious diseases, and preventing the unrestrained reproduction of physical defectives, physical health removals were often deeply connected to national economic anxieties and the desire to produce a proper and fit laboring body. As the following section will explore, this agenda often overlapped with the policing of mentally “unfit” immigrants, who, while less represented in the scholarship on health deportations, actually made up a far greater proportion of post-entry removals during the 1920s.405

Deportations for Mental Health and Defects

While the literature on health and immigrant populations in the United States has focused largely on physical health and bodily diseases, the deportation statistics for the early twentieth century reveal how powerful mental health was as a criterion for evaluating and expelling non-citizen residents.406 Physical “defects,” were more effectively policed at the border, while mental deficiencies were more frequently apprehended after entry. In part this was due to the fact that physical issues were more readily detected visually at a quick inspection, while mental challenges often took longer to assess. As Ji-Hye Shin explains, “medical inspection at

405 This discrepancy in the scholarship is likely due to the historical emphasis on exclusions and deportations at the point of entry, rather than on post-entry deportations. Exclusions at the border reflected far higher proportions of physical health cases. In 1920 for instance, the year in this period when physical health post-entries were at their highest (at just under 3% of total deportations), exclusions for disease or physical defects comprised just under 13% of exclusions at the border.

immigration stations was not always successful in detecting and excluding insane immigrants; in fact, a majority of the insanity-related deportation cases came from state mental institutions. 407

From young children deemed to be suffering from “subnormal” intelligence to elderly immigrants diagnosed with dementia, mental fitness was in many ways as critical as physical well-being for belonging in the nation, and was often policed just as strictly. Like physical illness or injury, mental illness or difference was often tightly linked with the “likely to become a public charge” criteria, with immigration officials arguing that any disability, either physical or mental, made immigrants less likely to be able to sustain themselves through their own labor. As the documented diagnoses of mental “inferiority” or illness of many deportees during the period reflect, these assertions were often based on scant medical evidence, broad assumptions, or language barriers that kept immigrants from making a case for their own well-being and mental fitness.

Scholars have explained that for many immigrants, one of the major challenges for proving themselves to be of fit mentality was language. At the same time as exclusion and deportation for illiteracy became law, which was often applied inconsistently depending on what the native language of the immigrant was, immigrants were also increasingly being found to be “feebleminded,” “insane” or otherwise mentally deficient. These categories overlapped in their disadvantaging of non-English speaking migrants, who often lacked sufficient translation and interpretation assistance to ensure that their mental state could be accurately expressed. Alan Kraut points out that immigration defenders argued the foreign-born did not, in fact have higher rates of insanity or mental disability, but that “officers were certifying immigrants of their group mentally deficient when the real problem was unfamiliar language or culture.” In fact, he

explains, some doctors went as far as to critique the entire system, such as Dr. Antonio Stella, who “denied the validity of intelligence test results on the grounds that such tests were culturally biased.” As the example below demonstrates, many immigrants turned to outside tests to attempt to undermine the bias of immigration service exams, but these appeals were often ignored.

While many immigrants lacked the financial means, language skills, connections, or institutional knowledge to contest their diagnoses or deportations, other cases dragged on for months as various experts were engaged to assess the health or mental fitness of the immigrant. One particularly grim case was that of an 8-year-old Irish girl who was deported on the grounds that she was “subnormal in mental,” an allegation which was contested by her parents and various advocates. The girl’s father, James Moran was a member of the Dairy Employees’ Union of Chicago, which wrote to the Secretary of Labor on his behalf in 1928, explaining that her father “had the child examined by reputable medical men who pronounced the child normal, but said she was exceedingly shy.” Furthermore, they argued, her father was employed and able to support her care and education “according to the American standard of living,” while her relatives in Ireland were not in a position to care for her. In response to pleas and medical testimonies, however, the Acting Secretary of Labor responded with regret, agreeing that “the case of this little child is certainly most pathetic, and one which is worthy of the most sympathetic consideration,” but explaining that the immigration law provided no leeway for intervention in cases of mental deficiency exclusions.

As complex as mental illnesses were for immigration officials to identify, document, and prove, mental deficiencies provided an even more ill-delineated category for removal.

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408 Kraut, Silent Travelers, 75.
409 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 7596, File 55609/70.
Deportations for “subnormal mentality” or “feeble-mindedness,” like so many other provisions for expulsion, frequently intersected with concerns about an immigrant’s ability to support themselves financially through their own labor. In the case of one immigrant being deported for mental defect, the woman was reported by the Wayne County Psychopathic Clinic in Michigan. Her case file explains that she was found to be “definitely feeble minded, about middle grade,” and “having a mental age of approximately 9 years.” In addition to this defect, the institution reported, there “may be a mild mental disturbance.” Her “abnormality” was described in detail: “She tells of queer experiences and peculiar thoughts which are troubling her, but as it does not appear that she actually believes these things and, so far, her conduct has not been controlled by them, it is probably nothing more than a marked tendency toward romancing which, in itself may or may not be symptomatic of something more sinister.” While they noted that the immigrant had been suffering from a physical illness, and concluded that it was likely that with physical improvement, “there will be more stability and self-control,” they further noted that “the intellectual defect is so great, her conduct will continue to be childish and impulsive.” However, the most damning assessment she was charged with was the accusation that “she is undoubtedly incapable of providing for herself.”

As these cases suggest, mental health was an even more flexible category for removal than physical health (which often required the diagnosis of specific conditions, and which featured a more thoroughly developed set of qualifying illnesses). As Deidre Moloney notes, psychological illnesses and developmental disabilities were less clearly defined and reliant on relatively recent study and discourse. “The diagnosis and treatment of such diseases was far less precise than for many medical conditions,” she explains, and “there was a greater stigma

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410 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 3355, File 54636/14.
attached to them than exists today.” As the above case demonstrates, testing for subnormal mentality was controversial and unreliable at best, biased and harmful at worst. Mental illness diagnoses also differed from physical in that they often did not follow the familiar racial or ethnic patterns of physical health removals. An examination of the deportation statistics for 1926, when post-entry removals for mental illness and disability peaked for the decade, reveals ethnic patterns inconsistent with our common understandings of which ethnic groups were most targeted for removal as unfit citizens.

While the largest number of deportations by “race or people” for insanity and other mental illnesses were 138 Mexicans, this was only 5.3% of the overall number of Mexicans deported in that year—well below the overall rate of the 9.7% of all deportations that year conducted on the basis of mental health. The 69 Scandinavian (Norwegian, Danish, and Swedish) immigrants removed for mental health that year, on the other hand, were disproportionately high, at 12.6% of the total number of Scandinavians deported in 1926. Even more striking was the rate at which German immigrants were removed for mental illness in the same year—a total of 133 deportations for mental health, amounting to 15.6% of all German deportations. These realities stand in sharp contrast to the aspirations of many of those nativist voices who had been at the forefront of the push for greater deportations. Indeed, in his Study of American Intelligence, Carl Brigham, an Army testing psychologist came to a very different set of conclusions. As Lynne Getz observes, “Using a most extraordinary logic, Brigham reasoned that immigrants who had come to the United States since 1900 possessed lower native intelligence than people who had been in the United States for several generations… Claiming

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411 Moloney, National Insecurities, 105.
that the tests offered conclusive proof, Brigham pronounced all Southern and Eastern European people innately inferior to Nordic people."413

The widespread deportation of Northern and Western European “races” preferred by both social scientists and the quota legislation of the decade is startling, and it suggests the need for further study of the unexpected and largely unexplored patterns present in the deportation statistics of the decade. It also demonstrates that while policy studies have emphasized the goals set out by deportation boosters, the realities enacted by officials on the ground were immensely different, and critical for understanding the true reach of the deportation state. At the same time as the deportation of the “innately” superior Nordic people was jarring, the fact that the highest proportion of a single “race” to be deported for mental health in 1926 was “African (black)” at 29.6% is no less striking.414 In spite of the assumptions (bolstered by suspect social scientific studies) that native born Americans or northern and western European immigrants were of “substandard” mental capacity, the deportation numbers reflect the extent to which the actual execution of deportation law did not always apprehend those who its congressional authors had intended. Instead, deportation implementation reflected patterns of institutional overcrowding and coordination, as well as local financial and social strains, and specific local and institutional prejudices that often diverged from supporting the motivations of the legislation which it had been built upon.

414 With the exception of Korean deportees (with a sample size of was a total of 3 deportees, with only a single deportee being deported for insanity) and “West Indian (except Cuban)” with a sample size of 12 deportees, 4 of which were deported for either insanity or “other mental conditions,” these examples do not provide a representative comparison to the “racial” groups discussed above.
Immigrants suffering from mental illnesses were among the largest institutional populations referred to the federal immigration bureau by local institutional superintendents, and often their case files noted multiple institutionalizations before they were eventually identified and detained as deportable. The 1922 case of a “26-year-old native of Holland, of the Hebrew race,” reflects a common pattern of both permeability at the Canadian border and repeated entries and institutionalization. He had been admitted in 1920, the immigration authorities noted, but had continued to reside just over the Detroit border in Windsor. After being rejected for reentry after the expiration of his visa, he entered without inspection, and promptly became a public charge at a Detroit hospital on account of his insanity. 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415 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 5220, File 55247/275.
including, notably, many who fit the racial criteria for national acceptance. In her study of state-driven deportations for insanity, Shin encapsulates the importance of this criteria in her conclusion that “insanity became a site not only of cooperation but also of contention for citizenship and belonging, and for authority and power. Insane immigrants… occupied a precarious position in American society; becoming insane compromised their rights and rendered them dependent, unfit, and immobile.”

At the overlap of both physical health and mental health, it is important to recognize a distinct and yet connected category, that of the “defective.” The development of categorical definitions of “defectives” and their relative absence from the historical literature on immigration restriction is the subject of Douglas Baynton’s critical article, “Defectives in the Land.” Disability, while an important facet of anti-immigrant sentiment in the United States, Baynton notes, has “largely held a marginal place in that scholarship.” In spite of its largely overlooked nature, he explains, immigration officials were ordered to deport anyone with “any mental abnormality… which justifies the statement that the alien is mentally defective.” Many of the provisions around physical and mental health were sufficiently vague and expansive as to include those defined as “defectives,” this category deserves attention in its own right. It shifted throughout the decade, and sometimes disappeared altogether as a standalone category outside various forms of physical and mental deficiencies.

The category of the “defective,” was particularly expansive, and particularly prone to supporting the goals of correcting and curtailing the national labor force. By the 1920s, Baynton explains, the category had crown to include arthritis, asthma, bunions, deafness, flat feet,

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418 Baynton, “Defectives in the Land,” 34.
hysteria, poor eyesight, poor physical development, spinal curvature, vascular disease of the heart, and varicose veins. Many of those provisions inherently disadvantaged elderly migrants, who were less desirable for inclusion in the nation due to their limited capacity for productive labor, and their propensity for requiring medical assistance and public aid. As Deidre Moloney has explored, the category of deficiency could often be utilized not only to discriminate by age, but also by “race” or ethnicity, and notes that Jewish immigrants were particularly susceptible to apprehension under the “poor physical development” provision, often on account of the forms of labor which they had commonly practiced in Europe.419 Eithne Luibheid explains that this category included the rare cases of immigrants with underdeveloped or non-gender-conforming genitalia, who were rejected on grounds of physical defects (although, as she points out, the immigrants sometimes sought to make the case that these defects, unlike others, would not incapacitate them from productive labor).420 Together, these diverse efforts at policing inclusion in the national body marked a growing effort to surveil and discipline belonging and the limits of citizenship. “The exclusion of disabled people was central to the laws governing immigration,” Baynton concludes, citing an Ellis Island medical inspector who reported that his duty had been “to detect poorly built, defective, or broken down human beings.”421 By uniting the various institutions charged with detecting and (when it came to citizens) repairing these “defective” or “broken down” individuals, the growing deportation regime proved one of the most powerful tools of the state in this project.

419 Moloney, National Insecurities.
420 Luibheid, Entry Denied.
421 Baynton, “Defectives in the Land,” 34.
Deportations for Crime

One of the most enduring and popular criteria for deportations throughout the twentieth century and beyond has been crime, and advocates of stricter deportation laws have often argued the need for national security through the targeted removal of threats. This perception of threats to public safety has also intersected in important ways with concerns over the expense of maintaining foreign-born criminals in the United States. In spite of Progressive era studies whose findings on the subject often undermined their own conclusions, the association of immigrant populations with increased proclivity for criminal behavior endured throughout the 1920s. I outline the kinds of crimes which were used as the basis for deportation, the processes by which criminals were identified and selected for deportation while serving their time in prisons and reformatories, and the ways that racial assumptions influenced the application of criminal deportations.

Criminal deportations fit into a longer history of expulsions and exile for crime but sharpened the lines between citizens who could be either castigated or rehabilitated, and non-citizens, who could be castigated and then permanently removed. As Ryan King, Michael Massoglia and Christopher Uggen explain, “criminal deportations constitute a form of contemporary banishment—the systematic removal of an offender from the state.”422 As the Chicago deportation drives of 1926 in the previous chapter demonstrated, deportation was newly envisioned during the period as a potential opportunity to clean up an entire social threat through the permanent expulsion of as many of its perpetrators as could be gathered. The expanding network of prisons, juvenile reformatories, and other carceral institutions throughout the country allowed for this project to be initiated not only by local officials, as occurred in Chicago, but by

the institutions themselves, and by the federal immigration service, who soon recognized that
criminal deportations gained their work popularity and regard from the public.

As scholars of the Dillingham and Wickersham Commissions have explained, much of
the energy of social scientists studying the immigration “problem” was devoted to understanding
and proving the connection between the foreign-born and crime. Lynne Getz contends that
eugenicists such as Charles D. Davenport, the founder of the Eugenics Records Office in New
York, stressed the connection between race and crime. “Davenport began his scientific
investigation assuming that race determined social behavior and that the ‘darker’ the race, the
‘more given to crimes of larceny, kidnapping, assault, murder, rape, and sex-immorality,’ she
writes. Furthermore, “to prevent eugenic calamity in the United States, Davenport advocated the
restriction of undesirable immigrant groups wanting to come into the country and the
sterilization of members of those groups already here.”423 These concerns echoed those of other
prominent restrictionists at the time who worried that the social ills brought by the foreign-born
would not only damage society in the present, but would be passed along as biological traits to
their descendants, weakening the very social fabric of the nation.

As the chart below demonstrates, deportation for crime became one of the fastest growing
trends of the period, and by the end of the decade, more than a tenth of all deportations were of
immigrants convicted of crime. Beyond the actual numbers of criminal non-citizens deported, the
growing deportation regime served to draw public attention to immigrants in criminal
institutions, as well as to create a tighter association between immigrants and crime in the public
imagination. Because prisons contained one of the largest institutional populations which could
be easily inspected for potential deportees, criminals were disproportionately represented in both

deportation populations and media attention. However, it also reflected a particular commitment to deporting criminals, both because of a genuine motivation to eliminate foreign-born “threats,” but also because of the effort to improve the national image and governmental record on suppressing crime (as is visible in the 1926 drives in Chicago, where the city’s reputation provided a strong impetus). Prisons also, as Foucault noted, held a critical place in the state as a penal detention acted as a “calculated technique for altering individual behavior.” As it came to replace public execution as the prominent disciplinary capacity of the state, he explains, it morphed into a “carefully articulated disciplinary mechanism,” one which, I argue, critically shaped the disciplinary identity of deportation.424

**Figure 11: Deportations for Crime, 1920-1930**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Deportations</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Deportations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>74</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
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<td>1.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>637</td>
<td>6.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>793</td>
<td>7.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>953</td>
<td>7.9</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>1409</td>
<td>10.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>1711</td>
<td>10.3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Unlike many other criteria for deportation that provided more flexibility for immigration officials to impose their own values, judgments, and racial assumptions, criminal deportations were more strictly bound to the values, judgments, and assumptions of other institutional

officials—those who had arrested and sentenced them. The 1923 deportation of an elderly Canadian man who was an inmate at the House of Correction in Chicago demonstrates that criminal deportations were shaped by the agendas and subjective decisions of the institutions from which they were gathered. The deportee admitted to having entered without inspection from Canada in 1921, after which he ‘wandered over the United States securing a precarious livelihood.” However, he was reported by his employer, who explained that he “was arrested on the charge of disorderly conduct… having stolen and wrecked an automobile. A more serious charge was not proffered against him on account of his age.” However, it was ordered that after a 30-day commitment at the House of Corrections, he was to be deported for crime and likelihood to become a public charge.425

Other immigrants were not fortunate enough to receive any leniency in their sentences, and thus served longer periods before their removal. As scholars have explained, this was often a heavily racialized process, as certain populations were associated with criminality in the mind of many public officials. Ahmed Ratis Mouhaddin, or Ahmed Ratib Mouohidden, a young Turkish national who was deported in 1929, was one who fell under the provisions for a crime of moral turpitude, “gross indency.” Mouhaddin had entered the country in 1924 with the intention of joining his brother, who lived in Lansing Michigan, and attending the Michigan Agricultural College at Lansing. He enrolled as a student there, but in 1925, was charged with “gross indecency” and sent to prison. When asked about this conviction in his deportation interview, Mouhaddin explained that “I plead guilty, but I learned later that I did not understand the charges.” Mouhaddin, in spite of his lack of understanding, was sentenced to three to five years imprisonment at Lansing, which made him susceptible to deportation, and in 1929, on the

425 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 5970, File 55401/6.
recommendation of the Supervisor of Paroles, his release was granted and he was discharged into
the custody of the Immigration Service for transportation to New York and then Turkey.\textsuperscript{426}

Immigrants detained for crimes often attempted to negotiate for their early release for
deportation rather than serve out their full sentences before removal, but some also fought to be
allowed to remain in the country after their release. This was often an option only available to
literate, educated, English-speaking immigrants with the resources and knowledge at their
disposal to pursue these options. Even so, their appeals were rarely allowed. A British deportee
from London, Ontario, who was imprisoned in Sing-Sing for grand larceny wrote to Secretary of
Labor Davis, pleading his case: “Please allow me to impose briefly upon your valuable time in
seeking your assistance… I am rightly detained in Sing Sing prison, for the [perpetration] of a
crime. It is my first misfortune of this type and I earnestly seek to pay my debt to Society and
then enjoy the necessary freedom to adhere to my commercial future. In this respect I am badly
handicapped by a deportation warrant.” He further explained that he was only 21 years old, and
would upon release “engage in a profitable and conscientious trade,” and asked if he could have
assistance in suppressing the warrant for his removal. He was not satisfied in this request and
was deported in 1926.\textsuperscript{427} However, the following year, another request came from Sing Sing to
the Assistant Secretary of Labor, this time from the Christian Science Prison Committee for the
State of New York on behalf of Mr. E.A. Hastings Till. The Committee requested that rather than
deportation, Mr. Till be paroled to their committee, because of their thorough conviction that he
“will make a useful member of society when he is released.” Although they promised to find him
work and to ensure his well-being, they too failed to gain sympathy.\textsuperscript{428}

\textsuperscript{426} Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 6703, File 55475/102.
\textsuperscript{427} Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 6703, File 55475/75.
\textsuperscript{428} Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 6703, File 55475/86.
Throughout the 1920s, anxieties over crime acted as a powerful impetus for the apprehension of numerous immigrants, although the boundaries between criminal acts, and other criteria for deportation often became blurred, obscuring the true number of deportations that were initiated, at least in part, because of crime. Deportation was increasingly recognized by a variety of criminal institutions as a potential tool for relieving institutional overcrowding and fiscal burdens. At the same time, while wardens, prison superintendents, and other institutional figures utilized deportation to serve their own interests, prisoners also increasingly recognized the possibility of using deportation law to their advantage. Because many states allowed for the conditional early release of prisoners for immediate deportation, prison attendants worried over criminals using deportation to shorten their sentences, including American citizens who tried to claim deportable immigration status to ensure their own release.

By 1931, the state and local laws governing the possibility of early parole for the purpose of deportation had given way to a House bill to make this policy federally applicable. HR 9674-Chap. 371, approved March 2, 1931, stated that the previous Parole Act of 1910 would be amended to include the following:

That where a Federal prisoner is an alien and subject to deportation the board of parole may authorize the release of such a prisoner after he shall have become eligible for parole on condition that he be deported and remain outside of the United States and all places subject to its jurisdiction, and upon such parole becoming effective said prisoner shall be delivered to the duly authorized immigration official for deportation.\(^{429}\)

However, while the U.S. government may have approved the early parole of prisoners for the purposes of deportation, this approach was less than appreciated by some representatives of foreign governments, who saw this tactic as dumping of criminals. A 1934 letter from the District Director at St. Louis to the Commissioner General reported that “Italian Consuls, with

\(^{429}\) Congressional Record, Seventy-First Congress, Session II, Chapters 368-370.
whom the offices of this district have to negotiate for passports in behalf of aliens under orders of deportation, are pretty generally taking the position that they will not issue such passports prior to the expiration of the alien’s minimum sentence, if he happens to be serving a term of imprisonment.” This was a severe concern, the Director explained, not so much for the immigration service itself, which was not required to pay for the detention of the deportee until their prison sentence had expired,” but for the “taxpayers of the nation as a whole,” upon whom this burden rest. His accusation that this passing of responsibility by the Italian government was “unconscionable” is only one small example of the ways that the Immigration service grappled with how to alleviate both the taxpayer burden of institutionalized immigrants, and also maximize their own limited appropriations.430

Deportations for Sexuality and Morality Criteria

The case of Giovanni Vacca, aka John Vacca or Vecca, demonstrates how crime as a rationale often coincided with concerns over sexual dangers and the safety of national morals. Vacca, who had been born in Italy and identified his race as South Italian and his occupation as laborer, was deported to Italy in 1926 for a crime of moral turpitude—“rape with consent.” When questioned in his deportation interview, Vacca explained that he had served in the Carabinere of the Italian Army, and that he had never been imprisoned or become a public charge in Italy prior to his departure. He had come to the United States via Canada, where he deserted the ship he was employed upon as a “workaway.” His traveling companions, he explained, had brought him with to Detroit shortly afterward, where he entered without inspection. Following this, he explained, he immediately moved to Cleveland, where he worked

430 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 7592, Files 55608/115-55608/124.
at a shoe shop continually until his arrest. Vacca, when asked about his criminal record, explained that he had been sentenced in 1925 at Cleveland for “rape with consent” and sentenced to from one to twenty years for this crime.\footnote{Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 6703, File 55475/103.} However, while his rather brief immigration case file contains extensive information as to his entry, background in Italy, and imprisonment, it gives little information about the crime that landed him in the grasp of the immigration service.

The malleability of federal deportation law, still being negotiated both in congress and in the institutions where it was ultimately enacted, reveals how central deportation was to the enforcement of social control agendas throughout the period. As Deidre Moloney explains, “the regulation of women’s non-marital sexuality at the borders, including prostitution, non-marital births, and common law marriage, was a means to ensure that admitted immigrant women would become both moral citizens themselves and the mothers of moral future citizens.”\footnote{Deirdre M. Moloney, “Women, Sexuality Morality, and Economic Dependency in Early U.S. Deportation Policy,” \textit{Journal of Women’s History} 18:2 (Summer 2006): 96.} This process is far more momentous when one recognizes that it did not stop “at the borders,” but reached aggressively into the interior of the nation, and not only prevented the admittance of “immoral” women, but ensured the ever-present threat of their castigation through removal. This section explores the ways in which the search for deportable immigrants, while couched in objective criteria and scientific terminology, often reflected morality causes of a particular moment or locality.

These apprehensions were facilitated by the highly elastic and ill-defined “moral turpitude” clause of deportation criteria. While immigrants seized for deportation from various public institutions were often indicted for more straightforward crimes, such as robbery, many, including immigrant women, were caught up in more ambiguous accusations. Women were often
deported for “prostitution” when the evidence did not necessarily bear out the accusations, but revealed a whole range of activities including extramarital affairs, having children out of wedlock, or separation from their husbands. Men’s sexual and moral behaviors were policed through deportation as well, with anxieties emerging over immigrant men acting as procurers, pimps, failing to support wives and children, and bigamy. Moloney states that “while the moral turpitude clause sometimes affected immigrant men who served as ‘procurers,’ those accused of adultery or bigamy, and very rarely those engaging in prostitution themselves,” she concludes that “efforts to exclude or deport immigrants based on concerns over sexuality had more profound effects on women.”433 While this was undoubtedly true, her focus on deportations at the point of entries obscures the significant numbers of immigrant men apprehended long after entry when they became imprisoned for crime. Although these men were often, at least on surface, deported for their likeliness to become public charges, or other crimes, their case files reveal a great deal of emphasis on their sexual improprieties and lack of moral fitness.

As anxieties about foreign-born immorality, as well as the fertility and birthrate of immigrant women, gained traction throughout the early twentieth century, the deportation regime was strengthened by the eagerness to identify removable sources of non-normative sexual behaviors. This effort to control migrant sexuality, scholars have explained, was given weight by Progressive era concerns over shifting gender roles and women in the industrial workforce, and as Moloney explains, “regulation served as a means to reinforce traditional marital and domestic norms among potential citizens and to deny access to those who did not conform to them.”434 In spite of the increased recognition of sexual policing as a rationale for deportation, this literature

has tended to focus overwhelming on the process of excluding sexual deviants at the borders, as well as of creating new identification tactics for pinpointing them at the point of entry.

There has been considerably less attention to the ways that these processes continued well after entry, as women (and in smaller numbers, men), were apprehended in the institutions of the state and referred for deportation. As Luibheid notes, when women whose “sexualities presented a threat to the nation,” were admitted to the country, “immigration procedures ensured that they became incorporated into webs of surveillance that disciplined them and produced them as ‘good’ citizens, in gendered, sexualized, racial, and class terms.” Though she does not discuss post-entry deportations in any depth, this comment gestures to how critical the new era of surveillance and documentation was for tracking immigrants after their entry, and how deeply the modern institutions of the nation-state acted as a form of scrutiny into the personal, private recesses of non-citizen lives.\footnote{Luibheid, \textit{Entry Denied}, Xxvii.}

While deportations for crime more generally reflected an intense anxiety about immigrant criminology, crimes of “moral turpitude” and sexual deviance were particularly fraught for immigration officials, who sought to use deportation not only to ensure public safety, but also public morality. The 1924 deportation of Lillian Mary Irene Johnson, alias Irene Johnson, from Cleveland, Ohio demonstrates how the designation of “likely to become a public charge” could be used to reveal a much broader agenda of social policing. The official deportation warrant for Johnson, a 17-year-old Canadian citizen of the “African black race,” states only that she was to be deported for “LPC” and entering without inspection. However, her immigration case file reveals a much more complicated case than such a simple designation would indicate. The report of the District Director at the Port of Buffalo to the Commissioner General of Immigration
explains that Johnson had entered the country the year before at Detroit before traveling to the home of her uncle in Cleveland. Once she was in Cleveland, she took work as a domestic, but was reported to the Cleveland policy “as an incorrigible” by her uncle, after which the police then brought her case to the attention of the immigration officials.

The report goes on to explain that her sexual behavior had come under question, and that Johnson “admits that she had sexual relations with two men in Canada, but claims that she was assaulted on each occasion.” After entry to the United States, the report states, “the alien admits to having sexual relations with one man on three occasions since entering the United States, but denies having practiced prostitution.” In a deportation investigation ostensibly about the risk of the alien being a public charge, the fact that a great deal of attention was paid to her sexual history and impropriety (with no concern for her allegations of sexual assault), accusations of prostitution without any evidence or even charge of financial transaction suggests the flexibility of LPC as a grounds for deportation. In fact, the only mention of the immigrant’s economic standing is in the observation that she acquired work as a domestic once entering the country, with no indication that she had lost the position or had become unable to work. In fact, the report details the real reason behind her apprehension and deportation: “owing to the fact that she was not amenable to discipline, she was forced to leave the home of her uncle in Cleveland, who… is desirous of having her returned to her home in Canada.”

The questioning of Johnson during her hearing revealed that she was a baptized member of the Protestant A.M.E. church in Kirchener, Ontario, her father was a traveling Methodist minister, and her parents and 4 siblings all resided in Brantford, Ontario. When asked whether she had trouble living with her uncle, a garbage wagon driver for the city of Cleveland, Johnson replied that “Yes, he did not want me to go out and we had frequent quarrels on that account, and
I left his house and obtained employment as a domestic.” When asked what charge she was arrested on, Johnson explained that “they said I was arrested for running away from home, as that was the only charge they could place against me.” After being asked whether she was employed at a “sporting house,” she denied the allegation, explaining that the woman who had kept it before was the proprietor of such an establishment.

As the inspecting officer continued to press the matter, searching for sexual improprieties, including whether she had ever had children, whether she was currently pregnant, and whether she had ever suffered a venereal disease, Johnson continued to maintain her innocence. When asked whether she had sexual relations since entering the country, she admitted that she had on three occasions with a man with whom she had been “keeping steady company,” denying that she had ever accepted money from him for sexual intercourse, but explaining that he had paid to take her to “dances and picture shows.” In the summary of her hearing, the immigrant inspector wrote nothing in the recommendation section regarding her LPC status or entry without authorization, but merely reported on her “immoral relations” both before and after her entry to the country. The recommendations were followed, and Johnson, who had been awaiting the hearing in the Juvenile Court at the Detention Home, was deported to Canada.436

Johnson was particularly vulnerable due to her age, race, and the fact that her own family had reported her for removal, but her case was far from unique during the period. The accusations levied against her, though never substantiated or matched with deportation legislation, were enough to color the immigration officials’ view of her suitability for residence in the country and to encourage them to seek out a basis for deportation which could be backed up by evidence and law. Like many women of the era, Johnson was targeted for prostitution,

436 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 5970, File 55401/8.
which was often used as a catchall accusation for any woman exercising non-normative or “immoral” sexual behaviors, such as sex outside of marriage. Immigrants were inspected and excluded, Eithne Luibheid has explained, not only for their “sexual orientation but also on the basis of particular sexual acts.” More importantly, however, she states, the regulation of sexuality at the border was actually constitutive of imagined sexual identities (which were heavily gendered, racialized, and class-based), which were then “treated as evidence that undesirable acts would likely occur.” Thus, she argues, immigration control both reflected and generated a variety of “peripheral sexual figures at the U.S. border,” who included “the racialized prostitute, the amoral and despotic pimp, the fecund woman whose reproduction was uncontrolled, the gold-digging hussy intent on snaring an American husband, and the foreigner who threatened miscegenation.”

Figure 12: Deportations for Sexual or Moral Transgressions, 1920-1930

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Deportations</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Deportations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>165</td>
<td>6.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1921</td>
<td>198</td>
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<td>1922</td>
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<td>3.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1923</td>
<td>200</td>
<td>5.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1924</td>
<td>198</td>
<td>3.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>322</td>
<td>3.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>384</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>547</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>529</td>
<td>4.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>394</td>
<td>3.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>677</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


The most numerous deportations for sexual impropriety were certainly for prostitution, although it is clear that clause was used more flexibly than only where proof existed of an individual accepting financial remuneration for sexual acts. However, a whole range of other sexual behaviors were policed by immigrant officials, both at the borders, and throughout the public and private institutions of the state. Some of these are hard to track statistically because they fell under broad categories, such as the provision for the exclusion and removal of those deemed to possess “constitutional psychopathic inferiority,” which was added in 1917. This clause included “various unstable individuals on the border line between sanity and insanity,” including those who were assessed to be “persons with abnormal sex instincts.” In other cases, the particular diseases which deportation officials fixated on at many of the public hospitals around the country, including syphilis and gonorrhea, reflected a concern with protecting not only the physical health of the nation, but its moral health as well.

The 1925 case of a couple, Edna Sullivan and William Edward Troke, who were deported to Canada, reflects how flexible the category of “crimes of moral turpitude” could be, and thus, how useful in punishing sexual impropriety. Both immigrants were otherwise married, their case files reveal, but according to Sullivan’s testimony, Troke’s wife had left him, and her own husband had “run away with another woman.” However, she did admit to “having had sexual intercourse prior to their entry into the United States, thus committing adultery.” Furthermore, she admitted, they had engaged in sexual relations “on several occasions subsequent to their entry.” It was not at all uncommon for deportation hearing officers to ask intensely personal questions of immigrants, designed to assess the extent of their misdeeds, such as on how many occasions a particular sexual relationship had occurred. Sullivan and Troke were found deportable, Troke on the grounds of the “moral turpitude crime of adultery,” and Sullivan on the
“additional charge” that she was unable to read and thus should not have been allowed to enter the country. These cases demonstrate the extent to which morality was policed through deportation, in tandem with dependency, crime, and gender normativity.

Deportations for “Likely to Become a Public Charge” and Dependency

Throughout the 1920s, the most useful, flexible, and encompassing criteria for deportations was the “likely to become a public charge” designation. While it has received considerably less attention from scholars than disease or political deportations, the charge was in fact one of the most instrumental tools of the young deportation regime. The greatest value of the criteria was that it could often be used to deport immigrants who had been detained for other reasons, but were found not to fit the official deportation requirements. Thus, for instance, an immigrant who received attention from the authorities for a crime which was not a severe enough offense to qualify could instead be found subject to deportation as likely to become a public charge if he had received public assistance. In other cases, immigrants who lacked the medical criteria for deportation could be removed on the grounds that their condition left them disabled and unable to support themselves economically and likely to turn to public aid.

The LPC charge was particularly fraught with connotations of bodily fitness and the ideal laboring body, which often were heavily overlaid with racializing assumptions about where different immigrants fit within a hierarchy of bodies. As Baynton has noted, disability was particularly intertwined with fears about dependency, and the immigration service’s definition of “poor physique” reflected concerns with those who might be insufficiently hearty for rough manual labor, including those “who have frail frame, flat chest, and are generally deficient in

438 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 6703, Files 55475/88 and 55475/89.
muscular development,” as well as those who are “undersized—markedly of short stature—dwarf.”\textsuperscript{439} Moloney notes that often this could be used to deport those who were, in fact not unable to work because of their physiques, but those whose physiques were marked by their work. This included those as tailors whose frail frames, stooping backs and poor eyesight actually denoted the success of their ability to earn a living off their labor, as their disfigurements were products of that very labor. The “poor physique” charge was used frequently against Jewish men, who often were concentrated in work outside of hard industry, and thus, their advocates argued that their physique did not “adversely affect an immigrant’s ability” to work.\textsuperscript{440} Likewise, Baynton notes that many of those who were excluded as LPC had, in fact, been self-supporting and regularly employed in their home countries. Importantly, he explains, “the public charge law also assumes that the unemployment or underemployment of disabled people is a problem centered in bodies rather than in the relationship between particular bodies and the constructed physical and social environments in which they live.”\textsuperscript{441}

Unlike other criteria for deportation, such as crime or radical politics, which skewed much more heavily toward male immigrants, the likely to become a public charge category impacted disproportionately large numbers of women and children, who were assumed to be even more likely than single men to become burdens on the public budget. This category was particularly elastic and powerful because it did not require proof that the immigrant had, in fact, used public assistance, only that for some reason they might be predisposed to need to utilize it in the future. This allowed for the imposition of individual and collective assumptions about physical fitness and the earning potential of “unfit” ethnic groups, as well as intensely gendered

\textsuperscript{439} Baynton, “Defectives in the Land,” 35.
\textsuperscript{440} Moloney, \textit{National Insecurities}, 126.
\textsuperscript{441} Baynton, “Defectives in the Land,” 34.
assumptions about the ability of single women and mothers to support themselves. In doing so, it
drew on the Progressive era efforts to eliminate female dependency by strengthening legal
obligations of husbands and to ensure that deserted women did not become an undue burden on
the public. For immigrant women, the fact of the pervasive assumption that they were unable
to sustain themselves financially, in spite of their increasing numbers in the industrial workforce,
made them perpetually vulnerable to removal. Particularly in periods of economic depression,
immigrants needing the assistance of charitable organizations or any form of public welfare,
including medical treatment which they could not pay for, put themselves in line for potential
depортation. Critically, deportation gave institutions, local officials, and immigration authorities
the power to impose these assumptions and to police dependency far past the border, and in
doing so, served both social control and economic aims.

*Figure 13: Deportations for Likely to Become a Public Charge Provision, 1920-1930*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Number of Deportations</th>
<th>Percentage of Total Deportations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1920</td>
<td>808</td>
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<td>1921</td>
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<td>2092</td>
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<tr>
<td>1925</td>
<td>1758</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1926</td>
<td>887</td>
<td>8.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1927</td>
<td>569</td>
<td>4.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1928</td>
<td>477</td>
<td>4.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1929</td>
<td>373</td>
<td>2.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1930</td>
<td>305</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


This charge was not only disproportionately used to apprehend female immigrants, but was also utilized as a flexible mechanism for removing racial “undesirables” when no other suitable criteria could be determined for their expulsion. As Fox explains of the Depression period, social workers and government welfare officials “saw the extension of relief to European immigrants as temporary assistance to a struggling new member of the community,” and thus were less likely to remove them for economic dependency unless they had otherwise demonstrated themselves unfit for belonging in this “community.” When it came to Mexican immigrants, however, she explains, social workers “came to see the distribution of relief to Mexicans as an illegitimate and possibly permanent subsidy to the agricultural industry.”

Molina describes the same process a decade later in California’s Imperial Valley, but argues that while some welfare officials opposed the use of deportations on these grounds, many supported the process of regulating later through removals. Instead, she explains, “while these deportations were officially based on charges of disease affliction and LPC, they were actually yet another form of post-entry social control deportation… just one more version of growers calling in the Border Patrol to deport workers on payday, as had been done time and time again.” This process, Molina asserts, might have been directly driven by public health officials, who broke confidentiality to share medical histories with the Border Patrol, even when the immigrants hadn’t sought charity.

At times, the justifications of how deportees came to be considered public charges were unimpeachable, such as when they became hospitalized and could not pay their bills, or when they sought public welfare to alleviate financial destitution. At other times, the assessment was

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443 Fox, *Three Worlds of Relief*, 123.
far more tenuously established in the documentation, but, because deportees only had to be “likely” to become public charges, the provision could encompass a wide range of accusations. One Romanian deportee, removed in 1923 as “likely to become a public charge,” reveals how subjective the category could be. The man had first entered the United States in 1903, but had most recently reentered over the border at Buffalo in 1921, after a six-year stint in Canada. His deportation hearing revealed that “the evidence indicates that he is a common laborer, spends his money as fast as he earns it,” and thus “is always more or less likely to become a public charge.”\(^{445}\) No evidence existed that he had actually proven himself unable to support himself as a common laborer, but his lack of thrift and savings earned him the condemnation of immigration officials, who determined that these were deportable offenses.

Often, deportations for LPC provisions overlapped with criminal deportations, especially when the crime was theft, which supported immigration officials’ claims that a given immigrant was unable to support themselves through honest labor, and thus would end up reliant either on public welfare, private charity, or immoral and illegal behaviors. One Canadian deported in 1923 experienced how minor such crimes could be to bring one to the attention of the institutional officials—his crime had been that “he recently stole some rope, for which offense he received a sentence of thirty days.” Because of this offense, it was recommended that he be deported to Canada upon his relief from prison. Just as important as the criminal charges against him, however, was his admission at the hearing that “he has been in poor financial circumstances at all times in the recent past.”\(^{446}\) In another case from the same year, a Dutch immigrant who had arrived as a crew member on the ship “Nieuw Amsterdam” and deserted upon arrival was deported when it was proved that “the alien has had considerable difficulty in making a living

\(^{445}\) Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 5220, File 55225/247.  
\(^{446}\) Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 5220, File 55225/269.
since entry.” These difficulties, immigration officials explained, had not rendered him a public charge yet, but they condemned the fact that “at the present time he is working for a farmer in Palymra, New York, receiving no remuneration except his board and room.” In becoming destitute, or even struggling financially, immigrants became vulnerable to expulsion, as officials more sharply defined public benefits as the sole right of citizens.

In the same vein as the public vigilantes who reported on suspected radicals and other potential deportees, individuals also began to report on those who they felt to be an institutional burden on the nation. Although these immigrant suspects were less clearly a threat to public safety or the protection of American values, they posed a different danger in the public mind: as a drain on the financial welfare of the nation. In 1922, on the urging of Mr. E.E. Ellis of Spokane, Washington, Senator Miles Poindexter of the Senate Committee on Mines and Mining wrote to Commissioner Husband. Ellis had sent him a clipping from the Spokane Chronicle, he explained, which made the “surprising” claim that 90% of the inmates at the County Poor Farm at Spangle (a town in Spokane County) were immigrants. Most of them, he explained, had not even taken out their first citizenship papers. Poindexter wrote, “I will be very much obliged to have your advice and suggestions as to the present status of immigration laws as affecting such a case as to the liability of alien public charges of this kind to deportation.” These residents of the local poor farm had become a concern not only to the elected representatives of the state but to the press, and private citizens as well. Even before the onset of the depression at the end of the decade, the expense of maintaining non-citizens was in the public eye, and contributed to the growing identification between public assistance and the exclusive rights of citizenship.

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447 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 5520, File 55225/257.
448 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351.
Because of the nature of the charge, many of the deportations under the LPC provision, were, in fact, deportations about something else as well—whether it was disability, disease, gender nonconformity, or mental “inferiority.” Most importantly the LPC clause gave immigration officials the opportunity to knit together a network of institutions of the state (including asylums, hospitals, prisons, and orphanages), at which any immigrants who had resided in the country for less than a certain number of years would be vulnerable for removal, by mere virtue of having sought (voluntarily or otherwise) the services of that institution. In the process, even the ostensibly benevolent institutions of the state—such as orphanages and poorhouses—which were designed to provide care and welfare for society’s most disadvantaged, took on a threatening, punitive role. This impact profoundly reshaped the way that non-citizens interacted with the state and its institutional services, and solidified an enduring distrust of government welfare among the foreign-born. Because institutions supposedly established for aid became vehicles for exclusion and expulsion, deportation cast a shadow over the infrastructure of the state for immigrant populations. Perhaps no other deportation provision contributed so clearly to the creation of what Rachel Ida Buff has called “the deportation terror.”

Even at the far reaches the nation, in its far-flung territories, institutional coordination made policing the territorial populations newly possible. The Inspector in Charge at Ketchikan reported in 1923 to the Commissioner General that, while “many of the cases reported to us cannot, of course, be taken up because of the length of time the alien has been in the country, or the triviality of the offense,” the employees of his service took the measures within their power. While there were few institutions in territorial Alaska, the Inspector notes that “splendid cooperation exists between the police officials of the territory and our officers. The immigration inspectors, he explained, make it their “particular business to interview the marshals, their
deputies and the town police chiefs” to gain information about immigrants in the area, and then coordinate their apprehension with the central office at Ketchikan. This was possible, they explained, partially because of the network of institutions and, just as importantly, transportation for conveyance, as there were “no penitentiaries in Alaska, persons sentenced to imprisonment being confined in federal jails.” As such, those arrested there served time at the federal penitentiary at McNeil Island, Washington, while “persons adjudged insane” in the territory at “conveyed by U.S. Marshals to a contract institution near Portland, Oregon.  

As immigrants were maneuvered through and expelled from various institutions of the state, their trajectories required coordination not only within the United States, but abroad as well. Increasingly, foreign nations chafed against being asked to receive disabled, diseased, or insane deportees with little warning or time for preparations for proper care, and the Immigration Service was forced to take additional steps to ensure the safety of institutionalized deportees. In her early study of deportation, Jane Perry Clark notes that by 1930, “a beginning has been made toward preventing indiscriminate dumping of deportees from the United States, and toward international cooperation in social care.” By 1927, she explains, the Irish Free State had begun to demand that it be notified in “sufficient time” of deportees afflicted with tuberculosis, and by 1930, of insane deportees. Poland made a similar request regarding those deemed insane, while Denmark requested advanced notice for both the insane and criminals. While this coordination was far from perfected, and indeed, remains a strain between nations at present, this effort reflected an even greater expansion of the bureaucratic powers of the nation. At the same time as authorities were working to improve the system of screening immigrants before departure to the

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449 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4038, File 54941 General.  
450 Clark, Deportation of Aliens, 420.  
451 Clark, Deportation of Aliens, 419.
United States for institutionalizable conditions, they were simultaneously working to coordinate the return and institutionalization of migrants who had slipped through the cracks of this system, or arrived before its inception. The unprecedented regime of surveillance, tracking, and documentation involved both reflected and shaped the powers of the modern bureaucratic nation-state and its reach across and within borders and institutions.

A 1925 letter from the District Commissioner at Montreal to the Commissioner General explained that several immigrants had been awaiting their deportation to Britain, which was being delayed by the Bureau’s failure to secure the necessary passport permission from the British Embassy. After waiting nearly four months in the local jail for deportation, he notes, John Whitford’s jail bill to date had reached $95.70, and “it will probably be twice that before slow moving diplomatic machinery produces a passport.” Even worse, the commissioner explained, “the alien has suffered and will suffer a long imprisonment and by the time he leaves the jail he will be in rags.” Another deportee from the same group posed even greater challenges, having “become violently insane while waiting for a passport,” and thus requiring three attendants to transfer him from the jail to the State Hospital at Ogdensburg, New York. This was not merely a problem of institutional burden, the Commissioner insisted, but because he was a war veteran whose story was being followed by the press, “his case reflects no credit on this Service.” This letter encapsulated many of the tensions faced by institutional officials during the period, including prison, mental health and institutionalization, and the limited funds available for treating immigrants requiring public welfare. It also gestured to the challenges of detention and transport coordination that will be explored more deeply in the next chapter. The delays incurred by the bureau had become not only a financial burden, but a public opinion liability, the author explained, stating that “I am sure the Bureau will agree that such long detention of aliens is
indefensible from any point of view, either the material one of eliminating heavy drains upon our limited appropriation, or the legality of prolonged detention.”

The impact of deportation on the relationship between the state and the non-citizen reflects what Foucault has noted about the practice of identifying and tracking biographical information from people. While traditionally those in power were those most heavily scrutinized and recorded, he argues that there was a shift in disciplinary societies to the tracking and documenting of society’s “others,” an argument borne out by the tremendous paper trail attending America’s undesirable expelled. These biographical details, he explains, “became a means of control and a means of domination.” Importantly, for deportation practice, these amplified forms of surveillance and documentation were what made it possible not only to more sharply draw the boundaries between citizen and outsider, but to construct the non-citizen as a perpetually vulnerable and punitive identity. This process was facilitated by centralized, systematized, and modernized institutions of the state, as well as by newly powerful bureaucratic agencies for the organization of these efforts.

This coordination, immigration authorities discovered, required not only expanded communication between the officials of the various district offices, but a broader project of informing all public and private employees in the various services and institutions where immigrants were apprehended of the laws at their disposal. A 1923 report from the Commissioner at Seattle explained that while there was a general willingness to help among public servants, there was a variation in how effective this was. “The amount of co-operation we receive from the heads of the smaller institutions, either public or charitable,” he explained, “depends on how well they are informed concerning the Immigration Service and concerning

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452 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351.
what constitutes a deportation case.” Furthermore, he argued, it was important not only to educate institutional officials, but to cultivate goodwill and loyalty among them, as he had observed that when “an alien who has become particularly obnoxious to the head of some county or city institution” is deported, that head is “very likely” to begin to report additional cases more actively.454

However, while U.S. officials continued to portray deportation as a one-way process and the sole prerogative of the American government, deportations to the U.S. from other nations also centered frequently around institutionalized populations. At the same time as the U.S. negotiated the conditions upon which they were permitted to deport institutionalized immigrants to other nations, they were also forced to reckon with the fact that their own citizens could likewise be subject to deportation. This was a particular point of tension in the relationship between Canada and the United States over the course of the decade, as each tried to ensure that the other absorbed and supported the institutionalized public charges for which they ought rightfully bear the financial burden. This became particularly complicated due to the porousness of this border, especially prior to the 1920s, and the commonality of families who lived transnational lives crossing regularly between the two, or mixed families where some members were U.S.-born while others were Canadian citizens. Confused by this reality, the Commission or Immigration at Montreal wrote to the Commissioner General in 1928 asking for clarification about whether Canada could deport “illegitimate children born abroad of American mothers.” These children, the Commissioner General explained, could be accompanied by their mothers when deported from Canada only “when it does not become necessary to arrange for their

454 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4038, File 54941 General.
commitment to an institution... our Service has no authority to require state institutions to accept aliens as charges therein.”

While the Commissioner continued to explain that the U.S. could hardly expect Canadian institutions in the reverse situation (where a Canadian child was deported with its U.S. citizen mother), to support these foreign mothers, Canadian officials often expressed that they did not feel that the relationship happened on equal footing and with reciprocal expectations. The Canadian officials commented regularly on the American unwillingness to receive its own indigent citizens, as well as their aggressive removal of foreign-born charges. In a 1923 letter to the Secretary of Labor, the General Medical Director of the Hospitals for the Insane, Reformatories, and Industrial Schools in Montreal bemoaned the fact that “very often I am asked by the United States authorities to receive in our Hospitals for the Insane persons who have become insane, even after these persons have lived twenty-five years in the United States.” In Canada, he explained, aliens who had lived continuously in the nation acquired domicile and were thus not subject to deportation after a time, and inquired incredulously, “do I have to understand that any alien living in the United States, no matter what length of time, is always deportable?”

While his question revealed an incomplete understanding of U.S. deportation law—not all immigrants could be deportable at any time, although there were a number of categories of deportability which had no time limit—his point gets to one of the major questions at the heart of deportation practice. When deporting for social and health dangers, criminals, and economic burdens, at what point does the sending nation (or nation of birth when those differ), cease to be responsible, and the receiving nation take on the onus of caring for its own long-term non-citizen

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455 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 7542, File 44499/655.
456 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351.
residents? A 1923 Resolution from the National Society of New England Women in Congress assembled at Toledo, Ohio, stated that the immigration service was being “too lax to properly control the desires of other nations to pass on to us their undesirable citizens, thereby taxing our people for the support of the vicious, feeble minded, insane and paupers, who constitute a large proportion of the inmates of our institutions of correction and charity” suggests how many among the American public saw the answer to that question.457

Conclusion

It is important to note the blurring of the boundaries in the discourse around institutional deportations, between “correction and charity,” and the undifferentiated lumping together of the “vicious,” “feeble,” and “paupers.” Increasingly, all identities seen unfit for citizenship were combined for the purposes of assessment and castigation, and as such, criteria which might merely have been thought pitiable or burdensome contributed to a more expansive identity of immigrant criminality. Taken together, these disparate cases, and the disparate spaces at which they were identified, denote an immensely important shift in the nature of deportation. As the decade wore on, the centralization and documentation of immigrant bodies throughout all forms of state institutions represented a fundamental shift in the power of the federal bureaucracy and its ability to wield power over its residents. The following chapter will explore how this shift relied not only on the institutional networks which allowed the identification and apprehension of immigrant threats, but on an infrastructural capacity to detain and then transport them.

457 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351.
Chapter 5- Deportees in Detention and Transit: The Physical Infrastructure of Immigrant Removal

Theodore Irwin’s 1935 novel *Strange Passage*, chronicling the experiences of a group of deportees aboard a train from Seattle to Ellis Island during the Coolidge administration, provides the striking description:

Five thousand feet above sea-level, the cold bit through the paper-thin blankets and their clothes. Few of the deportees could find sleep… All the windows had been shut, and the odors of ten-day socks and underclothes corked their nostrils. The lights had been doused; it was so dark you couldn’t see the face of the man sleeping next to you. Too worried to rest, they tossed in their berths. All the weeks and months of uncertainty, in jail and detention were behind them. This was the climax, it was happening right now, they were being kicked out.458

While deportation is, at root, the process of putting immigrant bodies into transnational motion, scholarship has tended to focus on policy formation, congressional debates, judicial maneuvering, and public discourse, largely leaving aside the practical considerations of strategically moving thousands of individuals a year across vast distances. This chapter will examine detention practices, as well as the “deportation specials,”-- trains carrying deportees west or east for eventual removal at the coasts, or south or north for removal over land borders were often named. In doing so, it explores the new networks of incarceration, transportation and communication that made previously lofty goals of immigrant removal a strategic reality.459

From a haphazard practice of occasional small-scale deportations at the start of the decade, immigration officials instituted a practical apparatus for the enforcement of new deportation laws. This took the form of cross-country scheduled train journeys designed to pick up immigrants who had been previously gathered and imprisoned in cities and towns across the nation. While officials consistently bemoaned the logistical challenges of the process, by the end

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458 Irwin, *Strange Passage*, 42-43.
of the decade, a more efficient and streamlined process was in place as a result of persistent efforts to centralize transportation and maximize limited budgets.

“If You Cannot Deport or Release Us, We Demand Improved Meat”: Immigrant Detention and the Rise of the Non-Citizen Carceral Regime

In the investigation of temporary Junior Watchman Ennis N. Isaacks, a number of Mexican immigrant women were called upon to testify regarding his behaviors, and one provided the following account: “Yes, the first time he took Concepcion Bustamante down in the basement and when she came back she told me she had sexual relations with him down there. Then the next night he came again and I went down in the basement with him and had sexual intercourse with him and he promised to have me sent to Mexico as quickly as possible.” Other women echoed her testimony, reiterating that their desire to be released from detention, even to be deported to Mexico was so great that they were bribed into sexual relations. “None of us girls wanted to have anything to do with him,” one explained, but “then he said that he would send the boy with him, who had an automobile, to Mexico with us.” Yet another woman admitted to having been duped into an affair with the watchman in return for release from detention, explaining, “he offered to use his influence to have us sent to Mexico quickly, if we would allow him to have sexual intercourse with us.”

Isaack’s infractions had been possible, it was determined, because the Matron of the local detention center in California had gone away for a week, during which period Isaacks had been left alone with the female detainees on the night shift from 12am to 8am. The abuses were not discovered until the women were on a train being transported to Nogales, where they were met by Inspector Wright, who gathered oral statements, and ascertained that Isaacks was “in fact guilty of the acts imputed to him by the witnesses.” Isaacks’ case reflected not only the
disturbing lack of oversight and abusive conditions suffered by detainees at the time, but also the insular, nepotistic nature of local detention practices. The writer of the report described being “surprised—not to say astonished,” by Isaacks’ conduct, largely because his position had been obtained by his father, a county jailer in the area, reported to be a “steady, sober-going man.” Perhaps because of this prominent connection, it was ultimately determined that in spite of the gross misconduct, “it would doubtless be unadvisable to undertake to procure the institution of criminal proceedings under the state laws.”

While these tragic accounts are perhaps unsurprising in their descriptions of abuses common to the carceral system more generally, and immigration detention more specifically, perhaps what is startling is that these women were being exploited for the favor of having their deportations granted rather than prevented. Throughout the decade, migrants repeatedly called upon the immigration service not for relief from deportation, but for relief from long, ill-defined periods of detention awaiting their ultimate detentions. The self-named, “Committee of Deportees,” from Room 203, Ellis Island wrote to the Secretary of Labor in April of 1920 demanding recourse, and venting their frustration that in spite of the fact that he had promised to either deport or release them, the “promise [was] not fulfilled.” As such, they demanded, in partial resignation to their indefinite fate in detention, “If you cannot deport or release us, we demand improved meat.” Throughout the decade, their pleas were repeated, though rarely as pithily, by detainees, lawyers, and members of the general public who balked at the idea of non-criminal deportees undergoing indefinite detention, often housed in jails along with a general criminal population.

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460 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54922/290.
461 Message from “Committee of Deportees, Room 203, Ellis Island,” to Secretary of Labor, April 14, 1920, U.S. INS Files 71-42, Immigration History Research Center.
The organizing efforts of deportees extended beyond Ellis Island as demonstrated by the letter from a group of detainees at Salem, New York to the Secretary of Labor. “We 26 undersigned men,” they wrote, “protest energetically against the situation in which the immigration authorities put us,” and demanded their release for deportation as their convicted jail time had elapsed.\textsuperscript{462} One deportee’s attorney described the carceral limbo experienced by the detained particularly clearly, explaining that his client, “desires that if he cannot have his freedom in this country, he desires to be deported forthwith, so that he may have his freedom in another country.”\textsuperscript{463} Another Ellis Island detainee echoed these concerns in his correspondence with Commissioner Uhl, arguing that “Where the alien desires to be actually deported, there is no reason for his long custody, which is a deprivation of his liberty.” His accusation carried with it a particularly devastating description of “men incarcerated in jails, dotting the broad expanse of our country,” and he concluded that the deportee “is entitled to his freedom, either in this country or in any other country he is sent to… he should not be allowed to be kept an indefinite time in jail.”\textsuperscript{464} Throughout the decade, this deprivation of liberty resonated among critics of the immigration service, even among those who advocated for higher numbers of deportations, but found the long postponements of removal to be a miscarriage of justice.

In the past as in the present, few aspects of deportation practice captured the public imagination as powerfully as detention, which became a hotly contested topic. Because detention lent a carceral element to what was, ostensibly, an administrative procedure rather than a punishment, it has been one of the most powerful forces in creating and sustaining discourse around the “illegal” or “criminal” immigrant. In recent decades, the rise of the for-profit prison

\textsuperscript{462} Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351C.
\textsuperscript{463} Tamiment Library, Record Group 118, Elizabeth Gurley Flynn Papers.
\textsuperscript{464} Tamiment Library, Record Group 118: Elizabeth Gurley Flynn Papers.
industry has gained attention, and many scholars note that the earliest for-profit detention center in the nation was actually created as an immigrant detention center. Today, immigrant detention comprises a massive network of facilities, intentionally shrouded so as to prevent public scrutiny of the deportation regime. However, at the start of the twentieth century, the federal infrastructure for housing potential deportees was anything but coordinated or efficient. Instead, officials relied on an ad-hoc assemblage of cells in county jails, detention facilities in port and border cities, repurposed army barracks, and even the homes of private citizens to hold migrants under deportation proceedings. As the reach and powers of the Bureau of Immigration expanded throughout the 1920s, so too did its physical infrastructure, as new immigration offices were stationed around the nation and authorities increasingly recognized the need for more centralized detention procedures.

Legal scholar Daniel Kanstroom has critically addressed the tensions posed by early deportation as a procedure which was technically administrative and under the auspices of an administrative agency, but was, in the lived experiences of deportees, quite clearly punishment.\textsuperscript{465} Mae Ngai has explored how deportation and the condition of deportability served, particularly after the institution of the quota acts to restructure the relationship between non-citizens and the punitive state, with resulting discourses of “illegality” and the rise of the identity of the “illegal alien.”\textsuperscript{466} Many deportees, guilty only of violating immigration law by becoming ill or dependent on public welfare after residing in the nation for some time, were nevertheless criminalized by deportation proceedings, and perhaps at no stage of the process was this criminalization highlighted more than in detention. Behind bars and stripped of their freedom of mobility, non-criminal deportees increasingly entered the public imagination as

\textsuperscript{465} Kanstroom, \textit{Deportation Nation}.  
\textsuperscript{466} Ngai, “The Strange Career of the Illegal Alien.”
shadowy, menacing threats to the national body. As such, deportation detention, particularly when it stretched over long periods, was constitutive of the criminalizing of increasingly precarious denizens.

Among the many critical insights which can be gleaned from a deeper investigation into early detention practices is a more accurate understanding of the true reach of the deportation state. As is explored in other sections of this project, the impact of the nascent deportation state far out-stripped the actual numbers eventually removed by warrant proceedings. Instead, the imposition of a shadow of deportability and danger over the immigrant populations of the nation demonstrated the true power of the deportation regime. While appropriations for deportations in this period were never equal to the cost of identifying, detaining, and removing all of the potentially deportable immigrants in the nation, the efforts put into assessing and approximating the number of non-citizens in U.S. institutions was highly revealing. A survey from the Commissioner General of “deportable aliens” detained in immigration facilities, local jails, and other institutions around the country in 1926 exposed that, “it is estimated that there are now in the United States 57,896 deportable aliens including those actually under deportation proceedings, but it is believed that this estimate is extremely conservative.” While this tally might seem astonishing next to the number actually deported in 1926 (10,904 individuals, in addition to another 1,647 who were permitted to reship one way foreign in lieu of deportation)\textsuperscript{467}, it confirms the immense reach of the deportation state, even as the transportation infrastructure struggled to catch up to the detention capacity.\textsuperscript{468}

In the absence of a consolidated modern detention system, immigration officials were forced to use creative means to house the tremendous number of detainees in the clutches of the

\textsuperscript{467} Annual Report of the Commissioner General of Immigration, 1926.
\textsuperscript{468} Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351F.
Bureau of Immigration. While some deportees were able to remain in the facilities in which they were apprehended and identified for deportation—namely hospitals, asylums, criminal populations in prisons, and juvenile offenders in reformatories, other needed to be situated after their capture. Among the most common practices was detaining immigrants in the local county jails until a deportation transport came through the area for pick-ups, although this often elicited criticism based on overcrowding and the mixing of the deportees with general criminal convicts. Another tactic was to repurpose government buildings for temporary detention, including former military facilities. The Assistant Chief of Staff to the Director of Operations of the War Department wrote to the Commissioner General in 1920 to explain that while the proposal of housing immigrants at the Atlantic Branch United States Disciplinary Barracks at Governor’s Island was impracticable, detention accommodations could be provided at Camp Dix, New Jersey to assist with the overflow of detainees from Ellis Island.469

Other local officials ventured even further outside of traditional practice when seeking to find accommodations for the overwhelming and steadily growing number of migrant detainees. In some cities in Arizona, deportees were held in the City Jail, often for a daily fee, while in other localities, immigration authorities paid local citizens to house deportees until their transportation. In Globe, Arizona, Mrs. Carmen Sanchez housed deportees at a rate of $1.00 a day, while in Tucson, the immigration service found an even better bargain—the home of Mrs. Chavez, where they paid only $0.65 daily.470 As the immigration service transformed from a scattered, disjointed collection of local practices to a more unified, streamlined, planned system for maximized removals, few logistic challenges confounded officials more than detention.

469 U.S. INS Files 71-42, Immigration History Research Center.
470 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351H #2.
In one highly unusual deportation case in 1920, the critique of the criminalizing and pernicious impact of immigrant detention emanated from an unlikely source—the Consul for Guatemala at Mobile, Alabama. The Consul, Mr. Valenzuela, wrote to the Commissioner General to intervene in the case of a young boy who had been employed by his wife. After the boy, a native of Guatemala ran away from their home in Orchard, Alabama, he was apprehended in Lucedale, Mississippi and detained for removal. In spite of efforts by Mr. and Mrs. Valenzuela to contact the department for a reprieve, he noted, the boy had “been kept in common guard house for over a month, together with men of all ages and nationalities, stowaways, men detained for gambling, drunkards, and so on.” Therefore, he argued, in spite of the boy’s violations, he would “suffer more morally in those days kept in the guard house than he would if let free in the streets… The jailer himself said to me that the place was a mighty poor place for a boy of his age. If kept in a children’s detention home or another more adequately fitted for the purpose I would have nothing to say.”

Detention practices often drew great attention from the general public even where no distinct personal stake or clear interest existed. For many Progressive era reformers, the excesses and abuses of immigrant detention flew in the face of their conceptions of efficient, rationalized institutional practices. For others, unauthorized immigrants posed a public safety menace and secure facilities for their segregation from the general public was a high priority. Because detention facilities were still inadequate for the demands of the federal government’s amped up deportation agenda, many localities struggled to weigh whether releasing deportees on bond was a feasible stopgap, but many worried about the dangers to the public and the potential for escape.

In 1925 a representative of the Republican National Committee wrote to the Commissioner

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471 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 3355, File 54634/9.
General regarding detention facilities. “I have had letters from some very influential people of Galveston with reference to the establishment of a camp for the detention of immigrants who are unlawfully in the United States and who are held for deportation,” the author explained. “The idea appeals to me very strongly” he concluded, “and I believe that it is well worth your serious consideration.”

Within Galveston alone, disagreement over detention was a hotly debated topic. The Galveston League of Women Voters wrote at the same time to Senator Morris Sheppard to “call your attention to the dreadful conditions which exist in regard to the detention of deportees in this part of the world.” Among the abuses cited by the League were the intermixing with “ordinary criminals” in the County Jail, and “given no more liberties, no literature, and very little exercise, and held under these conditions until the date of their deportation.” Referring to their own recent survey about the conditions of Texas prisons, which they concluded were “so horrible it is scarcely possible to believe such things could exist in this period of enlightenment,” the League went on to explain that while these detained deportees had broken immigration law, they were “not in the true sense of the world criminals.” Closing with a call to patriotic instincts, should humanitarian impulses prove insufficient, the League concluded with the assertion that “One might expect such things in Russia where ignorance is supreme, but surely our country should not tolerate such things as this.”

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472 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 7538, File 55599/137.
473 While Galveston has received far less attention as a port for migration in and out of the nation than Ellis or Angel Island, it represented an important hub for the immigration service and throughout this period experienced high rates of entry and exit. See Bernard Marinbach, Galveston: Ellis Island of the West, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1983); and Mark M. Stolarik, Forgotten Doors: The Other Ports of Entry to the United States (Philadelphia: Balch Institute Press, 1988). Because of its centrality as an agricultural and industrial port, it figured particularly importantly in the practice of “reshIPPING foreign,” or allowing would-be-deportees to return home as seamen on outgoing ships rather than await a formal deportation transport.
474 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 7538, File 55599/137.
The Galveston League was joined by many other organizations who advocated for a humane detention practice for detainees, many of whom echoed their calls for keeping immigrants out of the demoralizing conditions of county jails. Mrs. Kenneth F. Rich, Director of the Immigrants Protective League in Chicago contacted the Commissioner General to share the various abuses in detention that had been reported to the IPL over recent periods. In Crookston, Minnesota, she reported, there had been allegations that deportees “suffer physical cold, without sufficient blankets; that food is particularly poor; that fresh air is lacking; that physical exercise is not permitted,” while in Crown Point, Indiana, similar complaints had been made about food and oppressive discipline. Rich joined other critics of the early carceral arm of the deportation state in noting that the roots of these issues often lay in the potential for profit. Indeed, she explained, “the food ‘rake-off’ by Sheriffs has been, of course, one of the conditions which have made jail administration so notorious.” In Chicago itself, she explained, the conditions at Cook County Jail were more bearable, but there, as elsewhere, detained immigrants faced other threats. “Comparatively few of the persons deported constitute any vicious type,” she argued, but, “the County Jail is a ‘school for crime,’” and thus the deportation regime threatened to actually increase rather than control criminal elements.475

In a more detailed account of the findings at Crown Point County Jail, Rich outlined the issues, including their “very meager diet” consisting of bread at every meal, with peas at lunchtime, and beans at dinner. “In view of the per diem paid by the Government for the care of federal prisoners,” she argued, “it would seem to us that the Sheriff of that county is profiting at the expense of the Government and of the deportees.” In fact, she explained, the scale of the rake-off might be attributed to the fact that the Sheriff was reaching the end of his term limit and

475 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 8335, File 55639/731.
“wishes to make all the profit possible before he leaves.” In reply to Rich, the Commissioner General reassured her that he shared the concern over the lack of provisions for detention in non-penal institutions, but stressed that the lack of appropriations had prevented this process. However, he explained, Congress was likely to approve appropriations soon for the construction or purchase of detention stations, and had, in fact, recently acquired a former marine hospital at Detroit which was being retrofitted as an immigrant detention center to relieve the overcrowding of local jails.

There was an undeniable public interest in the question of new public detention centers, which for some was profit-driven, as the building, provisioning, and maintenance of new detention facilities presented the opportunity for coveted government contracts. INS files from the decade reflect a period of vast infrastructural growth, with the erection and renovation of dozens of new district and sub-district facilities, and when those facilities also served as detention centers, there were additional profits to be made from contracts for feeding detainees, as well as the prospect of new jobs for guards and matrons. The District Director of Immigration at Galveston argued to the Commissioner General in 1927 that reshaping deportation routes to make Galveston a hub for detention and shipping would be a practical, economic plan. In fact, he explained, it was cheaper to send deportees gathered in the Salt Lake City, Denver, Kansas City, St. Louis, and Omaha districts of the Immigration Bureau by train to Galveston than to New York. Furthermore, he insisted, “as the Bureau is aware, the trans-Atlantic rates from Galveston are about $20.00 less per adult than from New York,” and by sending them on that route, “it is believed that a very substantial savings will be effected.” In order to facilitate the detention of such a large number of deportees, he drew the Commissioner’s attention to the Harris County Jail at Houston, which had recently been razed to erect a “modern up-to-date structure on the
same site,” which he believed would be sufficiently spacious to “comfortably care for all aliens conveyed to this District for deportation and reshipment.”

The desire for prompt deportation served the interests of the immigration officials and local budgets as well, although these considerations were frequently weighed against the potential dangers of allowing deportees control over their own travel. “There is no gainsaying that the voluntary departure privilege has been productive of a vast amount of good in ridding the country of a large number of deportable aliens,” the District Director at El Paso wrote to the Commissioner General. However, he concluded, “that the safest method to handle all deportable aliens is formal warrant proceedings,” and argued that all other recourses should be tried before resorting to voluntary departure. This procedure began years ago, when there was “very little money for deportation purposes,” and therefore was outdated for modern deportation needs, he explained. Furthermore, he argued, it posed a danger because immigrants in detention manipulated the provision for their own purposes, and, in fact, “a number of prison inmates have claimed to be aliens in the hope that they could thereby secure an early release.”

In correspondence with the Workers’ Defense Union, Commissioner Howe of Ellis Island expressed frustration at being blamed for the delays in deportations and balked at being criticized by the organization for poor food quality, vermin, and long detention sentences. The delays, he asserted, couldn’t be held against officials at Ellis Island because between legal proceedings and transportation delays, they did not really have control over the timing of departure. While the Commissioner arguably exaggerated the extent to which detention conditions were out of his hands, there were in fact many sources of delays that were out of the control of individual

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476 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 7592, File 55608/128.
477 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 8335, File 55639/731.
478 Tamiment Library, Record Group 118: Elizabeth Gurley Flynn Papers.
officials, or even of the United States entirely. As is explained in greater depth in Chapter 1, deportations were often postponed or even indefinitely stalled by the lack of passport permission or transit coordination from the receiving nation. This was most notable in the case of the Soviet Union, where strained diplomatic relations made securing passports for deportation an impossibility by the mid-1920s, except in unusual cases (by 1926, for instance, only 125 individuals of the Russian “race or people” were deported, and of that number, only 26 were sent back to Russia).479

However, even where friendly diplomatic relations existed, a variety of factors could lead to prolonged detention periods, and these delays often left federal immigration officials in conflict with local authorities who resented the high cost of protracted incarceration or institutionalization. After a request by the District Director at Spokane for information on expediting deportations to the United Kingdom, the First Assistant Commissioner of Labor replied that he had heard many such complaints from around the nation. The British Consul, he relayed, required additional information when the deportations involved “alien criminals or insane,” which were “the most expensive and difficult to handle.” As such, their detention at Ellis Island was an impossibility, as it would be “highly impracticable” for the Psychopathic Ward in the Ellis Island Hospital and the Criminal Detention Room to be filled with a glut of deportees from around the country awaiting negotiations with the British Consulate. Thus the cost of the detention was once more foisted upon the local offices, adding fuel to the growing frustrations between state and municipal institutions and the federal immigration authorities who demanded increased coordination and reporting of deportable aliens, but claimed inability to shoulder the spatial or financial burdens of effecting these deportations.480

480 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 7591, File 55607/610.
“I hesitate to find fault with an official who is as helpful and desirous of the speedy execution of the Immigration Law as to deportation as is yourself,” began one unusually deferent letter from the New York State Hospital Commission to the Commissioner General in 1922. However, the author explained, the conditions in the hospitals had reached a point which was “appalling,” with over 13,000 overflow in the hospitals, and daily requests from local hospital superintendents to parole deportable aliens. “The State of New York feels that the least the Federal Authorities can do,” he continued, “is to relieve us of the incubus of these undesirable as promptly as is consistent with proper hearings, after we certify them for deportation.”

Other times, intervention from local officials was less cynically motivated by budgetary concern, but prompted by concern for the well-being and safety of detainees. While deportees in Crookston, Minnesota may have suffered from extreme cold, deportees in Tampa, Florida suffered from the opposite problem. “Please expedite orders deportation,” read a telegraph from the Tampa office in July of 1924, before going on to explain that the local commissioners and sheriff had been protesting against the “acute suffering” of detainees in area jails because of extreme summer weather.

Progressive reformers from mainstream immigrant aid organizations earned perhaps the most civil, obliging responses from immigration officials, but they were far from the only organizations to register their outrage about the abuses of the detention system. Radical activist and anti-deportation organizer Elizabeth Gurley Flynn gave voice to these concerns, labeling the treatment of detention and transport as “harrowing,” and full of “physical pain and mental misery.” While she highlighted similar concerns to many other critics, such as insufficient food, overcrowding in detention rooms, and a lack of contact with their outside supports, she also

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481 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351.
noted some critical issues that more disconnected, outside observers were less likely to recognize. These hardships included the fact that many deportees never got an opportunity to retrieve their possessions between their apprehension by the immigration authorities and their final removal from the nation. Furthermore, she explained, for many, this meant that their savings were left behind in American banks, and that not only were remaining family members left destitute, but the deportees themselves were thus forced to arrive at their destinations penniless and without their belongings. In other cases, it was more than money in the bank that immigrants requested the opportunity to retrieve—immigration case files are replete with deportees demanding an extension of stay to collect money owed to them by others or to sell property before departing. Such considerations were immensely critical to deportees themselves as they sought to tie up the loose ends of long-term lives in the United States and prepare for new steps in distant, often entirely unfamiliar lands.482

Often deportees and their supporters recognized that their own disapproval was not the most powerful criticism that they could leverage against the immigration service, and instead pointed out that the atrocities of detention were drawing international censure. A supporter of one New Orleans deportee, a socialist and labor activist who had been detained for over six months pled with the Commissioner, “I wish you would begin to realize that American justice the world round, is being weighed through your Department and is being found wanting.” In one of the more poetic descriptions of the behemoth infrastructure of the nascent deportation regime, the advocate remarked “I realize, of course, the flood of cases that your office has to handle. I realize that your machinery moves slowly, but it also grinds exceedingly small… Apparently

482 Tamiment Library, Record Group 118: Elizabeth Gurley Flynn Papers.
jails of America are to break the health of individuals as the wheels of old were to break their bones.”

Though deportees and their advocates found much to object to in detention conditions, immigration service employees had their own qualms with the system, and pointed to the dangers of inadequate detention facilities. In 1920, the Commissioner of Immigration at Ellis Island sent the Commissioner General not only a summary of concerns about detainees, but a package containing a knife that detainees on the island had been fashioning into a file for cutting bars, another knife which they had been transforming into a key, and a portion of the window bar that the detainees had succeeded in breaking through. These detainees, stowaways from ships, had attempted “what looked to be a wholesale escape,” which the watchmen were only barely able to thwart. The letter demonstrated a grudging admiration for the “skill” these detainees demonstrated in their escape work, and his description of the stowaways in question portrays them in an almost superhuman light: “Stowaways are the source of a great deal of anxiety… they are smart, agile, resourceful and daring, and can easily scale the walls and swim the channels, and seem to have no fear of physical hazard.” So looming were these figures that the Commissioner described them as a “menace to the institution,” and concluded that “the quicker we can deport, the better.”

These fears of revolt among deportees extended throughout the country, including to the United States Army Barracks at Fort Wayne, Michigan, where immigration officials reported in 1920 that they were having trouble controlling the immigrant population confined there. After a hunger strike among detainees, authorities resorted to removing some of the population to the Wayne County Jail in attempts to curb protest, as well as to stop the spread of disease among

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483 Tamiment Library, Record Group 118: Elizabeth Gurley Flynn Papers.
484 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/262.
deportees. These deportees, falling within the jurisdiction of the Detroit district, continued to be a thorn in the side of officials, and became the subject of protests over family visits. The Inspector in Charge at Detroit was forced to justify himself to the Assistant Secretary of Labor. Louis Post inquired why visits had been curtailed and reminded the Inspector that it was not department policy to “impose any hardships” beyond necessity to the families, given that “deportation proceedings are not criminal proceedings and it is desired to use as liberal a policy in this respect as the circumstances will permit.” However, the Inspector replied, circumstances had necessitated the policy on visits, which had been put into place after a number of escapes, believed to have been facilitated by visitors.485

The challenges of keeping ill detainees separated from the general population at Fort Wayne reflected one of the most common concerns of immigration authorities, who struggled to manage large populations in close quarters. While historians such as Emily Abel, Amy Fairchild, and Natalia Molina have fruitfully explored how immigrant health and illness, both mental and physical, served as criteria for exclusion and deportation, we know less about how the conditions and spaces of deportation enforcement were actually generative of disease and dangers to public health.486 For many deportees, threats to their health came not from their homeland or passage into the United States, but was contracted at the point of their departure. At the start of the decade, correspondence from the Chief Medical Officer at Ellis Island to the Commissioner General reflected the high rate of infection, with 80 admittances to the hospital for various

485 U.S. INS Files 71-42, Immigration History Research Center.
486 See Molina, “Constructing Mexicans as Deportable Immigrants;” Molina, Fit to Be Citizens?; Fairchild, Science at the Borders; Miriam King and Steven Ruggles, “American Immigration, Fertility, and Race Suicide at the Turn of the Century,” Journal of Interdisciplinary History 20:3 (1990): 347-369; Kraut, Silent Travelers; and Abel, ”From Exclusion to Expulsion.”
illnesses ranging from influenza to measles over the course of only two weeks, and 11 deaths within that period.\textsuperscript{487}

Further correspondence with the Inspector in Charge of the Deporting Division could offer not real reassurance, and recommended to alleviate overcrowding of detainees whenever possible, to ventilate detention rooms, and to allow deportees time outside for fresh air. Furthermore, the Commissioner urged, interpreters, watchmen, and matrons needed to spread word among detainees “of the danger of expectorating on the floor and admonish them to desist from doing so.”\textsuperscript{488} In spite of these limited precautions, detention conditions could often prove dangerous or even fatal for deportees. In addition to the frequent deaths deported at Ellis Island detention quarters, including influenza and a range of other respiratory infections which spread rapidly among tightly packed detainees awaiting transportation to their nations of origin, authorities around the nation reported fatalities. One of the challenges of local immigration officials saddled with high detention costs for long-postponed deportations was the financial burden of those who died before transportation could be arranged. Among the many cases which came to the attention of federal officials was a dispute over who bore the responsibility for covering the back charges for the detention of an alien who had passed away while in detention in the U.S. Naval Hospital at San Diego.\textsuperscript{489}

For many localities, one of the greatest frustrations of coordinating with the federal authorities on deportations was the frequent delays in securing an available deportation transport for deportees awaiting removal. Chief among their concerns was the expense of detention, which fell upon the local institutions within which the deportees were housed, or the appropriations for

\textsuperscript{487} Letter from Chief Medical Officer at Ellis Island to Commissioner General of Immigration, January 8, 1920, U.S. INS Files 71-42, Immigration History Research Center.
\textsuperscript{488} U.S. INS Files 71-42, Immigration History Research Center.
\textsuperscript{489} Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 6166, File 55426/39.
the local district within which the deportation case fell. On the federal bureau’s side, the fiscal priority was for composing the most cost-effective deportation parties available, even when that meant leaving deportees waiting longer in detention until a full trainload of immigrants could be gathered. The following section explores the experience of deportation after the individual passed from detention to transport. I argue that the systemization of deportation trains during the 1920s played a critical role in the rapid rise of deportations over subsequent decades, acted as a growing opportunity for profit off of immigrant removal, and brought deportation into the public view.

“A Trip on the Deportation Special”: U.S. Deportation Trains and the Business of Removal

Deportation is a process that takes place at the confluence of simultaneous efforts to delineate the national body and mark out its boundaries by selecting those unwelcome within the population, and to define and enforce the fit and desirable immigrant body. Its expansion in the 1920s reflected these twin concerns with controlling individual bodies and national composition. Deportation trains, which traced long, winding routes across the nation, bringing groups of immigrants, often for weeks on end, to their final exit points at the edges of the nation, were critical to these new forms of policing the nation and its non-citizen residents. The sites at which these trains did their collecting were, critically, the institutions at which bodies, immigrant and otherwise, underwent intensive scrutiny, surveillance, disciplining, and categorization—asylums, prisons, juvenile reformatories, and hospitals. As deportation specials traversed the nation, they stopped to gather together those immigrants who had been examined, judged, sorted and deemed undesirable, unfit, or unassimilable for various bodily or psychological deficiencies, and, upon reaching the edges of the national body, forcibly “spew” them out.
On a very basic level, deportation trains were what made what Ngai has described as deportation’s “coming of age” a possibility during this period. The rise in planned, cost-effective transportation methods not only facilitated the movement of greater numbers of deportees, it encouraged local immigration offices and institutions to put forward potential candidates for deportation. The new networks of communication and cooperation linking immigration station outposts as far-flung and seemingly insignificant as those in Montana or North Dakota, and created a powerful machinery for deportation whose reach extended far beyond the port cities and border towns which have attracted the attention of scholars. If deportees could now be efficiently rounded up in rural Kansas and Nebraska, sent by train to Chicago to await an east or west-bound deportation special, no immigrants were safe from the reach of this growing machinery. While spaces like Whitewater and Turner, Montana might have been “for all purposes, barely more than places designated on a map”, with little more than country stores and a few residences, they too were part of the expanding reach and power of the INS, housing barracks for border patrols along common Canadian entrance sites to the nation. Likewise, after the closing of the immigration office at Antler, North Dakota, the town contacted the Chief Immigrant Inspector at Grand Forks “praying” for its reopening, stating that despite its small size, many migrants were crossing into the country through its railway station.\footnote{Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 7546, File 55601/36.} Each locality had its own incentives, political agendas, racial dynamics, and morality causes which led to particular patterns of round-ups and reporting to federal immigration officials, but their efforts were linked together by a powerful new system for enforcing ever-expanding deportation laws. Although scholars such as Ethan Blue, Adam Goodman, Yukari Takai, Aristide Zolberg have examined the importance of transportation in the implementation of immigration control, they
have largely focused on overseas shipping rather than cross-continental ground transport. However, without first negotiating systems for the mass movement of deportable immigrants from the interior of the nation to its ports, deportation’s explosion into its modern form would have been impeded.

As historians have observed, trains and railroads have held both massive practical significance for the expansion of the United States settler state, but also a tremendously important place in national mythology around “discovery” and “creation” of the country. Richard White explains in *Railroaded: The Transcontinentals and the Making of Modern America* that “The railroads, in turn, were agents of the expansion of these states. What these railroads allowed the governments of the United States, Canada, and Mexico to accomplish in the late nineteenth century was remarkable.” Because “railroads poured non-indigenous settlers into a vast region that nation-states had earlier merely claimed,” White argues, they were critical for the fulfilment of the aspirations of a settler state aiming to assert control over a massive spatial entity. However, while scholars have examined the importance of railroads as they “poured” in non-indigenous settlers across the continental expanse of the country, they have rarely acknowledged how important the accompanying ability to remove peoples from around the nation, also made possible by rail networks, was for consolidating the reach of the federal state. In a very concrete manner, transcontinental railroads “made” modern America partly


493 White, xxiv.
because of their ability to remove people at government will, and to expand the reach of governance in terms of determining and enforcing the composition of the national population through forced removal.

While much of the work of expanding the United States through railroads was completed in the nineteenth century, deportation marks the continued importance of trains for asserting national dominance and solidifying control over the American continental empire. In fact, as Kanstroom thoughtfully observes:

The transcontinental railroad and the U.S. deportation system have much in-common. Both started at the coasts and now span the country. Both implicate our grandest national aspirations and hide some of our most shameful historical truths. Both have been episodically updated but retain many essential features of their nineteenth century origins… and both were in large measure built on the backs of Chinese immigrant workers who suffered immense hardships in the process of their creation. 494

Kanstroom, however, fails to note that the railroads and the deportation system, both products of a modernizing, centralizing nation-state, were not, in fact, merely parallel institutions, but in fact, one (railroads) was deeply entwined with the functioning of the other (deportation).

As deportation trains gathered individuals at the 35 central Immigration and Naturalization Services offices around the interior of the nation (each representing up to dozens of sub-offices in their districts), these journeys linked together the vast expanse of the nation in the project of expelling unwanted and “unassimilable” foreign-born residents. Included in these offices were those in Ketchikan, Alaska; San Juan, Puerto Rico; and Honolulu, Hawaii. In these spaces of American empire, still not fully integrated into the political body of the nation, the Immigration Service represented a form of governance that gained its power by its ability to exclude, both in terms of immigrants from around the world, and in terms of full participation of indigenous people in the territories. By claiming and exercising the power to deport immigrants

494 Kanstroom, *Deportation Nation*, 91.
from these widespread states and territories, the United States asserted its control over the population and composition of these distant spaces. While deportees from Puerto Rico and Hawaii were obviously not gathered by train, those coming from Alaska were brought by train to Washington State to be joined with deportation parties, linking the project of policing immigrants in this contested space to those within the continental boundaries of the nation.

Studying the paths of deportation trains also unsettles simplistic narratives of the routes immigrants traveled. While the commonly assumed path of immigrants from Europe tends to focus on direct arrival from Europe at Ellis Island, and potentially further movement west across the nation, the trajectories of many immigrants were quite different. For numerous deportees, the moment of their removal from the nation was their first time experiencing Ellis Island. For instance, J. Savarino, deported through Ellis Island in 1925, had initially migrated from Italy to Mexico in 1923, and had lived there until a few months before his deportation. After crossing the border, he worked in Holtville, California, for some months, before being apprehended, held in the county jail for a few weeks waiting for an eastbound deportation train, and then removed from the country. Judge McCormick, who decided his case, was reported to have told Savarino through an interpreter that, "The worst punishment I can inflict on you is to send you back to Italy, as you don’t want to go back."495 Savarino’s path, far from uncommon during the era, demonstrates that the journey of deportation did not always backtrack along previously trod paths for immigrants, but often exposed them to new regions of the country, and new experiences of the United States, such as processing through Ellis Island, which may not have been part of their encounter with the nation otherwise.

495 "Judge Issues Order to Deport Italian," *Los Angeles Times*, April 14, 1925.
Similarly, while most accounts of Chinese immigrants in the United States assume arrival through Angel Island and original settling in California, the paths of removal for deportees to China reflect that this was not always the case. Indeed, it was not infrequent for Chinese seamen who had deserted from ships in New York to be taken cross-country by train for deportation through California, often never having previously gone west of New York City. Discussing a 1929 deportation transport taking 23 Chinese to San Francisco, one reporter explained that the transport picked up 19 crew members in New Orleans from a recently deserted British steamship, three men from New York, and a Chinese resident of Savannah, Georgia who lacked citizenship papers.⁴⁹⁶ These deportees collectively reflect the insufficiency of uni-directional accounts of migrant experience, and show how deportation reflected messy patterns of migration and exposure to the nation. As Elliot Young, Grace Peña Delagado and other scholars have addressed, the routes traveled by Chinese immigrants to the United States often led through Mexico due to the extensive restrictions against Chinese migration.⁴⁹⁷ Young explains that while deportations to China from the U.S. only averaged about 500 a year throughout the early twentieth century, remaining as low as 461 in 1930, when the total deportations had risen immensely, many more Chinese were pushed back over the Mexican border, either through official deportation or various forms of coercive repatriation.⁴⁹⁸

The sheer act of coordinating the deportation of unprecedented numbers of immigrants each year was not only a complicated process, it was an expensive one. As the deportation machinery of the 1920s and 1930s matured from the smaller and more selective procedures of previous decades, the government increasingly bemoaned that their “house-cleaning” project was

⁴⁹⁶ “Special Prison Car to Be Used to Deport Chinese,” The Atlanta Constitution, September 6, 1929.
⁴⁹⁸ Young, Alien Nation, 139.
a costly one, and sought new ways to streamline deportation for greater efficiency and savings. Therefore, deportation shifted from a haphazard practice of transporting immigrants across the nation when they were apprehended, holding them indefinitely at Ellis Island or in San Francisco and then deporting them, to a well-oiled schedule of trains criss-crossing the nation to pick up deportees in a planned manner. This shift was critical in the creation and solidification of the expanded modern deportation regime. Indeed, Torrie Hester notes, “The Bureau of Immigration was shaped, like all bureaucracies, by the need to balance its budget and maximize its efficiency,” and it was from this need that the deportation party system emerged, which, by 1923, saved the Bureau an estimated twenty thousand dollars.\footnote{Torrie Hester, “Deportation: Origins of A National and International Power” (PhD Diss., University of Oregon, 2009), 124-125.} In addition to allowing greater numbers of deportations to take place, this shift had another important, and highly contested feature. By leaving deportees in local detention centers until a full and maximally efficient train was ready to pick them up and deposit them for transnational shipment, the INS shifted the burden of detention costs onto localities.

These localities, often overwhelmed by the lack of detention infrastructure for such high numbers of deportees (leading to schemes like detention in homes of private citizens), and begrudging the high costs associated with waiting for deportation trains to come through, spent much of the decade in enraged and frequent correspondence with the central IS office in Washington D.C. over the subject.\footnote{Recent work on immigration detention such as Mark Down, American Gulag: Inside U.S. Immigration Prisons (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004); Renee Feltz and Stokely Baksh, “Business of Detention,” in Beyond Walls and Cages: Prisons, Borders, and Global Crisis, eds. Jenna M. Lloyd, Matt Mitchelson, and Andrew Burridge (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2012); and Michael Welch, Detained: Immigration Laws and the Expanding I.N.S. Jail Complex (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2002) provide critical attention to the construction of a detention behemoth and the profit angle of its operation, but tend to focus on more contemporary periods.} When the Commissioner General of Immigration sent out a call for information about deportable aliens in jails and other institutions of each regional
office, the El Paso District Director responded with indignation. The overcrowding of jails, unequipped to hold not only the criminal population they were designed for, but now detainees of all forms being held for deportation, he explained, was causing a crisis of detention space. Indeed, he explained, deportees were being held in the houses of private citizens for lack of space in public institutions.\textsuperscript{501}

However, as the Bureau of Immigration sought to institute regular deportation transports, they clashed over finances not only with regional and local offices of the IS, who had their own set of concerns, but with the Comptroller of the General Accounting Office. In a November 1925 letter, the Commissioner General argued that the switch had been made to large transcontinental parties to save money over transportation in small numbers, and contended that the business was being handled in “the most economical way possible.” He went on to explain to the Comptroller that parties were joined at the most economical point, such as the linking up of aliens from Omaha, Kansas City, and St. Louis Districts to the larger parties at Chicago, “which alone affects a great savings to the Government.” However, he asserted, he needed to impress on the Accounting Office that these parties included all sorts of dangerous elements, “including a very large number of insane aliens, more or less violent, criminals of the most desperate character, persons afflicted with loathsome and dangerous contagious diseases.” Therefore, the Commissioner argued, “for the foregoing reasons it has proven to be not always desirable to take advantage of the lowest available rates, but to patronize lines more convenient for our Service, taking into account scheduled time of arrival and departure at certain points, equipment furnished and the quality of service rendered.”\textsuperscript{502}

\textsuperscript{501} Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4027, File 54933/351H.
\textsuperscript{502} Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4027, File 54933/351E.
European migrants were the most numerous deportees, and therefore, the most numerous passengers upon deportation specials for most of this period. The smaller number of Asia-bound deportees, however, captured the national focus in different ways. Nearly always emphasizing their “undesirable” and “ineligible” nature, accounts of “oriental” deportation parties focused on their racial ineligibility for residence in the nation. Commentators often lumped them with other non-European migrants, and indeed, so did expediency and efficiency in terms of deportation transport, as they were nearly always the groups heading west for removal, leading to divergence between parties composed of “undesirable Mexicans, Japanese, Chinese and others,” and parties of assorted European nationalities. After President Roosevelt called for the deportation of 151 Chinese criminals in 1935, most detained for narcotics-peddling charges, an act which Roosevelt claimed would save the government the $1.06 daily charge of maintaining each prisoner, deportation of “Orientals” was again in the spotlight. Citing long-term New York-San Francisco deportation special officer Edwin Kline, one reporter noted that each west-bound “prison train” trip generally contained about ninety Chinese deportees.

Deportations west to Angel Island for deportation to Asian nations, and east to Ellis Island for deportations to Europe had their own calculated fiscal planning, but deportations over the nation’s land borders provoked some of the most contentious and ongoing battles between local and federal immigration officials over the course of this period. The Inspector in Charge at Galveston directed one of many such letters of protest to the Commissioner General in 1923 complaining that previously most Mexican deportees had been returned via San Francisco to Mazatlan, on the west Coast of Mexico. He conveyed the belief that Mexican aliens from the

prison should be deported to remote points in Mexico, and not across the land boundary. Indeed, the Inspector asserted, Mazatlan was not far enough, because it was directly connected to Nogales by rail, making return to the Arizona border easy. Instead, he proposed, deportation to Salina Cruz, a seaport further south, “if the expense be not deemed prohibitive” would “rid the border of this criminal class of deports.”

Echoing this sentiment, local immigration agents throughout the Southwest kept regional and federal inboxes full of complaints about the futility of deporting people by train or foot over the border, only to allow their easy return the following day. At the turning point of mass deportations of Mexican Americans during the Great Depression, the question of how to best implement these deportations in a way that was both affordable and permanent was a constant struggle. As one 1933 observer noted, “Many of the Mexican workers are taken forcibly to be dumped over the Mexican border. One ‘Deportation special’ it is reported, a train of eight coaches, all loaded with Mexican workers, was made up at Denver. One solid carload of Mexican laborers and their wives and children was sent from Pueblo.”

Often images of deportation from the early twentieth century bring to mind sensationalized, sporadic, and hysterical episodes featuring raids, round-ups, and disruptions of political meetings. While such events did on occasion take place, such accounts overshadow the more mundane, regularized, and continuous nature of deportation throughout the 1920s. Although vigilantes, nativist organizations, employers, and an outspoken press all played a critical role in the development of deportation practices throughout the 1920s, what is often

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505 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351.
507 Some examples of the tendency to view deportation as a series of episodes, or “crisis” points, rather than as a continuous method of social definition and the negotiation of inclusion and exclusion include: Van Vleck, The Administrative Control of Alien; Murray, Red Scare; Hong, “The Origin of American Legislation to Exclude and Deport Aliens for their Political Beliefs;” Preston, Aliens and Dissenters.
elided by examination of these groups is the increasingly systematic and bureaucratic nature of the system, which identified the spaces in which unsound immigrant bodies could be found, detained, and collected. The vitriolic speeches calling for widespread removal of radicals, the dramatic scenes of police busting down doors in immigrant neighborhoods must be examined next to the pragmatic considerations which made the growth of the nascent deportation machine possible: train schedules, tabulated reports, and the ever-present struggle for fiscal appropriations.

Indeed, by the mid-1920s, deportation officials in Washington had developed schedules of deportation parties crossing the nation in each direction, and before a given party was to depart, they wrote to commissioners around the country asking them to report how many migrants they had ready for pickup at the moment. These reports were then used to coordinate the most efficient, streamlined, and cost-effective plans for collecting these deportees and depositing them at the ports for shipment abroad. Using this information, they put together train routes, adding on cars midway when deportees became too numerous. In Chicago and other large cities, these transports would collect previously gathered groups of deportees who had been brought by train from smaller towns around the region to await the east or west-bound specials. Depending on the nation of return for deportees ready for departure at a given moment, smaller transports might branch off from the eastbound special at Buffalo to remove immigrants over the Canadian border.

The frequency of cross-country deportation specials grew with both the increased efficiency of government officials, and mounting pressure from local immigration stations that demanded shorter detention periods. By 1931, deportation trains were leaving approximately every six weeks in each direction, and the number of larger groups of parties sent out rose from
In 1925 to 174 by 1930. This expansion was pushed by appeals from below, and in 1925 the Assistant Commissioner explained to the Portland District Director that they were considering proposals from both the Grand Forks, ND and Chicago offices to be run at least eight times a year, rather than the previous six. By 1930, the Bureau of Immigration had settled into fairly standard patterns, which allowed for maximal efficiency and savings.

Westbound routes, most often carrying deportees to Mexico by way of El Paso, or Asian deportees by way of San Francisco, would depart either from New York to New Orleans by water, then to El Paso by rail, or from Chicago to El Paso by rail, and then, in both cases, on to San Francisco by rail. Eastbound trips, which most often carried deportees bound for Europe, either took the southern route From San Francisco to New Orleans, then on to New York, or the northern route from Seattle to New York by rail all across the top of the country. Jane Perry Clark, a Barnard Professor who published the first monograph on deportation in 1931 explained that due to massive crowding at Ellis Island, deportees would sometimes be held for further detention at the end of the train journeys, at Gloucester City, Angel Island, East Boston, Seattle, or Galveston.

In the early 1930s, as economic depression raised pressure for voluntary departure or repatriation of immigrants, particularly from Mexico, deportation trains increasingly took on significance for people who were not, technically speaking, being forced out of the country. These departing immigrants, often pressured, intimidated, or coaxed out of the nation by both economic and political forces, often rode alongside deportees on trains out of the nation, complicating our understanding of these journeys. By the 1920s, there were efforts by Congress

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509 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4027, File 54933/351G.
510 Clark, Deportation of Aliens, 455.
to negotiate reduced train fares for voluntary repatriates. While train companies initially agreed to this practice, when then government did not pay its agreed portion of the subsidy, the agreement dissolved.\textsuperscript{511} Instead, as the practice of repatriation grew, voluntary associations and charitable organizations often subsidized the expense of leaving the nation. In some cases, the local government initiating the push for repatriation would provide passage just to the border and no further, so Mexican American associations often gathered money to provide passage from the border to immigrants’ hometowns and keep them from being stranded just over the border without money.\textsuperscript{512} As Adena Miller Rich of the Immigrants’ Protective League explained of deportation trains, “One of the most cruel effects of compulsory emigration—expulsion—has been the failure of the United States government in certain cases to send the deportee all the way. To be put off in a place where he is an utter stranger may mean the most abject misery.”\textsuperscript{513}

In a 1936 article on repatriation of immigrants, Rich explained that when voluntary removal was coordinated, these individuals had to be attached to deportation parties along with “regular deportees.” However, she explained, charitable organizations had to make arrangements for their expense and maintain these immigrants until their transfer from their local communities to ports of departure. These organizations, Rich wrote, were able to obtain “charity tickets” in coordination with the railroads, and the savings were significant. However, it often required the coordination of many groups to make a voluntary departure journey possible. For instance, in the case of one couple, Rich traced the various organizations involved in financing their voluntary return by train to Mexico:

\textsuperscript{512} Ibid, 241.
The Mexican Consul promised a rebate of the railroad fare from the border at Laredo, as far as Irapuato. The Salvation Army secured authorization of half-rate tickets to the border. The Catholic Charities contributed $15 toward the Mexican railroad fare from Irapuato to Mexico City. The Mexican Blue Cross and Mexican Health Center contributed the amount necessary for food on the journey. The man’s English teacher at Hull-House, from the Chicago Board of Education, bought them clothing. The balance of the expenses for this couple, $62.61, was met by the Governor’s Commission on Unemployment and Relief, acting through the Immigrants’ Protective League.\textsuperscript{514}

Thus, while this chapter focuses primarily on forced, government-funded deportation journeys, it recognizes that deportees’ experiences often occurred alongside, or even in the very same train compartments as immigrants in the process of other forms of voluntary or semi-voluntary departure.

Deportation required not only negotiating many different levels of authority, practical planning, and strategic implementation within the United States, but also required coordination with receiving nations all over the world. As deportation trains set off across the country with increasing frequency, foreign nations implored the government to give them advance list and notice while migrants were en route to Ellis Island, in order to give them time to prepare the necessary documents and entry permits. Additionally, transport was not over once immigrants reached the European continent, but instead involved complicated networks of permits for overland transport. Some nations, such as Germany, refused trains carrying deportees further east into Europe to pass through, or applied heavy conditions and required the accompaniment of their own guards. While the government sought to present itself as the sole and all-powerful arbiter of who could remain within their borders, the practical reality was that they were beholden to a vast range of pragmatic considerations and global constraints, and deportations were often stalled or even prevented by their inability to coordinate with receiving or intermediary nations across the globe.

\textsuperscript{514} Rich, “Case Work in the Repatriation of Immigrants,” 601.
Policy-based studies of deportation give the impression that once the IS made a deportation decision about an individual, they were unconstrained by further legal maneuverings or practical considerations. This was far from true. Even if the United States could arrange deportation on their end, its success required cooperation with the receiving nation, and often, the question of ground transport once reaching that nation was a sticking point for the passing of agreements. Some countries, such as France, insisted upon the deportees being routed on train through the country by U.S. immigration officials, rather than being dropped at LeHavre with a ticket to go on further, and complained of how U.S. deportation often left them burdened with foreign and penniless immigrants. Other nations, such as Italy, insisted upon taking deportees into custody immediately upon their arrival in the nation, and taking them to their final destination on their own transportation, while U.S. officials were not allowed to proceed with them into the country.  

As deportation specials traced their way across the American landscape, trains also moved large groups of deportees out of their neighboring nations. Barbara Ann Roberts explains that deportation trains in Canada generated similar critiques about conditions and reflected Canada’s struggle to create a system which was capable of efficiently deporting in mass numbers. She asserts that by the start of the 1930s, “As larger numbers of deports overwhelmed the system, conditions which had always been unpleasant become abominable. For example, a trainload of deports sent in January 1933 from central Canada to Halifax complained that the food on the train consisted of sandwiches; they were not given clean blankets; they were not allowed to move freely about the train…” A New York Times correspondent’s account of his

515 Clark, Deportation of Aliens.
1927 deportation from Mexico to Laredo, Texas demonstrates that high profile deportations from Mexico attracted public attention around deportation transports in similar ways. As with deportations that might attract crowds of protestors at detention or train stations in the United States, deportations occurred suddenly and without warning or time for organization, and the correspondent was taken to a train station slightly outside of Mexico City to prevent onlookers. However, the correspondent explained, his fellow United States reporters in the area figured out the ploy, and arrived at the station in Tacuba with his family, allowing him to say good-bye. Relative to descriptions of American deportation trains, his complaints about conditions seemed mild: “The seats in the second-class car were hard and uncomfortable,” and in detention the night before the journey, he was required to sleep on a dirt floor.\(^{517}\) It is important to recognize that rising coordination of deportation transports in the United States was part of a larger development of mechanisms for the policing of non-citizens around the world.

As the practice of conducting “deportation specials” cross-country became a regularized system throughout the mid-1920s, it became necessary for immigration officials to commission the construction of specialized train cars for transporting deportees, in what amounted to moving prisons. While gathering individuals from spaces such as asylums, prisons, and hospitals, designed for the segregation, surveillance, and control of bodies deemed to be physically or psychologically unfit, pathological, or morally lacking, deportation trains reassembled and reinscribed these technologies for controlling, but put them on the move. Early on in *Strange Passage*, the female protagonist, Stephanie, relates the sensation of being transferred from one prison to the next at each stage of deportation. She recollects that, “in the detention room of the deportation station, it is damp and cold. There are other women in the room, some weeping.”

Then, she is “marched to a small caged truck that looks as though it were used by the dog-catcher. The truck takes her to the train… Now the stupid Montana prairie stretches as far as her eyes can see. The Rockies in the distance, cut by the window-bars into segments, look barren to her.”

In order to ensure efficient cross-country transportation for deportees, immigration officials strategized and ultimately reached protocols for refitting train cars to hold migrants on their way to expulsion. A March 1926 letter from the Assistant Commissioner to the District Director at Georgia describes a well-prepared train car, stating that “you should be sure to have the car windows securely fastened down (closed, or so arranged that they cannot be raised more than about two inches from the bottom, and also that the toilet room doors are so fixed that they cannot be locked… With the doors kept locked and guards on duty, escapes should be practically impossible.” To reassure concerned officials in Georgia, the District Director explained to them that in addition to the normal precautions, bars, and locks, “we take their clothes away from them” during the night, to further ensure no efforts at escape will be made. Urging caution however, officials insisted that stringent searches of immigrant bodies and belongings were needed to prevent danger or escape. In 1927, a warning was issued to all station directors that “at one of the stations, an insane male alien was delivered to the party train while in possession of an old-fashioned open razor and that another alien delivered to the party train had concealed in his hand-baggage nearly a gallon of intoxicating liquor.”

Segregation of deportees of differing statuses for transportation was yet another level at which deportation officials concerned themselves with the regulation and control of immigrant

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518 Irwin, Strange Passage, 19.
519 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4027, File 54933/351F.
520 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 7592, File 55608/130.
521 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 7594, File 55608/138.
bodies. The Immigration Inspector in Charge of Transportation contacted the Commissioner General in 1920 regarding a large deportation party from San Francisco with pickups around the country. The inspector explained that “During the trip a good deal of sickness occurred and it was impossible to place as many aliens in one car as heretofore. It was therefore necessary to use three cars on account of this sickness which included chickenpox and one of threatened diphtheria…” Some of the new arrangements were designed with the intent of keeping deportees separated from the general public on smaller trips where there were not enough deportees for a full deportation train. The District Director at Atlanta wrote to the Commissioner General in 1926 explaining that a private car is preferable because, “it would greatly enhance the risk to convey the party (made up of ex-convicts and an insane alien this trip) in an ordinary day coach… and no means of segregating the passengers from the prisoners.” Furthermore, the Director explained, his reason for the use of a particular car was for safety, since the prisoners could be placed in upper berths, and “with a guard at each end of the car escape is impossible and three men can handle a large party safely.”

In other cases, special arrangements were required for the transportation of women and children, as well as sick deportees, and the commissioner of matrons as well as guards for trips with female passengers was an often-bemoaned additional expense. A.J. Poston of the Southern Pacific Company was contacted by Commissioner General Harry Hull in 1927 with instructions for deportation trips to include one tourist car and reclining chairs for women and children, as well as ill men, at least three experienced guards for each party. After concern was expressed by Agent Kline, the chief conveyer of deportation parties throughout the period that women deportees must travel steerage, which would leave women and children with “insane and

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522 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 3722, File 53814/1.
523 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4027, File 54933/351F.
diseased male deports,” more attention was given to shipping practices. For deportation parties which shifted to ships for the trip from New Orleans to New York, he demanded iron barred doors in steerage quarters, and for the staterooms “to be occupied by insane female aliens in order that the doors may be securely fastened from the outside by the officer in charge of the party for the purpose of keeping such aliens confined to their quarters.” However, the accounts of Alan MacDonald and Jane Perry Clark, each of whom were allowed to ride aboard deportation trains, suggest that the divisions aboard trains were lacking at best. MacDonald’s descriptions feature deportees of all states of physical and psychological states of well-being jumbled together along with former prisoners and other criminals. Clark explains that “Families were kept together on the train, but in general there was no segregation, and insane and convicts, children, and illegal entries travelled together in the same car.”

The process also required close attention to staffing not only aboard the train itself, but upon reaching stations. Concerns over adequate safeguards increased in the case of racialized groups such as Mexican deportees, who were seen as being so desperate to stay in the nation, and so little controlled, that their transport required special assistance. A letter from the Inspector in Charge at the International Bridge at El Paso outlined the challenges required with safely transporting deportees. Inspector E.M. Kline, he explained, goes both East and West through El Paso on Sunday, and therefore, it is critical to know when he leaves San Antonio going West and Los Angeles going east, because it would be required to have extra men available for Sunday work at the depot. “The train from the west always arrives at night,” he explained, “usually bringing ten to twenty Mexicans, insane, diseased, feeble minded, and hard to handle. It is dark around the El Paso Union Depot and we have lost aliens, after receiving them, out in the yards

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524 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 7594, File 55608/131.
525 Clark, Deportation of Aliens, 472.
before we could get them into the trucks.” Only with increasing standardization of deportation practices, nation-wide communication, and bureaucratic reorganization was efficient and uninterrupted transport able to take place, and the shifts of this era facilitated the deportation machinery which was to continue growing for the following decades.

A focus on the actual enforcement of deportation law on the ground allows for an examination of how its practice was negotiated at a pragmatic level, and for immigration officials, little mattered more than cost. A 1922 letter from the Assistant Commissioner of Immigration to all District Commissioners and Inspectors chastised their lack of economy, accusing them of “more or less reckless expenditure of funds, particularly in connection with deportation cases, it not infrequently happening that an attendant is employed to assist an officer in conveying a single alien.” Instead, he urged, “more careful scrutiny” would be required to see that “greater economy is practiced.”

Given limited appropriations, and a groundswell of pressure for mass removal, immigration authorities often approached deportation as a business, which had to be run as efficiently as possible. They quickly discovered it paid to deport in bulk.

In 1929 contracts with the Southern Pacific Lines for trains heading eastbound and westbound, the government negotiated a rate of $80 per capita from San Francisco or Los Angeles to New York (and vice versa) plus charges for meals and guards, provided the party was of 25 or more deportees. For parties this large, the railroad company would throw in free transportation for the immigration officer in charge of the party. For “westbound alien deportees” picked up in Chicago or Carbondale going to San Francisco, the rate for guards and meals was $23.75 for groups of 10 or fewer, $20.00 for groups of 11-20, $16.25 for groups of

526 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4027, File 54933/3511.
527 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 7592, File 55608/128.
21-30, and for parties of 31 or more, a bargain rate of $13.75. However, a 1927 warning from the District Director at St. Louis to the Commissioner General provided a grim and calculating reminder regarding number of aliens to a party and cost. “Even when it is thought several aliens can be joined or annexed,” to a deportation party, the Director cautioned, “it is not safe to prorate the cost of transportation, for one or more may die, abscond, or be taken from us by habeas corpus.”

Frequently, railway lines wrote to immigration officials selling their credentials as possible deporters, and offered incentives to gain lucrative government contracts. A September 1924 letter from the District Director at Kansas City, Missouri to the Commissioner General reported that the Katy Road had offered “inducements to the Immigration Service for this deportation business”: furnishing of guards and free passage for the Immigration officers, meals for aliens at 50 cents apiece, and a special Tourist Pullman car, as well as the right to appoint temporary special guards of their choosing. In 1927, when the Missouri-Kansas-Texas Railroad Company wrote to the Director at Kansas City to notify that they were discontinuing their practice of providing accompanying guards free of charge, they included the appeal that “I trust however, that this action will have no effect on our former friendly relations and hope that we may continue to be favored with such movements as you may have by reason of our short line and superior service.”

To sell themselves as strong contenders for deportation specials, railway companies also relied upon their business records, arguing that if they were efficient transporters of goods, they could be relied upon to deport humans. The Wabash Railway Company wrote to the Bureau of

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528 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 7594, File 55608/131.
529 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 7594, File 55608/135.
530 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 7592, File 55608/128.
531 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 7592, File 55608/128.
Immigration in 1921 regarding the plans to move a large number of Mexicans from Saginaw, Michigan to “the Mexican Frontier.” Their company, they argued, had “handled a large volume of this Mexican business to Michigan, and from letters of commendation received from the sugar company, I believe that our service has proved as good, if not better than that of other lines.”

Other suggestions for cost-cutting veered away from the use of trains, and proposed greater use of ships through the Port of Galveston and other sites rather than full train traversal of the nation, or advocated for the use of vehicles rather than railways. The District Director at El Paso appealed to the Commissioner General to consider that transport from Tucson to Nogales for departure at Mexico, a common route, could “be conducted at much lesser expense by government truck, instead of by train, which requires a holding period at some expense, in the county jail.

While the primary expense lay in transportation, food aboard was also a concern, and the ability to get the best deal on provisions was a major concern. On trips aboard the Southern Pacific Lines, for the price, the meals included were a breakfast of “stewed prunes, oatmeal, meat order, potatoes, bread, coffee,” a lunch of “soup, meat fish or hash, bread, bread pudding, coffee, fruit,” and a supper of “spaghetti or macaroni, meat, potatoes, vegetables, bread, coffee, fruit.” For guards on the other hand, breakfast might include “baked apple, bananas and cream, grape fruit, wheat cakes, oatmeal, ham or bacon and eggs, fried potatoes, hot rolls, coffee, tea, and milk,” lunch would involve “assorted meats, salad, lamb chops, vegetables, pie, cheese, pudding, coffee, tea, cocoa, milk,” and supper contained “soup, steak, roast, potatoes, salad, hot rolls, dessert, coffee, tea, chocolate, and milk.” Throughout the period, the allotted meal

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532 Immigration and Naturalization Services, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 55933/351.
533 Immigration and Naturalization Services, Record Group 85, Box 7594, File 55608/131.
534 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 7594, File 55608/131.
budget for deportees was generally 50 cents a head per meal, but because provisioning deportees was outsourced to private companies, efforts to cut costs and profit at the expense of deportees were rampant. A letter from the Inspector in Charge at Denver about better ways of feeding detainees at a lower cost featured a menu with, surprisingly, a lot of cupcakes.535

Alan MacDonald, a journalist allowed to ride aboard a deportation special in January 1930, observed that the food given to deportees consisted of “beef stew, prunes, vegetables, rice pudding, wheat bread, tea, coffee, or milk,” a menu which he noted was “as good and more varied than the soldier’s regular fare.” This was possible, he asserted, because the Commissioner “gave the contract to a Chinaman, who profited so much among his own countrymen by boasting his business connection with Uncle Sam,” that he could afford to provide good food even within the severely limited budget.536 In spite of the speculative, and racialized presumptions of MacDonald’s statements, it is clear that competition for government contracts for food, transportation, and detention was fierce, and that there was profit to be made off the stomachs of deportees. Mrs. Kenneth F. Rich of the Immigrants’ Protective League wrote to the Commissioner General in 1931 demanding investigation of unfit food conditions in county jails where deportees were detained before their trains departed. Citing abuses at Crookston, Minnesota, Crown Point, Indiana, and Chicago, Rich decried the notorious “food ‘rake-off’”, and requested attention of the plight of deportees who were suffering from a poor quality food, physical cold, and lack of medical attention for the sake of profits.537 Because detention and transport were moments at which the deportation process was most visible to the general public, it provided an opportunity for critics to oversee and object to its operation.

535 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351A.
537 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 8335, File 44639/731.
Itself an instrumental tool for new forms of policing the nation’s boundaries, and social control and policing of foreign-born residents, the deportation train was often imagined to be a more active and embodied agent. As the opening quote suggests, language of swallowing or gorging was a common feature of descriptions of the trains. The imagery of an embodied train coming across the nation eating whatever was in its path was perhaps most powerfully captured in the description of the deportation special as a “great black snake, crawling across the country, gorging itself on luckless, unfriended foreigners.”\footnote{MacDonald, “A Trip on the Deportation Special.”} Indeed, even the laws implementing deportation were given form, as the District Director at El Paso suggested in a 1925 letter.

“What from time to time in my life I have heard the expression ‘Laws with teeth in them,’ etc,” he wrote, and continued, “Following this simile, I can almost fancy hearing the legislation referred to in some quarters as a ravening beast.”\footnote{Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 4026, File 54933/351C.}

Irwin’s dramatic and fanciful novel provides some of the most creative imagery of the embodied deportation train. Describing its course over the night landscape, he described, “With its huge unblinking eye, the train strode through the darkness—a Cyclop walking in his sleep.”\footnote{Irwin, \textit{Strange Passage}, 42.} Elsewhere, he depicted deportees, worn down by the endless noise and movement challenging the train as if a human opponent, “Roar, train, roar. Snort and creak, push on, take us for a long ride, roar you train!”\footnote{Irwin, \textit{Strange Passage}, 37.} Drawing upon the serpentine imagery, Irwin explained of the additional cars being added at Chicago (from Denver, Omaha, Fort Wayne, Kansas City, the South, and the Leavenworth and Joliet Penitentiaries), and again at Fostoria, “the Deportation Special was growing like a triumphal snake-dance.”\footnote{Irwin, \textit{Strange Passage}, 95.} Critics writing about the novel noted its sensory
emphasis on the bodily experience of riding a deportation train, and one observed that “The harshness, foul food, discomfort and smells endured on the train across country are vividly real.”

As the train crept through the “unvarying plains of eastern North Dakota,” the deportees aboard the fictional deportation special in *Strange Passage* began discussing the scenery outside their window. “’This is one damn big country,’ muttered Szuts, the fiery Hungarian radical of the bunch.”

Paul, the Austrian, reminisced about “back where we started,” in Washington state, describing the expanse of timber woods and great fir trees, then the mountains, “beautiful with the snow on their peaks,” then, farmhouses, cattle, and dairies, then “a big city, with all the trains and crisscrosses of railroad tracks, the paved streets, and people driving automobiles.”

Sharing their experiences and memories about the American landscape, other deportees chimed in with accounts of their first time encountering the view of the New York harbor, or the stockyards of Chicago. In a comically heavy-handed scene, the deportees exclaimed about the fact that they really were passing through genuine “amber waves of grain,” and sadly reflected on the patriotic song which had popularized the phrase.

Irwin’s tale provides only a dramatic, imagined version of contact with the American landscape, but it provides an important reminder that there was in fact, something ironic about deportation. At their very point of expulsion from the country, many deportees gained their greatest contact with its full range, and were exposed to new regions, vistas, and cities. As McDonald quickly reflected riding aboard a deportation special in the dead of winter, what deportees could see through their barred windows was “the snow-covered, frozen, interminable

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545 Irwin, *Strange Passage*, 54.
prairie which far away on either side merged into the smoky gray of the winter sky.” Even as the Immigration Bureau removed immigrants from the nation, they exposed them to it in a way that few Americans of the era, even native-born, would ever have the opportunity for, leaving them departing from the country with a greater acquaintance with the American countryside than most could imagine. Coupled with their exposure to a more variegated and multi-ethnic group of fellow travelers than most were likely to ever encounter, this gave deportees something of a paradoxically Americanizing experience. They saw the most of the nation as they left it, interacted with a broader cross-section of its populations than they likely did in their pre-deportation lives, and had unprecedented contact with the range and ever-controlling reach of its institutions.

It was not, however, landscapes alone to which deportees were exposed along their journeys. They were able to observe the political and racial dynamics across the nation at work, such as in the case of a 1925 dispute between the Attorney General of Georgia and the Immigration Bureau. The State of Georgia argued that when deportation trains came through to pick up alien convicts from the Federal Penitentiary at Atlanta, where “it sometimes happens that there will be one or two negroes in a party with five to ten white prisoners,” which, by keeping them in the same train car, was a breach of Georgia State laws about segregation of interstate traffic. Instead, to accommodate the ban against transporting “Negroes” across state lines by train, it became necessary to transfer them to Savannah (technically intrastate transport), and then get them a steamship ticket from there to New York, upon which of course, they were required to travel in steerage. However, even those accommodations posed challenges for the immigration authorities, as state laws prohibited whites and “negroes” from traveling in the same

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546 MacDonald, “A Trip on the Deportation Special.”
coach, thereby making it necessary to have a white Immigration Officer in the car with them. Asking for assistance in smoothing out the situation, the District Director appealed to the Attorney General, explaining, “This office finds itself in an awkward position. Under Federal law it is required to convey these alien prisoners to New York City and it is a violation of the State law for a white guard to take a negro prisoner on a train, unless you agree with the argument advanced…” This startling and revealing incident serves as a reminder that while deportation law may have been federal, the transportation policies required for it to be implemented were not always. As deportation specials snaked across the nation, they did so in patterns shaped by all sorts of local concerns, regulations, racial dynamics, and political agendas.

Although immigrants aboard deportation transports were some of the clearest victims of efforts to constrain the borders of the national body and draw delineations around which residents were truly fit to be Americans, depictions of deported immigrants centered on “melting-pot” representations. It was the motley nature of deportation parties that caught the eye of many observers, who noted that rarely outside a deportation transport could one find such a widely assorted population packed into such a small space. While many immigrants experiencing post-entry deportation proceedings were residents of primarily ethnically homogenous neighborhoods, the groups aboard deportation trains struck many as being a remarkably diverse. Picked up in cities and towns all over the interior of the nation, deportation trains exposed immigrants not only to new parts of the nation, but forced them into long periods in close quarters with a wide range of different people. One of the odd and unintended features of streamlining deportation practices to large train parties was introduction of deportees to a vast array of individuals and ethnic backgrounds.

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547 Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 7592, File 55608/130.
Ironically, for many travelers on deportation trains, their greatest exposure to the diversity of the national population came at the moment, and as a result of the process of, their removal from the country. Rarely did Americans, immigrant or native born, encounter such diverse groupings, and the experience of spending as many as a couple of weeks thrown together in what Jane Perry Clark referred to as “the motley assembly,” must have been a strange experience for deportees.548 One reviewer of Irwin’s novel noted that there were only a handful of other situations, “a prison, a steerage passage, a company of infantry at the front…” where such a “mixed group of the human species is gathered together and battened down under pressure.” Indeed, he argued, “they embrace nearly all economic classes of society, all shades of political opinion, a motley of races, tongues, religions and conditions of economic service,” and share only that they are people “without a country.”549 Alan MacDonald described the deportees upon the train he observed as “this most strangely assorted company of deportees—a far more various company than any I had ever seen or imagined.” This company, he explained, including “worried, broken wives and mothers,” “the pitiful, mumbling, vague-eyed insane,” “the recently recovered sick,” “the former convicts, strong-arm men, prowlers and swindlers,” “young girls still proud and individual,” were all drawn together only by “virtue of laws most all had, in one way or another, defied.”550

As Paul, the Austrian protagonist of Strange Passage observed while sketching his fellow inmates upon the train, “Faces about him were international: cheek bones pressing out against fair skins, fat padded jowls that seemed boneless, hair and eyes pigmented from every tone of the chromatic scale, lines that captured moods from mania to depression. Nordic and Latin and

548 Clark, Deportation of Aliens, 473.
550 MacDonald, “A Trip on the Deportation Special.”
Slavic and Semitic—a map of the world, these faces.” The cast of characters described along the journey were a comically miscellaneous group, featuring almost every immigrant stereotype conceivable, from the aristocratic German to the Greek gunman to the grinning “West Indies Negro”. Such stylized racist caricatures were not limited to fiction, but appeared in journalistic accounts as well. While less abhorrently described, likewise, in MacDonald’s account, where “In these cars was a complete, if limited world, with its valiant ones, its lovers, its philosophers—and its confirmed, congenital villains,” a complete set of ethnic stereotypes was present. It was complete with descriptions of the “Stolid Germans and volatile Irish,” as well as the “regular-featured, blond blue-eyed Englishman” and then, in Chicago, the “less spirited, poorer type of surreptitious immigrant invader,” “sullen” and of a different character.

Even the relatively sympathetic account (in contrast to many anti-immigrant tracts of the time) of deportees in Strange Passage reflects the pathological assumptions about immigrant immorality, and the assignation of stereotypical traits to particular ethnic groups. The Frenchman and the Greek, embodying tropes about hypersexualized ethnicities discuss their love of young girls, 10, 11, 12 years old aboard the train, and the Greek, fresh out of prison, goes around “mentally raping” the women aboard the train. Later, the two fight over the young Scandinavian boy Tor, recently out of juvenile detention, leading him to a confused wariness over their competing desires to have them bunk with him. Meanwhile, Bertha Bascwicz, the “big Polish blonde” suffers from such overwhelming lust and such poor self-control that after becoming aroused while dancing, she busts out of her bunk at night, bares her body, and demands to be taken by whichever man is willing. Alongside these depraved individuals, Irwin introduces us to the mental inferiors of the train, “Unkempt Ranashad, the Persian lunatic” and

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551 Irwin, Strange Passage, 70.
552 MacDonald, “A Trip on the Deportation Special.”
Napoleon, the “lank West Indian Negro.” Portrayed with exaggerated racist tropes, Napoleon’s minstrelsy elements can be best seen in the scene in which, “The gangling Negro sprang into the aisle, great grin on his shiny face, spotted white ducks flapping about his cowhide shoes. Flop-floppety-flop went his big feet, and his long legs began to fly about, clogging, shuffling, doing a buck-and-wing, a cake-walk and Charleston, his bellowing voice accompanying in an improvised song… His eyes were two white lights, his grin showed teeth like two rows of piano keys.”

In another bluntly racist set of stereotypical caricatures, this time not in a work of fiction, one reporter observing the arrival of a deportation special through Buffalo, New York described the party as follows: “In the group was a man returning to an ancestral caste and romantic family traditions; another returns to an African grass hut with a background of tom-toms and witchcraft. Between these extremes, there were criminals, insane, and sick people without claim to citizenship, aliens who had overstayed their legal residence and those who entered the country illegally.” By bringing the process of removal into the public sphere, deportation trains contributed to the creation of a shared (and profoundly racialized) imagination of the “illegal” immigrant and introduced and consolidated a recognizable set of caricatures of “undesirable” migrants.

**Deportation as Spectacle, Art, and Romance**

Beyond the clear function of physically removing those immigrants who had been marked for deportation, deportation trains provided a critical public function. Because deportation specials went through dozens of cities to pick up aliens, sometimes stopping for extended periods to add several more train cars to facilitate the new deportees, they became

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public spectacles, and reports appear of people using deportation train stops as a destination to go and gawk at the departing foreigners. While INS offices, Ellis Island, and courtrooms were all largely shielded from onlookers, deportation trains provided an important outlet for the public to observe the fruits of removal campaigns. Often, they seemed to do so with great relish, gathering at the scheduled train stops or as they passed through towns to watch the imprisoned immigrants meet their punishment. Newspapers of the time often featured stories on deportees being moved out of their cities, and frequently included photographs of the assembled groups of deportees at the train station awaiting departure onboard a deportation special. The shock value of groups of deportees, prepared for removal, with the few possessions they were able to take with them, seemed enhanced in the press when the deportation party contained women and children.

Aside from those who gathered particularly to see deportations, the large numbers of ordinary train travelers must have been struck by the site of large groups of travelers guided by guards and police onto specially designated trains. H. Roger Grant notes that intercity passenger trains peaked in the 1920s, and that “Railroad stations, whether in large communities or small, were vibrant places as patrons awaited thousands of daily runs.”

As railroad historians have often noted, train stations and depots were important public spaces, often at the center of small town life, and a gathering point where people encountered individuals and groups that they might not otherwise come into contact with. Deportations, often invisible except in the cases of public and workplace raids, became spectacles at the point of transportation, and this visibility was central to how the public understood deportation’s place in American society.

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Often, cases of infamous deportees drew particular crowds to watch their departure or passage through towns. The October 1929 deportation party pictured below leaving Chicago included Giuseppe Accardi, an “important gangster.” As often occurred in news accounts of departing deportation trains, a more general story on the deportation party was followed with a picture and detailed life story of its most notorious deportee, in this case, Accardi.\textsuperscript{556} Anna Sage, better known as the “woman in red,” a deportee said to have spotted Dillinger for Federal Agents, was transported to New York for deportation in 1936 as the public eagerly observed. Even those observers who did not know her reputation might have been able to come up with the title, “woman in red,” one reporter stated, noting that her outfit upon the train consisted of a “large red artificial rose at the neck of her dress, large red ear rings, dark red lip rouge and her fingernails were tinted a deep crimson.”\textsuperscript{557} That the fashion choices of an individual deportee attracted an audience demonstrates the extent to which deportees were on display aboard the trains, visible markers of the rising policing of unwelcome immigrant populations.

Observers of deportation trains could at times cross the line from curious spectators to hostile mobs. On one early deportation special passing through Montana, the inspector came through the train and warned the deportees that they had better take down the red I.W.W. paraphernalia they had pasted to the windows, seeing as “The cowboys of this State don’t like I.W.Ws… If they see you coming through with a lot of racket and find out who you are, the might let loose with some fireworks. These cowboys are mighty quick on the trigger hereabouts.”\textsuperscript{558} While this train made it through unscathed, other deportation trains were met with harassment, taunts, and jeers. As Dorothee Schneider makes clear, it was not always hostile

\textsuperscript{556} “Deport 250 in Armed Train: Aliens from Chicago Sent in Big Cleanup,” \textit{Chicago Tribune}, October 20, 1929.
observers who came out to taunt the deportation train passengers. Instead, she explains “In some cities, such as Chicago and Detroit, labor rallies were held in support of the deportees as the train passed by. In Butte, Montana, IWW sympathizers even tried to storm the train. But otherwise neither the deportees themselves nor their supporters managed to be heard.”\textsuperscript{559} The planned attempt by IWW members in Butte was averted when immigration officers were warned of the plot. The deportation cars were then detached, and reattached to a regular train, which made a wide detour, and avoided potential derailing of the deportation transport at Butte. Declaring that the maneuver demonstrated a reaffirmed commitment to the task of identifying deportable immigrants throughout the nation, one newspaper asserted that, “More teeth in the comb that is going over the country can be supplied if necessary.”\textsuperscript{560}

The extent to which deportees were a spectacle for public display and consumption appears in fictional representations as well. At one of the stops in \textit{Strange Passage}, the protagonist bemoans that there wasn’t even a peddler or newsboy around to buy treats from through the window bars, but instead, “Just the curious hangers-on they saw at every stop, the kind from who you couldn’t grub a cigarette or yesterday’s newspaper… They only tried to be funny, yelling, ‘Taxi?’ and ‘Porter? Porter?’ as though they didn’t know you were just like a prisoner.”\textsuperscript{561} Later, the deportation spectators took on a gentler, if still exploitative, role in Irwin’s account. At the stop in Chicago, while waiting for the additional train cars to be attached, “A couple of lady-reporters and a photographer came aboard to interview Mrs. Gomez. They took notes: née Ada Frawley, 31, American citizen being deported to Portugal with a three-

\textsuperscript{559} Schneider, \textit{Crossing Borders}, 141.
\textsuperscript{561} Irwin, \textit{Strange Passage}, 56.
month-old babe in arms… The photographer posed Mrs. Gomez with babe in arms against the bars of the window, then shot his pictures.”

As deportation rates shot up throughout the decade, and the public gawked at immigrant deportation parties being transported out of the nation, the process came to inhabit the public imagination in literature and art in new ways. Reviewing *Strange Passage*, one critic argued that reading the book was “rather like reading a novel that has several incorporated short stories.” “But,” he continued, “sticklers for form may forget their rules in their interest in a problem that is new to American fiction.”

Another literary critic echoed this idea, explaining that while overly concerned with the “romantic theme,” Irwin illuminates “the sociological aspects of a problem which becomes increasingly important as a rising tide of nationalism threatens to inundate the world.” This “problem that is new to American fiction,” found its way not only into literature, but also into art and film, where others provided their own perspectives on “the point that Theodore Irwin wants to make in his remarkable novel, ‘Strange Passage’ is that deportation campaigns have a very human cost.”

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562 Irwin, *Strange Passage*, 96.
565 Chamberlain, “Books of the Times.”
While a fictionalized, and at times absurdly romanticized, version of life upon a deportation train, Irwin’s work nevertheless takes up numerous realistic elements from journalistic accounts in the constructing of his story. The hunger strike initiated by one of the train’s inmates after the food quality on board took yet another dip reflects numerous real accounts of deportees striking against inedible food and unethical exploitation of food contracts in detention centers and aboard trains and ships. Though an escape as widespread (and, at least temporarily, successful) as the one Paul, Stephanie, and their fellow travelers undertake in *Strange Passage* never occurred, newspaper reports of attempted escapes and rioting aboard trains were common throughout the 1920s and 1930s. Immigration Inspector Gates L. Rapp of Washington, who led many of the deportation parties out of the Northwest, was in charge of apprehending an attempted escape of deportees being transferred from the Lehigh Valley railroad to a Jersey City barge. “This is the worst bunch of aliens ever brought East for deportation,” he stated after the attempt at escape through a smashed window. In the midst of the chaos, another deportee, Beulah Harouk, en route to Syria, “took advantage of the excitement to stab herself
with a pair of scissors.” Though it is impossible to know if Irwin read accounts of this incident, the similarities in *Strange Passage*, where a pair of released Walla-Walla inmates file through the window bars of the train and attempt to flee, leaving an opening for a depressed and crippled Lithuanian coal miner to slit his throat and bleed to death in the lavatory, are striking.

Likewise, the scene in which one of the deportees steals a fork from dinner is a nearly exact replication of Alan MacDonald’s account of being allowed aboard a deportation train as a journalist, merely swapping out fork for knife, and having the young lady in question hide the stolen silverware in the folds of a newspaper rather than those of a napkin.

In his review of *Strange Passage*, New York Times book reviewer John Chamberlain touches upon one of the most striking elements of the novel—the fact that it was constructed as a romance novel, with the deportation train itself being the primary plot device to throw the protagonists together. Cramped together in a tiny train car, the two find themselves drawn together as a barrier against the disturbing and odd characters on the train, the harshness of the guards, the cold and lonely nights, and the prospect of being returned, alone, to a land that is no longer home. Upon seeing Stephanie again, nine years after their first meeting, Paul recollects fleeting moments that are hardly conventionally romantic: bribing a man outside the train to give her apples and keep her from starvation, helping her dispose of a fork she had stolen as a weapon, and debating whether to give her a pair of earrings made by the Walla-Walla inmates on board that he won in a game of cards (ultimately deciding she was too classy a young lady to

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567 Irwin, *Strange Passage*, 93.
568 MacDonald, Alan. “A Trip on the Deportation Special.”
bear the idea of prison-made jewelry). As Chamberlain notes, “we have the strange picture of the deportation squad playing Cupid.”

A strange picture indeed, but hardly an uncommon one. Throughout the 1920s and 1930s, stories on deportation often structured themselves around romance. Little caught the imagination of the public like a heart-wrenching tale of two lovers torn apart by deportation (provided of course, that these were the exceptional, worthy immigrants, accidentally caught up in a system designed for more dangerous foreigners). While immigrant aid organizations and protestors focused primarily on deportation as a practice that destroyed families and ripped fathers and mothers from their children, popular cultural depictions tended to emphasize deportation as a possible obstacle to new, exciting instances of romantic love. In film, as well as in novels and newspaper and magazine articles, love stories featured prominently in deportation accounts throughout the 1920s and 1930s, and overcoming the threat of deportation to reunite with a lover allowed for a gratifying cinematic ending. In the 1928 film *Anybody Here Seen Kelly?*, Mitzi goes to America to be with her love Kelly, but a scorned former lover, now a customs official attempts to have her deported before Mitzi saves the day and marries her. *The Mystic*, released in 1925, features a criminal turned good who follows the young Hungarian gypsy he loves abroad after her deportation. *Delicious* (1931) features lovers separated by a variety of highjinks and disguises, but ultimately reunited about the ship the young Scottish woman is being deported upon. While immigration officials struggled with the practical dimensions of an emerging deportation regime and mapped out its operations, the American

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569 Chamberlain, “Books of the Times.”
570 *Anybody Here Seen Kelly?* Directed by William Wyler, 1928. American Film Institute Catalog of Feature Films.
571 *The Mystic*, Directed by Tod Browning, 1925. American Film Institute Catalog of Feature Films.
572 *Delicious*, Directed by David Butler, 1931. American Film Institute Catalog of Feature Films.
public grappled with new opportunities to engage with the “human cost” of deportation, and to make sense of the ramifications of this powerful technology for controlling non-citizens.

Explaining the reason behind his travel aboard the deportation special, MacDonald wrote:

Twelve thousand or more undesirables, I was informed, are annually deported by the United States; and a large share of them are taken to the coasts by the wholesale method of these trains: Deportation specials! Hundreds of humans gathered up as if by a gigantic, continent-wide net, herded into prison cars and ridden under guard to Ellis Island and other Government stations, there to be places on ships bound for their natal-homes. How like Russia that sounded! Could such a thing be done without brutality, with justice and fairness? What was the truth?573

While the “truth” behind deportation specials is an impossible concept, MacDonald’s queries make it clear that deportation transportation in the 1920s and early 1930s captured and confused the American public. Examining this process of mass herding aboard prison cars provides a critical perspective on deportation practice, not in its pure, legal imagination, but in messy logistical reality. By looking at the creation, synchronization, and expansion of machinery for enacting deportations, it is possible to see how deportation grew into such a massive project of social policing and cast such a long shadow into immigrant communities all around the nation.

573 MacDonald, “A Trip on the Deportation Special.”
Conclusion

In October 1954, the Acting Assistant Commissioner of the Detention and Deportation Division sent a memorandum detailing the progression of the case of Anna Sali, aka Anna Sauerli, aka Annie Able, aka Anna Heineman. Anna had been deported for insanity and ended up institutionalized in Germany, where officials were tracking her status. What was striking about her case file, however, was that it was a mere continuation of a file that had been started 35 years earlier, in 1919. Immigration officials had attempted, and failed, to deport Anna to both Canada and then to her native Russia. Anna and four other Russian natives had been deported together in May 1923, but the Soviet Government had refused to recognize their travel documents and allow them to enter, at which point four were taken to Hamburg, while another was taken to Italy, and all had been kept in institutions for the insane at the expense of the Immigration Service. The commissioner went on to note that by 1941, the department was still paying for the detention of “some or all” of these deportees, but that “only one survived WWII.” Anna, it was concluded in 1954, should be kept abroad rather than returned to the United States.

Anna and Otto Heineman, the father of her three children, had been institutionalized in 1919 at the State Hospital for the Insane in St. Peter, Minnesota, while their children were put into custody at St. Joseph’s Orphanage. The couple and their three children had first entered the United States via Canada in 1913, reportedly on a passport issued by the Ukrainian Diplomatic Mission. The family entered the country at Pingree, North Dakota and moved to Windom, Minnesota (in a common form of unofficial removal of potential burdens from towns) with the assistance of the citizens of Pingree, as they had been suffering from “lack of food and frost bites.” Otto had been institutionalized for insanity brought on by syphilis and was slated for deportation to Canada, but died before it could be effected.
Even before Anna’s deportation, the children were returned to Canada as public charges, where they were put into a “Children’s Shelter” in Regina, Saskatchewan. Anna, too, was scheduled for removal to Canada based on the assumption of her matrimonial citizenship via Heineman. In spite of her mental illness, Anna’s deportation warrant, like so many others apprehended for deportation at asylums, was officially issued because she was deemed to have entered without authorization and to have become “likely to become a public charge.” However, as immigration officials discovered, Anna was not the wife of Heineman, a U.S. native and naturalized citizen of Canada. She was in fact, the “legal wife” of Nicholas Sali, who had resided for a time in Canada, but possessed only Russian citizenship. District immigration officials at Minneapolis then reached out to Sali and discovered Anna had deserted him in Canada, but used his Ukrainian passport to establish a deportation case for removing Anna to Soviet controlled Odessa.

After her failed deportation, by 1926, debate over the fate of Anna and the other Russian deportees stuck in European insane asylums was still going strong, and Comptroller General himself had intervened to ask whether there was any prospect of their delivery to their countries of origin. However, the Immigration Bureau concluded, “it is impossible to fix any date in the future when they will be able to deliver them to their final destination.” Subsequent correspondence revealed in 1937 that further attempts had been made to appeal for her removal to the Soviet Union, but “the Soviet authorities in Moscow have definitely declined to permit the return of the above named alien to the Soviet Union,” and as such “the warrant of deportation will remain outstanding.” In the 11 years from their initial deportation to 1934, these five immigrants in detention in Hamburg and Italy had racked up an expense of roughly $37,000 thousand, averaging about $670 per year per person. To even continue to leave these individuals
institutionalized in Germany, the U.S. Government had to appeal to the Hamburg Senate in 1928 to allow these migrants to remain in the Hamburg Lunatic Asylum.\textsuperscript{574}

The paper trail in Anna’s immigration case goes cold in 1954, leaving her fate unknown. But as a roughly 62-year-old woman who had been detained in the Hamburg Lunatic Asylum for over thirty years (at tremendous cost to the U.S. government), remarkably surviving World War II and the mass murder of disabled people in Germany, it seems likely that she died in detention in Hamburg. Anna’s path, like so many other deportees of the period, was far from linear. Born in a town near Odessa in what was now Soviet controlled Ukraine with her husband, then living in Canada, then Minnesota, Anna spent at least half of her life in a sort of deportation-limbo in a country that had no connection to her origins or her chosen migration path. Her immensely complex case, startling in its twists and turns, encapsulates many of the features of the modern deportation state throughout this project (though perhaps it best highlights where they fell short of their goals).

The case reflects the many levels of space and authority Anna had to traverse to reach her ultimate destination. It illuminates the transnational paths taken by deportees, as well as the (sometimes insurmountable) challenges posed in negotiating with other countries for the return of their citizens. It also demonstrates the effort to shape the nation through the removal of those who, like Anna, were deemed to be public burdens and unfit for citizenship. Anna’s own experiences reveal that the removal project enacted by the state was ambitious, aspirational, and ultimately, curtailed by realities outside of what immigration policy makers had been able to imagine. Anna’s story also highlights the critical role that the institutional spaces of the state (both in the U.S. and abroad) played in the evolution of deportation practice, as well as how

\textsuperscript{574} Immigration and Naturalization Service, Record Group 85, Box 3355, File 54635/9.
deportation initiated new forms of institutional contact and coordination. It also, perhaps most importantly, reminds us of the intimate human experiences hidden behind the legislation and statistics of immigrant removal.

Like Anna’s case, this project more generally demonstrates the ironies of the growing deportation state in the 1920s. Even as the state sought to exercise an unprecedented degree of vigor in seeking out and removing “undesirable” immigrants after their entry, it continued to struggle with the tremendous limitations on their practical ability to fulfill their goals. In fact, what emerges most clearly from many of the deportation cases discussed throughout this project is the confusion, messiness, and fragmentation of this emerging project. The deportation regime brought together train companies, prison wardens, city police forces, bureaucratic officials, and foreign consuls in a previously unimaginable network for removal, but at the same time, struggled immensely to impose order and standardization on this project. The number of immigrants deported multiplied five-fold over the course of the decade, and yet, even as officials solidified the infrastructural capacity necessary for this escalation, they were frequently thwarted in their efforts to deport individuals, and constantly decried the constraints upon their powers of removal.

At the global level, the United States celebrated its powers of sovereignty and its legal right to deport any individual who transgressed its immigration laws. They coordinated and collaborated with other nations to establish a broader system of tracking and documentation for the removal of immigrants, and even used deportation as an informal mechanism of foreign policy. In practice, however, they were constrained by the rights of other nations to deny passports and reentry, by the denial of transportation rights through intermediary countries, and through complex and confounding shifts in national borders and imperial holdings. However,
even more embarrassing was the reality that in spite of the vast ostensible powers of the federal government, a deportation could often be stalled or even prevented by an individual’s refusal to disclose his/her own nationality or place of birth. At the same time, the government’s policy of policing its population through deportation often gained it harsh criticism, which was most frequently phrased in a language of foreignness, and with pointed accusations that the more the U.S. policed its own population, the less American it became. Deportation both solidified the boundaries of the modern nation-state (and their powers of self-determination and exclusivity), and yet, often revealed how unfinished this process was, and how illegible national belonging continued to be.

At the national level, the growing deportation infrastructure provided clear evidence of the growing bureaucratic capacity of the state, and the nation’s ability to determine the composition of its own population. It also allowed for creation of stricter boundaries around rights and privileges of citizenship, and the establishment of punitive consequences for non-citizenship. The U.S. practiced these powers not only within the continental states, but in their territories as well, demonstrating their ability to police territorial populations, even as they remained uncertain of their assimilability within the nation. However, at the same time, the expansion of the bureaucratic infrastructure for deportation was often at odds with the Congressional goals in enacting immigration legislation and reflected deep tensions between the legislative and enforcement branches of the government. Even as deportation reached peak numbers by the mid-1920s, the Immigration Service consistently had to curtail and at times entirely suspend their pursuance of deportation cases because of the continued insufficiency of Congressional appropriations. Vigorous immigration legislation, it became clear, was not always in sync with the practical and logistical needs of vigorous immigration enforcement.
As this project has explained, one of the most critical innovations of this period was the coordination and communication between a wide network of Immigration Service field offices throughout the nation and the local officials within their districts. In a real disjuncture from the past, the federal bureau actively coordinated between field offices on a scheduled basis to determine their deportable populations and arrange for their efficient removal. This more thoroughly integrated the project of policing immigration throughout the nation, rather than solely at its ports and land borders. However, at the same time, this also meant that the Service was at the mercy of localities to identify, investigate, and gather and detain their own potential deportees, and this played out in uneven and distinct ways all around the country. Because the service was perpetually underfunded and understaffed, their work necessitated active local initiatives to grow at the pace it did, which meant that the agendas served by those enacting the groundwork of deportation were not always those of the federal government. Instead, they reflected local prejudices, labor needs, political dynamics, and infrastructural capacity. The deportation state could knit together these localities, and link them together on train routes, but to a startling extent, the localities and their populations and officials set the tone for deportation’s actual implementation.

At the institutional level, as well, the growth of the deportation state reflected a paradoxical tension between expanded power, centralization, and infrastructure, and a flailing, inefficient, and at times, ad hoc effort to impose order on chaos. Few elements contributed more to the increased deportations of the decade than the regular, scheduled efforts to assess, document, and remove the foreign-born in institutions of the state, from prisons to hospitals to poorhouses. Because these populations were already assembled, vulnerable, and documented, they provided a ripe hunting grounds for deportation officials who culled their lists for
deportable immigrants. However, the lack of funding often made these efforts moot, as local officials were asked to gather lists of potential deportees, but then perpetually told that their funds could not be extended to remove nearly as many as could be apprehended. As the Commissioner General of Immigration lamented in 1927, there were over 113,000 “alien inmates” of various penal and charitable institutions, and “how many of these were subject to deportation could only be ascertained by individual and in many cases, long-drawn-out investigations—interview of friends, relatives, and the like, scattered throughout the country.”

Even as the deportation state grew to massive proportions, its operations remained “scattered” and reliant on voluntary participation and local initiative. Furthermore, the institutional coordination led to tension and dispute between local and institutional officials, who chafed at having to shoulder the financial burden of detaining deportable immigrants, and the Immigration Service, which was unable, due to their limited resources, to shift this burden to the federal government in the form of transportation expenses. Although institutional officials hoped that the new deportation legislation of the preceding decades would provide them with the opportunity to clear their rosters, they were frequently frustrated by specific wording, time limits, and complex criteria for removal, and were forced to develop new strategies for using the categorization in flexible and expansive ways to effect their goals.

While it has been remarkably absent from the scholarship, the process of deportation was far from over when the order to deport was passed. Deportees had to be housed and eventually transported to the nation’s boundary and beyond. Like each of the other facets of the process, the experiences of deportees in detention and transit were marked by deep inconsistencies and by a messy, uphill struggle to impose centralization and systemization. Throughout the decade,

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deportation officials made great headway in creating streamlined and regularized train schedules for deportation in order to maximize the number of deportations which could be effected within budget, and courted competitive bids and handouts like free guards from private transportation companies in order to make the most of their money. At the same time, detention sites remained insufficient, and deportation officials had to cobble together a range of solutions for holding immigrants, from private homes to local prisons. Furthermore, transportation itself was often the site of conflict, protest, and public spectacle.

This project has advanced a number of connected arguments about the significance of deportation during the 1920s. Deportation practice did not always mesh with its official policy dictates, so the decisions and logistics of its on-the-ground implementation are in many ways more revealing. Deportation increasingly provided an opportunity for the project of policing immigrants to include a much broader cross-section of the country, both geographically and in terms of active participants. Rather than the sole purview of Congressional legislators or Ellis Island inspectors, deportation came to integrate and represent the interests and agendas of a wide array of actors: municipal police forces, prison wardens and hospital superintendents, private citizens, foreign officials, the local press, and many others.

As post-entry deportations increased, the deportation state also cast an expansive and ever-growing shadow over immigrant populations and reshaped the experiences of non-citizens as well as their relationship to the state. In doing so, it helped to consolidate non-citizenship as a distinctly disciplinary identity. Deportation, particularly in the vast application of the “likely to become a public charge” provision and for medical, mental health, and criminal charges, also more firmly established the benefits and institutions of the state as being the sole right of citizens. These shifts, did not take place through legislative proclamation, but were instead result
of practices honed throughout the decade, as modern citizenship was given new meaning through new technologies of control and apparatuses of exclusion. However, I emphasize, deportation, as the physical process of putting non-citizen bodies in motion, also redefined citizenship in another critical way: as the right to space within the nation.

The structure of this project also reflects my insistence that while scholars have largely understood deportation chronologically and through policy changes, for deportees themselves, the experience was largely a spatialized process of uprooting from one location and being coercively thrust into another. I highlight the levels of authority that immigrants were subjected to throughout their deportations—from the institutions at which they were apprehended, to the city streets and ethnic neighborhoods where they were rounded up by local police, to the nation they traversed during the expulsion, to the transnational transportation and global politics which determined their paths of removal. However, the insistence on the importance of space is about more than the experiences of deportees. It also reflects my argument that even as this period represented a critical increase in state power over individuals, this power did not necessarily or exclusively manifest in the form of federal control, but instead was dispersed through a range of institutions, authorities, and governmental agencies.

I have also advanced the argument that deportation took on a particular and distinctive form in the 1920s, as officials aspired to creating a deportation apparatus vaster and more encompassing than the small, reactive, and limited one which had preceded it. In spite of the common perception of the 1920s as a period when the national state was receding and there was a conservative retreat from big government, deportation represented a great expansion of the state bureaucracy. Deportation instead grew out of earlier Progressive era efforts to systematize the powers of the state and its institutions and the Immigration Service through the decade
worked to create an integrated network of bureaucratic employees, local authorities, and institutional officials to carry out the work of policing the nation’s non-citizen population. Even as the Quota Acts and overseas inspection made exclusion more clear-cut and limited the role of the Immigration Service, post-entry deportations provided a tremendous opportunity for discretion, and the uneven patterns of application observed throughout this project demonstrate how widely this discretion was utilized. No longer was deportation merely the enforcement tool of a specific external agenda (such as anti-radicalism or anti-Chinese racism), but deportation now served as a goal in and of itself and one which took on different resonance and possibilities for different actors across the nation.

At a moment of mass migration and unprecedented mobility, the development of the deportation state represented a critical new effort to curtail movement. This required and was facilitated by modern advancements in tracking and documentation, including across cities and states, and even over national borders. It also contributed to a growing administrative capacity, an unprecedented degree of state surveillance over non-citizen communities and a shift in the relationship between the individual and the powers of the state. Importantly, while the development of the expulsion capacity of the government was a critical form of state building throughout this period, one of the striking elements is the range of actors who were empowered in this process, and how even low-level bureaucratic employees were able to make massively important decisions about what kind of people could be Americans and what “threats” to national well-being were most dangerous. While in some ways, the Immigration Service started the decade as just a beleaguered, underfunded agency within the Department of Labor, frantically trying to capitalize on anti-immigrant sentiment and expand its own powers and funding, it did, in critical ways, become a real force to be reckoned with over time. Though the networks of
institutions, officials, and governmental authorities which constituted the nascent deportation state were perhaps not a full-fledged or centralized bureaucracy by the end of the decade, they had made critical steps in that direction.

The immense chronological span of Anna’s deportation case also prompts an exploration of the vital legacy of 1920s deportation practices. As scholars have noted, deportation practice continued to expand throughout the twentieth century, accelerating in its final decades, and exploding in the early twenty-first century. Average yearly deportations have increased roughly 200 fold since the 1920s, and the peak number of 438,421 removals in 2013 dwarfs the rates of the 1920s, which were unprecedented for their time. What has been less fully explored, however, is how the infrastructure and machinery for deportation put into place in the 1920s has profoundly shaped the practice’s growth in the decades to come. Immigration officials in subsequent decades were aided by the initiation of streamlined, systematized practices for identifying and tracking deportable immigrants in the nation’s institutions, for negotiating with foreign nations to acquire passports and transportation permissions, for coordinating with local officials, for detaining immigrants and arranging the transit to the nation’s borders and ports, and for securing sufficient appropriations from Congress for funding the entire project. While these technologies of control have advanced in ways that would have been unimaginable to immigration officials 90 years ago, the same basic impulses motivate the identification and apprehension of unwanted immigrant populations at present.

576 Ana Gonzalez-Barrera and Jens Manuel Krogstad, “U.S. Deportations of Immigrants Reach Record High in 2013,” October 2, 2014, Pew Research Center Website, www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/10/02/u-s-deportations-of-immigrants-reach-record-high-in-2013/ The article notes importantly that not only was this an all-time high, but that the year 2013 also witnessed a reversal of recent years in that the percentage of deportees who were criminals in fact dropped.
In the contemporary moment, when the American deportation has reached its peak numbers and far surpassed the rates of earlier decades, we can continue to see how the institutionalization and bureaucratization of the Progressive era Bureau of Immigration shapes enforcement. The creation and evolution of programs such as CAP (Criminal Alien Program), a “jail status check” which screens federal, state, and local prisons for removable immigrants, and Secure Communities, a 2008 information-sharing project between local law enforcement and ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement), are only modernized, computerized versions of systems of coordination, reporting, and streamlined removal consolidated in the 1910s and 1920s. These programs have attracted attention and criticism from immigrant rights activists and some local governments, generating debate strikingly similar to that of the 1920s over the appropriate ways to decide which immigrants ought to be removed as threats to the national body, as well as the power of non-federal governmental bodies to shape deportation enforcement at the local level.

Over 85 years after the deportation drive of 1926, Chicago again found itself in the spotlight in late March of 2011 because of the tensions between local and national authority regarding deportation of criminal aliens. This time however, Chicago, rather than pressing for deportation for its own agenda and embarking on a plan for mass deportation which the federal government only signed onto late, and abandoned early, was taking a stance against federal government pressure for deportation. It was one of many local governments that attempted to opt-out of the controversial Secure Communities initiative for tracking and deporting of criminals. Still at stake, just as before, were the political agendas behind the rhetoric of rescuing the country from alien crime, a sentiment expressed by Cook County Sheriff Thomas Dart, who inquired, “The original concept was to get the really bad people out of the country, but are those
the only ones you’re getting?" In the present, as in the past, deportation remains central to American society because of its critical role not only in determining and policing national boundaries, and defining Americanism, but also because of its central place in determining the balance of power between distinct levels of government power.

The recent case of Isidro Macario, deported from Boston to Guatemala in early 2016 echoes a common narrative among contemporary immigrants—Macario had committed a minor crime many years ago and had otherwise lived an inconspicuous life with his wife and four children, three of whom are American citizens. Despite President Obama’s assertion in 2014 that his administration would diverge from its earlier practices and emphasize “felons, not families,” immigration activists have pointed to the continued removals of immigrants guilty of minor or no crimes. Macario, who fled a repressive and violent regime in Guatemala to which he lost his father at the age of 23, settled in Lynn, Massachusetts. As a young man, he was arrested for drunk driving and rear ending a car, and was given two years’ probation. In spite of his strong claims to being a model non-citizen, his twenty-five years of residence in the country, thousands of dollars of legal fees, and the extensive efforts of a number of advocates to overturn his order of deportation, he was deported in January, 2016. “Mr. Macario is a priority as defined by the executive action issued on Nov. 20, 2014,” ICE spokesman Shawn Neudauer explained, “in that he is an alien convicted of a significant misdemeanor.”

577 Kari Lydersen, “Documents Reveal Pressure to Comply With Program to Deport Immigrants,” New York Times: Chicago News Cooperative, March 26, 2011, A25A. Local municipal and county leaders were not alone in their condemnation of the Secure Communities Program, and around the same time, Illinois Governor Patrick Quinn joined the governors of Massachusetts and New York in attempting to pull out of the program. Jerry Stermer, a senior advisor to Quinn was quoted as saying his initial understanding of the program was that it would go after “murderers and rapists and arsonists, the most serious,” but that when his office discovered that fewer than 20% of deportees had been convicted of a serious crime, they changed their position on the program. See Gretchen Gavett, “Why Three Governors Challenged Secure Communities,” Frontline, October 18, 2011, www.pbs.org/wgbh/frontline/article/why-three-governors-challenged-secure-communities/
579 Ibid.
Following neatly with the now-common trope of the “deserving” immigrant who ought to be spared from the gears of the deportation machinery designed to apprehend individuals far more dangerous and threatening to the national well-being, Macario’s case relied on his strong record as a church leader, diligent laborer, and responsible, heteronormative family man. In recent years, many deportation organizations, particularly those led by youth organizers, have called for an end to the reliance on this “good immigrant” narrative. They have argued that they shouldn’t have to rely on their “perfection”, their bright, college-bound futures, or their contributions to society to be treated with rights and respects similar to those granted citizens. As one deportation activist explained in her eloquent response to President Obama’s dichotomy of felons versus families, “We protest to reclaim our humanity… that is why we say ‘not one more deportation’ and why we won’t fall for the divisions created by politicians that ask us to choose between felons and families… Everyone—particularly victims of the international predatory economy that pushes us to migrate as well as those who are caught in the prison-industrial complex—deserves to be here.”

In spite of these staunch efforts to reclaim the deportation narrative, however, the falsely assumed correlation between crime and immigrants continues to be one of the most enduring legacies of the early twentieth century, and one of the most powerful motivators and excuses for the ever-expanding deportation regime.

However, while criminal deportations make up a massive proportion of contemporary deportations, and remain as one of the clearest legacies of the transformations deportation practice underwent during the 1920s, they continue to exist in tandem with other forms of institutional removals. Together, these practices demonstrate that the concern with policing the national body for those who might be either morally or bodily deficient, has only grown and

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evolved. There has also been attention in recent years to the practice of “medical repatriation,” otherwise known as “medical dumping,” of non-citizen patients who are pressured or coerced into removal when they cannot pay for their medical services, often at risk to their health. The Center for Social Justice explains of this practice that “acting alone or in concert with private transportation companies, such hospitals are functioning as unauthorized immigration officers and deporting seriously ill or injured immigrant patients.”

While occurring outside of the formal deportation process (like the repatriations of the early twentieth century), this practice echoes the efforts of immigration agents in the 1920s to eliminate any migrants who didn’t possess healthy, hearty enough bodies to be considered useful potential laborers.

Among the most disturbing aspects of the contemporary deportation state is the clear profit motive, including the competition of private companies and local governments for lucrative detention contracts. Building off of the 1920s businesses who appealed to the immigration service for an opportunity to transport or feed deportees, modern corporations have escalated deportation into a strikingly profitable endeavor. Deportation activists have joined with prison organizers in decrying the damages done by the for-profit prison industry, which thrives on the incarceration of citizens and non-citizens alike. While the for-profit prison industry in its modern incarnation is a new phenomenon, the profit margin in immigrant removal has deep roots, and expulsion has long been an enticing business opportunity for private companies. While the massive modern network of detention centers is a far cry from the cobbled together system of county jails and rented rooms in private homes, the systematic train networks of the 1920s were a major impetus for the development of a broad system for the detention of immigrants awaiting removal throughout the country.

Deportation practice has become far more focused on a single national group, and thus detention and deportation infrastructure are more densely clustered in the U.S. southwest than they were a century ago, to correlate with the largest concentration of Mexican immigrants. However, as was the case in the 1920s, deportation continues to be a project that reaches into all corners of the country, including its outermost and most tenuous reaches, and continues to spread the policing of American belonging far beyond the borders. A recent report on the growth of the detention industry explains that of the 637 detention centers currently in existence, there is at least one or more facility in each of the fifty states, and even more strikingly, in Puerto Rico, Guam, the Virgin Island, and the Northern Mariana Islands.\textsuperscript{582} Furthermore, today, as nearly a century ago, deportation reflects the intertwined interests of profit and policing of non-citizens. Starting in the early twentieth century, deportable migrants have been increasingly reduced to train fare and price-per-bed calculations. As anti-deportation activists have noted, the competition of private companies for ICE facilities is “a process that both lines corporate pockets with taxpayer money and turns human beings into commodities.”\textsuperscript{583} As of 2014, in spite of claims that DHS was conducting more targeted and selective detention practices, the agency was budgeting up to $5.6 million per day for immigrant detention, with a capacity of 31,800 detainees at over 250 facilities around the country. By 2011, nearly half of all immigrant detainees were housed by private prison companies, including the Corrections Corporation of America and the GEO group, which have reported billions of dollars in detention profits over recent years.\textsuperscript{584}

\textsuperscript{582} Walter Ewing, “New Data Sheds Light on Sprawling, Often For-Profit, Immigration Detention System,” website of the American Immigration Council, April 26, 2016, immigrationimpact.com/2016/04/26/immigration-detention-for-profit.
\textsuperscript{583} Detention Watch Network, http://www.detentionwatchnetwork.org/aboutdetention.
By the contemporary moment, that detention infrastructure has grown into a behemoth of incarceration, abuses, and profit. From the creation of the first private prison in the U.S. as an immigrant detention center in Houston, Texas, the revenue involved in immigrant detention has burgeoned. As historian Greg Grandin explains of the recent resurgence of deportations of Central American migrants since the start of 2016, “the deportation regime is completely dependent on the interests of privatized detention companies, with an over-militarized and arbitrary federal bureaucracy that terrorizes those that live under its thrall.”\textsuperscript{585} However, while the massive network of detention centers looms large over immigrant communities, it has managed to stay, as one organization described it, “nearly invisible… vast, ever-changing, and shrouded in secrecy.”\textsuperscript{586} Unlike the relatively inefficient, disorganized, but largely transparent detention practices of the early deportation regime, the modern system is “sprawling, labyrinthine,” and intentionally designed to be out of the public scrutiny.\textsuperscript{587}

ICE, the modern incarnation of the Immigration Service, has evolved and extended many of the features of deportation practice. In uneven, complex ways, deportation practice had set the IS apart as an increasingly modern bureaucratic agency in the 1920s due to its expansive and diverse powers, its infrastructural sophistication, and its vast network of connected districts and institutions, all of which have grown immensely in the ensuing century. In considering the modern functioning of immigration policy making, Oliver Belcher and Lauren Martin note that it “is not governed by the constitutional norms that apply to domestic laws and social policies,” but exists as “a mix of foreign and domestic policymaking.” This regime, they explain, integrates

\textsuperscript{586} Detention Watch Network, http://www.detentionwatchnetwork.org/aboutdetention
aspects of “labor market regulation,” “law enforcement,” “population management,” and “border control.” These seemingly disparate social functions were in fact brought together by the nascent deportations state as early as the 1920s, with tremendous ramifications for the development of modern practices of social control and migration regulation. By creating a deportation infrastructure both powerful enough, and ambitious enough, to take on all of these agendas, immigration officials in the early twentieth century re-centered deportation from a peripheral practice of migration restriction to the heart of regulating and controlling the modern nation-state, and this centrality has only continued to grow.

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