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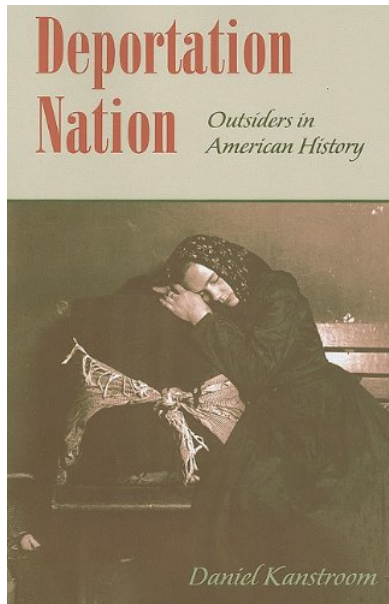

The danger of deportation hangs over the head of virtually every non-citizen in the United States. In the complexities and inconsistencies of immigration law, one can find a reason to deport almost any noncitizen at almost any time. In recent years, the system has been used with unprecedented vigor against millions of deportees. We are a nation of immigrants - but which ones do we want, and what do we do with those that we don't? These questions have troubled American law and politics since colonial times. "Deportation Nation" is a chilling history of communal self-idealization and self-protection. The post-Revolutionary Alien and Sedition Laws, the Fugitive Slave laws, the Indian 'removals', the Chinese Exclusion Act, the Palmer Raids, the internment of the Japanese Americans - all sought to remove those whose origins suggested they could never become 'true' Americans. And for more than a century, millions of Mexicans have conveniently served as cheap labor, crossing a border that was not official until the early twentieth century and being sent back across it when they became a burden. By illuminating the shadowy corners of American history, Daniel Kanstroom shows that deportation has long been a legal tool to control immigrants' lives and is used with increasing crudeness in a globalized but xenophobic world.

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