Deporting Radicals, Deporting La Migra: The Hayat Case in Lodi
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DEPORTING RADICALS, DEPORTING LA MIGRA

The Hayat Case in Lodi

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ABSTRACT

This article will examine the nature of deportation as a logic that upholds state sovereignty and constructions of citizenship through technologies of exclusion, discipline, and ‘removal’. Regulations of immigrant populations by the state rely on notions of unwanted bodies that contaminate or threaten the national body politic and so must be cleansed from national territory. My research focuses on the impact of post-9/11 policies of surveillance, detention, and deportation of Muslim immigrants that were part of the US state’s War on Terror and were bolstered by ideas of protecting ‘national security’ from ‘internal’ and ‘external’ terrorist threats. The paranoia and nativism accompanying this siege mentality overlooks the ways in which deportation is, on the one hand, an economic policy of the neoliberal state that disciplines labor and depresses wages, and on the other, is also a political instrument for repressing movements that oppose US polices at home and abroad.

Key Words ◇ deportation ◇ repression ◇ resistance ◇ US imperialism ◇ War on Terror

Introduction

Deportation is a rather euphemistic word. It sounds vaguely like embarking, disembarkation, or deboarding, one of those strangely technical terms that the aviation industry uses for getting off a plane. Deportation actually means getting kicked out of a country. The expulsion of individuals by the state is also called ‘removal’ in the US, which is more accurate but equally ambiguous and impersonal.1 The image of unwanted persons being sent by the government to their home countries assumes the legality of the process and the illegality, or at least undesirability, of the deported persons. As such,
deportation conjures up fear in those who potentially could be deported, and evokes some degree of reassurance or acquiescence in those who believe that the nation is thus rid of persons who do not deserve to reside within its borders. There is a moral economy that is deeply embedded in deportation that constructs the virtue of citizenship. There are those ‘good’ citizens whose belonging in the nation state is unquestioned and those who could be expelled because their status is legally problematic or because they are viewed as ‘threats’ to the nation.

Deportation connotes a moral judgment of worthiness and desirability that differentiates between those who are deported and those who are not, but this line is not as fixed and self-evident as it appears in mainstream discourse about ‘illegal immigrants’ and ‘un-American’ dissidents. The ongoing War on Immigrants waged by the state, and intensified in the 1990s, has infused the public imagination with the specter of ‘hordes’ of dark-skinned immigrants from ‘alien’ backgrounds invading the nation by crossing its borders illegally, by land, sea, and air, or living furtively within its borders in illegal status while leeching off the state’s social services (Inda, 2006). The War on Terror has deployed similar rhetoric to target Muslim, Arab, and South Asians who are undocumented immigrants, as well as permanent residents and even citizens assumed to be ‘threats’ to national security—a potential ‘fifth column’ within the nation. Deportation of these unwanted immigrant bodies appears to function as a cleansing of these unwanted bodies from the nation, so that the national body politic is freed of these contaminants (Peutz, 2006). Underlying the moral panic about expelling these polluting bodies is a racist regime of governmentality that fuels xenophobic hysteria and paranoia about individuals and groups that are sullying or destroying the nation. The term ‘extraordinary rendition’ is similarly a euphemism for expelling individuals who are presumably ‘terrorist threats’ to their home countries where they can be tortured without US culpability, as in the case of Maher Arar, a Canadian citizen who was deported to Syria by the US and later cleared of links to terrorist groups. In such cases, deportation is not just about exporting detainees but a strategy for outsourcing torture to cleanse the nation from further guilt and absolve the state from responsibility for its atrocities.

Deportation is taken for granted as a remedial device that the state has no choice but to use, in order to maintain its integrity and security in response to unwanted pollutants. However, I argue that deportation is actually a constitutive logic of the neoliberal, imperial state. Neoliberal capitalism envisions citizens as productive, self-reliant individuals who are free of the dependence created by the welfare state, and as consumers of social services that are increasingly privatized in the neoliberal state (Miller, 1993). The privatization of citizenship in the neoliberal state has diminished the right of citizens to public goods and services which are allocated according to individual ‘worthiness’ and not by right. The domestic
regulation of labor and subjection of immigrants is tied to the US state’s policies of global military, political, and economic domination that have historically relied on both direct and indirect methods of control (Harvey, 2003; Mamdani, 2004). US imperialism is characterized by nebulous, non-territorial forms of domination that do not resemble traditional forms of territorial ‘colonialism’—what some call ‘neo-colonialism’—and blur the boundaries of ‘formal’ and ‘informal’ empire (Ahmad, 2004).2 US imperialism has generally enforced its political projects through client states, with the help of complicit elites, and covert or proxy wars (Magdoff, 2003; Mamdani, 2004), a situation that has changed somewhat after 9/11 with the US war on Afghanistan and direct occupation of Iraq. But US empire continues to rely on the twin processes of foreign coercion and domestic repression. Global imperial power and neoliberal capitalism go hand in hand, for ‘the hidden hand of the market will never work without a hidden fist’ (Koshy, 2003: 169), and repression is necessary to discipline citizens and crush dissent against imperial policies. US foreign policy is linked to the ‘policing of domestic racial tensions’ and disciplining of subordinated populations through racial and class hierarchies at home (Pease, 1993: 31), as I will demonstrate in this article.

Thus the logic of deportation, in my view, is both economic and political for it supports US policies of neoliberal capitalism and of political domination and repression. Deportation in the US is not an exceptional phenomenon in response to exigencies of infiltration or invasion, but is actually part of the normative regime of controlling and disciplining bodies (Ong, 2006: 6). Deportation is a daily technology of subjection for regulating citizens, migrants, and workers by a state in which repression and war, at home or overseas, are not a ‘state of exception’ but rather the everyday state of emergency in US empire (Agamben, 2005: 22; Hardt and Negri, 2001: 17). The national consensus for US foreign policies is strengthened through historical processes of scapegoating ‘outsiders’ and conflating internal and external enemies (Stoler, 2006: 12) that link the domestic and foreign fronts of US imperialism. In this article, I argue that deportation, too, links both the overseas and homeland arenas of imperial control.

**Deportation’s Neoliberal Logic**

This article demonstrates that deportation is both an economic and political strategy of the imperial state. I will be focusing here primarily on the political uses of deportation policy, but I want to note that the economic and political logics of deportation are distinct but ultimately overlap, to ensure a docile workforce and target politically threatening dissent—goals that converge in some instances, as I will discuss later. Aihwa Ong observes that
the neoliberal state relies on ‘a biopolitical mode of governing that centers on the capacity and potential of individuals and the population as living resources that may be harnessed and managed by governing regimes’ (2006: 6). Deportation is one of the ‘spatial practices that engage market forces’ by controlling and recruiting certain pools of workers for the neoliberal state to ensure its competitiveness and productivity in the global economy (Ong, 2006: 6). Immigration law regulates the flow of labor across national borders through immigrant visas and documents that determine who can enter and for how long, based on work and educational credentials. Deportation policy, which determines who must leave, works in tandem with this management of the entry of immigrant labor. The threat of expulsion is necessary for regulating economic citizenship for it disciplines immigrant labor and depresses wages. Deportation laws have historically performed this function ever since the 1888 deportation statute was promulgated to regulate the flow of cheap, foreign (mainly Chinese) labor (Hing, 2004: 209–10).

Furthermore, Nicholas De Genova (2002: 438–40) points out that it is ‘deportability, and not deportation per se’ that is crucial for neoliberal capitalism, given its reliance on cheap immigrant labor that is undocumented and hence pliant: ‘The category “illegal alien” is a profoundly useful and profitable one that effectively serves to create and sustain a legally vulnerable—and hence, relatively tractable and thus “cheap”—reserve of labor.’ Deportation, or specifically the legal production of the category of deportability, is an economic strategy of the neoliberal state that requires the presence of non-citizen and undocumented labor. The heightened fear of deportation produced by the War on Terror ensures that wages will continue to be depressed and immigrant workers will be even more hesitant to organize collectively and more intensely subjected to economic exploitation. Yet the implications of this economic logic of deportation and deportability are rarely made explicit in state policies and legislation, unlike policies that openly target political dissenters for presumably posing a threat to ‘national security’. This makes it difficult to enact strategies of resistance that challenge the core of this logic rather than simply asserting that ‘good immigrants’ are hard-working, productive, and deserve to stay.

As Ong (2006: 19) argues, ‘The neoliberal exception thus pries open the seam of sovereignty and citizenship, generating successive degrees of insecurity for low-skilled citizens and migrants who will have to look beyond the state for the safeguarding of their rights.’ Yet despite the interest in transnational movements, the possibility of what some have called ‘postnational citizenship’ (Soysal, 1996) or ‘global citizenship’ (Hardt and Negri, 2001) remains ambiguous, given that individual and collective rights still remain largely tied to territorially bounded nation states (Shafir, 2004). Political movements, too, continue to address their claims for immigrant and civil rights to the nation state as the guarantor of rights. Immigrant rights
organizing in the US after 9/11 has challenged the climate of xenophobia and repression, particularly with the mass-scale immigrant rights protests in 2006 in response to the proposed ‘immigration reform’ bill, HR 3477. Hundreds of thousands of immigrants, the majority of whom were Latinos, marched in cities across the nation under slogans such as ‘No human being is illegal’. Yet the general focus of this movement—at least in its mainstream, US-flag waving manifestation—demonstrated that undocumented immigrants still appeal to the state for ‘legalization’ of their status, which is understandable given the material reality of the state but still reinforces the link between state sovereignty and citizenship (Allday et al., 2006). At the same time, Ong’s analysis points to the ways that immigrants are forced to grapple with the limitations of ‘rights’ as granted by the state and consider other ways of responding to issues of deportation, an issue I will return to later. The question of what strategies immigrants and others can use in forging a political movement to challenge the state’s disciplining of immigrant labor is tied to the political function of deportation policy, the second major component of the logic of deportation.

Deportation as an Instrument of Terror

Deportation is a political instrument of the neoliberal, ‘warfare state’—a heavily militarized state that wages perpetual war, overtly or covertly—for the political logic of deportation contains dissent and suppresses political movements that challenge imperial policies. Especially after the passing of the PATRIOT Act in 2001, but also at many other historical moments, the threat of deportation serves as a device for repression along with policies of surveillance and detention, by intimidating critics of state policies. Since the events of 9/11, the actual as well as threatened deportation of Arab, Muslim, and South Asian immigrants has been used to instill fear in communities that have been targeted in the domestic War on Terror. Muslim families began experiencing the ‘disappearances’ of their husbands, brothers, and sons, for none of the detainees were identified publicly and the locations where they were held remained secret (Chang, 2002: 69–87).

As part of the domestic ‘War on Terror’ at least 1200 Muslim immigrant men were rounded up and detained within seven weeks in the immediate aftermath of 9/11, none of them with any criminal charges, and some in high security prisons (Cainkar and Maira, 2006).3 By May 2003, the government had also detained over 1000 foreign nationals under the Absconder Apprehension Initiative, which prioritized the deportation of 6000 Arabs and Muslims of the over 300,000 immigrants with outstanding deportation orders (Cole, 2003: 25). The targeting of Muslim and Arab males highlights the gendered dimension of the War on Terror, whose public discourse relies
on often hyper-Orientalist tropes of violent, fanatical Arab and Muslim men and oppressed, veiled women who can be rescued by the US, through military intervention if necessary (see Sheikh, 2003).

An interesting point to note that reveals the underlying political logic of deportation is that nearly 40 percent of the post-9/11 detainees were estimated to be Pakistani nationals (Schulhofer, 2002: 11). There were mass deportations of Pakistani nationals on chartered planes, some leaving in the middle of the night from New York state, that went unreported in the mainstream media (Ryan, 2003: 16). Pakistani immigrants were disproportionately targeted for detention and deportation, even though there were no Pakistani nationals involved in the 9/11 hijackings. Although Pakistan has been a key ally to the US in its War on Terror, Pakistanis in the US became suspect because the US government claimed it was clamping down on Islamist guerrilla networks linked to both Al Qaeda and the Taliban in northwest Pakistan, along the border with Afghanistan. This is one of many examples that illustrate how deportation links domestic immigration issues with US foreign policy.

Furthermore, the post-9/11 sweeps included not just Arab and Muslim immigrants but targeted other communities as well, particularly low-wage, undocumented workers. For example, in November 2001, the government began requiring all airport screeners to be US citizens and conducted a multiagency sweep of airports, Operation Tarmac, that resulted in the detention and deportation of more than one thousand undocumented airport workers, mostly Latino and Filipino (Nguyen, 2005: xx, 18). A point that is often overlooked in discussions of the War on Terror is that most of the Muslim and Arab males who were deported were low-wage, undocumented workers. So while the targeted detentions and deportations had a chilling effect on political dissent among Arab and Muslim Americans, whose home countries and regions were being targeted by US military incursions, it also served to make even more vulnerable a class of already exploited immigrant labor. The detention of Arabs and Muslims rounded up after 9/11 shows most clearly the intertwining of the political and economic logic of deportation policy. Most of the detainees were deported for immigration violations, and except for one or two high-profile cases, none was found guilty of terrorism-related charges. Their detention and deportation was based on political profiling linked to the War on Terror, and though they were targeted for being Arab/Muslim and not specifically because of class, the mass warehousing and intimidation of this pool of low-wage labor had an economic effect. The economic and political work of deportation converge in this regime of discipline and punishment.

Deportation is accompanied by regimes of surveillance and detention that work in tandem with one another as part of the disciplining technologies of the state. Surveillance has been conducted through FBI infiltration of
political groups and Muslim communities and use of ‘insider’ informants, as I will discuss later, but also through FBI interviews of targeted populations, such as Iraqis during the buildup to the war on Iraq, and later Iranians (Cainkar, 2004). The state created official policies for openly monitoring and collecting information on suspected populations after 9/11. In June 2002, the National Security Entry–Exit Registration System (NSEERS) was established, requiring all male nationals over 16 years of age from 24 Muslim-majority countries, including Pakistan and Bangladesh, as well as North Korea, to submit to photographing, fingerprinting, and interviews at federal immigration facilities. Over 80,000 men complied with the ‘Special Registration’; many of these men, however, never came back, for 2870 were detained and 13,799 were put into deportation proceedings (Nguyen, 2005: xviii). After news broke of mass arrests of nearly a thousand Iranians complying with Special Registration in Southern California in December 2002 (Nguyen, 2005: 52), some undocumented immigrants and those with pending immigration applications fled to the Canadian border and tried to apply for asylum (Ryan, 2003), highlighting that their fear of detention and deportation was linked to a fear of persecution in the US based on religion and national origin.

The indirect but intended outcome of the threat of deportation is that it creates terror and stifles dissent among those who consider themselves ‘deportable’ as immigrants or suspect populations. Corey Robin (2003: 48) argues that ‘fear does the work—or enhances the work—of repression’, noting that the effects of ‘Fear, American Style’ have been most evident in immigrant, Middle Eastern, and South Asian communities, as well as in the workplace where ‘suppression of dissent’ has been evident since 9/11. Robin points out that repression works on two levels to silence dissent: on a state level, through agencies such as the FBI and the Department of Homeland Security, but also on the level of civil society, where individuals internalize repression and censor themselves. This is the larger political problem and painful paradox created by the War on Terror, for the targeted communities that most need to mobilize collectively are also the ones who are, understandably, the most afraid of being punished for political speech, let alone political organizing, an issue I will return to later.

**Deporting ‘Alien’ Ideologies**

It must be noted that deportation has long been used for repression and coercion by the imperial state, and so its normative character is rooted in historical precedent in the US. In fact, as Bill Hing points out (2004: 209), the ‘first deportation and expulsion provision was related to political ideology’. In 1798, Congress passed the Alien and Sedition Act, anticipating war with
France, that ‘made it a crime to criticize the government’ and authorized the deportation of alien males over 14 years old (Chang, 2002: 22; Delgado, 2003: 68). During the First World War, the Espionage Act of 1917 was passed to suppress dissent, drawing on nativist fears directed at anarchists and socialists, as was the 1918 Anarchist Act targeting ‘subversive aliens’ (Hing, 2004). The infamous Palmer Raids of 1919–20 led to the rounding up of almost 3000 foreign nationals for deportation, most of them workers and union members, during the ‘Red Scare’. Attorney General Mitchell Palmer created a ‘Radical Divison’ within the Department of Justice that, with the help of J. Edgar Hoover, employed spies to infiltrate labor unions (Hing, 2004: 216–20). The Palmer Raids are perhaps the historical event that most closely parallels the post-9/11 mass detentions and deportations, initiated by Attorney General John Ashcroft, which targeted Muslim and Arab men but in a similar wartime climate of nativism and hysteria about foreign ‘subversives’.

The anti-communist witch hunt of the 1940s and 1950s and the Smith Act are infamous for driving the ‘second Red Scare’ of the Cold War, but the targeting of political dissidents who were non-citizens persisted even after the McCarthy era. For example, the McCarran–Walter Act of 1952 which contained ‘the most extensive ideological deportation and exclusion provisions’, based on association with the Communist Party, was used by the FBI and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) to arrest seven Palestinians and one Kenyan in Los Angeles in 1987 (Cole, 2003: 131). The case of the ‘LA Eight’ is important because it demonstrates that the political profiling of Arabs and Muslims did not begin only after 9/11, and those who have protested US policy in the Middle East have been targeted by the government at various moments since the 1967 Israeli–Arab war.6

The government charged that the affiliation of the LA Eight with the Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine (PFLP) implied that they advocated ‘world communism’, still a deportable offense (Cole and Dempsey, 2002: 35–8). The LA Eight successfully challenged the government’s targeting of political activism and use of secret evidence, but while the government eventually dropped the charges of association with communism, they prosecuted the six non-citizens on immigration violations. The INS continued to seek the deportation of Khader Hamide and Michel Shehadeh, who were permanent residents, on grounds of providing ‘material support’ to the PFLP, allegedly a ‘terrorist organization’ (Cole and Dempsey, 2002: 36–7). In this, the INS was conducting an ideologically based deportation case based on government disapproval of the PFLP’s political activity. The FBI’s goal was admittedly ‘to identify key PFLP people in Southern California so that law enforcement agencies capable of disrupting the PFLP’s activities through legal action can do so’ (cited in Cole and Dempsey, 2002: 38).

David Cole (2003: 126–7) points out that these ideologically motivated deportation campaigns targeting particular political groups and activists relied on immigration law because non-citizens tried in immigration courts
have none of the rights afforded to citizens during a criminal trial. The political irony that must be noted in the case of the LA Eight is that the FBI and INS charged the Palestinian activists with belonging to an organization that was not a threat to the US but was opposed to the policies of the Israeli government and the occupation of Palestine. In charging them on behalf of the Israeli government and trying to squash pro-Palestine organizing in the US, the government was revealing its own support for Israeli policies and its willingness to prosecute these activists for opposing a foreign government. The other troubling aspect of the LA Eight’s 15-year battle in the courts to fight their deportation is that it occurred after the political persecution of the FBI’s COINTELPRO program of the 1960s and 1970s had been brought to light and criticized for its surveillance, infiltration, and disruption of civil rights and anti-war organizing in the US (Chang, 2002: 29–32). In fact, the government reopened the case of the LA Eight after 2001, under the provisions of the PATRIOT Act, in an attempt to finally deport the remaining Palestinian activists. A similarly ideologically motivated campaign directed at activists opposing US-backed regimes involved the government’s surveillance of the Committee in Solidarity with the People of El Salvador (CISPES) in the 1980s, a group of mostly US citizens who opposed US military aid to the repressive right-wing regime in El Salvador (Cole and Dempsey, 2002: 22–3).7

Cole (2003: 85) points to two significant features of this historical pattern of state surveillance and political repression in the US: first, ‘antialien sentiments and tactics’ were generally used to target noncitizens, but this political repression eventually extended to citizens as well and broke down the sanctity of the citizen/non-citizen divide. The second point, as illustrated by the CISPES case, is that the end of the Cold War saw the substitution of ‘terrorism’ for ‘communism’ in the US state’s crosshairs. The Reagan administration made ‘support for terrorism’ a crime in 1984, a measure later adopted by the 1996 Antiterrorism Act proposed by the Clinton administration (Cole, 2003: 29). What these two points together suggest, in my view, is that political deportation in the US has historically been aimed not just at organizations and activities or even individual activists, but at ideologies viewed as threatening to state interests. For example, Beatles star John Lennon was targeted for deportation by the Nixon administration to sabotage his concert tour protesting the Vietnam War, after years of FBI surveillance (Hing, 2004: 226–8; Wiener, 2006).

Deportation is thus a device not just for removing and repressing ‘alien’ or ‘radical’ bodies and organizations, but an instrument for eliminating radical ideas—radical because they are opposed to key US policies of neoliberal economic expansion and global political domination. The word ‘alien’ is problematic when applied to immigrant bodies—as if they were creatures who landed from a spaceship—but it is revealing when applied to
the actual target of deportation, the ideas that are deemed fundamentally ‘alien’ to the imperial state. This is what we need to consider in reframing our understanding of the political work of deportation: targeting bodies, organizations, and also ideas.

**Law as a War Zone**

It is important to note that the legal groundwork for targeting immigrants for deportation in the War on Terror was laid well before 9/11 and that the PATRIOT Act actually extended provisions in the Anti-Terrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act and the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, introduced under a Democrat administration. Kathleen Moore (1999: 95) argues that the national anxiety about political, economic, and cultural threats to the nation from immigrants and aliens is in response to the ongoing and ‘heightened sense of insecurity required to maintain a restructured, wartime regulatory state after the primary security target disappears’. This manufactured sense of national insecurity that shores up the warfare state, even in ‘peace time’, is reflected in US law and has persisted well beyond the Cold War, as these examples demonstrate. Contradictory to the notion that ‘the fate of justice during war is an aberration’, Richard Delgado (2003: 80) observes that the recurrent pattern of suspension of civil liberties and use of the law to execute government policies shows that ‘it’s the rule, the most obvious, most visible case’, for ‘all of law is a war zone’.

The targeting of non-citizens and citizens who embody alien ideologies in the War on Terror connects US foreign policy concerns with domestic issues of immigration, criminalization, and incarceration. Deportation connects overseas wars with racial profiling and domestic assaults on civilian populations, revealing the links between the War on Terror, the War on Immigrants, and the War on Drugs (Nguyen, 2005). The blurring of panics about terrorists, immigrants, and young men of color is evident also in the ‘war on gangs’, which has used ‘anti-terrorist’ strategies to annually deport up to 40,000 alleged Latino gang members to Mexico and Central America for ‘aggravated felonies’ since 1996. Anxieties about ‘border security’ and infiltration of terrorists through the US–Mexico border shows how ‘homeland insecurities’ about immigration are linked to foreign policy concerns about war and terrorism.

Detention, as a necessary precursor to deportation, also connects Arab, Muslim, and South Asian detainees to other criminalized minority and immigrant populations who are over-represented in the prison system (Cainkar and Maira, 2006). The issue of deportation is thus necessarily linked to the expanding American prison-industrial complex, ‘a vast system of
immigration prisons that had been detaining 150,000 people annually since the mid-1990s and now hold more than 200,000 people each year’. As Tram Nguyen (2005: 7) observes, ‘this almost invisible system of warehousing—and “removal” or deportation—had been operating and growing quietly for years before September 11’. The INS, which is now the Bureau of Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) under the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), warehouses immigrants in local jails as well as privately run prisons. Immigrant detainees have been abused, even tortured, by prison officials and held in secret detention well before 9/11. In *American Gulag: Inside U.S. Immigration Prisons*, Mark Dow (2004: 11–12) documents the workings of the vast but largely ‘invisible’ prison system run by the INS and its later incarnation under DHS, and the often brutal treatment of immigrant detainees, who constitute a shadow ‘nation within a nation’.

For example, an infamous report of the Department of Justice’s Office of Inspector General (OIG) investigated conditions at the Metropolitan Detention Center in Brooklyn and Passaic County Jail in Paterson, NJ, where many of the post-9/11 detainees were held (Taiara, 2004). Released in 2003, the OIG’s report found 300 videotapes documenting numerous incidents of cruel, inhumane, and degrading punishment, including prison guards slamming detainees into the wall, smashing their faces into a T-shirt with an American flag, beating them and dragging them over floors and stairs, conducting unnecessary strip searches, leaving detainees naked, and subjecting them to verbal abuse, racist comments, and threats. This report became public before the torture of Iraqi detainees by the US military in Abu Ghraib prison came to light, but it was barely noticed in the mainstream media and disappeared quickly without any of the public outrage provoked by the Abu Ghraib scandal.

This instance of domestic torture of detainees exemplifies what Dylan Rodríguez (2006: 23) describes as the

> . . . illegal and unconstitutional abuses of state power, unabashed use of strategic and deadly violence, and development of invasive, terrorizing surveillance technologies [that] might be seen as the state’s prototyping of the era’s broadly revivified (and significantly extrastate) domestic low-intensity warfare techniques against racially pathologized ‘activist’ and ‘civilian’ populations alike.

He argues that ‘the prison regime has become an indispensable element of American statecraft, simultaneously a cornerstone of its militarized (local and global) ascendency and spectacle of its extracted (or coerced) authority over targeted publics’ (Rodríguez, 2006: 44).

The twin processes of detention and deportation are part of everyday regimes of state control that link domestic and foreign policies, the two fronts of imperial domination. As Rodríguez suggests for detainees, deportees too are targeted because of domestic and international politics, so that even if they are not traditionally ‘political prisoners’ or deportees, they are constituted politically in their encounter with the state. Certainly, there
are cases of detention and deportation that involve political activists who are explicitly targeted because of their organizing activity, as in the case of the LA Eight and CISPE, among many others. However, there is a continuum between so-called ‘political prisoners’ and detainees and deportees who are not traditional ‘activists’ but who are subjects of a political process that targets populations selectively, in accordance with political projects of intimidation and control.

In this light, I offer a story of South Asian immigrants targeted for deportation after 9/11 to illustrate the work of deportation as a political, economic, and social technology of US empire. While not all the South Asian immigrants in this case were eventually deported, their stories show the range of experiences that South Asian immigrants have in their encounter with the state, as a result of its deportation regime.

**Lodi: On Wine, Terrorists, and Wigs**

On 7 June 2005, the FBI arrested two Pakistani American men, 22-year-old Hamid Hayat, and his father, Umer Hayat, an ice-cream truck driver, for funding and organizing a ‘terrorist cell’ in Lodi, California. The initial affidavit released to the media alleged that Hamid Hayat, who was a US-born citizen, had attended a terrorist training camp in northeast Pakistan in 2003 and had returned to the US after two years intending to ‘attack ... hospitals and large food stores’. Hamid Hayat had been initially detained in South Korea on his way back to the US, but was ultimately cleared and allowed to return; the refusal of re-entry to the US, sometimes to citizens, is the opposite process to deportation but part of the same process of regulating bodies in the name of ‘national security’.10

The arrests and allegations created a media blitz and national panic about terrorist sleeper cells in the Central Valley of California, focusing on the small, agricultural town of Lodi, about 40 miles south of Sacramento. With a population of approximately 60,000 and known for little else except wine-making and fruit-packing, Lodi was suddenly thrust into the national spotlight. Coincidentally, this sensationalized ‘discovery’ of Muslim terrorists lurking amidst vineyards and orchards broke just as President Bush, Jr., was pushing for the renewal of the PATRIOT Act, amidst increasing criticism of the erosion of civil liberties and frustration with the lack of tangible breakthroughs in the War on Terror—including the inability to capture the elusive Osama bin Laden or any major Al Qaeda operatives.

In this context, the Lodi case clearly had the potential to ratchet up public fear of terrorism and provide renewed justification for the government’s policies of surveillance, detention, and deportation, particularly those targeting Muslims, Arabs, and South Asians. Yet the government affidavit
eventually filed in the federal court in Sacramento contained none of the original allegations about sensational terrorist plots, and the two men were charged only with lying to federal investigators about the son’s alleged links to Al Qaeda training camps. Three other men in Lodi, two Muslim religious leaders and the son of one of the imams, were also arrested but only for suspected immigration violations. As it became apparent that the FBI had no tangible evidence that Hamid Hayat was linked to a terrorist group, it began downplaying the seriousness of the threat the men posed, admitting that none of the five men had plans to bomb targets in California, or anywhere else. ‘We did not find these guys in the middle of executing an attack. That did not happen,’ said McGregor Scott, US Attorney for the Eastern District of California (Holstege et al., 2005).

Yet the damage had already been done by the lurid stories that fueled hysteria about terrorist threats and suspicion of Muslim immigrants, particularly Arab and South Asian males. Why did the FBI seize these men in Lodi and how did Hamid Hayat, a 22-year old cherry packer, become the object of intense government scrutiny? As the story unfolded over the following weeks and months, it became apparent that the answers were tied to another figure who slowly emerged from the background: a Pakistani man in his late twenties, Nasim Khan. Khan had befriended the Hayats and the imams and had stayed at their homes after moving to Lodi, helping them with computers and particularly spending time with their sons. Khan vanished just after their arrests, but it was soon revealed that he was an FBI informant who had infiltrated the community and had been spying on Lodi residents and recording conversations for three years; Khan had been paid $250,000 by the FBI by the time the case came to trial (Cockburn, 2006). Fifty tapes of conversations in Urdu and Pashto, recorded by Khan, that included comments by Hamid Hayat about his identification with militant groups, were presented by the government as the basis of charges that the Hayats sought to attack the US (Hood, 2006; Thompson, 2005). This implies that verbal statements expressing militant dissent against the US are a potential criminal offense, a point I will return to later.

The legal case made by the government tried to link these political statements made by Hamid Hayat to conversations in which Khan urged Hamid to attend a terrorist training camp. Khan was recorded as telling Hamid that he wanted to attended a ‘jihadi camp’, and suggesting the young man accompany him (Mojaddidi, 2006). When Hamid eventually went to Pakistan to get married, he got repeated phone calls from Khan who kept urging him to attend a camp and verbally abusing him when Hamid repeatedly insisted that he had no desire to comply. According to Wazhma Mojaddidi, Hamid Hayat’s lawyer, the FBI agents who received the tapes, however, barely spoke these languages and relied on Khan rather than on a translator for interpretation. Over time, it was revealed that Khan, who was a permanent resident, had been convicted of burglary while living in Oregon, and
while being interviewed by the FBI about money laundering, had pointed to the TV screen and declared, ‘I know that man’ (Bulwa, 2005; Mojaddidi, 2006). That man happened to be Ayman al-Zawahiri, Al Qaeda’s second-in-command. Khan blithely announced that, while he lived in Lodi, Zawahiri visited the mosque and walked around town (Cockburn, 2006). This alone should have given the FBI agents pause, as terrorism experts later proved this claim false and asserted that there was no evidence that the Al Qaeda leader had visited the US, let alone strolled around Lodi (Bulwa, 2006a). Yet Khan was not accused of lying to the FBI, as the Hayats were.

Interestingly, Khan was actually first asked by the FBI to inform on the two imams, who were in the US on religious leader visas, and who were in Lodi to establish an Islamic school for the town’s Muslim population. The FBI interrogated the imams after they were detained, but since they refused to ‘admit’ to any involvement with terrorism, they were charged only with immigration violations (Mojaddidi, 2006) and the focus of the investigation shifted to Hamid Hayat. The imams eventually decided to cut their losses and took voluntary departure, so they were never technically deported by the government. This is despite the fact that they were presumably the ‘masterminds’ of the terrorist plot in which Hamid Hayat was involved.

The FBI also interrogated numerous members of the Pakistani community in Lodi and raided several homes. After I heard about the arrests in June 2005, I visited Lodi with Veena Dubal, a law school student and member of the Bay Area-based Alliance for South Asians Taking Action (ASATA) in which I was also involved doing immigrant and civil rights work. When we arrived in Lodi, we found that the FBI was swarming all over the town and were continuing to monitor the mosque. Several Pakistani men were standing outside the mosque in the early evening, relaxing on the grass and chatting after work. They told us that the FBI began coming to Lodi immediately after 9/11, making ‘friends’ with mosque members (Dubal and Maira, 2005). One man described to us, without looking around, exactly where each federal agent’s car was parked; we saw the three large SUVs with black-tinted windows, just yards from the mosque where some young South Asian and Latino boys were playing basketball. One middle-aged Pakistani man said quietly, ‘Let them come ask us questions. We have nothing to hide.’ While this resilience was inspiring, it also bespoke a certain resigned acceptance of the surveillance; others we spoke to were understandably concerned about the impact of the surveillance and racist backlash in Lodi on their children and families. One woman reported that her young child had been followed by the FBI while going to get ice cream. Several Pakistani men had been hauled off for questioning by the FBI without having access to an attorney; a few had been detained. Others complained that they had been taken out of their workplaces for interrogation and could not return because their co-workers became suspicious of them. The most shocking
report was that of an FBI raid on the home of one of the imams, which had been under close surveillance, when only three women and five children were inside. The agents broke down the front door and put a gun to the head of one of the women. Her 11-year-old daughter passed out but the FBI denied entry to medical personnel and refused to let her go to the hospital. This gross violation of human rights outraged even the local emergency care personnel, but went unreported in most media coverage.

When meeting with members of the Council on American Islamic Relations (CAIR) and the ACLU, who were providing legal support and civil rights information to the local community, we noticed a blue SUV driving around the motel where the team was holed up during the investigation. Undercover agents had been monitoring the team in their motel for days, and as we drove by, the man driving the SUV circled our car and took photographs from his window. When we tried to approach him, he fled, only to return later and take more photos. Strangely, the man was wearing a large afro-wig and dark glasses, a rather crude disguise that seemed surreal in the middle of Lodi. It was such a conspicuous cover that it made clear that the purpose of the FBI surveillance was intimidation of the community.

Despite the immediate support provided by civil rights activists from the surrounding area, it became apparent that one of the reasons that Lodi might have provided a convenient location for such intense FBI surveillance was the lack of political mobilization in the South Asian community in this rural area. The Pakistani community is a largely working class population, numbering between 2000 to 4000, many of whom work at the local fruit canning factory close to the mosque (Hua, 2005). The community has lived in Lodi since the 1920s (Grudin, 2005), and some men we spoke to said their ancestors had come to the US as early as 1908 to work on the railroads, so it is a much older community than the upwardly mobile South Asian population in the Bay Area. Yet South Asians in Lodi are geographically and politically isolated from their compatriots in the major urban and suburban South Asian enclaves, and most do not speak English (Grudin, 2005), so they are an easier target for surveillance and intimidation. Compared to the Bay Area, where there is a plethora of civil and immigrant rights organizations, Lodi had no South Asian political organizations and the Pakistani community had not been exposed to workshops on civil and immigrant rights. Hamid Hayat, like other men in Lodi, had opened his door to the FBI when they arrived at his home, three days after he returned from Pakistan. Without consulting a lawyer, he had agreed to repeated questioning and offered to drive to Sacramento to take a polygraph test. When he was told he had failed the lie detector test, he was never shown the actual report by the FBI. Given the intense desire of the FBI to ‘discover’ a terrorist plot, civil rights education would probably have been a thin shield. Mojaddidi (2006) pointed out that both father and son were pressured into admitting that Hamid had attended
a terrorist camp in the repeated interviews they were subjected to, which were conducted in a language they did not fully understand. The FBI even showed Hamid photos of his own wedding in Pakistan as evidence, claiming that the Pakistani men with guns were terrorists even though Hamid tried to explain that they were shooting blanks, as is the custom at weddings in Pakistan and the Middle East.

The Hayats were eventually brought to trial separately in spring, 2006 and Hamid Hayat was found guilty of making false statements and providing ‘material support’ for terrorism, facing up to 39 years in prison (Bulwa, 2006a). His father’s trial ended in a hung jury and Umer Hayat was charged only with lying to Customs on returning to the US; his terrorism charges were dismissed and he was sentenced to the 330 days in prison he had already served (Bulwa, 2006b). By the time the verdict was reached, it was acknowledged even by the mainstream media that the case basically involved the use of preventive detention, based on fear of an alleged plot rather than on evidence of actual terrorist activity, and that the Hayat case was a ‘much-needed victory for the Justice Department’ given its lack of success in prosecuting terrorism cases (Bulwa, 2006a). Hamid Hayat’s attorney and the new co-counsel, Dennis Riordan, filed a motion for a new trial, hoping to bring in evidence and testimonies that the government had denied them during the trial.

Surveillance, Repression, and Resistance

Yet the case also brought to light an important issue that began surfacing in the media, that of paid FBI informants infiltrating mosques and South Asian, Arab, and Muslim immigrant communities across the US. A pattern emerged of informants framing suspects, usually young Muslim men critical of the War on Terror and angry at US atrocities in the Middle East, by provoking and recording statements of their desire to attack US targets, or as in Hamid Hayat’s case, simply supporting militant dissent against US policies. As Paul Ehrlich observes, ‘If that was illegal, the jails would be filled. If every person in the Middle East and Asia who’s displeased with the U.S.’s performance is a terrorist, then we have millions of them’ (cited in Hood, 2006). The corollary, of course, is that Muslim and Arab Americans have become increasingly reluctant to express dissenting political views, even with others who are from their communities, since the informants are often Muslim or Arab themselves.

Arab and Muslim American communities around the nation—particularly in places with concentrations of Arab and Muslim immigrants such as in Brooklyn, New York—became familiar with the ‘telltale signs’ of informers, who ‘like to talk politics . . . have plenty of free time’ and ‘live in the neighborhood’ (Elliott, 2006). The use of insider informants was publicized in the trial of Shawahar Siraj, a Pakistani man, in an alleged plot to blow up
a New York subway station in 2004. An Egyptian informant who was spying on the Muslim community around the Brooklyn mosque showed him pictures of Muslims overseas being mistreated and offered explosives to Siraj, who was then found guilty of the plot in 2006 (Rashbaum, 2006). This strategy of ‘pre-emptive denunciation’ has prompted public debate and soul-searching within Muslim immigrant communities about whether the role of these informants, including imams working with the FBI, can be considered complicity or cooperation; in all cases, it has sowed the seeds of distrust and division that need to be addressed in responding to the post-9/11 civil rights crisis.

The detentions and deportations in the Lodi case brought attention to government strategies of infiltration and surveillance, but they also predictably heightened the sense of fear and suspicion within South Asian and Arab American communities. Arab American communities, in particular, have a collective memory of historical patterns of surveillance and often violent tactics of intimidation directed at Arab or pro-Palestine political organizations in the US, such as the American Arab Anti-Discrimination Committee (ADC). The use of government informants, including religious leaders, has deepened the sense of vulnerability and distrust already permeating these communities after 9/11, for it directed suspicion inward and within the mosque community. The mosque and home could no longer be safe havens free of state intrusion since informants could be everywhere, as the Lodi case demonstrated, given that Nasim Khan worked with the imams and sometimes slept over at their homes (Bulwa, 2005). The state’s penetration of the intimate corners of domains believed to be private made it apparent that the strategy of surveillance, detention, and deportation was not just about the policing of national borders, or the border between citizens and non-citizens, but about the dissolution of the boundary between state and community, or state and home. The public sphere has enlarged to encompass all private spheres, even as the possibilities for open political discussion in the public sphere have diminished, if not disappeared for some.

Post-9/11 detentions and deportations thus have a deep social impact and have led to the reconstitution and reorganizing of social relations for Muslim and Arab Americans, demonstrating how the political and economic technologies of subjection have a social logic as well. It is also evident that for some subjects, particularly Muslims and Arabs, the distinction between private and public has become meaningless in the realms where it has the most serious consequences. The intimacy of the state is heightened through practices of surveillance, detention, and deportation, so that ironically knowledge of the full reach of the state’s powers and familiarity with certain aspects of the law is often greatest in the segments of the population that are least protected by the state. This political education inflicted by the
War on Terror is involuntary, due to the state’s regulation and collective punishment of communities that are forced to directly confront its power.

The painful—but perhaps intended—outcome of the fear and distrust sown in Arab, Muslim, and South Asian communities due to surveillance and deportation is the suppression of political organizing and the very collective organizing that these communities need in order to respond to the political crisis. The surveillance and infiltration of activist groups by the FBI affects anti-war and other movements as well, but non-citizens are obviously more vulnerable due to the threat of deportation. Awareness of government informants and infiltration has also heightened fear of simply sharing information or political views, for all private spaces are experienced as public by Muslim Americans after 9/11. The only statements that Muslim Americans feel secure making in this all-encompassing public space is that of denunciations of terrorism and insistence on Islam as a peace-loving, non-violent religion. Steven Salaita (2006: 51) calls this the ‘prerequisite to speaking’ for Arabs and Muslims after 9/11, and proposes an ethics of refusal of this disclaimer. He rightly observes that the use of the word ‘terrorism’ is embedded in cultural prejudice about Arabs and Muslims and a decontextualized picture of violence that evades discussions of political grievances as well as state-sponsored violence. Invoking ‘terrorism’ by denying it thus reinscribes this set of cultural and political assumptions about Arab, and Islamist, politics and cultures (Salaita, 2006: 50–1).

Even if Muslim commentators privately oppose US policies in the War on Terror, many of them publicly perform the role of peace-loving ‘good Muslims’ who are willing to be made into loyal citizens of the US, as opposed to ‘bad Muslims’ who critique the expansionist policies and imperial strategies of the US under the guise of promoting ‘democracy’ (Mamdani, 2004: 15). There is obviously a concern about self-defense in this performance of ‘good citizenship’ by Muslim and Arab Americans who feel that their political views are being monitored by the state and are afraid to openly express their dissent, and the ‘good Muslim’ category is one that is commonly invoked in legal cases and in the mainstream political arena as a defensive strategy. However, I think that the deeper implications of this strategy are troubling in the longer term, if it is a defense that remains within the terms set by the state in the War on Terror, and refuses to acknowledge the root causes of terrorism and opposition to the US, in the Middle East and elsewhere. Those who are most vulnerable may not be in the position to challenge the dichotomy of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ Muslims and the fundamental premise of the War on Terror, but I would take Salaita’s point further and suggest that there also needs to be a collective defense of the right to express dissent, even radical ideas.

The Lodi case also created other kinds of responses within local communities, given that the profiling of Muslims and Arabs was often based on...
confused identifications of ‘Muslim’ and ‘Arab’. Sikhs, particularly turbaned Sikh men, were disproportionately targeted in the post-9/11 backlash and were among the men murdered immediately after the 9/11 bombings. After the Hayat arrests, CAIR conducted workshops on civil rights in the Lodi area in mosques and also in gurudwaras. The Lodi case prompted racist paranoia about ‘Muslim terrorists’ lurking in California, and it was also followed by racist graffiti on a gurudwara, or Sikh temple, in Lodi in October 2005 (Ioffee, 2005). There have also been racist incidents targeting Latinos and African Americans in the area, but what is interesting is that the Muslim American community in Lodi, sensitized to the issue of racial profiling, did make public statements of solidarity with the Sikh community in the Central Valley. Some Lodi residents even became involved in anti-racist projects in Lodi to combat hate crimes by fostering cultural understanding. In my view, these efforts are laudable and necessary, but not sufficient, for they raise other questions about responding to racist profiling.

The liberal view that ‘hate crimes’ can be addressed through ‘cross-cultural understanding’ and multicultural education continues to evade the role of state-sanctioned racial profiling and political, not just cultural, processes of discrimination. Local responses to the profiling of Lodi’s Muslims, as evident in stories in the mainstream media, generally reinscribed the Orientalist focus on Islam, gender, and youth that is part of the dominant discourse about the War on Terror. Articles about Lodi’s Muslim community focused on Pakistani American youth struggling with ‘the social pull’ between ‘the many freedoms offered to Americans’, particularly to young women, and the restrictions of conservative ‘traditions’ in the Pakistani immigrant community (Giese, 2005). These commentaries, and many other narratives about Muslim Americans after 9/11, suggest that the conflict is rooted in differences of culture and religion, a clash of cultures that pits Islam, if not the Middle East, against Western ‘democracy’ and ‘modernity’. Liberal multicultural narratives about Islam and the Middle East do not always fall into this trap of essentialized or Orientalized understandings, but even those that rightly condemn the racism and Islamophobia in the War on Terror do not often investigate its political context. Viewing post-9/11 racial profiling simply as a problem of domestic racism fails to acknowledge its link to the global dimensions of the War on Terror and the invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq. This is also true for responses to racial profiling within Muslim and Arab immigrant communities, but in some instances ‘cultural’ empathy with other minorities has extended to a political solidarity based on a deeper understanding of US racism and imperial power. Alliances have emerged, in some instances between groups and political movements focused on civil and immigrant rights, incarceration, war, and occupation that link policies within the US to interventions in the Middle East. These linkages formed in response to the state regime of surveillance, detention, and deportation...
point to new kind of affiliations in the shifting racial and religious politics of post-9/11 America.

Deporting the INS

An example of these new alliances in response to deportation and detention, and their implications for political analysis and organizing, is the Deporten a La Migra (Deport the INS) coalition in the Bay Area. The coalition included a variety of Latino, Asian American, anti-war, immigrant rights, housing rights, and labor groups in San Francisco, such as members of La Raza Centro Legal, St Peter’s Housing Committee, Day Labor Program, Heads Up Collective, SRO Families United, Asian Pacific Islander Legal Outreach, and ASATA. I became involved in the coalition as a member of ASATA, after an ICE (Immigration and Customs Enforcement) raid on Hotel Sunrise, a residential hotel in the Mission district of San Francisco. On 6 May 2004, federal agents detained nine immigrant men, deporting seven Mexican immigrant workers and detaining two men of Indian origin, one of whom was eventually released and another who disappeared into the US detention system. The raid violated the city’s sanctuary policy forbidding cooperation between ICE and local law enforcement on deportation cases involving only immigration issues. A few days after the raid, the coalition organized a press conference outside the Hotel Sunrise. Tenants at the hotel spoke about the impact of the ICE raids in terrorizing the community, and other speakers connected the raids to the broader context of the racist war on immigrants and the War on Terror. One of the hotel tenants interrogated in the raid was involved with a tenant rights campaign and members of the coalition feared that the raid would have a chilling effect on this mobilization, but the immigrant activist spoke at the protest anyway. Members of the coalition spoke to the tenants about their legal rights as part of their ongoing educational campaign in immigrant communities. I and others in ASATA worked on trying to track down the South Asian men who had disappeared and make sure they had legal representation. So the focus of the Deporten a La Migra campaign combined efforts to support the particular immigrants involved in the Sunrise raid with a larger critique of state policies related to the economic and political logics of immigration and deportation policy and the War on Terror.

This is just one of many instances of cross-ethnic alliances uniting immigrant rights, civil rights, labor, and other anti-war movements that emerged in response to post-9/11 deportations and detention. As I and others in the Deporten a La Migra coalition were trying to solve the mystery of the Sunrise raid, Arab and South Asian American groups were working to monitor the increasingly secret and unpublicized raids on Muslim immigrant homes and workplaces that are part of what I call the ‘Secret Registration’, which
took place outside of the media spotlight that had focused on the Special Registration. A Filipino community support group, FOCUS, was engaged in a campaign to stop the deportation of Filipino American families from the Bay Area by organizing airport workers, women, and youth. Others in Cambodian, Vietnamese, Salvadoran, and Mexican immigrant communities across the nation were trying to address the ‘tidal wave’ of deportations after a 1996 law made all non-citizens subject to deportation if they had been previously sentenced to more than a year in prison, regardless of the seriousness of the crime (Richard, 2003). These campaigns inevitably give rise to debates about whether some immigrants are indeed more ‘deportable’ than others. There are also many who belong to these communities, including South Asians and Arab Americans, who themselves argue that those who have violated the law should be deported, distancing themselves from the ‘true’ criminals or terrorists (Saliba, 2006). The larger point that is overlooked in this distinction between ‘good’ and ‘bad’ immigrants is that there are certain communities who are inevitably targeted for deportation on both counts, as dangerous criminals/terrorists and as immigrants, and that certain groups are overrepresented in detention and deportation for both these categories. Furthermore, the ‘good’ versus ‘bad’ immigrant dichotomy ignores the fundamental notion that ‘deportability’ is itself a tool that is used to regulate immigrant labor and suppress political movements. The few examples discussed here point to the many campaigns that have attempted to resist the political repression and to challenge the religious, ethnic, and racial divisions fostered by the War on Terror.

**Conclusion**

Deportation is a technology that is used by the state not just to regulate its borders through the ‘removal’ of individuals, but in order to remove radical ideologies. As such, the theater of deportation is a site in which the state is itself ideologically constituted as well as contested, as movements and campaigns resisting deportation bring to light the political and economic functions of deportation. The political and economic logic of deportation often work in tandem, as I have shown, particularly in cases that simultaneously terrorize immigrant workers and (potential) critics of US policy, disciplining labor as well as political dissent. Young Muslim and Arab American men who have been detained and deported after 9/11, such as Hamid Hayat, have generally not been political activists, in the traditional sense, but the state is aware that they are a source of critique of its policies in the Middle East, the major front in the War on Terror, and that their communities represent historical knowledge of the not so pretty face of US imperial power. If deportees and detainees are constituted politically in their encounter with
the state—even if they are not technically ‘political’ deportees—their experiences also help construct the image and understanding of the state in the public sphere, as coercive or democratic, racist or ‘tough on crime’ and terrorism. As De Genova points out, the state is not a ‘fixed institutional matrix but rather . . . a site of struggle in itself’ (2002: 428). This struggle, as I argue here, is ultimately a battle over the imperial state’s desire to expand its military, economic, and political power, and crush dissent against its policies at home and abroad.

While the US is now the lone global superpower and its military, economic, and political domination is unrivalled, the imperial state cannot tolerate the possibility of dissenting views and movements within its borders (and even outside), betraying a sense of ideological insecurity in its repression and expulsion of ‘alien’ ideas during this new Cold War. Bush’s doctrine of pre-emptive war overseas (Koshy, 2003) is paralleled by the pre-emptive detention and deportation policies under the guise of ‘homeland’ security, based on a similar doctrine of pre-empting ‘terrorism’ as a pre-text for repressing and regulating immigrants, workers, and dissidents. Other states also engage in these strategies in ways that are racist and xenophobic, but the economic and military might of the US and its waging of ‘perpetual war’, as well as its pivotal role in global immigration, make its program of deportation and the War on Terror a significant global geography of removal and repression.

Immigrants and citizens respond to state practices of surveillance, detention, and deportation in ways that are not always predictable. Political movements and alliances have emerged that sometimes defy the categories established by the state to distinguish its policing processes focused on various communities. On the one hand, some Muslim immigrants who are afraid of deportation and subjected to surveillance, such as those in Lodi, are likely to assert that they are ‘good citizens’ who believe in American democracy and freedom, even as the limits of that freedom are tested on their own bodies (Saliba, 2006). Some participate in the reinscription of the image of the ‘Muslim’ and ‘Arab terrorist’ and the dichotomy of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ Muslims and Arabs (Mamdani, 2004), as a prerequisite to acceptance into virtuous citizenship. These are often strategies of self-defense for Arab, Muslim, and South Asian immigrants, for those who are not citizens, in particular, are justifiably concerned about publicly expressing political dissent.

Yet this self-censorship allows the deportation strategy to achieve precisely the effect it intends: inhibiting political dissent and collective mobilization. It is important for members of targeted communities to think strategically of ways to collectively resist this reinscription of the discourse about terrorism while protecting vulnerable individuals or segments of these communities. Some have resisted this performance of ‘good’ citizenship and have challenged deportations, not just in the courts where the law
generally upholds the warfare state’s need for ‘national security’, but also in the public sphere, highlighting the connections between the economic disciplining and the political repression conducted through deportation, as was the case with the immigrants who protested the Sunrise raid.

However, collective responses from the targeted communities have sometimes worked within the parameters outlined by the state in its War on Terror, attempting mainly to shield immigrants from excessive harassment or violations or, in some cases, cooperating with the government in its hunt for the ‘real terrorists’. The issue of complicity with surveillance of the community is, obviously, a controversial one and gives rise to difficult debates within the community about the meanings of citizenship, loyalty, and betrayal. Yet there were other kinds of collective responses that challenged the government’s premise in the War on Terror and, in some cases, went even further, making links between the war on immigrants, minorities, and the poor at home and the war overseas, as was the case in the Deporten a La Migra Coalition and groups that resisted the government’s tactics in the Lodi case. In naming the coalition ‘Deporten a La Migra’, the organizers were not just trying to use a clever phrase but also suggesting a larger political critique: that resistance needs to be focused not just on specific deportation policies and on preventing or challenging deportations targeting specific individuals or groups, but also on the agencies of the state itself that regulate and discipline populations and enforce imperial policies of coercion, violence, and intimidation. If deportation is a struggle about deporting ideologies, not just individuals or organizations, then our resistance needs to work to end the imperial state’s increasingly globalized regime of terror and repression, to undo the empire’s perpetual war, by exposing the underlying political and economic logic of the War on Terror and creating broader alliances among those who are targeted, as immigrants, workers, or dissenters.

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NOTES

2. There are different strategies of dominance used by US imperial power: ‘control over international bodies (the United Nations, World Bank, International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organization), covert actions, global surveillance
methods, direct military interventions, political machinations, and deadly economic sanctions of the sort used against Iraq’ (Boggs, 2003: 6).

3. The Justice Department stopped releasing numbers of persons detained in the post-9/11 sweeps in November 2001, as public criticism began to mount, so though the official estimate was 1182 detentions, a conservative estimate of detentions until May 2003 is at least 5000 (Cole, 2003: 25).

4. Ironically, from the same area that provided the mujahideen whom the CIA armed and trained to fight its proxy war in Afghanistan in the 1980s. For more, see Rashid (2000).

5. The reregistration component of the program was officially ended by the Department of Homeland Security in December 2003, after protests by immigrant/civil rights and grass-roots community organizations, while other aspects of the program remained in place, and the detentions and deportations put in place by the program continued (see Caintkar, 2004).

6. For example, the FBI's extensive monitoring of the General Union of Palestinian Students on college campuses and at events around the country in the 1980s, with no objection from the Justice Department (Cole and Dempsey, 2002: 35–48; see also Green, 2003).

7. The FBI's extensive nationwide monitoring of CISPES was based on charges that they were supporting and funding the Salvadoran rebel group, the FLMN, and plotting terrorist attacks in the US, although the investigation never found any evidence of this (Cole and Dempsey, 2002: 22–3).

8. For example, Operation Community Shield was jointly undertaken by the FBI and Department of Homeland Security in 2005 to round up suspected Salvadoran gang members (Nguyen, 2005: 87).

9. See Welch (2000) and Dow (2004) on the connections between immigration and incarceration in the US.

10. In an unusual case, Hayat’s uncle and US-born cousin were refused re-entry to the US when returning from Pakistan in April 2006, as the trial was in progress, because they were on a no-fly list and were asked to submit to interrogation by the FBI without a lawyer present (Bulwa, 2006c).

11. For example, Arab American activist Alex Odeh was murdered in the Los Angeles office of the ADC in 1985, which was linked to the militant Jewish Defense League founded by Rabbi Meir Kahane. There were bomb threats against Arab American organizations in Detroit in the mid-1980s, and the Anti-Defamation League was found guilty of surveilling ADC members (see Abraham, 1994).

12. The first man murdered in a hate crime linked to 9/11 was Balbir Singh Sodhi, who was killed at a gas station he owned in Mesa, Arizona, on 15 Sept. 2001 (Prashad, 2003: 66).

REFERENCES


BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

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