

**Negotiating the Administrative Disappearing of Crisis
in the US Deportation State, 1914-1920**

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What do state actors do when they lack the capacity to implement the law? The concept of “administrative disappearing” refers to how state actors manage crises of state incapacity not by making populations legible, but by mobilizing uncertainty and information gaps in a way that generates revenue (Lara-Millán 2022). But we know little about *unsuccessful* attempts at administrative disappearing. Addressing this gap, this paper traces state actors’ evolving responses to the inability to carry out deportations during and immediately following World War I. The Bureau of Immigration released people from detention first on an ad-hoc mix of immigration bond, immigration parole, and their own recognizance (which was not preferred by the Bureau), then on a work-release program (not preferred by detained people), and finally, through a Liberty Bond drive (a compromise between both parties). I argue that “the administrative disappearing of state crisis” is not a sleight of hand on the part of state actors, but a negotiation between state actors and the population posing the crisis. In addition to its contributions to the literature on knowledge production and statecraft, this research contributes to literature on penal supervision by highlighting its geopolitical influences; and literature on migrant incarceration by shifting focus from the figure of the “criminal alien” to that of the “enemy alien.”

The United States deportation state is often analyzed as totalizingly powerful and limitlessly expansive (Golash-Boza 2015a). This view makes sense, given deportation's significant capacity for the destruction of lives and growth over the twentieth and twenty-first centuries (Golash-Boza 2015b; Goodman 2020; Hester 2017; Moloney 2012; Shull 2022). However, this view also tends to obscure historical moments of crisis in the deportation state, when it was unable to carry out deportations that had been ordered. In late 1914, shortly after World War I broke out in Europe, Atlantic maritime travel ground to a halt, leaving thousands of people awaiting deportation from the US – mostly of European and Middle Eastern nationalities – indefinitely confined in detention facilities. Then, when the US entered the war in April of 1917, these facilities received thousands of “enemy aliens,” or residents holding the nationalities of the countries with which the US was at war. The Bureau of Immigration both strained to accommodate all these people in detention, and struggled to legitimize indefinite detention to various audiences.

What do state actors do when they lack the capacity to implement the law? The recently-developed concept of “administrative disappearing” refers to how state actors manage such crises not by making populations legible – a crucial aspect of governance, at least in periods of stability (Scott 1999) – but by mobilizing uncertainty and information gaps in a way that generates revenue (Lara-Millán 2022). However, we know little about *unsuccessful* attempts at such disappearing – and we might expect that they happen, given ample evidence of the state's inability to impose its will in other knowledge production projects (Loveman 2005; Scott 2010). Addressing this gap, this paper traces state actors' evolving responses to the inability to carry out deportations during and immediately following World War I. I draw on historical documents from both state sources, mainly the Bureau of Immigration annual reports and files housed at the National Archives and Records Administration; and the archives of immigrant aid organizations, including the Foreign Language Information Service, the Hebrew Immigrant Aid Society (known today as HIAS), and the National Catholic Welfare Conference (known today as the US Catholic Conference of Bishops). I use the method of “reiterated problem-solving,” comparing contrasting solutions to the enduring problem of the inability to carry out deportations (Haydu 1998).

First, the Bureau released people from detention on an ad hoc mix of immigration bond or immigration parole and outright release. Bond was a sum of money paid to guarantee a migrant's appearance for deportation, while parole – which involved regular check-ins with a sponsor – was offered to those who could not afford bond. This arrangement was not ideal for the Bureau, as many people could not afford bond, making it difficult for the Bureau to claim that it was truly supervising them. To remedy this, the Bureau created a work-release program, in which detained people largely refused to participate. Finally, the Bureau released people on immigration bonds using Liberty Bonds, which financed US participation in the war, as collateral. This was more of a compromise between immigration officials and detained people: The former did not have to verify that guarantors (also called sureties) could actually pay if the migrant failed to appear to authorities when summoned, while the latter could both avoid predatory professional bondsmen and project loyalty to the nation.

This iterated problem-solving points to considerably more friction in the process of disappearing than is currently acknowledged. Extending the concept, I argue that “the administrative disappearing of state crisis” is not a mere sleight of hand on the part of state actors. Instead, it is a negotiation between state actors and the population posing the crisis, and among state actors as well. By making such negotiations visible, this theoretical contribution can shed light on state responses to more recent crises in penal governance – for example, imperatives to release incarcerated people during the Covid-19 pandemic.

State legibility and administrative disappearing

James Scott theorizes that states must “see” populations in order to rule them (Scott 1999). Legibility is achieved through counting, categorization, commensuration, and standardization practices, which growing bureaucracies facilitate (Anderson [1983] 1991; Espeland and Stevens 1998; Foucault [1975–1976] 2003; Timmermans and Epstein 2010; Weber [1921] 2013). Common legibility projects include censuses, or identity documentation such as passports (Emigh, Riley, and Ahmed 2016; Torpey 2000). Following these insights, many studies examine the relationship between knowledge production and statecraft, showing how the construction and classification of populations – through racialization, medicalization, and gendering, to name a few classification processes – is a crucial aspect of governance (Eyal 2006; Loveman 2014).

However, more recent studies show that ambiguity and mystification may be equally crucial aspects of governance. According to the concept of “administrative disappearing,” authorities may mobilize uncertainty and information gaps in order to resolve crises of state incapacity (Lara-Millán 2022). They do so by disaggregating populations into inert categories – for example, by reclassifying overcrowded jail populations into new releasable statuses and refraining from counting them; blurring the standards that demarcate jurisdictional boundaries – for example, by exchanging federal, state, and county prisoners across facilities; and producing incommensurable policy metrics – for example, by omitting certain types of incarceration from statistics on recidivism. This “administrative disappearing of state crisis” allows the state to comply with new mandates for which it lacks resources. This compliance is not merely symbolic, because it “alter[s] the resource basis of the crisis itself” – that is, it frees up or generates new revenue to alleviate state incapacity (Lara-Millán 2022:1499).

In addition to reflecting the contradiction of a new mandate absent the resources necessary to implement it, ambiguity may reflect other contradictions in statecraft. Multiplicitous legal statuses, for example, can result from the dual project of colonizing populations while avoiding their full inclusion as members of the polity – as with the US’s imperial management of Filipinos, who were classified simultaneously as citizens, nationals, and aliens during the first half of the twentieth century (Quisumbing King 2022; see also Jung 2015). Such statuses can also result from conflicting state logics that simultaneously value migrants’ labor and illegalize their territorial presence (Cheong 2022). While these contradictions are not necessarily borne of

a crisis of state capacity, as with administrative disappearing, they nevertheless provide further evidence that states may govern by mystifying populations, as well as making them legible.

Existing historical studies suggest that US immigration authorities may engage in administrative disappearing, although deeper analysis is needed. Operation Wetback – a 1954 military-style campaign to deport migrant agricultural workers who did not hold visas from the Bracero Program, a contract labor agreement between the US and Mexico – furnishes an example. The high number of apprehensions at the US-Mexico border was initially used to create a sense of crisis, resulting in additional appropriations to mount Operation Wetback. Yet similarly high numbers were subsequently used to demonstrate the operation's *success* (Hernández 2010). Several months later, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) established a parole policy that made detention the exception for those awaiting either deportation or a determination on their cases. To tout the policy's success, the INS excluded detentions of Mexican people – the majority of the detained population – from official detention statistics, explaining that these detentions lasted only a few days (Nofil 2024).

Administrative disappearing is described as “‘bureaucratic sleights of hand,’ where the state seems to wash away its problems with the stroke of a pen” (Lara-Millán 2022:1502). However, there are good reasons to assume that disappearing is a much more friction-full process. For one, the state legibility literature documents friction in the undertaking of legibility projects, administrative disappearing's conceptual counterparts. Populations being counted can experience feelings of mismatch with state categories (Emigh, Riley, and Ahmed 2020). Information-gathering usually requires concerted campaigns of solicitation and persuasion (Igo 2007; Rodríguez-Muñiz 2017). There is also ample evidence of effective resistance to legibility projects (Loveman 2005; Scott 2010). If the state is unable to smoothly impose its will in these settings, there are scant grounds for thinking that administrative disappearing is uniquely top-down.

Yet in order to observe similar kinds of friction in the process of administrative disappearing, it is necessary to examine unsuccessful attempts (Emigh 1997). Such attempts are absent from the data used to study the concept, which center on how state actors draw on successful attempts to learn strategies for disappearing over time. Accordingly, this paper extends the concept of administrative disappearing by analyzing iterated attempts, some of which failed, at disappearing.

Methods

Data for this paper were collected as part of a broader study analyzing the relationship between immigration detention and immigration bond and parole – two forms of release from detention – throughout the twentieth century. Focusing on origins and mechanisms of historical change, I sought to understand bond and parole's varying purposes over time. My guiding empirical question was, “When have immigration bond and parole substituted for detention, and when have they complemented it?” This question responds to limits in both state legibility and

surveillance literatures – the former of which focuses on stability rather than crisis (Lara-Millán 2022), and the latter of which theorizes surveillance (in this case, bond and parole) as uniformly a substitute for confinement (in this case, detention) (Foucault 1995, [1975–1976] 2003).

I first read the annual reports of the Commissioner-General of Immigration from 1907 to 1955, coding for bond, parole, detention, and other broad trends in immigration control. I then produced a timeline of major developments in the relationship between detention and systems of release, and pieced together inconsistently-reported administrative data on these systems. I triangulated this source with files archived under the subject headings “bond” and “parole” in the INS Record Group 85 in the National Archives and Records Administration. This collection contains department circulars, correspondences, requests for information, and other ephemera involving interactions between immigration districts and the Immigration Bureau in DC. Unlike the annual reports, these files more candidly discuss the crises and difficulties that the Bureau faced – and show how they were resolved in real time. I inductively coded these files to understand patterns and problems in the implementation of bond and parole.

It quickly became clear that mass releases from detention took place during World War I, due to the inability to carry out deportations. I identified and compared contrasting solutions to this problem (Haydu 1998). These comparisons revealed that the Bureau of Immigration could not simply release people however it wanted. Yet on the other hand, the Bureau would not tolerate certain schemes that cast doubt on its ability to supervise. The most successful release program, which created durable systemic change, involved negotiation and compromise between immigration authorities, other state actors, and the population that could not be deported.

Preliminary findings

Preliminary findings show that the Bureau of Immigration responded to the crisis of the inability to deport people during World War I with administrative disappearing. The Bureau released indefinitely-detained people who furnished Liberty Bonds as collateral guaranteeing their appearances for deportation. These releases *mystified* the indefinitely-detained population in the sense that the Bureau did not systematically count or supervise them, which *generated revenue* by both cutting detention costs and funding the government deficit. The Bureau effortfully solicited cooperation across state domains to implement this system. However, this was not the Bureau’s first attempt at disappearing. It was preceded by two unsuccessful attempts: One that was too *laissez faire* for the Bureau to claim that it was truly supervising those released, and another that was too restrictive for those indefinitely detained. What was unique about Liberty Bonds, the most durable form of disappearing, was the way the interests of the Bureau and detained people converged.

World War I created a crisis for the Bureau of Immigration. Unable to carry out deportations across the Atlantic Ocean and newly responsible for surveilling so-called “enemy aliens,” it was faced with supervising thousands of people who were indefinitely detained in overcrowded facilities. With the outbreak of war in Europe, shipping companies cancelled their

Atlantic lines due to safety concerns (Zolberg 2006:243), leaving over one thousand people indefinitely detained. Responding in an ad hoc way to advocacy attempts,¹ the Bureau began to release people on a mix of bond, parole, and outright release. The 1915 annual report explains,

It [the war] has resulted, however, in a partial failure promptly to enforce the law and regulations and may be best described by stating that at the close of the year there was a record of 1,328 aliens within the United States who under the terms of the statute have no right to be here, and whose eventual deportation it has been attempted to assure by accepting bonds where such instruments could be furnished or by releasing upon personal recognizance or paroling to apparently responsible persons or societies in cases in which bonds, for one reason or another, could not be supplied.²

When the US entered the war in the spring of 1917, the Department of Justice and the Bureau of Immigration rounded up all German (and some Austrian, Hungarian, Bulgarian, and Turkish) nationals residing in the country and detained many of them (Galvis Martínez 2021), overcrowding already strained detention facilities. Meanwhile, the number of indefinitely-detained people continued to increase as the Bureau ramped up internal investigations of suspected immigration violations; Table 1 shows that by the end of the war, 4,105 deportations had been suspended.

Many indefinitely-detained people could not afford bond, having been confined for several months or even over a year. These people were often released on parole – which entailed supervision by the above-mentioned “apparently responsible persons or societies” – or on their own recognizance (OR). But the Bureau was unsatisfied with this arrangement. Though detention expenses and overcrowding indeed decreased, people could abscond relatively easily, such that the Bureau could hardly claim it was truly supervising them. To replace this system, the Bureau in June of 1918 passed Rule 17-A, a work-release program (Wilsher 2011). Participants would receive a job placement from US Employment Service and 25% of the wage would automatically be stored in the US Postal Savings Bank on behalf of the Bureau until deportation could be effected. The Bureau hoped that Rule 17-A would replace parole and OR releases, cut detention costs, and provide extra war workers.³ However, the program was not a success – only 154 people participated.⁴ The Minneapolis district director complained that the cost of living was too high to expect anyone to be able to live on only 75% of a laborer’s wage. Moreover,

¹ For example, the YMCA petitioned for Emil Schmidt’s freedom (NARA RG 85 Entry 9, Box 2153 (53798/791 - 53798/850), File 53798/850); the Slavonic Immigrant Society, for Eva Herniak’s freedom (NARA RG 85, Entry 9, Box 2670 (54171/281 - 54171/340), File 54171/281); HIAS, for Leib Minzberg’s freedom (NARA RG 85, Entry 9, Box 2394 (53981/241 - 53981/309), File 53981/307); and the Home Mission Board, for Makra Mijota’s freedom (NARA RG 85 Entry 9, Box 1984 MLR A1-9 (53711/085 - 53712/027), File 53711/95).

² 1915 report of the commissioner-general of immigration, p. 10.

³ 1918 report of the commissioner-general of immigration, pp. 26-27.

⁴ 1919 report of the commissioner-general of immigration, pp. 17-18.

employers preferred to hire people with fewer employment restrictions than Rule 17-A participants.⁵ As the Seattle district director put it, “The conditions are regarded by many as too irksome for the aliens.”⁶ While the previous, ad hoc release arrangement was too laissez faire for the Bureau, Rule 17-A was too restrictive for the people who were indefinitely detained.

A frontline negotiation between immigration officials and indefinitely-detained people ultimately became both the preferred form of release from detention and a significant source for financing the US’s war efforts. In November of 1918, the Commissioner-General of Immigration wrote to the Acting Secretary of Labor, “Requests have been received of late from aliens whose deportation and exclusion has been stayed temporarily and their release on bond authorized, for permission to furnish Liberty Bonds in lieu of cash bonds or surety bonds [guaranteeing that they would appear for deportation when the time came].”⁷ Liberty Bonds were the financial instruments used to fund US participation in the war – pieces of government debt that ordinary people were encouraged to buy. This proposition worked well for the Bureau, which often struggled to verify whether individual sureties indeed possessed the assets to make good on immigration bonds.⁸ The Bureau preferred that migrants use corporate surety companies to underwrite bonds, confident that these companies possessed the collateral; however, these companies charged migrants unaffordable fees. The use of Liberty Bonds was thus a middle ground between individual and corporate sureties on which the Bureau and detained people could compromise. The Department of Labor approved the practice, and it became widespread.⁹ By the summer of 1919, the use of Liberty Bonds as collateral in immigration cases became regulated under the War Revenue Act.¹⁰ Thus the Bureau leveraged this system of release – which detained people had suggested – to both reduce detention costs and generate war revenue.

Detained people leveraged the symbolic valence of Liberty Bonds as well as the financial affordances. The war had inflamed a longstanding linkage between fears of political radicalism and anti-immigrant sentiment (Kanstroom 2007). Congress had passed an immigration act in October of 1918 that broadened the definition of “anarchist” as a deportable category.¹¹ When a series of bombs planted by Italian anarchists exploded across the country in the summer of 1919, the Department of Justice responded with a series of deportation raids from November to

⁵ 1919 report of the commissioner-general of immigration, pp. 376-77.

⁶ 1920 report of the commissioner-general of immigration, p. 374.

⁷ Bond for admission of aliens guaranteeing will not become public charges (1914-1919), November 5, 1918. Box 756 (52730/53B - 52730/53G), File 52730/53B, NARA RG 85. The Bureau of Immigration was housed in the Department of Labor at the time.

⁸ Bonds for admission of aliens vs. becoming public charges, November 24, 1911 and October 5, 1910. Box 755 (52730/40A - 52730/53A), File 52730/53; Bonds for admission becoming public charges (1912-1914), January 19 and July 1912. Box 755 (52730/40A - 52730/53A), File 52730/53A, NARA RG 85.

⁹ Bond for admission of aliens guaranteeing will not become public charges (1914-1919), November 13, 18, 21, and December 23, 1918; and January 21, 1919. Box 756 (52730/53B - 52730/53G), File 52730/53B, NARA RG 85.

¹⁰ See the War Revenue Act of 1918 (40 Stat. 1057).

¹¹ See the 1918 immigration act (40 Stat. 1012).

January. The Bureau struggled to keep up with the tasks of arresting, detaining, trying, and releasing over 5,000 people.¹² Moreover, the Bureau could not carry out most deportations – this time, due to diplomatic hostility between the US and the new Soviet regime.¹³ Immigration bonds justified in Liberty Bonds skyrocketed; the Service reported holding over \$600,000 in Liberty Bonds by the end of the raids.¹⁴ This massive drive might be interpreted as the government generating war revenue through raids, but the record suggests that the state was not the only party benefiting from the arrangement. The Chicago commissioner of immigration felt bamboozled, warning the Commissioner-General:

At first it was believed by this office that the offer of Liberty Bonds was made for the purpose of creating the impression that the subjects arrested were loyal citizens and investors in Liberty Bonds; however, it now appears that bonds are being purchased in large quantities, and as the market quotations on Liberty Bonds are about 92, the parties are in position to give an \$1,000 bond with an investment of \$920 and at the same time save the fees of bondsmen and indemnifiers.¹⁵

In other words, suspected anarchists appeared to authorities as though they were proclaiming loyalty to the nation, but Liberty Bonds were also simply a cheaper option for securing mass releases around which they could organize.

The Liberty Bonds scheme was a product of negotiations not only between immigration authorities and people who could not be deported, but other state agencies – namely, the Treasury Department and the Federal Reserve. The Bureau became so inundated with Liberty Bonds that it had difficulties administering them. Some districts even needed to use the services of surety companies to alleviate the clerical work.¹⁶ In collaboration with the Treasury, the Bureau arranged for Federal Reserve Bank branches across the country to receive Liberty Bonds deposited in immigration cases.¹⁷ But these banks proved recalcitrant in a number of ways. First, the Bureau mandated that sureties deposit Liberty Bonds with the bank branches directly, to

¹² 1920 report of the commissioner-general of immigration, p. 334.

¹³ 1921 report of the commissioner-general of immigration, p. 14.

¹⁴ (Folder 2; 1920), February 2, 1920. Box 756 (52730/53B - 52730/53G), File 52730/53C, NARA RG 85.

¹⁵ Bonds for admission of aliens guaranteeing will not become public charges (Folder 1; 1919-1920), November 29, 1919. Box 756 (52730/53B - 52730/53G), File 52730/53C, NARA RG 85.

¹⁶ (Folder 2; 1920), February 11, 1920. Box 756 (52730/53B - 52730/53G), File 52730/53C, NARA RG 85.

¹⁷ Bonds for admission of aliens guaranteeing will not become public charges (Folder 1; 1919-1920), January 23 and 29, 1920. Box 756 (52730/53B - 52730/53G), File 52730/53C, NARA RG 85.

reduce the Bureau's already overburdened involvement.¹⁸ But the banks refused to accept the deposits because they preferred to deal only with government officers; one fiscal agent wrote angrily, "The mere fact that these Foreigners present bonds to us is sufficient evidence to us of their character and we do not wish to have our receipts in the hands of these people."¹⁹ The Bureau then changed course, designating officers from its own force to deposit the bonds in the banks.²⁰ But the banks continued to refuse the deposits – some denied having been delegated the authority, others complained of a lack of capacity, and still others protested the Bureau's systems of receipts and filing.²¹ Such back-and-forths would continue in the years following the raids, evidencing the friction involved in collaborating across state domains to administratively disappear the crisis.

Conversations among state actors after the deportation raids reveal just how little was actually systematized and recorded in the administration of immigration bonds during and immediately following the Great War. When the Bureau made its arrangement with the Federal Reserve Banks, a circular was sent to the district directors, asking them to enumerate all the bonds in their respective jurisdictions – indicating that no centralized or standardized record-keeping practices had been established.²² In the summer, facing trouble suing for bond breaches, the Bureau's Acting Solicitor met with the Treasury's Chief of the Section of Surety Bonds to reorganize the immigration bond system.²³ The recommendations from this meeting show a lack of clear regulations regarding the life of the bond, the designation of a principal, or the deposit of collateral. Moreover, there were no codified reporting requirements for sureties, nor any plan for tracking sureties' solvency – corporate or individual. In other words, during World War I, state actors seemed less concerned with actually supervising the people it could not deport than with administratively disappearing the crisis.

Conclusion

While seeing populations through "legibility projects" is an established aspect of governance, mystifying them during crisis situations through "administrative disappearing" may be equally

¹⁸ Bonds for admission of aliens guaranteeing will not become public charges (Folder 1; 1919-1920), January 29 and 31, 1920. Box 756 (52730/53B - 52730/53G), File 52730/53C, NARA RG 85.

¹⁹ Bonds for admission of aliens guaranteeing will not become public charges (1920), March 15, 1920. Box 756 (52730/53B - 52730/53G), File 52730/53D, NARA RG 85.

²⁰ Bonds for admission of aliens guaranteeing will not become public charges (1920), March 26, 1920. Box 756 (52730/53B - 52730/53G), File 52730/53D, NARA RG 85.

²¹ (Folder 2; 1920), March 15, 1920. Box 756 (52730/53B - 52730/53G), File 52730/53C, NARA RG 85.

²² (Folder 2; 1920), February 2, 1920. Box 756 (52730/53B - 52730/53G), File 52730/53C. NARA RG 85.

²³ Con't (Folder 1; 1920), August 5, 1920. Box 756 (52730/53B - 52730/53G), File 52730/53F, NARA RG 85.

important. The preliminary findings of this paper demonstrate that administrative disappearing is not a mere sleight of hand on the part of state actors. Instead, it is more of a negotiation between state actors and the population posing the crisis, and among state actors as well. I illustrated this by including *unsuccessful* attempts at administrative disappearing, as well as successful ones, in my analysis of iterated solutions to the crisis of state inability to carry out deportations. Initial ad hoc releases from detention, many of which involved parole or outright release, were unsatisfactory to the Bureau of Immigration, so it devised a work-release program. But this program was unpopular among detained people, who subsequently proposed release on bond using Liberty Bonds as collateral. The use of Liberty Bonds became institutionalized, and then proliferated during the First Red Scare, leading the Bureau to painstakingly solicit cooperation from other branches of government to manage the deepening crisis.

In addition to its contributions to the literature on state legibility, this paper will contribute to literatures on penal supervision and migrant incarceration. First, existing studies tend to explain transformations in supervision in terms of transformations in the domestic political economy (Page and Soss 2021; Petersilia 2003; Simon 1993). But this paper suggests that *international* political-economic relations – namely, global war – are just as important in explaining transformations in supervision in immigration control. International relations created the crises of state incapacity to which new systems of supervision responded. War both rendered deportations across the Atlantic unsafe; and redrew national boundaries and fomented new diplomatic hostilities, such that certain deportations became impossible (Pope-Obeda 2018). This created a varied landscape of deportation, detention, and release: While deportations to Europe, the Middle East, and Russia were halted, leading to crisis and mass releases, they continued across the Pacific Ocean as well as over the borders with Mexico and Canada.²⁴

Second, existing studies tend to account for the rise of immigration detention using the figure of the “criminal alien,” which was developed as part of the 1980s mass incarceration trend to prioritize the deportation of people in removal proceedings who had obtained criminal convictions (Loyd and Mountz 2018; Macías-Rojas 2016; Shull 2022). But this paper suggests that the figure of the “*enemy alien*,” invoked especially during the World Wars to confine people suspected of disloyalty to the US, has also crucially shaped patterns of migrant incarceration. Detaining and trying so-called enemy aliens during World War I contributed to crises of state incapacity; demonstrations of loyalty to the nation through the purchase of Liberty Bonds subsequently determined who was releasable and who was not. People detained as enemy aliens strategically leveraged discourses of loyalty to secure their releases.

More broadly, this paper reveals that the power of the US deportation state is not totalizing – crises offer opportunities for organizing in its cracks. During the early twentieth century, detained people seized such opportunities to negotiate the terms of their freedom, first by working with advocates in an ad hoc way, then by refusing to participate in work release, and finally, by proposing and organizing around a Liberty Bond drive. But the population that posed

²⁴ 1915 report of the commissioner-general of immigration, p. 265. The Bureau conspicuously deported many refugees of the Mexican Revolution.

a problem for the deportation state only included European, Middle Eastern, and Russian migrants – not Mexican, Asian, or Canadian people, who were still detained and deported. These dynamics echo the organizing efforts of detained people and their advocates during the recent Covid-19 pandemic. People inside and outside facilities across the country demanded releases of all people confined in immigration detention, prisons, and jails, as these facilities failed to provide safeguards from the disease (Aguilar 2020, Anon 2020; Salvadore 2020). Future research can use the concepts elaborated here to explore the negotiations that took place amid this crisis, and who might have been excluded from them.

Figures and tables

Table 1. Aliens ordered deported to the countries from whence they came, in which orders of deportation were suspended due to war conditions, fiscal years 1915 to 1919

Year	Deportations suspended
1915	1328
1916	856
1917	694
1918	1045
1919	182
Total	4105

Source: Reports of the commissioner-general of immigration, Tables XVIII-A, pp. 132-33 (1915); pp. 90-91 (1916, 1917); pp. 156-57 (1918); pp. 188-89 (1919).

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