Since September 11, 2001, the United States Government has made it more difficult for immigrants to come to America while making it easier to deport them. Moreover, the United States Congress is considering the passage landmark immigration legislation to significantly restrict the number of immigrants entering the country and crack down on those already in the country who do not have proper documentation. Nativism is on the resurgence in the United States. This makes the publication of Kevin R. Johnson's *The "Huddled Masses" Myth: Immigration and Civil Rights* all the more timely. He argues that despite the lofty ideals inscribed at the base of the Statue of Liberty, the United States have a long history of treating "the Huddled masses" harshly. Johnson also maintains that government officials' mistreatment is "inextricably linked to the efforts of domestic minorities to secure civil rights and full membership in U.S. society" (1). Like their native-born counterparts, immigrants who have not been white, male, heterosexual, or part of the political mainstream have been discriminated against and disproportionately disadvantaged in American society. Unlike minority citizens, however, immigrants have had little legal recourse to defend themselves against various injustices.

Johnson states that in American society today immigrants function as scapegoats. The reasons for this are complex and slightly speculative. Johnson asserts that the abusive legal and extralegal actions directed against resident aliens are the result of a collective psychological transference. Specifically white Americans have displaced their social and political anxieties from one group of racial minorities - specifically African Americans - to immigrants. Regardless of the merits of this notion, Johnson correctly points out that recent laws dealing with immigration - such as California's Proposition 187 (1994), the federal Antiterrorism and Effective Death Penalty Act (1996), the federal Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act (1996), and the United and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism (USA PATRIOT) Act of 2001 - have been unfriendly to the foreign born. And Johnson demonstrates that the supporters of these laws acted partly out of nativist fears. Such sentiments, Johnson notes, are not new. Rather they have been part of the American political arena for nearly two hundred years. In the Nineteenth Century, many Americans reacted negatively to the
appearance of Irish and Chinese immigrants. The United States Government sought to end Chinese immigration with the 1882 Chinese Exclusion Act. Johnson astutely connects the current political push for exclusion and deportation of immigrants with that historic law as well as other restrictionist legislation of the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries.

Johnson devotes most of his book describing the various ways the United States continues to exclude, deport, and mistreat various immigrants. There are chapters on the poor, criminals, political radicals and others like homosexuals and racial minorities who seemingly threaten the established order. Furthermore, there is a chapter dealing with the ways immigration law and policy marginalizes women. In general, these chapters illustrate well Johnson's main contention. For example, he demonstrates that concerns about welfare use and abuse, a political issue that once centered on discussions of African-American women, has now become an issue involving immigrants, especially those who are not white. In 1994, Californian voters passed Proposition 187, which sought to strip the ability for many immigrants to gain access to public services. The debate about that referendum was infused with racism. Similarly, domestic political concerns about lesbians and gay men have led to the exclusion, deportation, and refusal of naturalization of immigrants who are homosexual. In short, Johnson's argument is convincing.

The "Huddled Masses" Myth might be an even more useful book if Johnson had compiled statistics to support his thesis. Nowhere in the text does he relate specifically how many immigrants - who are poor, racial minorities, criminals, homosexual, or radicals - have been barred admission or deported since 1882. Such numbers would be useful and might reinforce even better his main thesis. Additionally, there are a number of smaller points with which immigration historians might quibble. For example, instead of discussing Japanese American internment while discussing the exclusion, deportation, and discrimination against racial minorities, Johnson takes the issue up when examining the harsh treatment of political undesirables. The connection here is not as strong as Johnson suggests. As historians such as Roger Daniels have demonstrated, the unjust incarceration of Japanese immigrants and Japanese Americans has as much to do with racism as with political hysteria. And in fact, it is this nexus to which Johnson could have devoted more attention, especially with events since September 11, 2001. As he points out, Arabs, Arab Americans, and Muslims have been singled out for mistreatment. An entire chapter on Muslims and discrimination against other religious minority groups such as Jews would have been wonderful. As it is, Johnson spreads out his cogent analysis of current immigration law and policy and its relationship with Muslims over several chapters. Regardless, The "Huddled Masses" Myth is an excellent book. Anyone interested in immigration policy and immigrants generally should read it. Moreover, the book would be extraordinarily useful in a college course on immigration or on public policy.
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