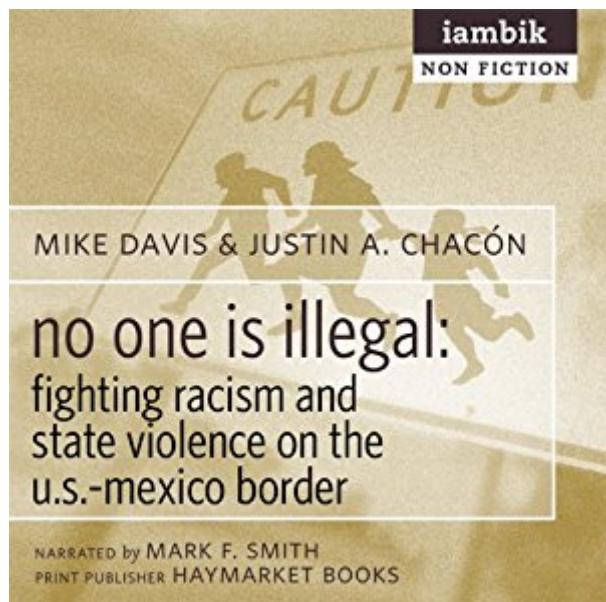


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No One Is Illegal: Fighting Racism And State Violence On The U.S.-Mexico Border



Synopsis

No One Is Illegal debunks the leading ideas behind the often-violent right-wing backlash against immigrants, revealing their deep roots in U.S. history. This vital book highlights the history of white vigilante violence in the U.S., drawing parallels with today's Minutemen Project; examines the role of U.S. corporations in the Mexican economy, and the role of immigrant labor in the U.S. economy; reveals how patterns in U.S. immigration policy and campaigns to scapegoat immigrant workers are shaped by the needs of business and politicians; and offers an insightful analysis of the most recent battles over immigrant rights. The authors also remember the long tradition of resistance to vigilante and state-sponsored racism among immigrants organizing in the factories and the fields, and chart a course toward justice and equality for immigrants in the U.S.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you want to cut through the Right's hysterical wailing about immigration, buy this extremely readable book. It's filled with little known facts about immigrants (they have a higher employment rate than the general population; they pay more in taxes than they receive in government benefits), looks at the ebbs and flows of immigration to the U.S. and how it's been shaped by racism against different waves of immigrants, explains how immigration is manipulated by Corporate America to ensure they have a plentiful supply of cheap labor and how capital uses the fear of immigration to divide and rule the American working-class. The book examines how the border was created through wars of aggression on the part of the U.S., how policies like the North American Free Trade

Agreement have devastated Mexico's small farmer class and forced them to look for work in the cities of the U.S., and brings the forgotten history of Mexican immigrants who engaged in bitter and bloody struggles against big agri-business in the South and West especially in the 1930s. The closing chapters explain how the debate over immigration has moved progressively rightward in the last 30 years or so, as successive Democratic and Republican administrations have passed more and more draconian laws against undocumented workers, made the Border Patrol the largest federal law-enforcement agency with over 12,000 officers, and wasted tens of millions of dollars into creating walls at the border designed not to stop immigration but to push it into ever-more remote areas, increasing the likelihood that immigrants will die in the desert trying to get the U.S. and earn a better life.

I am a long-time opponent of open borders. I want American immigration laws enforced and strengthened. However, I also believe it is important to respect those who disagree with me and understand their arguments. For that reason I read this book. The authors do make some good points in the book, such as the need for reducing the power of corporations in the U.S. The authors argue that a complete open-borders policy would be best for the United States and for workers in general. Surprisingly, the book is mostly about the history of union organizing in the American Southwest rather than about illegal immigration as such. Indeed, the authors seem to be anxious to muddy the waters as much as possible. They talk a lot about long-ago jailed union organizers and long-dead victims of racist violence; they want to present deportation of illegal aliens as no different from past discredited violence. The authors argue that current opposition to illegal immigration is nothing more than racism. I don't find this convincing. If opposition to illegal immigration is racism, why is it that Mexico has its own problems with illegal immigrants from other Latin American countries? The authors are clearly big supporters of unions and see unions as the solution to labor problems in the U.S. and around the world. I am a union member myself, and I simply cannot agree with them. Unions have their uses. In the end, however, no union can change the fact that labor conditions are ultimately determined by the supply of workers and the demand for specific skills. If plenty of workers are available who can do the work for less, working conditions will not improve. The authors are very concerned about not only illegal immigrants, but also the plight of all Hispanic workers.

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