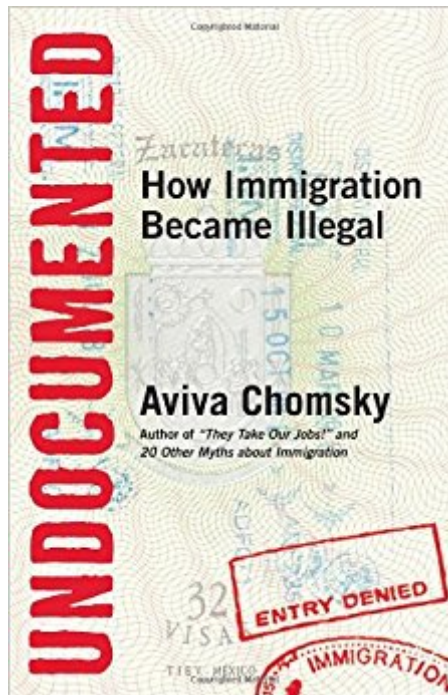




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Undocumented: How Immigration Became Illegal



Synopsis

Explores what it means to be undocumented in a legal, social, economic and historical context

“In this illuminating work, immigrant rights activist Aviva Chomsky shows how

“illegality” and “undocumentedness” are concepts that were created to exclude and exploit. With a focus on US policy, she probes how people, especially Mexican and Central Americans, have been assigned this status—and to what ends. Blending history with human drama, Chomsky explores what it means to be undocumented in a legal, social, economic, and historical context. The result is a powerful testament of the complex, contradictory, and ever-shifting nature of status in America.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

“An impassioned and well-reported case for change.... Chomsky ably lays out just how brutal life can be for the undocumented.”—New York Times Sunday Book

Review “Undocumented” adds smart, new, and provocative scholarship to the

immigration debate. “Los Angeles Review of Books” “From the first page to the last, Undocumented is to immigrant rights movement what We Charge Genocide was to the African American movement—a dossier that sets aside quibbles about whether immigrants contribute to the US economy or not, whether immigrants speak English or not and gives flesh to the slogan, ‘Immigrant rights are human rights.’ A clear-headed and smart book that locates the struggles of immigrants squarely in the struggles for human rights. Nothing less is to be

accommodated, and much more is to be imagined. • Vijay Prashad, author of *The Poorer Nations: A Possible History of the Global South* • “Professional in her scholarship, Chomsky has written a book that will be relevant to those who do not share her position as well as to those who do. • Publishers Weekly • “Dares to call the [immigration] problem ‘manufactured,’ one that could be solved with the stroke of a pen. • Ms. Magazine

Aviva Chomsky is professor of history and coordinator of Latin American Studies at Salem State University. The author of several books, Chomsky has been active in Latin American solidarity and immigrants’ rights issues for over twenty-five years. She lives in Salem, Massachusetts.

Excellent work on the concept and evolution of being "illegal" in America. Traces the development of that concept through the history of immigration to the present day. Chomsky’s argument that national borders are arbitrary and that the right to maintain the sovereignty of those borders through "border control" is fraught with implications, may not set well with readers and may cause them to discount the rest of the book. At the very least, that would be an interesting source of discussion. Nevertheless, Chomsky is able to show how the idea of the "illegal immigrant" is a recent one and owes much to immigration reform that benefited prospective European immigrants and prejudiced Mexican immigration. How? By imposing new restrictions that broke up traditional patterns of migration, work and acculturation by immigrants and replaced them with a gamed system that exposed immigrants to exploitation by employers. Chomsky takes to task the "my ancestors came here legally" myth and shows how immigration law and American prejudice privileged some immigrant groups over others, creating a dilemma in which new immigrants are not offered the opportunity to even get in line, as it were. Readers should come away with the understanding that rather than an ordered, efficient process that serves all equally, immigration law sometimes if not many times reinforces those prejudices or imposes undue burdens on likely immigrants. Chomsky elaborates of how immigration law frustrates rather than facilitates human rights and an efficient immigration process. She also, with no punches pulled, explains how immigrants employ fraud to try and keep up with ever changing demands. The solutions chapter at the end is the weakest, and does not really bridge the gap between theory and possibility. This book adds an important voice to the debates over immigration

This book is an easy to read, historical account of how immigration became illegal. Facts that many

choose to ignore are simply outlined for the reader to understand.

Ms Chomsky did an excellent job covering the history of our immigration policies. I saw her speak first and she's well worth seeing.

A disturbing book. I used it as background for a church workshop on illegal children immigrants.

This book is everything I have been looking for. Finally a book on human rights for refugees and (im)migrants!

This book does a great job at demonstrating how the United States has historically never been welcoming to immigrant groups and how it has actively tried to keep immigrants out. I think everyone should read this if you care about human rights.

Sometimes you read a book expecting to find one topic, and get twenty. This is one of those. Well written, very educational and full of facts and research. Good!

I highly recommend this mini history book!!

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