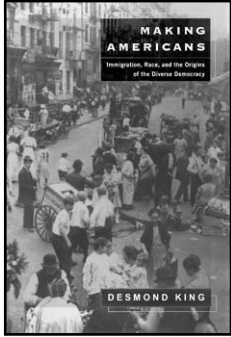


World Citizens or Corporate Slaves—BOOKS

by Chris Calder

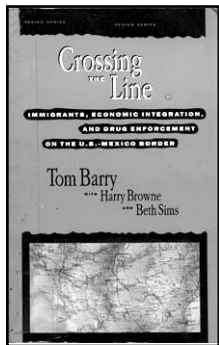
US immigration debates often tell far more about Americans—both truths and falsehoods—than about immigrants. Perhaps because of this, the most clear-eyed, comprehensive book on this list comes from Britain.

Desmond King, Professor of Politics and Fellow at St. John's College, University of Oxford,



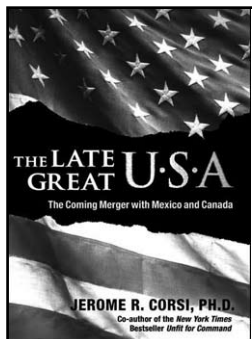
focuses on the 1920s as the birth of modern American immigration policy in *Making Americans*. King finds during that decade's debates the formation of an explicitly racist, even eugenics-based, policy that consciously constructed America as a racial hierarchy, Anglo-Saxons up top. King argues convincingly that

beneath today's veneers of patriotic nativism on the right and liberal internationalism on the left, a broad and largely unconscious consensus exists to maintain America as the home of the free and, first and foremost, of the white. King's treatment of Americanization, the process by which we define ourselves individually and as a nation, is an unsettling and essential focus.



Crossing the Line, by Tom Barry, et al, is the closest thing to an on-the-ground report on the issues arising from the US-Mexico border. Its often surprising discussion of the unique borderlands world demonstrates how far reality outstrips the bromides of mainstream immigration

debate. In a string of border-hugging twin cities, and in the vast desert reaches beyond, the peoples of the region are evolving a version of tomorrow that will leave today's commentators in the dust. *Crossing the Line* is compassionate reportage well-reflected upon, a rarity.



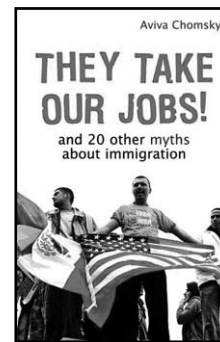
The rest of the books on this list do a better or worse job of marshalling facts to their cause, but too often veer into reactionary realms of both left and right. The most interesting of these is Jerome R. Corsi's *Late Great USA*. Corsi argues that high-level government plans are afoot

to create a European Union-style confederation out of Canada, Mexico and the US, complete with a single currency (the Amero) and greatly relaxed borders. (See pg. 6 box on the SPP.)

Those who dismiss this sort of thing as wingnut conspiracy or assume that relaxation of borders is automatically a good thing may be doing themselves a disservice. Corsi is thorough in his reporting on a number of very large and current projects that seem to point to a privatized future where national borders may fade but economic borders, again, privately maintained and enforced, assume great importance.

Aviva Chomsky's, *They Take Our Jobs: and 20 Other Myths About*

Immigration is the best of a group of books that address immigration on an issue-by-issue basis. These books by and large favor a relaxed immigration policy. Chomsky is most successful at tearing down assumptions about a charity-based US immigration policy or some golden age when immigrants behaved exactly as



native-born Americans wanted them to. Like King, she identifies the 1920s as the formative time for modern immigration policy, and points out the blatantly political slant of that policy since World War II. She is less successful in actually answering some of the most potent immigration-born anxieties. Chomsky, like Michele Wucker in *Lockout*, displays an almost Rumsfeldian disregard for the effect of a greatly relaxed US-Mexico border on wage and living standards. She claims the US labor movement can be relied upon to maintain those standards. Any actual worker in today's de-unionized economy knows this is pure fantasy.



The shallow and ossified politics of the US these days makes it very difficult to grapple with an issue at once as global and personal as immigration. But, as with climate change, an issue with which immigration is fast becoming one, the challenge is unavoidable.

Chris Calder is a freelance writer and former small town newspaper editor in Northern California.