Deporting Our Souls: Values, Morality, and Immigration Policy by Bill Ong Hing

A Calming Voice In A Storm Of Fear.

In the past three decades, images of undocumented immigrants pouring across the southern border have driven the immigration debate and policies have been implemented in response to those images. The Oklahoma City bombings and the tragic events of September 11, both of questionable relevance to immigration policy have provided further impetus to implement strategies that are anti-immigration in design and effect. This book discusses the major immigration policy areas - undocumented workers, the immigration selection system, deportation of aggravated felons, national security and immigration policy, and the integration of new Americans - and the author suggests his own proposals on how to address the policy challenges from a perspective that encourages us to consider the moral consequences of our decisions. The author also reviews some of the policies that have been put forth and ignored and suggests new policies that would be good for the country economically and socially.

My Personal Review:
In a book published in October 2006: Deporting Our Souls.... Values, Morality and Immigration Policy, Bill Ong Hing makes a very strong case for a much more humane immigration policy in the United States.

Hing who is on the faculty at UC Davis Law School argues that we need a new approach to immigration: "My solution is simple." He writes. "Calm down. Welcome undocumented workers...." His is a refreshing voice in a storm of fear. He uses lots of examples showing how the US's past immigration policy has mistreated people. He also shows how applications of the same policies are effecting people today. One example he uses is how Operation Gatekeeper, which sealed the border near El Paso drove the migrants into the Arizona desert where thousands have died.

His argument for immigration is not the ethics argument used by the Radical Immigration movement, that humans have the basic right to migrate as long as they are not an undue burden on the place they settle. He argues that we should allow immigration because it is the compassionate thing to do, that we have a responsibility to others wherever they live and that immigration is good for all of us. He does not argue for, in the words of Bruce Ackerman, "an immigrant's prima facie
right to demand entry into a liberal state." Hing believes that the US can make better rules for immigrants and the problem can be solved.

The book ends with these lines: ". we should fully embrace newcomers in our midst with open arms, for they are our neighbors and, in a real sense, our own collective relatives." His is a welcome sentiment in a sea of anger.

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