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No Border, No Country

Overrun: How Joe Biden Unleashed the Greatest Border Crisis in U.S. History, by Todd Bensman.
Bombardier Books, 432 pages, $33 (cloth), $21 (paper)

In *overrun: how joe biden unleashed the Greatest Border Crisis in U.S. History*, Todd Bensman chronicles the scandalous disaster that Biden and the Democrats intentionally unleashed at America's southern border. As the online saying has it, Bensman "brings the receipts": he delivers the desperately needed facts that mainstream reporters refuse to provide.

Alarming though it is, *Overrun* is anything but overwrought. Bensman, whose previous book, *America's Covert Border War* (2021), focused on counterterrorism measures at the border following 9/11, supports his case with extensive on-the-ground reporting; interviews with cartel members, immigrants, smugglers, border patrol officials, and NGO activists; and trips to the tiny Central American towns that send illegal immigrants to the U.S. The book is brimming with data and respectful argumentation, both hallmarks of the Center for Immigration Studies where Bensman is a senior national security fellow. Long attacked by hysterics as a "hate group" for reporting uncomfortable facts about immigration, in reality the Center is the calmest, most rhetoric-free, fact-based immigration outfit in Washington.

As Bensman shows, Biden's policies are extreme even in comparison to those of other Democratic administrations. Though he indulged in plenty of dreamy rhetoric, Barack Obama did ultimately reduce illegal immigration once political pressure mounted high enough. He did so effectively, with deportation flights and aggressive messaging to potential migrants that their attempts to enter and stay in America would not be successful. Now, however, America's largest "charitable" foundations have spent hundreds of millions of dollars to subsidize propaganda suggesting that normal immigration enforcement is somehow criminal.

The illegal aliens whom Bensman interviews reveal themselves to be entirely rational actors. Like many critics of immigration, Bensman freely admits that he might well have done as they did if he found himself and his family in dire economic straits. But the best interests of immigrants are not the same as those of the country.

Illegal immigration has not only mounted to a flood tide during the Biden Administration, it has also started flowing from entirely new sources. Whereas the influx once came primarily from Latin America, the U.S. now plays host to an entire United Nations' worth of entrants. Bensman pays special attention to what he calls "The Great Haitian Asylum Scam." Thousands of Haitians, already living comfortably abroad in places like Brazil and Chile, used the Haitian earthquake and the collapse of Haitian civil society to make asylum claims in America. The immigration establishment shamelessly encouraged them to lie about their reasons for entry, while the United Nations often paid them directly with cash cards as they approached the U.S. border.

At times, the detail in *overrun* can become a little excessive. Those seeking an overarching explanation of our border's fraught history may find more context on offer here than they desired. But some minutiae can also be illuminating. For example, Bensman gives a thorough explanation of the "Flores loophole," a notorious bit of liberal judicial activism foisted on then-president Donald Trump by California's left-wing district judge Dolly Gee. By forcing Trump to choose between separating parents from children at the border and deporting all illegal families en masse, Gee left Trump no alternative but to pursue unpopular family separation policies to keep from opening the floodgates altogether. Stories like this are important for understanding why even hawkish administrations such as Trump's are hamstrung by the do-gooders and the administrative state.

Our corrupted asylum regime is at the root of our current immigration problem. *Overrun* documents the many ways in which asylum policies have been used and abused for decades by illegal aliens, the overwhelming majority of whom are economic migrants. They flout U.S. law ever more efficiently now that they are coached on how to show "credible fear" of persecution when questioned by officials. Allegedly "religious" institutions, NGOs, and governments all collude to enable "refugee resettlement" in order to satisfy their savior complex or to pad their bottom line.

Bensman does not hesitate to advocate bold policy changes such as withdrawing from the U.N. Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, which he rightly derides as a Cold War relic. But he does sometimes shrink from the logic of his own position. Though he forthrightly notes that "today's Democratic party has taken a wholesale leave of its senses," some part of him still seems to believe in the contemporary "moderate Democrat" who must help "sweep the New Theologian extremists [that is, the open borders Democrats] from the halls of power." There is a certain amount of wishful thinking at work here. While there are certainly some moderate Democrat *voters*, there is no moderate Democrat electoral power base. Politically, moderate Democrats are a nonexistent force—none have meaningfully altered Joe Biden's immigration agenda, which has been completely run by the far Left.

Like many well-meaning analysts, Bensman is reluctant simply to oppose this immigration agenda. He feels a need to invoke various utilitarian arguments, as if the primary problem with mass immigration were that terrorists and criminals can slip through the cracks. Obviously, it is good to keep out gangs and drug cartels, but Americans are also well within their rights to deny entry to people who might be law abiding in all other respects, simply because they would undercut American labor or add to our cultural disunity. The modern Democratic Party is hell-bent on "fundamentally transforming the United States of America," as Obama promised to do when president. There is no need to create elaborate justifications for strongly opposing their effort.

These quibbles aside, Todd Bensman expertly shows how Democrats have arrived at a "sanctuary nation" ideology. When patriotic Americans look at the horrific situation at the border, they often wonder how it got that way, and why nobody is doing anything to stop it. *Overrun* answers both questions and will likely become a key record in the history of America's self-destruction.

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