

No, Controlling Immigration isn't Fascism

Long before the world learned of fascism in the 1920s and 1930s, countries controlled their borders. They did so in different ways, but ultimately it was to protect their own national interests, including their economic strength, culture, ethnicity, religion, security, etc.

When it comes to the term 'fascism', George Orwell's comments about the word's use in his time applies equally to ours:

"It is in internal politics that this word has lost the last vestige of meaning. For if you examine the press you will find that there is almost no set of people – certainly no political party or organized body of any kind – which has not been denounced as Fascist during the past ten years. Here I am not speaking of the verbal use of the term 'Fascist'. I am speaking of what I have seen in print. I have seen the words 'Fascist in sympathy', or 'of Fascist tendency', or just plain 'Fascist', applied in all seriousness..."

Let us therefore offer a simple definition of fascism, it is an organizing principle that binds the people together in the national interest as determined by the leadership of the country. While socialism binds a country together as well, it does so through the popular control of the means of production. Fascism can allow for some freedoms, such as private ownership of the means of production, so long as it controls how they're used and for what purpose.

Benito Mussolini hints at all of that in his famous "The Doctrine of Fascism" speech from 1932:

"The keystone of the Fascist doctrine is its conception of the State, of its essence, its functions, and its aims. For Fascism the State is absolute, individuals and groups

relative. Individuals and groups are admissible in so far as they come within the State. Instead of directing the game and guiding the material and moral progress of the community, the liberal State restricts its activities to recording results. The Fascist State is wide awake and has a will of its own."

Now, it should be made clear that every nation needs to pursue its national interests, but not every nation is fascist. For instance, a free country like the United States can have laws protecting its citizens' rights to property, speech, religion, etc., and not direct them as in a fascist state, while still acting in its national interest on war, trade, and immigration.

Even Bernie Sanders seems to be quite aware of this truth. And here we should be clear, if someone is going to call someone a fascist for wanting to control immigration, then that accusation is going to apply to an enormous swath of Americans across a wide variety of political lines.

Writing in [defense](#) of Bernie Sanders on his campaign page, Richard Eskow attacks the idea of "Open Borders", calling it a "gimmick, not a solution." Initially, he makes the argument against open borders with an economic case:

"... when the supply of labor increases, wages go down. A massive influx of foreign workers would lead to a steep plunge in those multiples. What's more, there are often significant cost-of-living differences between the United States and these workers' countries of origin."

The most interesting part of Eskow's defense of Bernie, however, is that the open-boarders argument "devalues other countries" and that,

"For most migrants, their native lands hold ties of language, culture, family, and community. It should not be necessary to endure the pain of displacement merely to earn a livable wage. To claim otherwise, as open-borders advocates implicitly do,

is to reflect the xenophobic belief that everybody would be happier here than anywhere else.”

Eskow’s reference to ties of “language, culture, family, and community” are fascinating. Since they’re brought up in defense of other countries, it is also legitimate then to consider America’s own “language, culture, family, and community” interests, let alone her economic interests.

Clearly culture and language matter to a nation and a people. Even Bernie Sanders’ campaign admits that borders help protect those things. If it is right, therefore, for other countries to preserve their cultures and traditions and economy, what then is wrong with the United States doing the same? It certainly isn’t fascism. Furthermore, what’s wrong with determining which immigrants would be best able to assimilate to the culture and traditions of the United States?