

Why They're Saying Donald Trump is a Fascist

It seems that figures on both the left and the right are increasingly applying a rather unsavory term to Donald Trump:

"Fascist."

The term is notoriously ambiguous. Perhaps the most well-known attempt to describe fascism is novelist Umberto Eco's 1995 essay ["Ur-Fascism,"](#) in which he lists 14 characteristics of it. In [a column for Slate last week](#), Jamelle Bouie claimed that 7 of these characteristics apply to Trump. They are:

1) A cult of "action for action's sake," where "thinking is a form of emasculation."

2) An intolerance of "analytical criticism," where disagreement is condemned.

3) A profound "fear of difference," where leaders appeal against "intruders."

4) Appeals to individual and social frustration and specifically a "frustrated middle class" suffering from "feelings of political humiliation and frightened by the pressure of lower social groups."

5) A nationalist identity set against internal and external enemies (an "obsession with a plot").

6) A feeling of humiliation by the "ostentatious wealth and force of their enemies."

7) A “popular elitism” where “every citizen belongs to the best people of the world” and underscored by contempt for the weak; and a celebration of aggressive (and often violent) masculinity.

Does the shoe fit? [According to Ross Douthat](#), the conservative columnist for the New York Times, yes.

However, he cautions people that instead of throwing around that label, they should look at why Trump’s particular brand of fascism is now resonating with so many Americans:

“Freaking out over Trump-the-fascist is a good way for the political class to ignore the legitimate reasons he’s gotten this far – the deep disaffection with the Republican Party’s economic policies among working-class conservatives, the reasonable skepticism about the bipartisan consensus favoring ever more mass low-skilled immigration, the accurate sense that the American elite has misgoverned the country at home and abroad.”

In support of Douthat’s contention, the Eco essay referenced above quotes Franklin Delano Roosevelt’s perhaps prophetic words in 1938:

“I venture the challenging statement that if American democracy ceases to move forward as a living force, seeking day and night by peaceful means to better the lot of our citizens, fascism will grow in strength in our land.”

Though Trump has gotten the support of about a quarter of the Republican electorate, Douthat does not think he will get much more, that the Republican Party is still “inoculated” against him and what he stands for.

Do you agree with Douthat that Trump's days as a candidate are numbered? Or, do you think his popularity will continue to "grow in strength"?