

From where I sit: The "F" Word

A view from the Chair - Mike Rawlins, Collin County Democratic Party Chair

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Fascism

People on the far left have been freely throwing around this word for decades, applying it to LBJ, the 45th President, and everyone in between. However, when it moves from the DailyKos and your left-wing friends on Facebook to establishment figures like [David Frum](#), former speechwriter to George W. Bush, it's past time to take a serious look at what's happening in the Republican Party today.

I hesitate to use this word. Aside from being just as inflammatory as "socialism", its meaning is even less understood.

In search of a good definition of fascism, I looked it up in my old college textbook, Sabine's "A History of Political Theory", a 948 page book with all of *four* pages on Mussolini's Fascism and its close cousin Hitler's National Socialism. This excerpt is very telling:

"Their so-called philosophies were mosaics of ancient prejudices, put together without regard for truth or consistency, to appeal not to common purposes but to common fears and hates. Both Hitler and Mussolini deliberately avoided any straightforward declaration of policy, because it would have repelled some group that they wished to attract."

With Fascism being so ill-defined as a political philosophy what is frequently done instead of summarizing the core beliefs is describing the characteristics – kind of along the lines of "if it walks like a duck". The "[14 Characteristics of Fascism](#)" has been widely shared on the Internet at least since the Presidency of George W. Bush, and is a fairly decent guide. While it doesn't tell us exactly what fascism is, it is clear that it isn't the liberal democracy that this nation established.

An objective assessment of these fourteen characteristics would hold that we're not there yet. But when sober people are warning that many of these characteristics are emerging, we ignore "it's starting to walk like a duck" at our peril.

Voter suppression, attempts to rig elections while at the same time fraudulently claiming that elections were stolen, new revelations about how senior leaders were seriously concerned about a coup in the waning days of 45's Presidency, and the January 6 failed insurrection should all sound alarm bells.

We are in perilous times. Democrats have always tended to have internal squabbles after losing elections. We cannot afford that self-indulgent luxury this time. In addition we have to put aside our policy differences -- even with hard core conservatives like Liz Cheney -- and find common ground in fighting this threat to our democracy.

What happened in Germany and Italy in the 1930s can indeed happen here.

Sincerely, Mike Rawlins, County Chair