

Trump backed by fascists, quotes Mussolini

A reporter
29 February 2016

Billionaire demagogue Donald Trump went out of his way to advertise his sympathies with racists and fascists this weekend, favorably citing a saying of Italian fascist dictator Benito Mussolini, while refusing to disavow an endorsement from David Duke, the longtime white racist agitator from Louisiana.

Trump also collected the endorsement of neo-fascist Jean Marie Le Pen, founder of the National Front in France. Le Pen, who was expelled from his own party for openly racist statements and repeatedly downplaying the scale of the Holocaust, wrote on Twitter Saturday, “If I were American, I would vote Donald Trump ... But may God protect him!”

Trump was pressed by reporters Friday over the recent endorsement of his campaign by former Ku Klux Klan leader Duke, who served two years in the Louisiana state legislature as a Republican and ran as a Republican for US Senate and governor. He claimed to disavow Duke’s support.

But asked the same question on the CNN interview program “State of the Union” Sunday, Trump refused an appeal from the Anti-Defamation League, cited by interviewer Jake Tapper, which called on him to publicly condemn Duke’s racism and anti-Semitism.

This exchange followed, in which Trump pretended not to know who David Duke was:

TAPPER: Will you unequivocally condemn David Duke and say that you don’t want his vote or that of other white supremacists in this election?

TRUMP: Well, just so you understand, I don’t know anything about David Duke. OK? I don’t know anything about what you’re even talking about with white supremacy or white supremacists. So, I don’t know...

TAPPER: But I guess the question from the Anti-Defamation League is, even if you don’t know about their endorsement, there are these groups

and individuals endorsing you. Would you just say unequivocally you condemn them and you don’t want their support?

TRUMP: Well, I have to look at the group. I mean, I don’t know what group you’re talking about. You wouldn’t want me to condemn a group that I know nothing about. I would have to look. If you would send me a list of the groups, I will do research on them. And, certainly, I would disavow if I thought there was something wrong.

TAPPER: The Ku Klux Klan?

TRUMP: But you may have groups in there that are totally fine, and it would be very unfair. So, give me a list of the groups, and I will let you know.

TAPPER: OK. I mean, I’m just talking about David Duke and the Ku Klux Klan here, but...

TRUMP: I don’t know any—honestly, I don’t know David Duke. I don’t believe I have ever met him. I’m pretty sure I didn’t meet him. And I just don’t know anything about him.

Clearly, the Republican frontrunner did not want to offend any racists or white supremacists who exercise considerable influence in Republican circles in many states in the South, the site of the majority of the March 1 Super Tuesday contests and several more later in the month, including Louisiana itself on March 5.

Trump was also evasive, albeit smirking, on the question of his decision to retweet a quote from Mussolini to the effect that “It is better to live one day as a lion than 100 years as a sheep.” On NBC’s “Meet the Press,” interviewer Chuck Todd asked him whether he knew the quote was from the Italian fascist dictator.

CHUCK TODD: That’s a famous Mussolini quote, you retweeted it. Do you like the quote? Did you know it was Mussolini?

DONALD TRUMP: Sure, it's okay to know it's Mussolini. Look, Mussolini was Mussolini. It's okay to—it's a very good quote, it's a very interesting quote, and I know it. I saw it. I saw what—and I know who said it. But what difference does it make whether it's Mussolini or somebody else? It's certainly a very interesting quote. That's probably why I have—

CHUCK TODD: Well, Mussolini is a known fascist.

DONALD TRUMP: ...between Facebook and Twitter, 14 million people when other people don't.

CHUCK TODD: Do you want to be associated...

DONALD TRUMP: It's a very interesting quote, and people can talk about it.

CHUCK TODD: Do you want to be associated with a fascist?

DONALD TRUMP: No, I want to be associated with interesting quotes.

While the Republican frontrunner flaunts his sympathies with racists and fascists, his Republican opponents continue to pledge their support for him if he becomes the party's presidential nominee.

Senator Ted Cruz of Texas, asked point blank on CNN, said, "I will support the Republican nominee, period, the end." Governor John Kasich of Ohio told the same program, "at the end of the day, I'm going to support that person who went through the arena and became the nominee."

Senator Marco Rubio of Florida, asked the same question on CBS, declared, "He's never going to be the nominee. So, I'm not worried about a hypothetical that's never going to happen." He continued, "If he's our nominee, it could be the end of the Republican Party. It will split us and splinter us in a way that we may never be able to recover." But he declined to say he would never support Trump if he were the nominee.



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