

UMBERTO ECO'S

14 SIGNS OF UR-FASCISM

CULT OF TRADITION

"Truth has been already spelled out once and for all, and we can only keep interpreting its obscure message."

DISTRUST OF THE INTELLECTUAL

"Action being beautiful in itself, it must be taken before, or without, any previous reflection. Thinking is a form of emasculation."

FEAR OF DIFFERENCE

"The first appeal of a fascist or prematurely fascist movement is an appeal against the intruders. Thus Ur-Fascism is racist by definition."

OBSESSION WITH A PLOT

"The followers must feel besieged. The easiest way to solve the plot is the appeal to xenophobia. But the plot must also come from the inside..."

PERMANENT WARFARE

"For Ur-Fascism there is no struggle for life but, rather, life is lived for struggle. Thus pacifism is trafficking with the enemy. It is bad because life is permanent warfare."

A CULT OF DEATH

"... the Ur-Fascist hero craves heroic death, advertised as the best reward for a heroic life. The Ur-Fascist hero is impatient to die. In his impatience, he more frequently sends other people to death."

THE LEADER EXPRESSES THE WILL OF THE PEOPLE

In Ur-Fascism "individuals as individuals have no rights, and the People is conceived as a quality, a monolithic entity expressing the Common Will. Since no large quantity of human beings can have a common will, the Leader pretends to be their interpreter."

IRRATIONALISM

A rejection of modernism: "The Enlightenment, the Age of Reason, is seen as the beginning of modern depravity."

DISAGREEMENT IS TREASON

"No syncretistic faith can withstand analytical criticism. The critical spirit makes distinctions, and to distinguish is a sign of modernism."

APPEAL TO A FRUSTRATED MIDDLE CLASS

In our time, when the old "proletarians" are becoming petty bourgeois (and the lumpen are largely excluded from the political scene), the fascism of tomorrow will find its audience in this new majority."

HUMILIATION

"The followers must feel humiliated by the ostentatious wealth and force of their enemies. ... by a continuous shifting of rhetorical focus, the enemies are at the same time too strong and too weak."

POPULAR ELITISM

"Since the group is hierarchically organized (according to a military model), every subordinate leader despises his own underlings, and each of them despises his inferiors. This reinforces the sense of mass elitism."

MACHISMO

This "implies both disdain for women and intolerance and condemnation of nonstandard sexual habits, from chastity to homosexuality)."

NEWSPEAK

"All the Nazi or Fascist schoolbooks made use of an impoverished vocabulary, and an elementary syntax, in order to limit the instruments for complex and critical reasoning. But we must be ready to identify other kinds of Newspeak, even if they take the apparently innocent form of a popular talk show."