

The Ideological Structure of Fascism*

A mythic past

Propaganda – “The Big Lie”

Victimhood – Nation under siege

Anti-intellectualism

Isolationism – Xenophobia

Unreality – Conspiracy theories

Replacement theories

Sexual anxiety – Patriarchy, reassertion of Masculinity

Dehumanization – Demeaning of the “Other”

Dismantling of civil society

Repression of resistance

*Courtesy of Prof. James West, Santa Fe, and his three-part series on Modernity/Anti-Modernity for the Santa Fe International Affairs Forum Dec. 4, 11, 18, 2024. The subject was German, Russian and MAGA fascism. West finds these themes commonly held by German, Russian, and MAGA fascism. Dr. West is an emeritus professor of Russian history, Dartmouth College.

Saladdin Ahmed on the Nature of Fascism

The normalization of the exercise of power against the marginalized, the excluded, the silenced, and the othered is at the heart of fascist dynamics. Whatever the expressions of the obsession with the cult of power, the image of an enemy is essential. The enemy as an existential threat to ‘our’ nation, culture, community, and so on is needed not only to stimulate the urge for the exercise of power but also to glue the individual members of the in-group together.

Saladdin Ahmed, on fascism, cited from the Facebook post of Reggie Williams of 12/12/2024.

Changes of Valance in Post-Modern Thought (Prof. West)

1980s – 1990s

Fashionable Leftist Critique

Undermine Traditional Authority

Reveal a More Complex Reality beneath (social) “Constructions”
(e.g., gender and sexuality)

Liberationist Aspirations (e.g., women, gays)

2000s

Migration to the Right

Undermine Modernity

Cultivate the Irrational

Alternative Facts

Manipulate Language so that nothing is “True”

Mobilize Anti-Modern Nostalgia

Collusion of Modern and Post-Modern Trends

Forces of Modernity

Erosion of Traditional Institutions

Democratization: Bipocs, Women, Gays, Transsexuals

Social Mobility: Minorities, Immigrants

Secularization

Globalization

Financial Crisis of 2008 (Banks, Corporations)

Forces of Post-Modernity

The Internet

Assault on All Institutions of Authority, All Truth-Claiming
Systems

Weakening of Parties, Elites

Erosion of the Center

Diverse Mainstream Center

Loss of Consensus: Polarization, Gridlock, Incoherence

Hyper-Democracy: Empowerment of the Peripheries, the
Outsiders

Comparisons: German and MAGA Themes (Prof. West)

Mein Kampf: What Hitler Didn't Like

Communists, Socialists, Liberals
Democracy
Modern Architecture, Modern Art
Homosexuals
Immigrants
Journalists
Lawyers, Bankers
Big Cities, Big Banks, Big Corporations
Stock Market and Financial Capitalism

What MAGA Doesn't Like

Globalization
Immigration "Replacement Theory"
Science Vaccines, Global Warming
Expertise
Bureaucracy
Liberals "Marxists" "Vermin"
"Marxist" Media
Feminism
Cultural Elites
LGBTQ "Woke Propaganda"
Abortion

Is MAGA a Post-Modern Fascism? (Prof. West)

Outsider Non-Elite Movement

Indifference to "Truth", Contempt for Decorum ("Political Correctness")

Mercurial and Inconsistent

Leftist and Rightest (can go any direction)

Rejection of Reason, Expertise, Rational Policy

Disdainful of Institutions, Precedents

Mobilization of Discontents

Focus Hatred on Immigrants, Religious Minorities (The "Other")

Anti-Capitalist: Banks and Corporations

Demonization of Foreigners

Isolationism: Tariffs, Cancel International Organizations

Intimidation: Threat of Retribution, Coercion, Violence

Charismatic Leader