

WARNING SIGNS

Political scientist Dr. Lawrence Britt wrote an article for *Free Inquiry*, a humanist magazine (Spring 2003), about the dictators Hitler (Germany), Mussolini (Italy), Franco (Spain), Suharto (Indonesia), and Pinochet (Chile). Britt said that these fascist regimes had common characteristics:

- Nationalism: constant use of patriotic mottos, slogans, symbols, songs, flags, and other paraphernalia; obsession with national security
- Human rights abuses: approval of torture, assassinations, imprisonment, summary executions, scapegoating, fearmongering, enemy lists, target populations, ethnic cleansing, segregation
- Military supremacy: glamorization of war, excessive funding of the military
- Sexism: rigid gender roles, male domination, homophobia
- Regulation/suppression of the media: censorship, no free press
- Use of organized religions and private corporations to manipulate the public
- Persecution/suppression of labor unions, intellectuals, artists, educators, journalists
- Corruption, cronyism, favoritism, nepotism, financial and election fraud, embezzlement, police abuse
- Propaganda, smear campaigns, character assassination, manipulation of the media and the judiciary

AGORAPHILIA

Agoraphilia means love of wide open spaces, meandering country roads, and leisurely pastimes. I am an agoraphile. I like to travel off-season when traffic is light or nonexistent, when merchants are genuinely glad to see me coming because their business is slow, when rates for rooms and grub are lower than usual. I particularly like driving on lonely Highway 50 across Nevada, with only four or five small towns strung across the state from Carson City to Ely. This was the old Pony Express route. It's a good day of driving with plenty of time and space to think lofty thoughts and see unspoiled nature. Roadrunner-shaped clouds scurry overhead. Shiny black ravens squawk from the sagebrush and creosote bushes. A Basque shepherd might use a red flag to stop traffic while his flock crosses the road. A few hardy desert rats live in the one-story, tin-roof houses of these former mining towns: Eureka, Austin, Cold Springs. Each town has plenty of rock shops and nail salons. Not much else going on. Buttes and mesas line up across the surreal landscape. You feel you could be driving across a Martian desert. Vapor trails crisscross the sky. Local radio stations advertise hogs for sale. There is nothing as sweet and satisfying as a good getaway. As Robert Louis Stevenson once wrote: "I travel not to go anywhere but to go. I travel for travel's sake...to get down off this feather bed of civilization and to find the globe granite underfoot and strewn with cutting flints."

TOTAL ME REPLACEMENT

Scientists at a leading Midwestern university have successfully manipulated human growth hormones allowing a test subject to clone himself without getting a split personality. This important breakthrough brings humanity one step closer to realizing its dream of being able to work less, play more, and never again have to fake a cold when calling in sick. Other research projects at the university include development of jammers that turn off cell phones when their users are being loud and obnoxious in public.

SWAMI SEZ

- “It was hard being young.” (John Maybury)
- “If I knew then what I know now, I’d probably be dead.” (Peter Loeb)

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