

# WHEN EVEN THE GERMAN FAR-RIGHT THINKS YOU'VE GONE TOO FAR . . .



Der Führer, upon learning that things are not going as he would like.

From Politico.eu:

Germany's far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) party has long sought close ties to the Trump administration in its quest for powerful international allies and an end to its political isolation at home.

But as public sentiment in Germany increasingly turns against U.S. President Donald Trump and his foreign interventionism – in particular his talk of taking control of Greenland and his seizure of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro – AfD leaders are recalibrating, putting distance between their party and a U.S. president they previously embraced.

“He has violated a fundamental election promise, namely not to interfere in

other countries, and he has to explain that to his own voters,” Alice Weidel, one of the AfD’s national leaders, said earlier this week.

Hmm . . . I don’t recall Weidel complaining when Trump, Vance, and Musk were stumping for the AfD in the last national elections in Germany.

With that as background, it’s that much more impressive that Weidel now is throwing Trump under the bus. Think about that for a minute: a would-be Führer who is underbussed by the neo-Nazi AfD is no Führer at all. And for it to be the *German* far-right . . . that’s really gotta leave a mark. Stephen Miller must be so sad.

Or emboldened. “These AfD folks are so soft, so lacking in strength . . . Looks like it is up to us to remind Germans of their own heritage and strength.”

The AfD is the second-largest party in the Bundestag, much to the horror of Germany’s conservatives and liberals alike, and the AfD seems to support everything Miller and Trump embrace: Islamophobia, anti-immigration, and historical revisionism, just to name a few. Even so, the AfD looks at Trump’s comments about Greenland (following his actions in Venezuela) and says “no thanks – that’s too extreme, even for us.”

Enter Mike Godwin, of Godwin’s Law fame, speaking with Politico two years ago:

**So to be clear – do you think comparing Trump’s rhetoric to Hitler or Nazi ideology is fair?**

I would go further than that. I think that it would be fair to say that Trump knows what he’s doing. I think he chose that rhetoric on purpose. But yeah, there are some real similarities. If you’ve read Hitler’s own writing – which I don’t recommend to anyone, by the way – you see a dehumanizing dimension

throughout, but the speeches are an even more interesting case.


What we have of Hitler's speeches are mostly recorded, and they're not always particularly coherent. What you see in efforts to compile his speeches are scholars trying to piece together what they sounded like. So, it's a little bit like going to watch a standup comedian who's hitting all of his great lines. You see again and again Hitler repeating himself. He'll repeat the same lines or the same sentiment on different occasions.

With Trump, whatever else you might say about him, he knows what kinds of lines generate the kinds of reactions that he wants. The purpose of the rallies is to have applause lines, because that creates good media, that creates video. And if he repeats his lines again and again, it increases the likelihood that a particular line will be repeated in media reporting. So that's right out of the playbook.

And now the lines aren't hitting in quite the same way, as the AfD (of all people!) has noticed. Nothing hurts worse than being the open-mic comedian who throws out what they think is a great punchline, only to hear the sounds of silence.

Godwin ends his interview like this:

When I was growing up and being taught the American system of government, we would always be taught that the U.S. government has checks and balances in its design, so you can't take it over with a sentiment of the moment. But I think what we've learned is that the institutions that protect us are fragile. History suggests that all democracies are fragile. So we have to



be on the alert for political movements that want to undermine democratic institutions, because the purpose of democratic institutions is not to put the best people in power, it's to maintain democracy even when the worst people are in power. That's a big lift.

"Even when the worst people are in power."

Godwin said that two years ago, but damned it if doesn't sound like he said it yesterday. And we are finding out now just how big a lift it is to maintain democracy with folks like that in power.