

Hitlerian Hyperbole

You know the golden rule of debating: The first person to mention Hitler automatically loses. Well, when it comes to spewing invective against Donald Trump, the list of losers is growing long, and not just on the left.

Former New Jersey Governor Christine Todd Whitman, considered a moderate Republican by her supporters, a RINO by her detractors, is the latest to ratify the Trump = Hitler equation. She accuses the Republican front-runner of using Hitler's brand of 'hateful rhetoric' and claims to discern 'chilling' parallels between modern-day America and the pre-Hitler Weimar Republic.

During his visit to the No Spin Zone this week, the usually reasonable newsman Ted Koppel stopped short of any Führer references, but he didn't hesitate to liken Trump to Benito Mussolini, aka Il Duce. The Italian dictator founded the Fascist Party, allied with Hitler, and wound up hanging from a rope upside-down in a Milan public square.

Many other less respectable media types are employing the Hitler theme in a desperate quest for readers or ratings points. Chief among them are the Philadelphia Daily News and the New York Daily News, tabloids that share both a masthead name and a badly failing business model.

But seriously, whatever you may think of Donald Trump and his proposals, can't we skip the Hitler stuff? Unless, that is, Trump has been holed up in his magnificent Trump Tower office writing about his great struggles (Mein Coif?) and his wish to demolish the entire U.S. political system.

Trump's followers, and their number is still growing, view him not as a cartoonish dictator, but as a cartoon-like superhero, an avenger of sorts. They want someone who can dismantle the policies of President Obama. And who would be better at

dismantling than a legendary builder?

The men and woman on that Las Vegas stage this week are a very impressive lot. There's a former high-tech CEO, a legendary neurosurgeon, a former ophthalmologist, three successful governors, and two brilliant Cuban-American Senators. But those eight were again dominated by the tycoon who has never held office.

The Trump-haters understandably point to some of his more incendiary comments. But does he really believe he's going to stop every Muslim in the world from entering the USA? Or that America's leading export in a Trump administration will be millions of hard-working Mexicans? Even Donald Trump has to know that many of his prescriptions simply can not be filled.

Nevertheless, he has a remarkable ability to feed off anger the way Popeye took strength from spinach. After seven years of Barack Obama's hollow oratory and failed policies, Americans are spitting mad. They see a president who won't identify our enemy, who dismisses their fears, and who seems to care more about 'climate change' than the stormy mood among many Americans.

Barack Obama's presidency has been a failure in many ways, especially for the working folks who flock to Trump rallies. They relish in Trump's role as the anti-Obama, while he relishes their adoration and applause.

So, yes, Donald Trump is a bomb-thrower, but he is also a skilled alchemist who can turn anger and fear into campaign gold. It's an open question whether he can ride that skill to the GOP nomination or the White House, but lots of people have gone broke betting against him.

Finally, the word 'demagogue' is being thrown around frequently these days. The definition: 'A political leader who gains popularity by arousing the emotions, passions, and prejudices of the people.'

So, yes, call Donald Trump a demagogue who appeals to emotion in the tradition of William Jennings Bryan and Huey Long. But he is not Adolf Hitler, Barack Obama is not President Paul von Hindenburg, and America, whatever our ills, is not Weimar Germany.

Traditional Americans, no matter how angry, desperately want this country to succeed. After decades of being insulted and demeaned by Washington and the mainstream media, they want an avenger. Donald Trump is filling that role. With a vengeance.