

Today Is No Different: In Defense of Angela Merkel and Pragmatism

Fight or flight? A growing proportion of the world's 65 million refugees are choosing the latter, of which over a million now call Germany home. For a historically homogeneous country that has often stood resistant to those fleeing oppression, the flight of migrants poses a dilemma.

Enter German Chancellor Angela Merkel. Although a divisive issue to most, the dilemma is a simple one for Merkel. Her deliberate and conditioned response to the refugee crisis signifies a fundamental shift in the mindset and demographics of Germany. Therein lies the key to Merkel's seemingly self-destructive pivot in support of the refugees. Her policies are born not out of any arbitrary sympathy for the daunting flood of peoples, but rather out of a principled pragmatism. Turning crisis into opportunity behind the politics of an altruistic agenda, Merkel extended her nation's helping hands in 2015 as an offer of refuge to the silenced and subjugated of war-torn Syria and its many asylum seekers.

In the face of expanding anti-immigrant sentiment, Merkel has stood steadfast, bound by her convictions – weary of the dangers festering within Germany's aging demographic and xenophobic populist past. Ignoring the migration crisis altogether and condemning the exiled, as a handful of Merkel's fellow European heads of state have opted towards, is the answer of lazy futility and cowardice. The question becomes how Germany may integrate these displaced persons, without overburdening its welfare systems. In light of the burgeoning need for a labor influx within the German economy, quibbling over cultural differences and the onus of assimilation looks to be increasingly trivial.

An injection of immigrants into any society tends to spawn a sort of socially enriching dynamism. Complete with euphoric pride and motivation, these immigrant populations are compelled by the desire for new beginnings and a better life. Without existing native resources to

replenish the welfare state, what alternatives remain for Merkel? With a healthy dose of humanitarianism to boot, Merkel's solution lends a way forward in a bevy of state interests. The time is now to unleash a pragmatic antidote to Germany's demographic crisis.

From championing universal healthcare to catalyzing the collapse of the Berlin Wall, Germany is as much Europe's revolutionary spearhead as it is Europe's penultimate stand against right-wing populism. For decades now, Germany has stood at the forefront of European progress and innovation. Today is no different.

