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## German History Is Changing

Germany is not to blame for World Wars i and ii. Instead Germans should celebrate '1,000 Years of German Empire—Our History, Our Achievements, Our Pride.' Welcome to the new German history.

- Richard Palmer
- [04-12-2018](#)

Who is ultimately to blame for World War ii ? The answer given by the glossy, color magazine sitting on my desk may surprise you. It is Britain, America and most of all, Wall Street.

It states that "the American financial capital enslaved Germany—and promoted the dictator," referring to Adolf Hitler.

Welcome to *Compact*, the magazine rewriting German history.

*Compact* is the magazine of Germany's alt-right. It focuses on news, politics, hating America and the odd conspiracy theory. In spring 2017, its editors introduced a new series: *Compact History*.

They quickly discovered there was a strong demand within the far right for this new history.

Now *Compact History* comes out three times a year. In front of me I have their latest—a special issue on the Treaty of Versailles, published 100 years after the end of World War i. The magazine argues that Germany was persecuted at the end of the war by greedy westerners. "The peace dictate of Versailles created ideal economic conditions for the growth of Hitlerism," says its final article.

World War i is not the only period in German history to get this treatment. The first issue was titled "1,000 Years of German Empire—Our History, Our Achievements, Our Pride." It described Germany's "millennial kingdom." Articles on the glory of Charlemagne, the Holy Roman Empire of Otto the Great, and the rise of the Habsburgs paint a shining picture of Germany's past.

German history has been twisted so that the country is portrayed as "the biggest criminal in human history," laments the magazine's editors. They promise to give the truth: "Our homeland has produced no such horrors as Tsar Ivan the Terrible, no drooling hate preachers like Robespierre, no St. Bartholomew's Day massacres, no barbarian tyrants like Henry viii, or gangster bosses like Al Capone." Germany has a different, better mission. In medieval times under the First Reich, Germans spread across Europe "not as beggars nor as conquerors, but as agents of cultural exchange."

This was Germany—until it became the "plaything of foreign interests" during the Thirty Years War (1618–1648). Later, the rise of Prussia in the 18th century paved the way for the second German Reich. This Prussia Kingdom "gradually became the model for a sense of duty, tolerance and military restraint," stated the magazine. Under Otto von Bismarck, Prussia unified Germany and carried the Reich "with splendor and glory into the 20th century."

*Compact History's* next issue was on "German Heroes," then "Mythical Germany," and next "The War That Had Many Fathers," with a radical new view of the causes of World War ii.

*Compact* is part of the growing fringe of German politics. It has strong links to the Alternative für Deutschland, which is

polling around 15 to 20 percent of the vote. But the rewriting of German history has an even broader appeal.

## A New National Pride

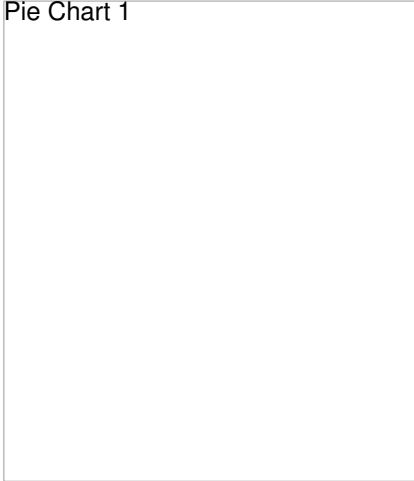
Earlier this month the University of Leipzig surveyed 2,400 Germans on their attitude toward authoritarianism. What they found surprised many.

They asked if people agree with statements like:

- “In the national interest, under certain circumstances a dictatorship is the better form of government.”
- “Without the extermination of the Jews, Hitler would today be regarded as a great statesman.”
- “The Jews, more than other people, use evil tricks to achieve what they want.”

In general, they found that around 10 percent mostly or completely agreed with these kind of statements. But another 20 percent said that they “partly agree, partly disagree.”

Pie Chart 1



*“Flight into Illiberalism” Competence Center for Right-Wing Extremism and Democracy Research, Leipzig University*

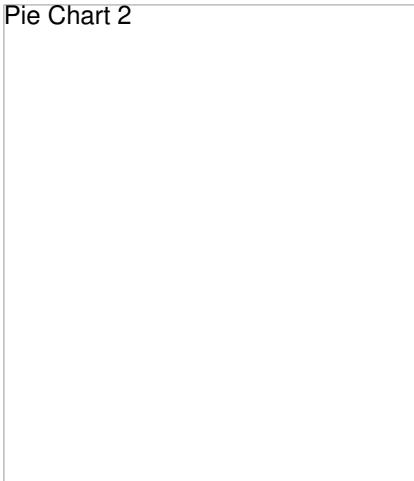
That so many are so wishy-washy about statements like “The crimes of National Socialism have been greatly exaggerated in history” is disturbing. That’s not the kind of question that any right-thinking person should answer “partly agree, partly disagree”—let alone “completely agree.” But 28 percent of Germans did.

Putting these figures together, the study concluded that at least 26 percent of Germans partly agreed with the idea of having a dictator in certain circumstances. In former East Germany, this rose to nearly 40 percent.

But some of the biggest surprises came on questions about Germany’s role in the world. One such statement was, “We should finally have the courage to have a strong national feeling again.” About 37 percent said they completely or mostly agreed. Another 30 percent partly agreed, partly didn’t. The statement, “What our country needs today is a hard and energetic enforcement of German interests vis-à-vis foreign countries,” got similar results.

Germans want to be proud of their history, and they want their nation to throw its weight around on the world scene. The biggest obstacle to this is their history. Already a shocking number are ignorant of it—hence this effort to rewrite it.

Pie Chart 2



*“Flight into Illiberalism” Competence Center for Right-Wing Extremism and Democracy Research, Leipzig University*

Another study revealed that Germans are uniquely proud of their culture. It asked Europeans if they thought their own nation's culture was more valuable than their European neighbors. In Germany, 46 percent said yes. Just next door, in France, that figure was only 23 percent.

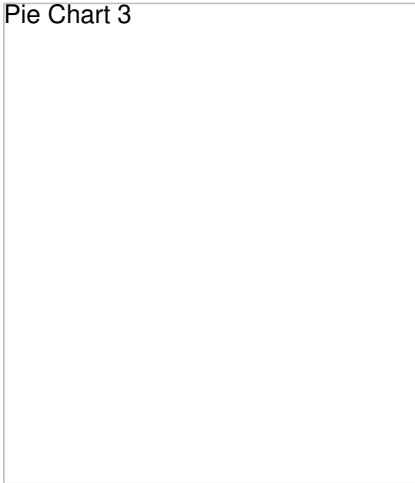
This is *Compact's* message. And that's why more than just *Compact* is responding to this idea of cultural superiority. The book *Our History—Germany From 800 Until Today*, from a mainstream, reputable publisher, aims to give "a different narrative of German history." Christopher Clark's book *The Sleepwalkers*, first published in the run-up to the 100th anniversary of the start of World War i, is still making waves with its claim that Germany is not guilty for World War i. (I reviewed *The Sleepwalkers* at the time in my article [The War over World War I.](#)) Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung noted that the success of Clark's book within Germany "betrayed a deep-rooted need" for Germans "to free themselves from blame and guilt" for World War i.

And some politicians are also promoting this message. In 2017, former German Defense Minister Karl-Theodor zu Guttenberg told Bavarians that if they don't "recall where we came from, what our history means," then people from another culture would define who they are. He told his audience to remember their history "with its dark and bright sides" and to take a "non-apologetic stand for our culture."

### A Warning From History—and Historians

Much of this rewriting of history comes from outside Germany. Despite its title, *Our History—Germany From 800 Until Today* is written by non-Germans. Clark is an Australian at Cambridge University. And some of the best warnings about the dangers of this revisionism come from German historians themselves.

Pie Chart 3



*"Flight into Illiberalism" Competence Center for Right-Wing Extremism and Democracy Research, Leipzig University*

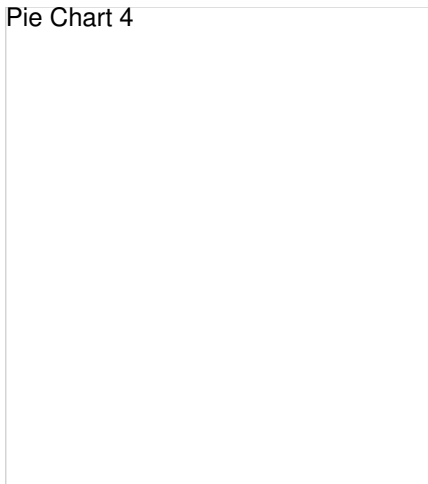
Late German historian Immanuel Geiss firmly believed in Germany's guilt for World War i. Because of Germany's role in World War i and ii, he said that Germany must "make do with the status of lesser powers in Europe" and forget about "all patriotic dreams of a German Reich."

If Germany did not allow this history to restrain it, then it "would inevitably lead to a third phase of German power politics, hence leading to a Third World War initiated, once again, by Germany."

Geiss was an august German historian. His teacher, Fritz Fischer, wrote the book on the start of World War i—literally. His work *Germany's Aims in the First World War*, published in 1961, is arguably the most important on the war. He argued that Germany held "a substantial share of the historical responsibility for the outbreak of the general war."

The response to Fischer's book was explosive—also literally. His office was firebombed. The government tried to stop him from leaving the country, and Franz Josef Strauss, one of Germany's most influential conservative politicians, denounced him in parliament.

Pie Chart 4



*“Flight into Illiberalism” Competence Center for Right-Wing Extremism and Democracy Research, Leipzig University*

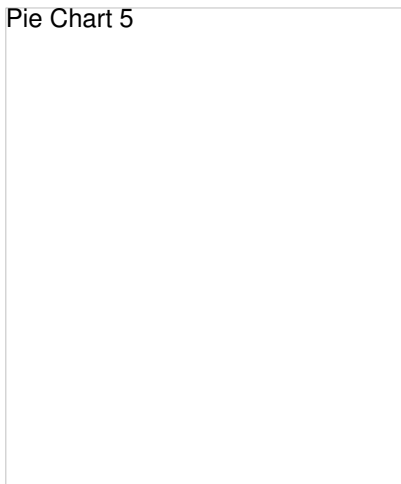
But Fischer’s argument for Germany’s war guilt was strong, and he eventually won over the German historical establishment. In 1972 Geiss pronounced the controversy over, declaring, “The overwhelming role played by the German Reich in the outbreak of World War I and the offensive character of Germany’s war objectives is no longer a point of controversy, nor is it disputable.” Few at the time disagreed with him. Unfortunately, enough time has passed that Fischer’s work has been forgotten and new interpretations of history are slipping in.

Over the last few decades, a whole school of German historians gave similar warnings based on this history. Heinrich August Winkler, chair of modern history at the Humboldt University in Berlin, wrote, “In light of the role that Germany played in the genesis of the two world wars, Europe and the Germans cannot and should not desire a new German Reich, a sovereign nation-state, anymore. This is the logic of history ....” The late Hans-Ulrich Wehler warned against “the classic mechanism of locating the source of evil outside one’s own history.” He saw a tendency in some German historians to blame other nations for the crimes of the Nazis, and he fought that tendency passionately. These men were quick to criticize anyone who even looked like they might try to rewrite this history. Now many are retired or deceased.

## Europe Returns to Its Roots

This movement to rewrite German history comes at the same time as a Continent-wide shift. All across Europe, this history is receiving a new and glossy write-up. It focuses on the same history that *Compact* did in its first issue: the Holy Roman Empire. In September, Aachen Cathedral held a weeklong festival to celebrate Charlemagne (or Karl der Grosse, as he is known in Germany). Austria is using its rotating presidency of the European Union to put the Holy Roman Empire on display, advertising the Imperial Treasure in Vienna and the crown of the Holy Roman Empire. Austria displayed this heritage at the heart of the EU—in the European Council building in Brussels—to try and get Europeans to reengage with this history.

Pie Chart 5



*“Flight into Illiberalism” Competence Center for Right-Wing Extremism and Democracy Research, Leipzig University*

This new European view of history is being pushed from the top. The EU designated 2018 as the “European Year of Cultural Heritage.” It called for all member states to work together for “the improvement of the knowledge and dissemination of the culture and history of the European peoples.”

As part of this year of cultural heritage, a meeting was held this summer in Berlin. The organizers wrote, “Cultural heritage must be given a much bigger importance in education activities—both formal and informal—for all ages. ... Special attention must be given to history education and heritage interpretation.” Of course, they emphasized that this “interpretation” should uphold the European Union.

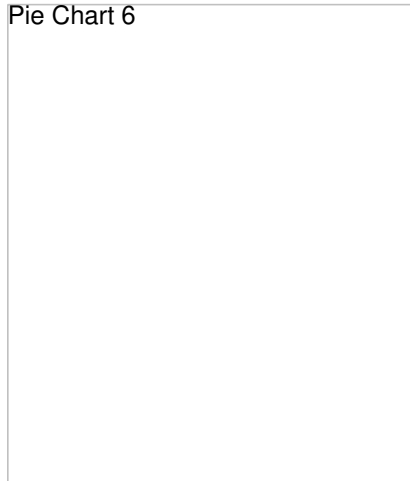
Why is this history receiving a resurgence all across Europe?

The desire for national greatness, and for Europe to throw its weight around in the world the way it used to, is part of the answer. But not all of it.

The Bible tells us that events in modern Europe have a deep and intimate connection with the past.

“You cannot truly understand the Holy Roman Empire unless you understand history—and the Bible,” wrote *Trumpet* editor in chief Gerald Flurry in the [cover article of our October issue](#). “Most are blinded and lack true understanding on both these vital sources. Having a good grasp of the Holy Roman Empire and what is happening in Europe today is vital if you are going to be prepared for what is coming in the near future.”

Pie Chart 6



*“Flight into Illiberalism” Competence Center for Right-Wing Extremism and Democracy Research, Leipzig University*

Much of this vital biblical background is found in the books of Daniel and Revelation. In Daniel 7, God summarizes the history of the world from that point on with four beasts. The first beast, “like a lion,” pictured the Babylonian Empire, then in existence. The next, “like to a bear,” pictured the Medo-Persian Empire that would soon replace it. The next, “like a leopard,” symbolized the Greek Empire of Alexander the Great. And the final beast pictured the Roman Empire. This beast was “dreadful and terrible, and strong exceedingly; and it had great iron teeth: it devoured and brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with the feet of it” (Daniel 7:7). Sure enough, Rome conquered and dominated the world on a scale and ferocity never matched before.

Ten horns came out of this 10th beast, symbolizing “ten kings that shall arise” after this empire fell. Kingdoms have repeatedly risen up, resurrecting the Roman Empire. So it was that Charlemagne and Otto the Great were all crowned “Caesar Augustus,” the Habsburg emperors traveled to Rome, and under Napoleon Bonaparte, the eagles of the Roman legions once again flew over Europe’s battlefields. God says that this empire is “exceeding dreadful ... which devoured, brake in pieces, and stamped the residue with his feet” (verse 19). That is His verdict on Europe’s history.

Last week I wrote about [how Brexit exposes Europe’s imperial ambitions](#). Europe’s history also exposes those ambitions. Europe is whitewashing and polishing the history of these empires, because the power rising in Europe is a continuation of these empires. In his article, Mr. Flurry wrote that “Europeans are doing something they have never done” since World War ii. “They are publicizing the Holy Roman Empire! They don’t publicize what *Adolf Hitler* did; too many people remember that bloody history. Instead they cloak it in the tradition of Charlemagne. And yet it is the same story! Not as many people died in the First Reich because they didn’t have the same military technology then. But it is the same ambition!”

At the same time as this shift in history, there is a growing appetite within Germany for a strongman. Daniel prophesied of this too: “And in the latter time of their kingdom, when the transgressors are come to the full, a king of fierce countenance, and understanding dark sentences, shall stand up” (Daniel 8:23).

“Bible prophecy makes clear: Soon, Europeans will get exactly what they are asking for, another Charlemagne-type leader,” wrote Mr. Flurry. “This man will come to power and set himself up as a strongman over all Europe. He will effectively hijack the European Union!”

Herbert W. Armstrong began forecasting this trend in Europe all the way back in the 1920s. In 1945, he wrote that Germany would rebuild itself and dominate Europe as part of “a European Union.” He made these accurate predictions, [and many more](#), based on the Bible’s prophecies.

The Bible tells us to expect a 10-nation power in Europe. It tells us that it will be a resurrection of these historic powers—a continuation of Europe’s previous empires—and it tells us it will be led by a strongman. Now we see a European Union, dominated by Germany, though not yet shrunk down to 10 nations. It is publicizing and promoting these historic empires, and there is a growing demand for a strongman. Even right now, Europe matches very closely the prophesied empire in your Bible.

To learn more about this return to Europe’s history, read Mr. Flurry’s article [“The Holy Roman Empire Goes Public—Big](#)

[Time!](#)” To study the biblical prophecies that are so crucial to understanding this modern European empire, read our free book [The Holy Roman Empire in Prophecy](#). This book will show you how the Bible has already proved stunningly accurate in describing Europe’s history. And it will show you how a true reading of this history helps us see what is coming next in Europe. ■