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OPINION | LETTERS

## *Beware the Dismissal of Germany's Nazi Past*

Germany's new far-right party, the Alternative for Germany, isn't the first to lament the Nazi past's dominance in German memory and identity politics.

March 12, 2017 3:45 pm ET



The nationalist Alternative for Germany party last month commemorated the 72nd anniversary of the Allied bombing of Dresden in World War II.

PHOTO: JENS MEYER/ASSOCIATED PRESS

Germany's new far-right party, the Alternative for Germany, isn't the first to lament the Nazi past's dominance in German memory and identity politics ("[German Right Takes Aim at Wartime Guilt](#)," page one, March 3). This complaint is as old as the postwar German democracy. It has seen numerous booms especially since the 1980s. But throughout this time, far-right circles' resentment at Germany's "cult of guilt" operated at the fringes of moderate conservative parties. What is new and worrisome is that far-right attempts to dismiss critical views on the Nazi past are no longer contained by deliberately democratic parties but given free rein to ally with demands to revise the inclusive political agenda Germany has observed over the past seven decades.

**Thomas Kühne**

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Frauke Petry of the Alternative for Germany party asserts that American forces after World War II allowed German war prisoners to die of hunger in the camps on the Rhine meadows. I was a first lieutenant in those forces with responsibility for coordination and treatment of Germans exactly in the Rhine meadows. In chaotic circumstances, masses of Germans were thrust under our authority starting in February 1945, before the war ended in May of that year. I can personally assure Ms. Petry that we American soldiers made enormous efforts to feed and shelter displaced Germans in a humane manner. Some Germans did die in an outbreak of typhoid. All of this stands in utter contrast to the German murderous gassing of millions of people. Any comparison is beyond moral relativism, it is simply not true.

Revived German pride, buttressed with revisionist false history is dangerous. It is precisely what alarms those few of us still alive who were there. And it should concern Germans and German watchers the world over.

**Harry M. Fleisch**

*Rye, N.Y.*

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