

POLITICS

The black and white colours of the Order became the colours of the state of Prussia.

Emperor William II of Germany posed for a photo in 1902 in the garb of a monk from the Teutonic Order, climbing up the stairs in the reconstructed Marienburg Castle as a symbol of the German Empire's policy.^[3]

German nationalism often invoked the imagery of the Teutonic Knights, especially in the context of territorial conquest from eastern neighbours of Germany and conflict with nations of Slavic origins, who were considered to be of lower development and lacking in culture. The German historian Heinrich von Treitschke used imagery of the Teutonic Knights to promote pro-German and anti-Polish rhetoric. Such imagery and symbols were adopted by many middle-class Germans who supported German nationalism. During the Weimar Republic, associations and organisations of this nature contributed to laying the groundwork for the formation of Nazi Germany.^[3]

During World War II, Nazi propaganda and ideology made frequent use of the Teutonic Knights' imagery, as the Nazis sought to depict the Knights' actions as a forerunner of the Nazi conquests for Lebensraum. Heinrich Himmler tried to idealize the SS as a 20th-century incarnation of the medieval knights. The modern Order however, was banned in the Third Reich in 1938, due to long standing belief of both Hitler and Himmler, that Catholic military-religious orders, were untrustworthy and politically suspect as subordinates of the Vatican, and representatives of its policy.^[4]



TEUTONIC KNIGHTS

3. (Polish) Mówią wieki. "Biała legenda czernago krzyża". Accessed June 6, 2006.

4. Jump up ^ Christiansen, p. 5