

*Imperialismus and Kolonialmission: Kaiserliches Deutschland und koloniales Imperium*, edited by Klaus J. Bade. (Beiträge zur Kolonial- und Überseegegeschichte, Band 22.) Franz Steiner, Wiesbaden, 1982. xii, 333 pp. DM 54.00.

German colonial history lasted only three short decades, from the mid-1880's to the First World War. For the mother country it was little more than an imperialistic episode. In the colonies, it brought substantial change. An important role in this was played by the Christian missionaries. Their ultimate goals, of course, were essentially different from those of the political or commercial interests. But there was also much overlap, with ample potential for mutual profit as well as for friction. The detail of this interaction between mission and colonial movement is the topic of the volume to be reviewed here.

The very nature of the German colonial effort renders the book's task a difficult one. Conditions in the "model colony" of Togo, for instance, were quite dissimilar to those in South West Africa, where violent uprisings had repeatedly to be subdued. Both differed from Cameroon and German East Africa in missionary traditions and ethnic cohesion. The insular possessions in the South Sea, for their part, were somehow more akin to each other than to the Kiaochow territory on the Chinese mainland, whose administrative and ethnic character made it a colony *sui generis*. A comprehensive treatment of these disparate entities would probably have been beyond the capabilities of any one individual writer, especially so as considerable primary research had to be undertaken to fill existing gaps. Bade overcame the difficulty by inviting an array of qualified experts, some of them as far away as Australia, to contribute essays for which he set up guidelines. All authors were also presented with drafts of the others' pieces for coordination and amendment. The result is an astonishingly homogeneous work which displays the present state of research and has to be considered one of the more important books on German colonial history to come out in recent years.

The volume is divided into two parts. In the first, an effort is made to describe the historical and intellectual background of the missionary endeavour by investigating the respective Catholic and Protestant attitudes in Germany during the nineteenth century. The editor himself adds an in-depth examination of one of the most influential pro-mission activists, Friedrich Fabri, who fervently advocated a close cooperation between missionaries and colonial administrators. The second part comprises eight analyses of the actual happenings in the individual colonies. The concluding essay considers the situation during the First World War when German government disappeared, and after.

It is difficult to summarize the varying results of these investigations, but a few generalizations appear warranted. Cooperation between the missions and the colonial authorities came naturally, as the common desire for orderly conditions and limited cultural advance made for ready companionship. Christian ethos stressed obedience to one's betters and industrious application to work, virtues to which government most happily subscribed. The missionary's most important tool was the school, which, while ultimately intended to serve spiritual purposes, in most cases was also fulfilling a welcome midwife function by bringing habits of occidental thought and behaviour to the indigenous populations, thus conditioning them for the colonialist scheme of things. The missionaries, on the other hand, could count upon the protection government offered, and they profited not infrequently from financial subventions or such services as road-building. There were also more hidden benefits to be obtained. Catholic orders and congregations used their role in the colonies to regain positions back home which they had lost during the *Kulturkampf*. In some of the colonies, the authorities might favour the Catholic missions with admission to certain districts because of the Catholics' hierarchical thinking and their eagerness to comply. Elsewhere the one or other Protestant missionary society was liked better because of its nationalistic outlook.

But there existed also a great potential for disagreement. Government could be adamant in the pursuit of its own goals, regardless of the religious point of view. The leadership of the Islamic populations in the northern parts of Togo and Cameroon, for instance, did not welcome any Christian proselytizing; for the sake of domestic peace, the missions were not allowed to go there. A sore point almost everywhere was the sale of alcohol. The missions abhorred it for good reasons; as it was a major source of revenue, however, it was never really curtailed. In many cases missionaries saw ground to deplore the treatment of black workers by their white employers; government usually backed the latter, though often more for political reasons than because of human insensitivity. A complex problem with wide ramifications was language instruction. Some Protestant missions believed in strengthening ethnic traditions and insisted upon instruction in the native languages. This could run counter to the government idea of serving economic and national purposes, which might call for a *lingua franca*. There were occasional doubts, though, whether this common idiom should be the German language, as an educated elite could become troublesome. In East Africa, Suaheli proved serviceable, if not with the blessing of everyone. Elsewhere, English played a strong and contentious role.

The book thus provides a competent introduction into the detail and complexity of its subject. It also opens avenues for future endeavours. It would be very useful, for instance, to compare the German record with that of other imperialistic powers, so as to find another yardstick for judgements than mere subcutaneous anticolonialism. A connected problem is that of the true benefit or damage which missions and authorities brought to the natives. This question is obviously most intricate, and a final answer may prove to be elusive. The present volume, however, impresses upon the reader the necessity of addressing it.

*University of Windsor*

Udo Sautter