

Friedrich Fabri und der Imperialismus in der Bismarckzeit. Klaus J. Bade. Freiburg: Atlanta Verlag, 1975. Pp. 579. Volume 13 in *Beitraege zur Kolonial - und Ueberseegeschichte*, eds. Rudolf von Albertini and Heinz Gollwitzer.

German social history began in a serious fashion only a decade ago. One can date it from Helmut Boehme's massive 1966 study on the social and economic basis for Germany's rise to power between 1848 and 1881. Added drive was given to this new approach to history from the mid-1960s revolt in Germany's academe against the traditional academic professorial structure and its works. As a result, traditional political history saw itself accused of falsely "individualizing" history through concentration on great men, nostalgia for the past, elitist concentration on foreign affairs, and an inability to explain the sharp discontinuities in Germany's recent history.

The new social historians insisted that historians begin to concentrate instead on the real continuities and forces in Germany's past, namely the social and economic. Fritz Fischer exposed Germany's expansionist pre-World War I policies as grounded in economic imperatives of markets and raw materials. H. Pogge von Strandmann initiated a new look at Germany's colonial policy with his 1968 article on the domestic origins of Bismarck's colonial approach. Since that year H.-U. Wehler has pleaded eloquently for the marriage of sociology, economics, and history, and has re-opened the whole imperialism discussion with his important 1969 publication on *Bismarck und der Imperialismus*.

Bade must be situated squarely in the middle of this new school of social historians, although much of his writing is still more political than social-economic. Still, he insists on the union between politics and social-economics, and has picked as his topic *Missionsleiter Friedrich Fabri*, a Protestant minister active both in the religious and mundane colonial associations. In his massive study on Fabri, Bade links the biographical with ideological, organizational, and structural analysis. He insists throughout that Fabri's type of colonialism (imperialism) is of one piece in which religious, social, and economic forces form a unity. On the one hand, he rejects Fabri's religious defenders, who see him interested in colonialism primarily for religious reasons, while naively using the economic vocabulary of the day to attract support. On the other hand, Bade also dismisses the East German view that Fabri was really a raving economic imperialist and a racist precursor of Hitler.

Fabri makes a good subject, as he was a leading representative of the non-commercial, middle-class colonial expansionists. Until 1884, he work-

ed for a quarter century as head of the large Protestant Rhineland Missionary Society. He then lost this position, because his religious superiors felt his political lobbying for colonies was adversely affecting his religious work. He subsequently played a leading role in such colonial organizations as the commercial Zentralverein fuer Handelsgeographie und Foerderung deutscher Interessen im Ausland, the Deutscher Kolonialverein of which Fabri was vice-president, the German anti-slavery movement, the Deutsch Ostafrikanische Gesellschaft, and the powerful Westdeutscher Verein fuer Kolonisation und Export. His two sons also held leading positions in colonial organizations. It was Fabri who forced the fusion of the competing colonial associations into one national lobby, the Deutscher Kolonialverein, in 1887. In the late 1880s, Fabri became an informal colonial advisor to Bismarck.

Bade's long book, a reworked Erlangen doctoral thesis, is not based on Fabri's personal papers, which were lost and last seen in Indonesia and India! Following extensive search, Bade has used Fabri's printed works, the files of the various colonial organizations in which Fabri was involved, including the Rhineland Society, and the papers of leading Kartell politicians, the Colonial Office and Cultural Ministry now housed in East Germany. His style is unnecessarily ungainly and laced with sociologese; the notes are too long (over 150 pages) and the organization is loose. Though Bade has in effect rolled what should have been several smaller books into one, his work is important.

Bade is a follower of Pogge von Strandmann's thesis that Bismarck, who was always disinterested in colonialism for its own sake, adopted a colonial policy in 1884 because it promised domestic advantages. Colonialism could help him to create a new "national" front in the country and Reichstag by integrating Bismarckian and moderate liberal forces against the rising threat from the Center, as well as left-liberal and Social Democratic parties' opposition, with their demands for greater political freedom. This Kartell of conservatives and moderate liberals gave him a secure Reichstag majority until the end of the 1880s. By 1888 it had become clear to German colonialists such as Fabri that Bismarck would do little to bolster the weak and economically-unviable "charter company" type of German colonialism. With the 1888 uprisings in East Africa and a year later in Southwest Africa, Bismarck's type of colonialism based upon independent and sovereign trading companies lay in ruins, and he was finally forced to send troops to put down the revolts. Largely because of Bismarck's continued playing down of colonial issues, the colonialist members of the Kartell turned on the Chancellor after 1888 and helped to bring him down in 1890. This official colonial reticence was evident after Bismarck's fall in the Helgoland-Sanzibar convention of 1890. It was only in 1899 that the last charter company (in the Marshall Islands) ceded to direct crown control, and not until 1906-1907 that an Imperial Colonial Office was founded under Dernburg.

Bade follows H. U. Wehler more closely than he does Pogge von Strandmann. He shares Wehler's views concerning the economic expansionist motives behind German imperialism, but he shows more differentiation in this than does Wehler. Bade shows that non-commercial

members of the middle class such as Fabri had a primary social motive for colonial expansion. Fabri was increasingly worried by the rising social question which resulted from the industrialization of the 1860s and the great depression after 1873. As in the pre-industrial 1840s, so too again in the industrialized 1870s, emigration of excessive population to colonies seemed to be a solution. Tied to emigration — because only in this way could colonies become strong and self-supporting, thereby attracting colonists and acting as markets for German goods — was the need to export capital to develop the colonies economically. Fabri's views on the need for emigration had no effect on Bismarck, who always rejected emigration of Germans as a policy. Bismarck did, however, listen to Fabri as one of Germany's best-informed colonial experts.

Fabri's hopes for an economically strong German empire run by the central government and siphoning off excess population to well-run plantations, never materialized. By the late 1880s prosperity began to return to Germany, which turned it into a country with imported populations. As well, capital was not attracted to the colonies because opportunities in Germany or other industrialized countries were better, and because the German colonies lacked stability. By 1914, only one German colony even approached self-sufficiency, and only about 12,000 Germans, mostly troops, civil servants, and missionaries, resided in the colonies.

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