out whether their rationalism, positivism, and empiricism created blind spots or weaknesses.

Perhaps the greatest limitation is the structure of the book. Introductory chapters trudge through ponderous descriptions of the structure of academic disciplines, the history of economics, and the social question (which may interest some, but not all, readers), so readers have to bide their time until page 127, when Grimmer-Solem at last reaches the start of his main narrative in 1864. Similarly, his final substantive chapter, on the arguments with the Austrian school, is more a digression than a culmination. Most readers will find that the three central chapters of the book, chapters 4–6—roughly covering the 1860s, 1870s, and 1880s—contain the heart of Grimmer-Solem’s story. With that slight warning in mind, anyone interested in the history of economics and social policy will find this volume deserving of attention.

**Brett Fairbairn**

*University of Saskatchewan*

**Carl Peters and German Imperialism, 1856–1918: A Political Biography.**


This is an excellent and much-needed account of the career of Carl Peters, a key figure in the history of German colonialism best known for his expedition in 1884–85 that led to the annexation of German East Africa. Even though many historians and popular authors mention Peters, no remotely adequate account of his life existed before the publication of this book. The genre of biography allows Arne Perras to draw together the diverse activities of his subject: his philosophical publications on Schopenhauer and Darwin, his colonial agitation in Germany, his East African expeditions, his quest for a political career as an anti-English pan-German. Peters’s penchant for misrepresentation has led many historians to dismiss him as an eccentric, but, as Perras shows, Peters was taken seriously by his contemporaries. Peters’s and his admirers’ mythmaking as well as critical historians’ irritation with his cruelty and duplicity have until now made for a blurry portrait in the historiography. Perras has taken it upon himself to offer a reliable narrative that addresses myths and disputes, and he clarifies confusing episodes such as the circumstances of Peters’s four sojourns in East Africa and his trial and libel suits in the 1890s and 1900s. The book is clearly written and concise. Perras presents evidence compactly and follows up promptly with his own conclusions, thereby keeping his story close to the sources. His judgment is unfailingly sound.

Perras sets for himself three goals: to use all relevant available primary and published sources by and about Peters (which no one has done before), to demonstrate that Peters was a key figure in the history of Wilhelmine nationalism, and to show how that nationalism exhibited strong continuities over the nineteenth century and strong connections to procolonial agitation. Perras examines Peters’s writings to show that “Carl Peters’s colonial ideology was essentially nationalist” (10). Rather than believing that the flag followed trade, Peters insisted that political measures (annexation) would produce colonial wealth. Peters’s priorities were to expand German national communities abroad and to direct German emigration away from foreign states (39–41). Perras points out that, unlike existing colonial organizations, Peters’s Society for German Colonization did not depend on “established overseas interests” for its founding in 1884. Rather, Peters’s group was “mainly supported by emigration enthusiasts and ardent nationalists” (49). Too often historians of German nationalism set aside the colonial movement in their work, seeing it as a separate phenomenon; they should read this book. With an illuminating account of Bismarck’s decision to uphold Peters’s fraudulent claims to land in East Africa (chaps. 2 and 3), Perras lends support to the argument of Geoff Eley and others that nationalism in
the German Empire was an authentic popular movement to which Bismarck responded, not a product of his manipulation.

Perras strictly limits his undertaking to the genre of political biography, providing only the barest information on Peters’s family or personal life. Given that Peters’s complex career unfolded amid so many important political and cultural currents, Perras could have paused at several points to provide some background or context, but he refrains from doing so (e.g., on political antisemitism, when stating Peters’s own limited interest in that movement [32, and elsewhere]). Given that nationalist ideology is so central to Perras’s story, he might have discussed which works in the now-extensive theoretical literature on nationalism he has found illuminating. However, he restricts himself to the briefest references to A. D. Smith and to W. Bloom (92–93). Perras’s argument about the fundamental place of nationalist ideology in the story of German colonial annexations and colonialist politics nonetheless comes through loud and clear. And as Perras does not make any claims about the nature of Bismarckian or Wilhelmine society generally, his strict focus on Peters rather than on Peters’s environment does no damage to his project. At times, though, I wished for a broader contextualization. When Perras argues, for example, that Peters’s career was destroyed not simply because of embarrassing revelations in the Reichstag that he had killed an African man and woman out of sexual jealousy but, specifically, because Peters had boasted on several occasions that his sexual relationship with the executed woman was a “Muslim” or “African” marriage, he drives home the irony that even anticolonial critics of Peters adopted an uncritically racist and uninformed notion of such marriages (216, 218, 230, 258). Perras does not place this event in any wider context of racist consensus in Wilhelmine society.

Furthermore, Perras’s footnotes are extremely economical. The text itself hardly engages any secondary literature beyond works by Hans-Ulrich Wehler, Geoff Eley, Hartmut Pogge von Strandmann, and Hans Fenske and a couple of less-than-stellar publications specifically on Peters. While it is true that little has been written on Peters himself, the political movements and cultural phenomena with which he was associated have been the subject of many good studies.

Perras does permit himself to step beyond the strict boundaries of political biography to consider Peters’s reputation after his death in 1918, during the Weimar, Nazi, and post-1945 periods, in two brief chapters. These are more pointers toward possible future work than they are the type of definitive accounts offered in preceding chapters; there is much more to be said about the post-1945 reception of German colonial history as illustrated through debates over Peters. There are a few minor errors: for example, Countess Pfeil was the sister, not wife, of Joachim Pfeil (82); some Germanisms creep into the otherwise outstandingly clean English prose (e.g., “overall” for “everywhere” [63]); and there are typographical errors, often in names (Hebers for Herbers [122], Poggellow for Poggelow [227]). The index needed another going-over to smooth out the differences between German and English; for example, it lists different page-number entries under “Gesellschaft für deutsche Kolonisation” and “Society for German Colonization,” without any cross-reference. But these objections do not detract from Perras’s achievement. With this book he has done a real service to scholars of German history and colonialism.

LORA WILDENTHAL

Rice University

Resisting the Third Reich: The Catholic Clergy in Hitler’s Berlin.

By Kevin P. Spicer.

As the National Socialist German Workers’ Party (NSDAP) rose in power and prominence in German society, the Roman Catholic Church leadership found that it had to address the role of Nazism in Catholic life. Kevin Spicer’s work addresses the Catholic Church’s