

Jensen's book gives a general and condensed overview of the ways in which German Jewish history was entangled in the legal and political history of different German states. One of main dilemmas the author faced was certainly the question of which material to select. Jensen can be complimented for his successful selection of the most important facts of the German-Jewish legal and political history in the last two centuries. The author has also achieved a good balance between the chapters. Almost half of the book deals with the period between 1871 and 1933, which is only logical given the importance of that period. The book could, however, have paid more attention to internal Jewish politics on the communal level. Jewish brotherhoods (*chevrot*), which not only dealt with various needs of the community—taxes, burial, charity—but also constituted a kind of political milieu within each community, are not addressed at all. The same is true with regard to religious movements within Judaism, for example the struggle between reform and orthodoxy. Jensen does mention that these aspects belong not only to religious, but also to political history (p. 15); he therefore could and should have included them into the book. All in all, Jensen's book is a rich and fascinating compendium on German Jews in law and politics throughout the last two centuries.

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***Historische Bevölkerungsforschungen: Deutschland und Österreich im 20. Jahrhundert.* By Alexander Pinwinkler. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag. 2014. 537 pp.**

After Michael Burleigh published his path-breaking work *Germany turns Eastwards*, German social historians during the 1990s did not tire of propagating the myth that German national or folk history (*Völksgeschichte*) from the 1920s until the 1940s was a forerunner of modern social history in postwar Germany, and that their representatives had already been conducting modern social historical research. Proponents of this unexplained 'continuity theory' then used this thesis to liberate German *Völksgeschichte* from the stain of National Socialism. This debate, which reached its climax at the *Historikertag* in Frankfurt in 1998, has continued until recently, when yet another attempt to exculpate *Völksgeschichte* in Christoph Nonn's biography of Theodor Schieder was rightly questioned by Peter Schöttler on H-Soz-Kult and Ingo Haar in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*.

Just how far *Völksgeschichte* adhered to international standards and to what extent it can be considered a predecessor of modern social history and population studies, however, remained unexplained. In this *Habilitation*, Austrian historian Alexander Pinwinkler gets to the bottom of this claim, without being constrained by any particular historical school or other disciplinary forces. His work on the history of populations in Germany and Austria in the early twentieth century is one of the most solid deconstructions of scientific myth building I have read in the last thirty years as a historian of science. Pinwinkler succeeds in contextualizing *Völksgeschichte* as a germanocentric and political discipline, whose scholarly standards were not only questioned by contemporaries but also in the postwar era, an insight that constitutes a common thread running throughout the entire book.

The study is divided into three main chapters. First, the author discusses the terminology, the fields of study and the representations of population and history in the nineteenth

and twentieth centuries, elaborating the social-biological and social-Darwinist thinking that was ubiquitous in discussions about the German ‘national body’. In contrast to the highly differentiated population analyses that did exist in the nineteenth century, the *Volksgeschichte* discourse that became predominant in the 1920s got stuck in a static organism paradigm that negated the positive social effects of immigration. Immigrants were typically deemed ‘racially inferior’, while German emigration was bemoaned as a ‘loss of German blood’.

‘Tribe’, ‘people’ and ‘race’ (*Stamm, Volk, und Rasse*) constituted the conceptual triangle in which the ethno-social and political discourses of national-conservative and *völkisch* circles in Germany and Austria were inscribed. Studies of *Volksgeschichte* were considered groundbreaking both in academic research and in policy documents produced for ministries or the SS. They informed scientists working in the network of National German Research Societies (*Volktsdeutsche Forschungsgemeinschaften*) as well as those working in transdisciplinary research institutes unaffiliated to universities (pp. 107–134; 298–312).

The second main chapter presents the academic research areas and careers of sixteen scholars from Germany, Switzerland and Austria who worked on the history of populations and historical demography during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Pinwinkler’s conclusion is remarkable: most German economists and economic historians employed methods that were much more diverse and significantly differed from the ‘limited intellectual horizon of numerous historical studies that were written in the context of German *Volkforschung* in the 1920s and 1930s’ (p. 136). The approaches of German ethnic studies (*Volkforschung*) can thus hardly be described as modern. Among those more modern economists and economic historians discussed by Pinwinkler are Karl Julius Beloch and Karl Bücher, proponents of historical demography during the *Kaiserreich*, who were denounced by Nazi historians as part of a liberal historical demography; Hermann Wopfner, who retired early during National Socialism; Wilhelm Abel and Wolfgang Köllmann, who grew up in the ‘confessing church’ (*Bekennende Kirche*); and the Swiss Arthur E. Imhof. The latter three demographers and historians also pushed for a repositioning of academic historical demography in the 1960s. Key actors of *Volkforschung* and *völkisch* demography, however, stuck to the social-biological approaches they had developed during the war years long into the 1960s, building on their own academic networks. Pinwinkler argues that the renewal of historical demography according to international standards only happened during the 1980s. This is true both for *völkisch* historians such as Hermann Aubin and Erich Keyser, also discussed by Pinwinkler, and for sociologist Gunther Ipsen and his student Werner Conze, two of the most prominent proponents of *völkisch* historical research. Pinwinkler concludes this illuminating chapter with an excursus on the question of social networks and their usage. The social capital, Pinwinkler suggests, that individual actors were able to gain from intelligent cooperation with colleagues in such networks helped them advance their careers. The author rightly distinguishes these emerging networks from the somewhat superficial focus on generations that is common in historical scholarship. After all, these old Nazi networks systematically excluded emigrants during the postwar years, so that they thus had little chance to enter West German elite circles, as the author persuasively argues.

The third major chapter analyses these academic networks in postwar West Germany and Austria. Pinwinkler specifically highlights particular nodes of these networks and their ‘personal and institutional persistence’ (p. 298), especially with regard to the well-researched *Ostforschung* (research into the East). According to Pinwinkler, some of the old networks were revived in postwar Germany, next to expellee organizations. Former members exculpated their friends and colleagues to present them as innocent bystanders. Thus, they soon entered

advisory positions in politics (Theodor Schieder, Werner Conze, for example). Exceptions show that not everyone succeeded in quickly adapting to new social conditions. Erich Keyser, for example, director of the Johann Gottfried Herder Institute in Marburg that had been central for German *Ostforschung*, faced reservations in international circles until 1959.

This highly readable book is a major achievement for the history of science due to its discussion of historical demography until the 1980s. It concludes with close to fifty pages of over a hundred short biographies, a detailed bibliography and index.

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***Weimar Colonialism: Discourses and Legacies of Post-Imperialism in Germany after 1918.* Edited by Florian Krobb and Elaine Martin. Bielefeld: Aisthesis Verlag. 2014. 255 pp. €34.80 (paperback).**

The last twenty years have seen a dramatic growth in scholarly works on the topic of German colonialism. These works have added greatly to our understanding of Germany's engagement with the non-European world in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Most of these works, however, do not explore these relationships after the First World War, which saw the end of Germany's formal overseas empire. After 1918, the Weimar Republic was, in Marcia Klotz's oft-quoted phrase, 'a post-colonial state in a still colonial world'. This volume, the product of a 2012 conference at the National University of Ireland Maynooth, explores this phenomenon of Weimar colonialism. To do so, the editors bring together chapters on cultural representations of the overseas colonies and on the relationship between the former overseas colonies and other territories of German involvement in the cultural imaginary of the Weimar Republic. What brings these disparate topics together is a concern with 'the retrospective processing of German colonial history' (p. 11).

The editors' lengthy introduction provides an excellent overview of the components of the post-1918 revanchist narrative that also introduces the reader to a wealth of secondary and primary sources on the period. This narrative is centred on stories of Germany's past colonial glory (in particular the myth of the loyal *Askari* and peaceful race relations); comparisons between German and British/French colonial methods (to the benefit of the former and to refute the 'colonial guilt-lie' of German brutality used to appropriate the German colonies as mandates); and assertions of the continued necessity of overseas colonies 'in the context of endangered Germanness' (p. 22). This revanchist discourse was 'an attempt to salve a humiliated national ego and refashion Germany as a model agent of the "civilizing mission" in Africa against the backdrop of military defeat, political collapse and foreign occupation' (p. 11).

After this introduction, the chapters follow in a sequence that can be grouped into four topics: propaganda and discourse in the early years of the Weimar Republic; literary and visual representations of the revanchist narrative; discourses pertaining to non-African territories; and discussions of Weimar colonialism from a post-1945 perspective. The first two chapters on discursive constructions of colonialism by parties across the political spectrum in the early Weimar Republic (Heidrun Kämper) and on the 'Black Shame' campaign (Elaine Martin) show how these discussions of overseas colonialism emerged within the broader context of geopolitical angst and debates about the future and meaning of Germanness.