

Many German-oriented Catholics responded by supporting German nationalist parties. The Center Party, which emphasized confessional concerns and downplayed ethnic differences, lost ground.

Ethnic polarization subsided in the years following the 1907 elections. The Center Party regained some of its former political dominance at the expense of overtly nationalist parties. Bjork attributes this development to the success of Catholic initiatives to “reassert the primacy of confession” (p. 161) in identity formation, the repressive policies of the Bülow Bloc, and the capacity of competing Polish and German nationalist movements to cancel each other out and increase the ranks of the “nationally uncertain” (p. 172).

The Great War led to further shifts in identity. While many Upper Silesians initially rallied around the German cause, the unremitting demand for sacrifice led to growing discontent. When the German state finally collapsed, the fate of Upper Silesia was drawn into question as never before. Some called for linking the region with a resurrected Poland, while others dreamed of Upper Silesia becoming an autonomous country.

To help determine whether Upper Silesia should be united with Germany or Poland, Allied leaders organized a local plebiscite. Partisans of the Polish and German causes campaigned vigorously to win over the nationally ambivalent. While a majority ultimately voted to remain with Germany, Upper Silesians were divided and conflicted on the issue. Bjork underscores how non-national understandings of community coexisted with national ones deep into the modern era, thanks in no small part to the influence of the church.

Written with confidence and dash, Bjork’s work is both entertaining and remarkably erudite. He blends sympathy for his subjects with incisive analysis of their actions into an account that is rich in nuance, pathos, and irony. While accessible to a wide audience, non-specialists would have benefited from more background information concerning Upper Silesia and better maps.

Bjork displays a solid command of the scholarly literature related to his project and draws on an impressive array of archival materials and newspapers. His decision to concentrate on one small segment of the region—the deanery of Myslowitz—lends texture to his argument, but the deanery is hardly representative of the region as a whole. The analysis of soundings from multiple locations, including the more pro-German left bank, would have supplied a welcome balance. Still, the trenchant analysis he brings to his data yields many fresh conclusions. This valuable study fills a significant void in the English-language literature on Upper Silesia and deserves careful consideration from Polish and German scholars working in the field.

Bjork succeeds in complicating reigning assumptions about nationalism by offering ample evidence of national indifference and the enduring relevance of religion in one corner of modern Europe. Historians of nationalism would be well advised to remember that border regions have not necessarily behaved like core territories and that religion has retained the capacity to

shape social identity in powerful ways. But Bjork also oversells his argument by not fully acknowledging the impressive results of state-sponsored efforts to germanize the region up to 1945. Had this process not been derailed by Germany’s successive defeats in the world wars, I suspect Upper Silesia would have conformed nicely, albeit belatedly, to the modernist paradigm.

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ROBERT J. RICHARDS. *The Tragic Sense of Life: Ernst Haeckel and the Struggle over Evolutionary Thought*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. 2008. Pp. xx, 551. \$39.00.

Among the many mavericks in German academia who intellectually shaped Germany’s transition from a pre-nation-state assembly of territories into an expansionist empire, Ernst Haeckel certainly figures very prominently. Those intellectuals present interesting examples of how science and politics became intertwined in the course of the nineteenth century. Haeckel has been recognized for many of his activities in both the sciences and politics, but he has probably been best remembered as *the* popularizer of Charles Darwin’s evolutionary theory in Germany. Thus Robert J. Richards’s biography of Haeckel fits nicely into the general trend during this “Darwin year” of publications that deal not only with Darwin but also with his impact throughout the world. But the book does more than reflect on the adamant propagandist of evolution. In fact, this work tries to capture all of the ramifications of Haeckel’s professional and private life in order to rehabilitate him as a serious figure in German academic life, not merely the precursor of Nazi ideology as some authors have suggested in the past. As indicated by the title, which echoes Miguel de Unamuno’s *Del sentimiento trágico de la vida* (1913), Richards’s vantage point to understand Haeckel’s work is to interpret him as a “tragic” figure—a split soul torn between modern science and the constant quasi-religious quest for transcendence.

Richards leads the reader through Haeckel’s life in eleven chronologically ordered chapters and two appendixes. One appendix deals with eminent figures in the field of biological morphology, because biological forms were Haeckel’s own scientific approach to the analysis of the living world; the second appendix discusses interpretations of Haeckel’s work that have linked it to Nazi biologism. The account of Haeckel’s professional and private life is very detailed, and it pulls the reader into the universe of German life sciences and also into the peculiar world of late-nineteenth-century German academia. Richards stresses Haeckel’s many scientific achievements and the numerous intellectual and political controversies he instigated. Certainly one of the best parts of the book deals with Haeckel as an artist. Perhaps the connection Haeckel established between the morphological characteristics of the living world and its aesthetic representation remains his most

original and pertinent contribution in both the sciences and the arts.

Despite its many achievements in portraying such a complex and rich life, the book nevertheless has quite a few problems. Though not openly hagiographic in outlook, Richards sums up Haeckel's importance as being "undeniably, a scientific and even artistic genius" (p. 439). Such qualifications—and the heuristic perspectives behind them—do not permit the best use of biography as a historical method. This becomes all the more evident in parts of the book that read in essence as an effort to rescue Haeckel's scientific work from misinterpretations, in particular with regard to Nazi biologism. Though Richards contextualizes events and developments in Haeckel's life in their broader historical settings, he fails to develop a sense of Haeckel's politics. Haeckel was a staunch biologist who interpreted the world through the lenses of the life sciences with all the known consequences of such an approach. In this regard he was at the forefront of the German bourgeoisie, who revered biology as *the* key to better understanding the dynamics of society and to acting upon that knowledge for the "betterment" of the social body. Richards's book is a step behind many works published over the past three decades or so that have painstakingly tried to capture the complexity of biological thinking in imperial Germany and its potential links to Nazi biologism.

It is further surprising that Nazi biologism serves as the only major point of historical reference in the book. Haeckel's endeavor to develop a highly ambivalent, semi-materialistic, non-Marxist philosophy called "monism" in order to overcome any kind of dualism between bodies and souls should have been more fully explored. Richards seems to be reluctant to do so, despite the fact that such an exploration would have brought Haeckel into the midst of current discussions on such compelling matters as the relationship between science and religion or questions related to the philosophy of mind. In these fields Haeckel's philosophy and politics would add important historical perspectives and perhaps show that the sciences have long been political, a nexus that cannot be easily disentangled. As a thorough study of Haeckel's life, this book will be a valuable resource to scholars in the history of the life sciences in general and the history of evolutionary thought in particular. But Haeckel's life and work also serve as a reminder that it is not possible to save the sciences without accepting the politics they imply.

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CLAUS-PETER CLASEN. *Streikgeschichten: Die Augsburger Textilarbeiterstreiks 1868–1934*. (Studien zur Geschichte des bayerischen Schwaben, number 38.) Augsburg: Wissner. 2008. Pp. xii, 332. €24.80.

Basing his account on a diligent examination of state and local archives and newspaper reports, Claus-Peter Clasen offers his readers a detailed chronicle of strikes

by Augsburg textile workers between 1868 and 1934. Most of the activity he describes was clustered in 1868–1870, 1882–1883, 1903–1912, and 1919–1924. Developments during less strike-prone years receive limited attention. Clasen seeks to fill narrative gaps in earlier accounts of individual strikes and recapture the drama of these clashes. As far as his sources allow, he attempts to present a balanced account, weighing the competing concerns of both employers and employees. He regretfully notes, however, that he found sources inadequate for an in-depth probe of the thoughts and experiences of ordinary workers or for relating how strikes, once initiated, were organized and conducted.

Clasen presents his narrative neither as a challenge to the work of other scholars nor as a model for rethinking our approach to labor history. He offers little in the way of an introduction to his study. About Augsburg and its inhabitants he provides scant information. He leaves his readers to draw on local histories, the most relevant of which he lists in his forward, for political, social, economic, and cultural background. Concerning business cycles and developments beyond Augsburg, Clasen has even less to say. He resists suggesting to any great extent how his findings fit within the broader context of scholarly literature on German workers and their collective struggles for more equitable treatment. His bibliography of secondary sources is narrowly focused and limited to works in German.

Following a brief survey of the number and size of Augsburg's pre-World War I textile firms, Clasen plunges immediately into a strike-by-strike account, beginning with clashes of the mid-1860s and concluding with a one-day strike in 1934 launched in spite of National Socialist prohibition. The author offers as complete a description of each strike, large or small, as his evidence allows. For some strikes, especially the earliest, Clasen is able to do little more than note that a workplace confrontation was mentioned in the sources consulted. Later strikes, especially those that took place in the turbulent aftermath of World War I, he describes at considerable length. As evidence permits, he reports for each strike the number of participants (male and female), the strikers' demands (with emphasis on wage issues), management's response, and the duration and outcome of the confrontation. Two appendixes summarize this information in tabular form. Most interesting are Clasen's accounts, gathered from newspaper and police reports, of workplace incidents initiating open conflict between workers and their supervisors, along with summaries of speeches and proclamations made during strike meetings and demonstrations.

Clasen gives only limited consideration to the organizations representing the opposing interests of employers and workers in Augsburg's textile industry. Before World War I, south German cotton manufacturers numbered among the empire's determined opponents of union recognition and collective bargaining. More often than not, the strikes Clasen describes were wild-cat walkouts, undertaken without union sanction, although union support in the form of financial contri-