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Milder, Stephen; Davis, Belinda; Brühöfener, Friederike

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Social Movements after '68: Histories, Selves, Solidarities

Stephen Milder, Belinda Davis, and Friederike Brühöfener

On 14 October 1979, from a stage in Bonn's Hofgarten, Walter Mossmann called for "Resistance at every level!"[1] Three seconds later, his words, amplified by "two four-meter-high towers of loudspeakers with a power of 12,000 watts," echoed off the buildings across the park.[2] In the meantime, they had been heard by the 150,000 opponents of nuclear energy assembled in front of him. Mossmann's reverberating call to action was only the latest evidence that the midsized university town and "provisional" capital of the Federal Republic of Germany (FRG, or, West Germany) had been overwhelmed by antinuclear activists. Sixteen chartered trains had arrived from across the country, holding up traffic at Bonn's small train station, which was filled with "thousands of singing and clapping activists."[3] At the city's outskirts, police tried in vain to halt a column of tractors driven more than 300 kilometers by members of the Rural Youth Association of Westfallen-Lippe.[4] Some 400 *Spontis* from Frankfurt, Marburg, and Gießen had arrived already the previous evening—by riverboat. To the frustration of some participants, members of the East German–oriented German Communist Party (DKP) took part in the protest vociferously, using a loudspeaker car to drown out chants "against reactors in East and West."[5]

The diverse, cacophonous mass of protesters had come from all across society, from all over the FRG, and beyond. While the majority of the demonstrators were young people in their twenties, significant numbers of older people took part, including "far more women than men."[6] Future chancellor Gerhard Schröder, then already thirty-five, positioned himself at the head of a contingent of the mainstream Young Social Democrats, as featured prominently in new coverage after the fact.[7] From the stage, Herb Pletchford,

"an Indian from the USA," described "resistance against uranium mining on Indian land," while Kathy McCaughin of Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, spoke about the near-meltdown at the Three Mile Island nuclear power plant.[8] In the crowd, activists from France waved signs against "the mammoth atomic reactor in Cattenom." Austrians, Swiss, Dutch, and British opponents of nuclear energy had also "come in droves."[9]

The demonstration in Bonn epitomized the diversity and the growing prominence of social movement activism in West Germany in the 1970s and 1980s. The motley crew of participants, some affiliated with national organizations or political parties, some members of local "citizens' initiatives," others attending on their own, was typical of many of the era's social movements.[10] So too were connections to activists from abroad. Some connections—like McCaughin's reminder that the world had been watching what happened at Harrisburg—made the Bonn demonstration seem part of a global movement. Others, such as the anti-Cattenom signs that dotted the crowd, suggested transnational links among particular struggles. Given such diversity, not only of participants but also of networks, conflicts among participating groups, like those incited by the DKP's attempt to exempt socialist reactors from the demonstration's focus, were common to many of the era's mobilizations. The conflicts notwithstanding, the Bonn demonstration then, brought together people with a wide variety of motivations from all across society, in the name of a common cause. It exemplified the way that activists who came from very different personal and local contexts stood in solidarity with one another, at once empowering themselves and collectively building the social movements of the 1970s and 1980s. Drawing on transformations in thought and practice begun already in the 1960s, these "new social movements" comprised activism emerging not out of rigid structures and tight hierarchies but rather from the loosest networks—as likely based across group houses and squatted buildings as in individual organizations identified via common ideology or even issue.

Understanding social movements in the decades after the perceived zenith of the student movement in the late 1960s—a period that we refer to throughout this collection as the years after '68—requires looking beyond any individual protest action, however. The Bonn demonstration's format—a handful speakers addressing a mass audience from the stage—made it highly legible to the press. Yet, focusing too closely on such mass demonstrations might draw a reader's attention away from the bottom-up organizing that had brought such a diverse crowd to the West German capital. Like most other mass demonstrations and street protests, the Bonn demonstration concluded at the end of a single day. It "crumbled apart around 4pm" as the tens of thousands of demonstrators "hastened back to their buses and

chartered trains." But for the demonstrators, the Bonn protest was "only a single step in the long-term struggle against the atomic state."[11] Mossmann's impassioned call for "resistance at every level" was based precisely on his experience of the power of grassroots organizing and the limited potential to effect meaningful change through established political channels. Hence, understanding the social movements of the years after '68 requires studying activism that took place where people lived, that built on alternative conceptions of power, and that was often framed in a transnational context. Examining contemporary grassroots politics requires us thus to analyze the tangible transformations that activists had already spurred on in their own lives, at the local level, and across borders. To better understand social movements after '68 and to reassess their significance, this volume presents a range of case studies, showing how the movements were organized, what concerns and ideas motivated their protagonists to act, and how they related to one another—and to society as a whole. This broad body of empirical research reveals how social movements after '68 brought together diverse demographics, often across geopolitical boundaries, and empowered individuals to act, both in their own interest and in solidarity with others.[12]

While this volume is closely focused on the movements of the 1970s and 1980s, and studies those movements' characteristics and commonalities, our research does not support the idea that they were wholly new or unprecedented. We do not describe the period we study as the years *after '68*, therefore, in order to suggest a clean break between "old" and "new" social movements.[13] We do so, instead, because of the long shadow that '68 casts on the movements of the 1970s and 1980s and that shadow's ongoing influence over the way the broad public and even many scholars have perceived them. The activism of the late 1960s—and responses to it—wrought real social and political changes that influenced later movements. But "'68's" near-immediate "mythologization" was perhaps even more important for the perception of the movements that came afterward.[14] The perceived apogee of postwar protest was not the only influence on social movements in the years after '68; indeed, for many contemporaries, '68 specifically represented also a nadir of their activism, in terms of official and other attacks against them and the attendant despair and disunity. The activism of the late 1960s—and that beginning already years before—constituted a powerful but also highly diverse set of influences on what followed. At the same time, other elements were also critically influential. The shift from the galloping growth of the postwar "economic miracle" to the challenges of the later "crisis decades" shifted the context of protest just as it reframed the way that social movements were understood. In elucidating this historical context, this volume addresses not only the movements' characteristics and internal histories but

also the ways in which they have been perceived. It is only by approaching the movements in their historical context, we argue, that we can understand their meaning for West German politics, society, and democracy. The remainder of this introduction outlines our approach to social movements after '68. It first situates the movements of the 1970s and 1980s by considering their historical context and what this has meant for the way we tend to understand them. Drawing on the research presented in this anthology, three further sections, corresponding with the three sections comprising the volume as a whole, articulate our understanding of the movements themselves. We begin with activists' own multidimensional relationships with the past, showing how they built on historical achievements even as they sought to address the problems of the past. Next, we take up the often personal and localized starting points of activism after '68, looking at the ways in which activists connected themselves, and their own experiences—via local issues and personal concerns—with other people, other places, and larger causes. Finally, we turn to the networks within which social movements developed. By following protest across ideological, societal, and geographical boundaries, we examine the meaning and the salience of solidarities for the era's social movements.

After '68: Explaining an Era—and Its Social Movements—by What Came Before

As the title of this volume indicates, the social movements of the 1970s and 1980s have been defined primarily in terms of that that came just before them. The broad West German New Left is widely regarded to have "disintegrated into a multiplicity of splinter groups" immediately after '68.[15] Accordingly, some activists perceived the 1970s as a comparatively "leaden time."[16] Scholars' interpretations of the era have often drawn in turn on a similar sort of comparison with the immediate past, though recent work now challenges that perspective, often looking explicitly to a longer period of postwar activism (1962–78; even 1963–89) that coheres as a single whole.[17] Work in this volume suggests still longer relevant trajectories, from at least the "generative and enabling" moment represented by 1945—while at once challenging assumptions that inhere in such characterizations as "the red decade" of 1967–77.[18]

Broader shifts in context are also essential to understanding the transformation of popular politics. The collapse of the Bretton Woods monetary system in 1971, as well as the 1973 and 1979 oil shocks, were important markers of what Eric Hobsbawm termed the "crisis decades."[19] That appel-

lation jarringly juxtaposed the 1970s and 1980s with the sparkling image of the preceding "golden years." In West German historiography, as a result, the period has come to be known as the time "after the boom."[20] Yet, as with the "red decade," it is important to simultaneously appreciate scholars' characterization of that context and critically review attendant understandings, as they relate to popular politics and otherwise.

Defining the "long 1970s," as some scholars have cast it, primarily by what preceded it has deep consequences.[21] It can seem to turn the unprecedented economic growth of the 1950s and early 1960s—and the social and political conditions that accompanied it—into some kind of norm. Emphasis on the economic growth of the miracle years also precipitates depictions of "'68ers" as callow youth knowing only prosperous, easy lives.[22] Accordingly, master narratives of systemic crisis and precipitous decline foist a set of presumptions onto our understanding of social movements in the years after '68. The narrative of breakdown has been extended to the movements themselves, which are also seen as little more than the remnants of a former sepia-toned Left, which splintered as the economy stagnated.[23] From this vantage point, debates over the uses of history can appear as a longing for a bygone era, intimating that new movements that fostered change in individual lives and particular communities were only isolated fragments, characterized dismissively by a lack of leadership.[24]

Recently, historians have begun to revise their perspective on the era, linking the "long 1970s" with the future instead of the past. Konrad Jarausch, for example, has interpreted the 1970s as a "pre-history of the problems of the present," while Niall Ferguson has described the 1970s as the decade "in which the seeds of future crises were sown."[25] While this has permitted fresh insights, it can likewise cast the era's activism, along with the issues that occasioned it, in highly inauspicious terms. The issues that have been portrayed as problems and crises of the present range from globalization and migration to environmental destruction and climate change, and thus have myriad links with the social movements of the 1970s and 1980s; it can seem that the earlier activism failed entirely—if not actually contributing somehow to the problems.

Debates on the perceived "crisis of democracy," which have been widespread in recent years, epitomize the extent to which teleological perspectives on the 1970s affect our understanding of the era's social movements. Since the contemporary crisis of democracy is perceived as a problem with roots that go back to the seventies, the era's movements have been implicated in it.[26] Particular initiatives and individual "single-issue movements" have been recast as threats to traditional parties; transnational solidarities have been said to ignore and thus challenge liberal conceptions of citizenship. Seeking

change from the self outward has been portrayed as a neglect of real politics. Most alarmingly, efforts to work around and beyond national parliaments have become threats to parliamentary democracy as such.[27] The social movements of the 1970s and 1980s, in short, have become handmaidens of democracy's ongoing deconsolidation.

Our research into the era's social movements draws on a different interpretation of the 1970s and 1980s. We avoid narratives based in the idea of a complete break between "miracle years" and "crisis decades," which obscure the movements' deep roots. At the same time, we refrain from seeing the seventies and eighties as part of an ongoing present, which neglects the distinct contexts of these two eras and suggests the sudden emergence of path-dependent processes that remain on track in spite of the copious, widely diagnosed crises of the past fifteen years.[28] By transcending the binary of rupture and continuity, we also open up space to rethink the results of contemporary activism in its highly diverse forms.

West German activists' own perspectives on the 1970s and 1980s clearly moved beyond these binaries. They experienced the years after '68 as a time of both promise and frustration. The period can be bracketed by the "student uprising" and the climax of the monumental peace movement of the mid-1980s. It also saw the emergence of a new political formation in the Greens (Die Grünen) that sought to transcend the divide between a conventional political party and a grassroots movement. Its beginning coincided with the new country's first change from a Christian Democratic–led government to one led by Social Democrats, a government that came into office on Willy Brandt's pledge to "dare more democracy." And yet, few of the era's movements could claim obvious and immediate victories in terms of the issues that animated them. Grassroots protests did not stop the proliferation of nuclear energy production just as mass demonstrations did not halt the deployment of NATO's new Euromissiles. The Brandt government did usher in changes in democratic praxis, but it did not precipitate a radically different, more participatory form of parliamentary democracy in West Germany; instead, it began a decade precisely of SPD-led assaults on popular political expression in the name of "militant democracy."[29] The emergence of the Greens was not just a boon for movement activists, but could also be viewed as a diminution of the potential of the social movements that party leaders claimed to speak for, since party leadership attuned itself increasingly to parliamentary politics rather than broad protest campaigns.[30] Yet, none of this warrants imagining the period as a time of failure for popular politics, nor does it suggest that we should see the era as one of absolute success as far as popular political engagement was concerned: to choose either would be precisely to take the period out of time.

Because we understand the 1970s and 1980s as neither a period of terrible disintegration nor a time when only crises were sown, we approach social movements after '68 in a way that opens the door to a different conception of the contemporary history of democracy. We look to the ways that the era's movements struggled to build on a past that contained achievements as well as missteps, at the ways they enabled a broad cross-section of the population to engage itself in political debates, at the ways they positioned personal and localized actions as the foundation of deep societal transformations, and at the ways that they encouraged—and even depended on—unexpected cooperation between unlikely partners, domestically and also internationally. As a result, we see the years after '68 as a moment when parliamentary democracy opened up to a more participatory democratic politics.

While the fullness of activists' participatory vision was realized only in glimpses here and there, the ideas that underpinned it have nonetheless left a lasting imprint on the ways that democracy was practiced in later decades. Specifically, they have created widespread expectations that parliamentary democracy must privilege public inclusion over elite leadership and transparency over backroom decision-making. These expectations, of course, do not ensure that parliamentary democracy will always be more inclusive. They do, nonetheless, serve as an important precedent and thus as a premise for demanding a more inclusive democracy, one that moreover includes attention to sites of expression beyond party politics and to sites of action and influence at every level of society. Indeed it is more than this: contemporary grassroots activists themselves rethought timelines of change. They saw each successive political experiment as a chance to learn and grow; each "failure" was instructive for the next efforts. They challenged the very notion of any end of history, realization of any utopia, and replaced the view with the need to doggedly keep at it. This may be one of contemporary activists' most signal lessons—and one of the very sources of challenge to notions of rupture versus continuity.

Movements and Histories: Working with—and against—the Past

The chapters in this volume look critically at social movement activists' own engagement with the past, particularly with histories of activism and democratic practice. In line with our understanding of the period's complicated position in longer historical trajectories, our research shows that activists looked with a mixture of pride and derision at past advances toward greater social equality and enhanced democratic participation, and even the histo-

ries of their own movements. By seeing the past as both a supporting basis for their actions and a reminder that so much remained to be done, activists declined to see the movements of the 1970s and 1980s as the falling action after the climax of postwar protest, or as evidence that democracy itself had passed its zenith and entered into a phase of deconsolidation.[31] So too did many of these activists refuse to see their demands for participatory democracy as a rebuff of the parliamentary democracy that West Germans had carefully constructed in the wake of World War II. Elucidating this multidimensional perspective on the past is essential for understanding not only activists' motivations and goals but also their place within Germany's postwar history and the longer continuum of social movement activism.

Perhaps the most salient example of activists' multidimensional perspective on the history of democratic advances is their relationship to what Geoff Eley calls the "post-1945 settlement," a phrase he uses to describe the social and political compromise that emerged from the rubble of World War II. That settlement, he argues, "sutured democracy and social justice firmly together inside a discourse of social recognition and public goods." The postwar era's economic boom and its stable—if staid—practice of parliamentary democracy, amid which youthful insurgents of the late sixties and early seventies came of age, made their mobilization possible.[32] Activists' attitudes toward the Basic Law, the 1949 provisional constitution that underpinned West Germany's new democratic order, exemplified this relationship. Protagonists of social movements made good use of the Basic Law's provisions: they availed themselves of democratic participation via "elections and votes" and also depended on its guarantees of freedom of expression and of assembly in order to protest. This was so despite efforts in the Bundestag to chip away at these guarantees from at least the late 1960s, as well as official efforts to restrict them on the ground.[33] As Michael Hughes shows, however, the same activists sought to transcend the very parliamentary democracy that the Basic Law prescribed, working to realize their own varieties of the direct democracy and council democracy that their predecessors had advocated from World War I.

It was precisely the combination of embracing the post-1945 settlement even as they sought to transcend it, Hughes and Eley argue, that shaped activists' primary contributions to democracy. Hughes finds that activists' aspirations for more, deeper participation motivated their challenges to the Basic Law and "ultimately established new norms for political citizenship." Even though they came nowhere close to installing a council democracy in the FRG, in other words, social movement activists succeeded in making parliamentary democracy as it existed in the FRG a far more participatory enterprise and, all the more, in legitimating a wide range of popular polit-

ical forms. They also spurred the politicization and reimagining of human relations broadly, at every level, such as between women and men, and also between adults and children. Indeed, it was not so much critiques of the post-1945 liberal democratic order per se but rather the activists' "largeness of aspiration, big ideas, and cultural militancies" that effected the greatest change in the long run, Eley finds.

The ways activists understood the history of activism, and even their own movements' pasts, were also multidimensional. Feminists' assessment of where the women's movement was headed, their ideas about "the possibility of changing the society, and . . . of what it meant to be a 'true' feminist" were highly dependent on their experiences within the movement, Bernhard Gotto shows. While women who had been engaged in the movement since the 1960s tended to feel that the movement was declining and becoming depoliticized by the late 1970s and early 1980s, women who joined the movement in the 1970s believed broader possibilities for meaningful action were just now opening up.

Activists' changing understanding of intellectuals' contribution to social movements revealed a similarly conflicted, multivalent view of past movements, as Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey shows. On the one hand, activists distanced themselves from earlier movements by rejecting the idea of a "universal intellectual," who could intervene in a social struggle from the outside, as a purveyor of abstract, universal values and thus reshape public opinion. The emergence of the "specific intellectual," who was expected to deploy actions as well as words in support of movements, on the other hand, revealed an emphasis on multiple viewpoints rather than metanarratives. Reflections on the past, then, promoted a more pluralistic approach to the problems of the present.

The research presented in this volume reveals that the past resonated with activists in the years after '68; but it also shows that their relationships to the post-1945 settlement and even to the histories of their own movements were complicated and multivalent. Rather than thinking in black-and-white terms about contemporary history or about their predecessors, or desiring to cut themselves off from the past completely, activists after '68 celebrated, critiqued, and sought to build on past accomplishments. Such a perspective on the past shaped the movements they organized, making them more open to divergent viewpoints and causing them to seek common ground amid a variety of viewpoints. Understanding activists' will to work with—but also against—the past is key to reintegrating those movements into longer histories—from master narratives on economic progress and the consolidation of democracy to microhistories of individual movements—as led by the example of contemporary activists themselves. Those longer his-

tories extend toward the present as well, challenging the explanatory importance of individual historical "flash points" and reminding us that change occurs unevenly and contingently but always connected to the past, just as to imagined futures.

"Start Where You Are"

Social movements in the years after '68 were organized by diverse casts of protagonists, who hailed from all across society. The deep engagement of "ordinary citizens" and "local people" fostered broad conceptions of societal problems and multifaceted approaches to them.[34] The same diversity supported the development of grassroots leadership and self-organization. Such diversity drew on local engagement, epitomizing Green party cofounder Petra Kelly's adjuration to "start where you are." Kelly linked grassroots work with big-picture changes, proposing that getting started at the local level would bring about greater transformation. Far from amounting to a withdrawal from politics writ large, beginning with personal matters and issues close to home fostered new sorts of political engagement and led to the development of new political coalitions, effectively allowing activists to transcend the shortcomings of "high politics" (*große Politik*).[35] The brand of popular politics that this approach generated expanded political participation to new populations at the same time as it provided a basis for connection with the needs of others, in the same town and also across the world.

Debates over living space and living arrangements provide evidence of the importance of the self and of one's own experiences as a basis for far-reaching political engagement during the 1970s and 1980s. As Freia Anders shows, discussions of what Henri Lefebvre termed the "right to the city" had their basis in individuals' own life situations and ability to access housing and other urban resources.[36] From this perspective, the practice of squatting in vacant buildings is hardly the work of a radical fringe but rather one tool in a broader toolkit that also included tenant organizing campaigns, rent strikes, expert critiques, and the presentation of alternative visions for urban life. In rural regions too, debates over the use of space were linked with much broader issues. Adam Seipp shows how, in the region around the Fulda Gap, where NATO expected the Warsaw Pact countries to strike in a potential third world war, inhabitants' efforts to protect their hometowns from the ill effects of US Army tank maneuvers linked concerns about the destruction of the local environment with the fears about preparations for world war and even questions about German sovereignty.

Changes in personal relationships were building blocks for shifts with effects throughout society. Within individual dwellings, as Belinda Davis shows, activists undertook experiments that fundamentally questioned the nuclear family and also the primacy of the couple's relationship. Inhabitants of living communities (*Wohngemeinschaften*, WGs) refuted essentialisms concerning "what women do," and "who men are." This intense work helped redefine the political itself, transforming activists' thinking concerning how and where change takes place and fostering new understandings of the time-line of change (transcending "revolution" versus "reform," and the success versus failure of individual political experiments). The "moral utopianism" voiced by West German women after '68 also drew on the idea that changing the self and interpersonal relationships would be the basis for any transformation of society as a whole. By working against the attribution of emotions on the basis of gender while repudiating the exclusion of emotions from political debates, Friederike Brühöfener shows, West German women sought likewise to create change starting from their own lives and experiences. In the long term, their work aided the development, in the FRG, of what Thomas Kühne has described as a "culture of peace."

David Templin's study of the changing meanings of the terms "self-organization" and "self-management" offers further examples of ways in which the restructuring of spaces for work and recreation proved transformative in the years after '68.[37] Apprentices' "self-organized" meeting spaces enabled them to express concerns that had been overlooked or downplayed by union leadership, while self-organization within activist groups became a means of demonstrating that a new society was possible, and living in it now. By the 1980s, efforts to create "self-managed" youth centers focused on the active engagement of participants in the centers' programming: sustaining independence had become an end in and of itself. As these different projects suggest, self-managed spaces were part of a collective effort directed toward the emancipation and empowerment of people who were often left out of preexisting decision-making structures.

By starting where they were, and by focusing on interpersonal relationships, activists confronted the extent to which the fundamental circumstances of their lives were shaped by both political decisions and social norms. By beginning from this most basic and personal level, their engagement showed them how changing personal circumstances could underpin deep societal transformations. In making changes to their own lives, they made themselves, their needs, and their experiences into the bases of an alternative society in the present. Indeed, asserting one's own right to decent living conditions was easily linked to the parallel rights of others. Both as models

and on account of the way they transformed their protagonists, new sorts of personal relationships and self-managed groups and spaces often served as building blocks for the broader transformation of society, meaning that the self was almost always viewed in relation to others, and as a starting point for activists' work that transcended the shortcomings of "high politics."

"Learn to Live in Solidarity"

In the years after '68, the idea of a shared, overarching struggle enabled a wide range of activists, focused on various particular issues, to feel that they were part of something far larger than themselves. Even if many increasingly approached their work from the basis of their own experiences and their own self-interest, they refused to see themselves as isolated individuals. Instead, they saw themselves and their own concerns as part of a broader emancipatory struggle, as they "learn[ed] to live in solidarity."[38] Such an outlook enabled activists to build common cause with people who had very different experiences, different concerns, and different approaches to politics. Not only did such networking link various sets of concerns together, it also frequently extended across borders and spanned oceans. As efforts to build connections and channels of communication across the Iron Curtain made particularly clear, however, even earnest strivings for solidarity did not always succeed in creating equal exchanges among their participants. But such efforts did blur the boundaries between groups and struggles that are often understood primarily in terms of their seeming difference from one another.[39] In short, the emphasis that activists placed on building solidarities deeply affected the way they saw their projects, the way they related to society, and thus the social change that they worked toward.

Protagonists of movements ostensibly devoted to a single issue conceived of their own struggles in relationship to other ongoing political projects, making particular interests the basis for broad solidarities. As Craig Griffiths shows, 1970s gay activists conceived of their movement only within the context of a wider struggle against capitalism. Realizing their own oppression as both homosexuals and workers, and seeking to build reciprocal solidarity with other oppressed groups, gay activists saw their politics not as a single-issue campaign limited to others with the same experiences but rather as part of a broad movement for social emancipation. Coming together around a particular cause or issue was the basis for engagement in broad movements with transformative goals. Indeed, coalition building and networking far outweighed the sectarianism, infighting, and self-isolation by which the era's grassroots politics have often been characterized.

Networking particular campaigns and building common cause in the name of a larger, shared struggle extended social movement activism far beyond the borders of the FRG in the long 1970s. The Maoist Communist League of West Germany (Kommunistische Bund Westdeutschlands—KBW) was well-known for its domestic networking, which consisted largely of "infiltrating" other activist organizations, from antinuclear citizens' initiatives to working groups focused on the abolition of the FRG's abortion ban. But, as David Spreen shows, the KBW also networked with anticolonial groups in Southern Africa, like the Zimbabwe African National Union (ZANU), and this networking benefitted the KBW. In providing the ZANU with funds, armored vehicles, and other resources, KBW activists came to see themselves as part of a "global revolutionary movement." The West German solidarity campaign in support of the Nicaraguan Sandinista movement, though quite different in nature than the KBW's support for the ZANU, had similar effects on its German participants. As Christian Helm shows, the unitary movement that West Germans built in support of the Sandinistas helped activists conceptualize political and societal change outside established frameworks and beyond national containers, even shaping the development of a "people-to-people diplomacy" that circumvented the Foreign Office and linked West Germans directly with Nicaraguans.

Building solidarity across geopolitical borders was not always a reciprocal project, even if claims to solidarity had deep effects on those who made them, as well as on those they claimed as their new partners. As Julia Ault shows, West Germans who sought to aid environmental activists in East Germany conceived of environmentalism as a single phenomenon in East and West. Such a conception helped West German activists to push their work forward within the FRG, but it did not always draw on accurate conceptions of the conditions in the GDR or reflect a relationship based in equal exchange. Indeed, efforts to act in solidarity with East German dissidents were shaped by West Germans' different understandings of the dissidents' situation and their political demands. Thus, Anna von der Goltz shows, some self-described leftists in West Germany, whose solidarity had its basis in advocacy of revolutionary transformation on both sides of the Iron Curtain, had a harder time connecting with dissidents than did West German conservatives, who shared GDR dissidents' critiques of state socialist repression. Unequal exchanges across the Iron Curtain reveal the role of misunderstandings in the building of solidarities, but they also show that solidarity could nonetheless prove useful—and even meaningful—for activists on both sides.

Building—and imagining—solidarity among struggles and across borders enabled activists in the years after '68 to see themselves as part of a larger, transformative project. To some extent, at least, their vision was vin-

dicated. In fact, the idea of living in solidarity underpinned their sense of themselves and their activist work: not only could many activists not understand themselves and their movements without such cooperation but they also depended on it to demonstrate the broader emancipatory potential of their action, regardless of its roots in particular circumstances. The idea of a common project, and strivings to realize it, helped activists to give meaning to their own work, to think through the links between their particular interests and their broader goal of multifaceted societal transformation, and thus to lay the foundation for an inclusive, popular politics that extended far beyond a limited, activist milieu, but also far beyond the formal structures of the FRG's parliamentary democracy. Solidarities, in other words, were essential to imagining—and acting upon—new conceptions of politics and participation.

Conclusion

By showing how the activists of the 1970s and 1980s started where they were, but nonetheless dedicated themselves to living in solidarity, this collection places the era's social movements into the center of important political and social debates in the years after '68. By analyzing the ways that activists interpreted the past, these essays position the era's movements within a longer historical trajectory. Indeed, this collection comes at what feels like another moment of possible deep political change, related not least to the rapid rise of the radical-nationalist party Alternative for Germany, mirroring political trends across Europe and the world, as well as to the concurrent rise of Black Lives Matter, in iterations across the globe, all in the midst of a pandemic that makes us more aware than ever of how we are all connected. The new prominence of radical nationalism cannot be cause for elitist retrenchment in the name of a notion that the masses and their political voice simply need to be better controlled from the top.[40] Indeed, notable responses across the United States and Europe (including non-prosecution of the removal of statues, official acknowledgment of the atrocities of imperialism, mainstream discussion of reparations for slavery, and the promise at least of entirely rethinking public security) offer a reminder of the changes bottom-up politics can engender, even if most often as a means from the top to protect the power of the status quo.

    We remind ourselves that, here again, these new movements did not come out of nowhere: they are part of shorter and longer histories, of popular memory, and of trajectories that connect these flashpoints. Awareness of this history; related thinking on the nature of change, leadership, polit-

ical organization, and politics itself; and efforts to work with these broader contexts inspired contemporary activists. It can remain a source of political inspiration today.

Stephen Milder is assistant professor of European politics and society at the University of Groningen and research fellow at the Rachel Carson Center for Environment and Society in Munich. He is the author of *Greening Democracy: The Anti-Nuclear Movement and Political Environmentalism in West Germany and Beyond, 1968–1983.*

Belinda Davis is professor of history at Rutgers University. She is author or coeditor of five books, including *Changing the World, Changing Oneself: Political Protest and Transnational Identities in 1960s/70s, West Germany and the U.S.* (Berghahn, 2010) (coedited with M. Klimke, C. MacDougall, and W. Mausbach), and *The Inner Life of Politics: Extraparliamentary Opposition in West Germany, 1962–1983* (Cambridge, forthcoming).

Friederike Brühöfener is associate professor of history at the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley, where she also serves as director of multidisciplinary studies. She is the coeditor—together with Karen Hagemann and Donna Harsch—of *Gendering Post-1945 German History: Entanglements*, published by Berghahn in 2019.

Notes

1. Walter Mossmann, *realistisch sein: das unmögliche verlangen; Wahrheitsgetreue gefälschte Errinerungen* (Berlin: edition der Freitag, 2009), 248.
2. Micha, Holger, Frank, and Uli, "Pressionen und Impressionen," *die tageszeitung*, 16 October 1979.
3. Uli Beller, "Mit Sonderzug nach Hannover und Bonn," in Christoph Büchele, Irmgard Schneider, and Bernd Nössler, eds., *Der Widerstand geht weiter: Der Bürgerprotest gegen das Kernkraftwerk von 1976 bis zum Mannheimer Prozess* (Freiburg: Dreisam-Verlag, 1982): 136–38.
4. Micha, Holger, Frank, and Uli, "Pressionen und Impressionen."
5. M.S. and H.B., "Legt ihnen das Handwerk!" *die tageszeitung*, 15 October 1979.
6. Micha, Holger, Frank, and Uli, "Pressionen und Impressionen."
7. *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 26 October 1979.
8. Micha, Holger, Frank, and Uli, "Pressionen und Impressionen."
9. M.S. and H.B., "Legt ihnen das Handwerk!"
10. On the concept of "citizens' initiatives," see Peter Cornelius Mayer-Tasch, *Die Bürgerinitiativbewegung: Der aktive Bürger als rechts- und politikwissenschaftliches Problem* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 1976).
11. Micha, Holger, Frank, and Uli, "Pressionen und Impressionen."

12. This volume also offers a correction to literature, scholarly and otherwise, that continues to characterize grassroots politics on the left after '68 as collapsing entirely, outside of a tiny number of dogmatic and/or violent activists.

13. On the distinction between "old" and "new" social movements, see Ulf Teichmann and Christian Wicke, "'Alte' und Neue soziale Bewegungen: Einleitende Anmerkungen," *Arbeit Bewegung Geschichte* 17, no. 3 (2018). Cf: Craig Calhoun, "'New Social Movements' of the Early Nineteenth Century," *Social Science History* 17, no. 3 (Fall 1993).

14. See for example Gerd Langguth, *Mythos '68: Die Gewaltphilosophie von Rudi Dutschke—Ursachen und Folgen der Studentenbewegung* (Munich: Olzog, 2001); Wolfgang Kraushaar, *1968 als Mythos Chiffre und Zäsur* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition, 2000).

15. Andrei Markovits and Philip S. Gorski, *The German Left: Red Green and Beyond* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1993), 58. On the "fragmentation" of the student movement, see also Geoff Eley, *Forging Democracy: The History of the Left in Europe, 1850–2000* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 418.

16. On the idea of the 1970s as a "leaden" decade, see Christiane Peitz, "Die Bleikappe des Schweigens: Margarethe von Trotta über ihren Ensslin-Film, das Sympathisantentum und deutsche Kontinuitäten," *Der Tagesspiegel*, 28 April 2007.

17. Cf. Timothy Scott Brown, *West Germany and the Global Sixties: The Anti-authoritarian Revolt, 1962–1978* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015); Carla MacDougall, "Cold War Capital: Contested Urbanity in West Berlin 1963–1989" (PhD diss., Rutgers University, New Brunswick, NJ, 2011).

18. See Geoff Eley, "Leaving the Borderlands . . . but for Where? 1968 and the New Registers of Political Feeling," in this volume; cf. Gerd Koenen, *Das rote Jahrzehnt: Unsere kleine deutsche Kulturrevolution 1967–1977* (Frankfurt a.M.: Kiepenheuer & Witsch, 2002); and Wolfgang Kraushaar, Karin Wieland, and Jan Philipp Reemtsma, *Rudi Dutschke Andreas Baader und die RAF* (Hamburg: Hamburger Edition 2005).

19. Eric Hobsbawm, *Age of Extremes: A History of the World, 1914–1991* (New York: Vintage, 1994), 403–32.

20. Anselm Doering-Manteuffel and Lutz Raphael, *Nach dem Boom: Perspektiven auf die Zeitgeschichte seit 1970* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008). Konrad Jarausch, ed., *Das Ende der Zuversicht? Die siebziger Jahre als Geschichte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2008).

21. On the "long 1970s," see, e.g., Martin Deuerlein, *Das Zeitalter der Interdependenz: Globales Denken und internationale Politik in den langen 1970er Jahren* (Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag, 2020).

22. On challenging the notion of activists as having grown up in material and other forms of comfort, Belinda Davis, *The Internal Life of Politics: Extraparliamentary Opposition in West Germany, 1962–1983* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, forthcoming).

23. See, for example, Tony Judt, *Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945* (New York: Penguin, 2005).

24. This is all aside from the substantial, ongoing literature that asserts the highly destructive character of "'68" itself. Cf. Götz Aly, *Unser Kampf: 1968 – ein irritierter*

Blick zurück (Frankfurt/Main: Fischer, 2008); Kraushaar et al, *Rudi Dutschke Andreas Baader und die RAF*.

25. Konrad Jarausch, "Verkannter Strukturwandel: Die siebziger Jahre als Vorgeschichte der Probleme der Gegenwart," in Jarausch, *Das Ende der Zuversicht?*; Niall Ferguson, "Introduction: Crisis, What Crisis? The 1970s and the Shock of the Global," in Niall Ferguson, Charles S. Maier, Erez Manela, and Daniel J. Sargent, eds., *The Shock of the Global: The 1970s in Perspective* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press), 18. Frank Bösch lists numerous historians, political scientists, and journalists who have interpreted the year 1979 as the beginning of the contemporary age, and the problems that accompany it. Bösch, *Zeitenwende 1979: Als die Welt von Heute Begann* (Munich: C. H. Beck, 2019), 14–15.

26. Colin Crouch's influential 2004 book *Post-Democracy* might be seen as the opening salvo of the latest chorus on the crisis of democracy. Crouch, *Post-Democracy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004). For overviews of recent literature on the "crisis of democracy," see Wolfgang Merkel, "Krise der Demokratie? Anmerkungen zu einem schwierigen Begriff," *Aus Politik und Zeitgeschichte* 66, nos. 40–42 (October 2016): 4–11; and Jan-Werner Müller, "Democracy's Midlife Crisis," *The Nation*, 22 April 2019, https://www.thenation.com/article/how-democracies-dies-how-democracy-ends-book-review/.

27. On deconsolidation broadly, e.g., Roberto Stefan Foa and Yascha Mounk, "The Danger of Deconsolidation: Democratic Disconnect," *Journal of Democracy* 27, no. 3 (2016): 5–17. On the idea that seeking change from the self outward amounts to a neglect of real politics, see, for example, Judt, *Postwar*; see also (though focused on the Unted States) Todd Gitlin, *The Twilight of Common Dreams* (New York: Metropolitan Books, 1995); On the threat to traditional parties, see, for example, Franz Walter, *Im Herbst der Volksparteien: Eine kleine Geschichte von Aufstieg und Rückgang politischer Massenintegration* (Bielefeld: Transcript, 2009); Wolfgang Merkel, "Ist die Krise der Demokratie eine Erfindung?" https://www.akademie-forum-masonicum.de/wolfgang-merkel-ist-die-krise-der-demokratie-eine-erfindung/; and Peter Mair, *Ruling the Void: The Hollowing of Western Democracy* (New York: Verso, 2013); On internationalism as a retreat from national politics, see, for example, Samuel Moyn, *The Last Utopia: Human Rights in History* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2010), 8.

28. On the 2010s as a decade of crises (and comparisons to the 1970s), see Andy Beckett, "The Age of Perpetual Crisis: How the 2010s Disrupted Everything but Resolved Nothing," *The Guardian*, 17 December 2019. See also, Craig Calhoun and Georgi Derluguian, eds., *The Deepening Crisis: Governance Challenges after Neoliberalism* (New York: New York University Press, 2011).

29. See Larry Frohman, "*Datenschutz*, the Defense of Law, and the Debate over Precautionary Surveillance: The Reform of Police Law and the Changing Parameters of State Action in West Germany," in *German Studies Review* 38, no. 2 (May 2015): 307–27; cf. Karrin Hanshew, *Terror and Democracy in West Germany* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012).

30. On activists' apprehensions about the Greens' emergence, see Natalie Pohl, *Atomprotest am Oberrhein: Die Auseinandersetzung um den Bau von Atomkraftwerken in Baden und Elsass (1970–1985)* (Stuttgart: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2019), 272–78; and

Stephen Milder, *Greening Democracy: The Anti-Nuclear Movement and Political Environmentalism in West Germany and Beyond, 1968-1983* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 238–46.

31. On '68 as the climax of postwar protest, see, for example, Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey, "Introduction," in *A Revolution of Perception? Consequences and Echoes of 1968*, ed. Ingrid Gilcher-Holtey (New York: Berghahn Books, 2014). On the idea that democracy was on the downward slope by the 1970s and 1980s, see Crouch, *Post-Democracy*.

32. On staid, but stable democratic praxis in the postwar era, see Martin Conway, "The Rise and Fall of Western Europe's Democratic Age, 1945–1973," *Contemporary European History* 13, no. 1 (February 2004): 67–88; Claudia Gatzka, *Die Demokratie der Wähler: Stadtgesellschaft und politische Kommunikation in Italien und der Bundesrepublik, 1944–1979* (Düsseldorf: Droste Verlag, 2019).

33. Davis, "Jenseits von Terror und Rückzug: Die Suche nach politischem Spielraum und Strategien im Westdeutschland der siebziger Jahre," in Klaus Weinhauer and Jörg Requate, eds., *Terrorismus in der Bundesrepublik. Medien, Staat und Subkulturen in den 1970er Jahren* (Frankfurt a. M.: Campus, 2006), 165; also Eckart Conze, *Die Suche nach Sicherheit: Eine Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland von 1949 bis in die Gegenwart* (Berlin: Siedler, 2009); Jeremy Varon, *Bringing the War Home: The Weather Underground, the Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2004), 26–27.

34. On the concept of "local people," see John Dittmer, *Local People: The Struggle for Civil Rights in Mississippi* (Urbana: University of Illinois Pres, 1995). On the practice of wide populations including conservatives borrowing on strategies such as citizens' initiatives, see Martin Geyer, "Elisabeth Noelle-Neumann's 'Spiral of Silence,' the Silent Majority and the Conservative Moment of the 1970s," in *Inventing the Silent Majority in Western Europe and the United States*, ed. Anna von der Goltz and Britta Waldschmidt-Nelson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2017), 251–74; on populations across the political spectrum in new social movements, see Horst Pötzsch, *Die Deutsche Demokratie*, 5th ed. (Bonn: Springer, 2009), 54–55.

35. Petra Kelly, "Ohne Frauen ist kein Staat zu machen," in *Ist das alles? Frauen zwischen Erfolg und Sehnsucht*, ed. Norbert Copray (Munich: Kösel-Verlag, 1991). Reprinted as "Ist das alles? Frauen zwischen Erfolg und Sehnsucht," in Petra K. Kelly, *Lebe als müßtest du heute sterben* (Düsseldorf: Zebulon, 1997), 167.

36. Henri Lefebvre, *Le Droit à la ville* (Paris: Éditions Anthropos, 1968). See too MacDougall, "Cold War Capital."

37. Historians have begun to join other scholars in addressing these issues. Compare Sven Reichardt's exhaustive *Authentizität und Gemeinschaft: Linksalternatives Leben in den siebziger und frühen achtziger Jahren* (Berlin: Suhrkamp, 2014), 351–459; also Detlef Siegfried, *Time Is on My Side: Konsum und Politik in Der Westdeutschen Jugendkultur Der 60er Jahre* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2006); Detlef Siegfried and Sven Reichardt, *Das Alternative Milieu: Antibürgerlicher Lebensstil und linke Politik in Der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und Europa 1968–1983* (Göttingen: Wallstein, 2010); Detlef Siegfried and David Templin, *Lebensreform um 1900 und Alternativmilieu Um 1980: Kontinuitäten und Brüche in Milieus der gesellschaftlichen Selbstreflexion im frühen und späten 20. Jahrhundert* (Gottingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 2019);

and Timothy Scott Brown, *West Germany and the Global Sixties: The Antiauthoritarian Revolt, 1962–1978* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

38. Cristina Perincioli, *Berlin wird feministisch: Das Beste was von der 68er Bewegung blieb* (Berlin: Querverlag, 2015), 29.

39. On the challenges but also the promise of such networking across borders, see Andrew Tompkins, "Grassroots Transnationalism(s): Franco-German Opposition to Nuclear Energy in the 1970s," *Contemporary European History* 25, no. 1 (February 2016): 117–42.

40. See, e.g., Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt, *How Democracies Die* (New York: Broadway Books, 2019); and Jason Brennan, *Against Democracy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2016).

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