



most West Germans did not necessarily regard the Allied victory as 'lovable', they certainly regarded the end of the war, like their British counterparts, as a moral and political watershed 'where good was good and bad was bad', just that most Germans would have excluded themselves from 'the bad'.<sup>2</sup>

British and West German activists thus participated in the contestations of what 'security' might have meant in the post-Second World War world, which was, at the same time, the world of the nuclear arms race. This book has told the story about how the activists wrestled with this problem and what their actions meant for the various conceptions of 'the political' that undergirded post-war British and West German politics. The quest for some form of security in two post-war societies lay at the root of the contestations that characterized the extra-parliamentary politics in Britain and West Germany. Although the campaigns were connected through networks of activists and although they shared the same historical conjuncture, their resonance and meaning differed. The interactions and the eventfulness of the campaigns reveal the very specific (p. 287) processes of politicization and depoliticization in post-war Britain and West Germany through the ways in which they conceptualized, thought about, discussed, and actively produced politics.

This 'politics' started out primarily, but not exclusively, as politics in the narrow sense. But it turned into a more general contestation about the relationship between politics and culture. It thus involved a discussion about 'the political' as the very space in which 'politics' could be made and produced, and about the agency of those who made politics. The protests might have been marginal in their respective political systems. But what matters is not their marginality, but their liminality: their existence at the borderlands of politics, in the spaces 'betwixt and between' the centre of government, of nation states, of public and private lives, of foreign and domestic politics, of the global and the local, and of cold war political ideologies. It is the activists' liminality that offers us important insights into the making and the dialectics of cold war protest politics from the end of the Second World War into the late 1960s.<sup>3</sup>

By framing their campaigns in terms of 'security', which seemed to reflect broader contemporary discussions, rather than in terms of the more utopian idea of 'peace', activists wrote and acted themselves into the cold war. 'Security', defined as 'national security', was one of the key ideologies of defence and foreign policy. By contrast, 'peace' was regarded as a tool of communist propaganda. But, it was also through their acceptance of the hegemonic terms of the debate that the activists were able to open up new vistas for social and political organization. Indeed, they proposed 'alternative futures' to the ones advocated by governments, which allowed the activists to create their own histories and to produce novel possibilities for political agency.<sup>4</sup> Defence and foreign policymakers, by using 'security', sought to evoke the importance of constant preparedness for war. By engaging with their own experiences and

memories of violence and warfare, however, the activists in both countries read safety from external violence together with the possibility of military attack. They connected with the aim of internal stability, unity, and concord, as well as with a good life guaranteed by the welfare state. In West Germany, this connection had a particular resonance, as it accompanied and vouched for the transformation of a nation defined by violence to one defined by **(p.288)** peace, from dictatorship to democracy, from a country divided within to one divided through its outside borders.

These processes were controversial, contested, and involved quests for political representation. These quests were about representation not merely in terms of the politics of a pressure or interest group. At the core, they involved representing the nuclear arms race as a problem for politics and therefore for public debate. Activists revealed the dangers of the arms race and nuclear radiation stemming from nuclear weapons tests. They thus revealed what had previously been invisible and thus made the topic negotiable within politics. By focusing on the issue of nuclear weapons, activists touched upon the core and essence of statehood and sovereignty in the cold war. It was through the symbol of nuclear weapons that cold war states sought to show their power. And it was in the 'geopolitical privacy' that the *arcana imperii* were kept under lock and key.<sup>5</sup>

This book has therefore highlighted a crucial feature that historians of social movements in the context of domestic political, social, and cultural history often forget: the importance of assumptions about both countries' international role in politics, the way in which international relations came to matter to people, and how they wrestled with the dangers and political challenges they saw as threatening to their world. Highlighting the importance of international relations for individual lives in this way more than merely breaks the division between international and domestic politics. It enables us to comprehend the cold war as a war in very immediate and direct, rather than diffuse and symbolic, ways.

Indeed, those Britons and West Germans active in the protests against nuclear weapons sought to highlight the dangers of the nuclear arms race as dangers that would surpass those of recent conflicts. While they communicated this knowledge to their respective populations, they also lost an awareness of the very threat of the arms race, because they came to focus on different components of the cold war, and especially the real violence that the cold war meant for countries outside the United States and Europe. For the campaigners in both countries, the cold war was a constant pre-war situation. Understood from the perspective of the arms race, my study has shown how cold war events played an active role in producing the movements that campaigned against its central characteristic, the nuclear arms race. And the cold war also played a role in un-making and remaking these connections. Social connections and **(p.289)** relations, social order as such, are highly unlikely and fragile. It was primarily

by reference to the warlike elements of the cold war and by working through the implications of the politics of security that the foundations for these social movements could be built. The activists' interpretations of the world as well as their very actions made visible the political and the social in whose name the activists claimed to act. The cold war nuclear arms race thus provided the conditions for its own critique.<sup>6</sup>

There existed, of course, a fundamental difference between Britain and West Germany: Britain was a sovereign country with its own arsenal of nuclear weapons that had come out of the Second World War victorious. By contrast, West German politics were, in the words of James N. Rosenau and Wolfram Hanrieder, a 'penetrated system' in which 'nonmembers of a national society participate[d] directly and authoritatively, through actions taken jointly with the society's members, in either the allocation of its values or the mobilization of support on behalf of its goal'. Thus, international politics were, by definition, part of domestic politics; even the government could not make sovereign decisions about the use of nuclear weapons.<sup>7</sup> In West Germany, international politics appeared to hold almost existential importance. As Michael Geyer has put it, the 'deadly intimacy with international relations turned grand questions of power politics into very personal concerns'.<sup>8</sup>

But this stark difference can be overdrawn. Within the context of NATO, it was far from clear that the UK government could always exercise its national sovereignty vis-à-vis the policies of the United States. Combining a transnational and connective approach with the methods of comparative history, this book has been able to query such straightforward conclusions that most structuralist and systemic explanations would favour. Indeed, the problem with such systemic postulations is that they lead to 'the neutralisation of the problem of aggression'. As a consequence, they deprive political systems of any domestically derived responsibilities 'outside of what the system imposes as a system'.<sup>9</sup>

**(p.290)** This book has, therefore, highlighted the multiple and complex ways in which existing structures were confronted by individual experiences. It has focused on the 'creative moments where the individual struggling to make sense of him- or herself and the world will bend, select, recombine, amend, transform the sources of meaning' in order to bring historical contingency and structural contexts together.<sup>10</sup> The actual practice of protesting on the basis of existing structures introduced new visions of the world, utopias in the original sense of the word as 'non-places', places away from existing political and social imaginaries that were nonetheless sutured tightly to the conditions in which they were produced.<sup>11</sup> Thus, the British and West German protesters whose stories this book has told were dialectically related to official renderings of the politics of security: as the dominant and oppositional groups interacted, their struggles thus constantly clarified the political-cultural field of the cold war rather than being proof for its demise. As William Sewell has argued with regard

to the French Revolution, 'the act of contesting dominant meanings itself implies a recognition of their centrality.'<sup>12</sup>

The protesters' radical potential did not only lie in challenging governmental authority *tout court*, as much of the recent scholarship on the location of protests in cold war history has assumed.<sup>13</sup> Such a perspective merely reproduces rather than analyses and deconstructs contemporary perspectives. Rather, the British and West German protests' radical potential lay precisely in making visible those assumptions of governments, and they provided the methods, means, and potential for the critique of these assumptions. Discussing nuclear weapons offered activists ways of debating and working through the violence of the Second World War and of grappling with the threat of new violence on a potentially unprecedented scale. Their politics of security therefore worked in three interconnected ways: in reading memories of the Second World War into the reality of the cold war; in demanding specific forms of political engagement related to these memories; and in connecting their campaigns beyond the level of nation states as 'decision and identity spaces' (Charles S. Maier), while nonetheless staying moored within local and national frames of understanding.

Activists thus made the cold war world comprehensible as a space of potential and real destruction. The central element of stability in cold war **(p.291)** international relations, namely the strategy of mutually assured destruction that had been established by the end of the 1950s and lasted into the 1980s, did not depend on the material reality of devastation. Instead, it was based on the hypotheses that the opposing parties developed about their behaviour in the future. In short, the cold war arms race depended on the scenarios that societies developed to make sense of it. It was this fiction of the arms race that made it real.<sup>14</sup> The British and West German protesters played a key role in creating this knowledge of the cold war and in making it politically relevant. It was through this image of destruction that British and West German activists gained access to multiple forms of knowledge of political and social transformation that undermined the very assumptions on which the binary structure of the arms race rested.

Fundamentally, discussing nuclear weapons enabled protesters to speak about the Second World War in ways that made its violence tangible at a time when the British and West German societies did not always thematize these memories openly.<sup>15</sup> Well into the early 1960s, for the protesters, the cold war was essentially the threat of a repeat of the Second World War. But, although these memories and experiences looked similar and mirrored general West European patterns, the consequences of war assumed different temporalities and resonances in Britain and West Germany. Total defeat accentuated the German post-war more strongly.<sup>16</sup> To a much greater extent than in Britain, West German protesters' experiences were shot through with nightmares of violence

and shock, and the history of the alleged normality of the increasingly affluent society was also the 'history of the imagination of horror'.<sup>17</sup> British protesters shared an uneasy awareness that the unity of their nation and the patriotic community that had been created in the Second World War was linked to murderous violence that was incompatible with the kind of society they wished to preserve.<sup>18</sup>

But the meanings of this awareness were fundamentally different in West Germany, which meant that it had a different resonance there among both the protesters and the general public. While discussions in other areas led to strategies 'that sought to erase the consequences of German violence *and* of violence against Germans', discussing the bombing war **(p.292)** conjured up these memories in different ways: it conjured up memories of victimhood during the bombing war, while, nevertheless, showing a modicum of awareness for German crimes. The symbolic linkage between the Bergen-Belsen camp and the British missile base Bergen-Hohne that protesters established on the first German Easter March highlights this most clearly. It worked towards developing 'redemptive transformations' and thus, in paradoxical ways, allowed them to read their own activism not only into the cold war but also into the young West German democracy.<sup>19</sup>

Protesters' implicit and explicit references to their 'injured citizenship' (Michael Geyer) highlighted this aspect of their politics of security explicitly, although this injury had normally remained silent: protesters shared a profound distrust of the use of the military by the German state, while they approved of the security provided by the welfare state and while they might even have agreed to serving in the West German army.<sup>20</sup> This meant that the West German protests against nuclear weapons appeared, at first, less mainstream and therefore more controversial. However, it was precisely the fact that West German activists expressed widely shared, yet not publicly discussed, fears about their sovereignty as citizens and their country's sovereignty in the international arena that made them so controversial. While Britain saw a variety of protest movements over the course of the 1960s, the West German Easter Marches transformed themselves into an 'extra-parliamentary opposition' that profoundly shifted the ground for what the politics of security meant.

In the wake of the crisis over the building of the Berlin Wall in August 1961, when Soviet and US tanks faced each other in Berlin, and following the Cuban missile crisis in autumn 1962, when the world seemed to have come to the brink of a nuclear war, a geostrategic *modus operandi* was established in Europe between the United States and the Soviet Union. It established a mutual agreement about the use of nuclear weapons for deterrence in a system of 'mutually assured destruction'.<sup>21</sup> The new status quo found expression in the banning of atmospheric nuclear weapons tests through an international treaty between the United States, the Soviet Union, and the United Kingdom in 1963

and the continuous improvement of the direct relations between the major powers. In this constellation, the British and West German governments successfully **(p.293)** managed to uncouple the link between the dangers of radioactivity and the arms race. They successfully replaced the dangers of the arms race with an understanding of nuclear energy as the harbinger and key symbol of modernity, focusing on health and safety measures to combat radioactivity and thus winning back people's trust in this form of energy. From around 1963, therefore, and until the mid- to late 1970s, the politics of security no longer primarily revolved around the cold war as characterized by an arms race.<sup>22</sup>

This meant that the visual arsenal of the real and tangible dangers of the arms race that nuclear weapons tests had provided had disappeared, so that nuclear weapons no longer appeared to many to assume the central importance for making sense of the cold war. Instead, protesters now increasingly focused on the real violence practised by the United States in the Vietnam War, and they highlighted what they regarded as specifically American ideologies, such as a specific brand of consumer culture, as the essence of the invisible cold war. Whereas, for the protesters of the late 1950s and early 1960s, the cold war had essentially been about nuclear weapons interpreted in the light of the Second World War's aerial bombing campaigns, by the mid-1960s the cold war had a different shape and structure for most activists. The United States and what activists regarded as its 'imperialism' had, for most protesters, become the symbol and incarnation of the cold war, as it threatened to suppress the projects for liberation that people in the developing world had promoted. Activists' previous debates about security now enabled them to discuss their aim as 'liberation'.

In West Germany, this theme could be tied to the more general concerns of individual and national sovereignty that protesters had discussed before. Their campaigns gained plausibility because 'high' politics—the Grand Coalition of the two major political parties *CDU* and *SPD* in 1966 as well as a number of ex-National Socialists in government and exposed civil-service positions—seemed to highlight the need for such a campaign. 'Liberation' for West German activists therefore also meant liberation from the past, providing security from a return of the past. The Easter Marches therefore transformed themselves into a campaign for disarmament and for democracy. Because of the different meanings and repercussions of activists' politics of security, such common cognitive framework could not develop in Britain. As a consequence, the politics of security broke up into separate and different movements with no clearly identifiable centre, **(p. 294)** although separate movements, ranging from CND to anarchist and Trotskyite groups, represented aims that were similar to the ones assembled in West Germany's single 'extra-parliamentary opposition'.

The different histories of protest and contestation in 1950s and 1960s Britain and West Germany were, therefore, the outcome of the ways in which British and West German protesters tried to write themselves—and their societies—into the cold war within the specific conditions of their countries. They were not simply the outcome of different traditions of radicalism in both countries or of different political systems. Nor were they merely responses to their countries' different geostrategic positions within cold war international relations.

But the politics of security was not merely about an active engagement with cold war international relations *per se*. Protesters' analysis of the international system offered the ground and conditions from which British and West German activists developed their arguments and their campaigns. The disruption of the ethico-political order across Europe during the Second World War remained a strong influence on political imaginaries well into the post-war period, as contemporaries sought to address the foundational question of how a 'workable ethics of democracy' should look.<sup>23</sup> Debates about this issue were profoundly shaped by the almost existential feelings of disorder about politics that people knew, as it seemed to them that history's continuum had been broken and had to be reassembled again. This meant that a complex multitude of different temporalities influenced the ways in which activists sought to turn security into their topic politically. Manifold reappropriations of the past were necessary and also guaranteed that the past had an enormous discursive appeal. Coming to terms with the past had a profound impact on the contest of the boundaries that were supposed to separate politics from non-politics, the resources on which protesters could draw to make their argument.

This theme had different resonances in Britain and West Germany and therefore provided different local and nationally specific contexts that help explain the different protest histories of the 1950s and 1960s. The protests in both countries participated in forging cold war political cultures. This confrontation in which British and West German activists engaged opened up new spaces of political action. Both campaigns grew out of a deep dissatisfaction with the organization and politics of the parliamentary left—in West Germany the *SPD* and in Britain the Labour and Communist Parties. **(p.295)** CND in Britain and the Campaign against Nuclear Death and the Easter Marches in West Germany thus provided spaces of political experimentation in which politics and culture could merge in novel ways. These spaces facilitated an engagement with political traditions in the context of concrete events and circumstances. The ways in which extra-parliamentary politics became enmeshed with culture, and the ways in which subcultures became political and were transformed into counter-cultures thus differed between Britain and West Germany in important ways. In West Germany, culture was more readily politicized because the *SPD* was more pronouncedly a cold war party and tried to suppress protests outside its organizational framework more fiercely than the British Labour Party. The feelings of disappointments connected with this were therefore much greater,



not least because the hopes that had been tied to the *SPD* as the progressive party of democratization had been so much larger.

Moreover, although the specific *contents* of the politics of security that the West German protests developed—their emphasis on the memories of the Second World War in the context of Germany's post-National Socialist society—had more resonance with mainstream public opinion than its British counterpart, the same could not be said for the *forms* they developed to express these politics. As West Germany was a divided country at the front line of the cold war, as anti-communist and anti-socialist sentiments continued to linger, and as memories of the street battles of the Weimar Republic as destabilizing forces in Germany's first democracy continued to loom, the boundaries of politics were much more tightly drawn in West Germany than in Britain. All activism that came to be seen left of the *SPD* was regarded as inherently dangerous for political stability. This was also true for activities that involved cultural engagement with artists, music, and theatre that was regarded as 'socialist' and 'communist'. Hence, mainstream popular culture was gradually depoliticized over the course of the 1960s precisely because it could be presented as the outward symbol of democratic affluence. By contrast, since they seemingly furthered the case of the 'other Germany', the cultures of activism that underpinned the extra-parliamentary protests of the late 1950s and the 1960s remained highly politicized.<sup>24</sup> This meant that the West German extra-parliamentary movement retained its dynamics and unifying cognitive framework beyond the issue of nuclear weapons. In Britain, by contrast, culture itself became a substitute for politics more readily than in West Germany: while sub- and counter-cultures were often tied to political projects, they were not directly linked to political campaigns.

**(p.296)** The New Left activist Perry Anderson attributed this lack of continuity in British protests of the 1960s, and the lack of a more sustained protest movement that rivalled the ones in continental Europe, to the *longue durée* of British history and the importance of 'traditions' in British political culture. In particular, he faulted protesters of the late 1950s and early 1960s for not moving beyond these traditions and for not engaging more actively with continental European theories of societal transformation. Observing France and West Germany in particular, Anderson diagnosed a special path in British radical politics, arguing that British radicalism had never been quite radical enough. Anderson came to this assessment through an engagement with Antonio Gramsci's notions of (cultural) 'hegemony', which he discovered through his friend Tom Nairn, who had learned of the Italian's work during a stint at the *Scuola Nuova Superiore* in Pisa in the early 1960s. Anderson argued, therefore, that it was necessary to shift attention within the politics of security towards undermining hegemony within culture by developing a revolutionary consciousness through intellectual and theoretical engagement.<sup>25</sup>

Although Anderson's diagnosis was already hotly debated at the time, it has been more or less unquestioningly transferred into the historiography on the British 1960s, albeit mostly without attention to its Gramscian roots: most historians and commentators highlight the importance of cultural changes over the course of the 1960s, while failing to engage with the political repercussions and the specific social and political locations of these cultural shifts.<sup>26</sup> They have, therefore, tended to subscribe to Anderson's diagnosis in slightly different ways by highlighting the 'conservative nature of British modernity'.<sup>27</sup> The comparative and transnational perspective applied here demonstrates, however, that West German protesters equally relied on traditions to anchor their protests. Indeed, Germany saw 'multiple restorations' similar to those in Britain, and it would be difficult to place the protests on scales of different degrees of conservatism and progressivism.<sup>28</sup>

**(p.297)** Conversely, one of the standard works on the history of the New Left, following more or less Anderson's line of direct theoretical engagement, fails to take account of the cultural dimensions of politics altogether.<sup>29</sup> Yet, these interpretations that have dominated the historiography on protests in the British 1960s are themselves in need of historicization. Anderson argued from a specific political position that entailed a commitment primarily to cultural theorizing rather than the concrete solidarity practised by the VSC, and he was also quite sceptical of those groups that sought to develop the politics of security as a politics of authenticity under the auspices of counter-culture. Moreover, Anderson's *longue durée* explanation and diagnosis of hegemony have entered the historiography of the period in a way that was oblivious to the interaction between cultural politics and concrete events. His thinking highlights the move towards counter- and subcultures while forgetting the concrete political debates that accompanied that transition.

But the comparison of the British and West German extra-parliamentary protests shows how their politics of security cannot be slotted easily into the functionality of modernist political terminology and of the models of politics these terms connote, especially as far as the nature of political change and categorization of political actors are concerned. The dynamic, rather than linear, pattern of politico-cultural transformation in which activists in both countries were engaged is lost in straightforward models of resistance, repression, and response. It also sits uneasily in straightforward interpretations of social and cultural change such as 'liberalization' and 'the growth of permissiveness'.<sup>30</sup>

Importantly, these transformations of activism also shaped the multiple experiences that activists were able to share and express as part of their protests. Activists' experiences highlighted the ways in which the international, social, and personal were imbricated in one another, but activists developed different degrees of awareness as to the boundedness of their experiences. Some also developed different assessments of the political relevance of their

campaigns that joined the existing parameters of interpretation. Whereas CNDers and early Easter Marchers stressed the rationality of their campaign as the key feature of a meaningful politics of security, their engagement in the campaign and the contestations they took part in gave rise to a view that highlighted the role of individual **(p.298)** convictions within the context of a given political and social context as the necessary precondition for creating security: security, therefore, had to start with the conversion of individuals and their emotions, as opposed to the reform of society at large and of governmental machinery.

Activists remained, however, almost entirely immune to recognizing the authenticity and political relevance of experiences that women voiced in terms that were similar to those of men. The late 1950s and early 1960s saw a revival of a specifically female discourse about security and peace as a specifically female and motherly responsibility, and male campaigners did not accept a genuine and explicit political role for female campaigners: mostly, women were backroom organizers, but only rarely public speakers. Although many women participated in the campaigns, male activists did not treat them as equal partners. But, for many women, their participation in the protest campaigns was an opening too: by involving them in protest organizations that did not represent their own feelings and interests, they developed different ways of thinking through politics and challenged the hegemony of male concepts of citizenship, first in the privacy of their campaign offices, and then publicly in their own campaigns for women's rights and through a series of cultural initiatives. They thus highlighted the fact that the very experiences male activists claimed for themselves as authentic expressions of their political demands depended on the 'emotions' that they had previously claimed to be female.<sup>31</sup> The conceptions of agency that activists developed were therefore themselves transformed over the course of their activism, as they sought to create a world for themselves that was not determined by the anonymous structures of government but that happened between people.

Protesters acted at the boundaries of the cold war and thereby produced conceptions of the political that came to lie outside the established forms of politics. They did this in the context of networks and frames of thinking that transcended the boundaries of the nation state. They thus purported to challenge the ethico-political force of the national state as the key organizing principle of the international system. Martin Klimke has powerfully argued for the connections between American and West German students that 'activists from different geographical, economic, political, and cultural frameworks imagined themselves as part of a global revolutionary movement', which allowed them to develop collective protest identities with shared political and cultural reference points.<sup>32</sup>

**(p.299)** But a closer and more detailed analysis of the networks and perceptions that carried such links between British and West German protesters highlights the fundamental paradoxes and ambiguities of these processes. Even as activists made claims of their transnational connections, they drew on resources, networks, and opportunities of the societies they lived in. More specifically, the transnational transfer of forms and methods of protest as well as cognitive frameworks always involved complicated processes of translation that the notion of ‘transfer’ can capture only incompletely. Knowledge was rarely transferred in packages by specific actors within the different transnational networks. Rather, the ways in which activists made sense of each other—and in which they assessed other activists around the world—influenced the transnational connections directly. As the transnational actors engaged with each other, they therefore always also compared themselves with each other and with third parties. This meant that their relationship to each other was rarely on equal terms and was very often competitive. This has important conceptual implications for our study of transnational social movement activism: instead of following the border-crossing networks of a few elite activists, historians should remain attuned to an awareness to the everyday relevance of such interactions within protest campaigns. Just as scholars should beware of taking the distance between movement organizations and mainstream political cultures at face value, they should also not, within a transnational perspective, reify the distance between border-crossing activists and the national, and often very local, contexts in which they operated. Instead, scholars should, in turn, historicize these patterns of interactions by embedding them within concrete and lived experiences. Transnational and comparative history should be creatively combined in order to highlight how images of transnational connections were already formed at the time, as activists in different locations compared and contrasted their experiences as they interacted with and observed each other.

For the protests in the late 1950s and early 1960s, CND held an almost absolute ‘epistemological sovereignty’ in the relationship between the two movements.<sup>33</sup> CNDers not only saw their campaign as the original anti-nuclear-weapons movement, but also regarded its activities as part of a non-violent, liberal, and ultimately beneficial British civilizing mission that would help hold together and fortify the decolonizing British Empire in a novel and mutually beneficial Commonwealth. This **(p.300)** interpretation wrote the crucial role that activists’ observation of Gandhi’s campaign in India had played in forming these policies out of history and thus reified CND’s position of ‘epistemological sovereignty’, although individual activists continued to refer to it. West Germans in the Easter Marches replicated this self-understanding of the British campaign by likewise interpreting CND as an example to follow and emulate: what they regarded as British traditions of peacefulness, radicalism, and individual freedom resonated especially strongly.

This meant that, for the Easter Marches, Britain provided the models for civic organization that West German protesters sought to translate into the West German context. British ideas of middle-class sociability and civility, and their seeming emphasis on rational debates rather than populist rallies, played a key role for the translation of British activism to the West German context. Within the contexts of their politics of security, British and West German activists therefore engaged in, adapted, and transformed what the sociologist Andreas Reckwitz has termed 'subject cultures', the ways in which individuals and societies make sense of their subjectivity in terms of both the one that is subjected to something (sub-iectum) and the one that subjects others.<sup>34</sup> This was essentially the subject culture based around middle-class/bourgeois civility that worked through the medium of morality, which could be generalized to gain the status of an acceptable public doctrine, and self-regulation through conscience and reasonable public engagement through (dominantly male) social groups within which participants regarded themselves as naturally equal.<sup>35</sup>

The shift of the politics of security away from nuclear weapons towards perceptions of US imperialism and the question of affluence from the mid-1960s also entailed different assessments of 'epistemological sovereignty'. Most protesters in both Britain and West Germany now assumed that US society, in the shape of the 'other America' of activists as well as of those groups opposing US imperialism worldwide, provided foundational knowledge on which protest politics could be built, although US activists themselves had been influenced by their British-inflected engagement with Gandhian politics of direct action and civil disobedience.<sup>36</sup> They now spelled out more clearly than they had done before that this also meant highlighting the importance of the Third World as a political project unconstrained by the binary features of the cold war that had the **(p.301)** potential to open up spaces from which political radicalism could be thought and acted out, and that brought with it a new form of ethico-political engagement that transcended those of the rational citizen subject.<sup>37</sup>

The subject culture that activists engaged in from the mid-1960s was one that fused elements of the artistic avant-garde of the 1920s with those of sub- and counter-cultural trends that emerged over the course of the 1960s. Their historical specificity lay in their appropriation of culture—and counter-culture—as an antidote to the social control, technical rationality, and routine that they regarded as the key features of governance during this time period.<sup>38</sup> It was not a little ironic that the technocratic GDR played a key role as a reference point for some protesters in both countries, as its foreign political propaganda emphasized elements of socialist subcultures that developments in the West seemed to have overlooked.

From this point of view, which developed over the course of the 1960s, with roots among pacifists in the 1950s, structures appeared as 'structural violence' and the rationalism of the external order as a power that forced the subject's self

to embrace it. The solution for some protesters to this problem was to invert the normative coding of the difference between 'rational' and 'irrational'/'emotional' from positive/negative to negative/positive, from the principle of a rational reality towards playfulness, from the form of protest marches that sought to represent the rationality of the claims in a relatively sombre atmosphere through forms of direct action that aimed to subvert normality through playful practices.<sup>39</sup> This transformation was never complete and always contested, but it fundamentally reoriented the protesters' mutual frame of reference towards a global scope. Throughout, British and West German activists differed, both between and among themselves, as to how to weight the different elements of this subject culture. There were, therefore, never two entirely separate national paths within this transnational conjuncture, although British political culture was generally characterized by a lower level of politicization than its West German counterpart.

The shift in transnational relations from a bourgeois to an avant-gardist/counter-cultural subject culture was accompanied by a transformation of the ways in which activists made sense of the world. In line with the **(p.302)** middle-class model of sociability whose proponents regarded their own activism as universally valid because it was based on reason, transnational perceptions in both countries until the early 1960s characterized the world as one fundamentally influenced by the struggle between life and death. Protesters therefore spoke of mass death, not in historically specific, but in universal terms. This had special consequences for the politics of the past in West Germany, as it helped activists there to talk about mass death without directly mentioning their own involvement in the millionfold mass death of the Second World War. This 'universalist scope of identification' with the world enabled activists to highlight the warlike character of the cold war.<sup>40</sup> Yet it also enabled them to emphasize a community of humanity that looked like 'the family of man'. Within that large family, a metaphor that evoked the intimacy and closeness of this community, potential differences of age, genders, social class, and ethnic belonging were subsumed within a general anthropological understanding.

With the shift towards more ideologically oriented understandings geared towards models of protest focused on direct action and the transformation of the activists' cultures of subjectivity, this anthropological understanding of world politics as a 'family of man' underwent an important transformation. The focus was now on political solidarity with those suffering from oppression. This solidarity was not only an ideal, a frame of understanding, or a social formation. Rather, 'solidarity' by definition implied the activity of showing the solidarity in order to bridge the gap between protests here and the object of solidarity there—the 'family of man', by contrast, had been an existing condition. This transformation was by no means a history of gains, as the British and West German activists' attempts to adopt the politics of solidarity turned the subjects

of liberation into passive victims of oppression that often served as fetishized icons of protest politics.<sup>41</sup>

The transnationality of the campaigns therefore always implied a sense, furthered by mutual observations often through the mass and movement media, that the protest movements shared a common historical conjuncture that protesters from Britain and West German activists interpreted differently in the late 1960s from how they had done in the late 1950s. This transformation of the mutual reference points of the campaigns was behind many of the contestations about extra-parliamentary politics and it framed the multiplicity of protests that was drawn together under the **(p.303)** heading of '1968'.<sup>42</sup> We cannot understand these debates if we do not bear in mind their genealogies in the earlier politics of security. When the West German Frankfurt School philosopher Jürgen Habermas criticized Rudi Dutschke and other activists as 'left-wing fascists', he was unable to detect this transformation in the transnational dimensions of the politics of security.<sup>43</sup>

Habermas had developed his arguments in his book on the structural transformation of the public sphere that first appeared in German in the early 1960s: interpreting developments in nineteenth-century Britain, Habermas regarded the rational discussion among (male) members of the middle class as the core of politics. Rational argumentation lay at the core of this model of democracy; consumer society, the mass media, and the emotions they provoked could only distort what Habermas assumed was a discourse among equals.<sup>44</sup> Dutschke, Krahl, Wolfgang Lefèvre, and others in the *SDS*, but also activists in the Easter March movement more generally, however, believed that democracy also had to be based on the fearlessness of conviction, and the voluntarist belief that individual actions could provoke social and political change, and that these actions could transcend the existing political order only if they developed the Situationist idea of transgression and playfulness in novel ways.<sup>45</sup> In short, in this Protestant inflection of Marxist ideas, the world could and would only change if individuals changed and were converted to a better life.<sup>46</sup> The counter-publics and counter-cultures that undergirded the extra-parliamentary campaigns in both Britain and West Germany, though to different degrees and with different agglomerations, did not easily align with Habermas's straightforward ideas. Situationism, the local protest cultures oriented towards 'anti-authoritarian' subversive practices, socialist youth cultures, the jazz and folk scenes, poetry slams in pubs, the art school movements, and the counter-cultural magazines with their playful cultural engagement of serious political themes as well as the aesthetic radicalism and stylistic dissidence in the art and literary world in **(p.304)** Britain did not make sense from the perspective of Habermas's normative orientation towards a perspective of the early nineteenth-century British public sphere. He saw 'fascism' and inflections of revolutionary

existentialism where he might instead have seen a constructive engagement with other 1920s avant-garde traditions.<sup>47</sup>

Ironically, both mainstream (male) protesters who focused on direct action and Habermas and his supporters in the movements and elsewhere ignored one crucial opening that their movements had produced. Probably the most important range of activism for which the movements of the 1960s provided a crucial space was feminism. But even that feminist activism was still inflected with echoes of the cold war politics of security from earlier periods—for example, when some feminists emphasized their war community of direct personal interactions to the anonymous structures of the cold war. Some feminists' emphasis on liberation and individual subjectivity therefore was another product of the dialectic of cold war protest politics: the ideas of personal liberation and gender identities directly replicated and dialectically reproduced from below the emphasis on freedom and personal independence in mainstream Western cold war propaganda.<sup>48</sup>

Through their existence, then, the campaigns in both countries expanded the space of what could be said and what could be done in politics in both countries, but they never did this in isolation from mainstream political cultures. Indeed, they enabled the integration of activists who had previously been excluded from legitimate political activities. However, by making this form of politics more legitimate, the marches enabled an ever larger pool of activists to emerge who challenged central parameters of the respective political systems. This was particularly important in the Federal Republic. There, the West German Easter Marches worked towards both strengthening and weakening political integration. While Easter March activists had previously been keen to avoid any allegations of working together with communists, they gradually adopted a position that regarded activities that consciously bridged the bipolar political divides of the cold war as key for the effectiveness of their protests. The Easter Marches were, therefore, constantly able to reinvent themselves as adequate responses to the relevant issues in international relations at the time—the interpretation of the Nazi past in the context of US hegemony provided an adequate master frame for the campaigns. The **(p.305)** different resonances of the British and West German movements meant that the stories activists have told with hindsight are structured differently: where many British activists write about awakenings and self-fulfilment in terms of an education of (cultural and political) sensibilities and sentiments and, at times, heroic agency, West German activists tend to stress the ruptures and discontinuities that the events of 1967 and 1968, in particular, implied.<sup>49</sup> British and West German activists thus endowed the concept 'experience' with different and specific meanings that reflected these different perceptions.



As the issue of nuclear weapons appeared to become less pressing, British and West German activists began to focus on questions of cold war ideology and forms of governance. On the one hand, their politics of security began to transcend the cold war binaries much more radically than before. On the other hand, this move had the tendency to take the nuclear arms race more readily for granted as one of many political problems. The bomb gradually became secondary.<sup>50</sup> Both British and West German activists, each in their specific ways, produced their own history by appropriating elements of hegemonic frameworks of interpretation and understanding, and they turned these back against governments and parties. They did this by applying the past to the present and thus produced their own *contemporary* history. They continued to move on.

### Notes:

(<sup>1</sup>) Jeff Nuttall, *Bomb Culture* (London, 1968), 18.

(<sup>2</sup>) Dan Diner (ed.), *Zivilisationsbruch: Denken nach Auschwitz* (Frankfurt/Main, 1988).

(<sup>3</sup>) Cf. Victor Turner, 'Betwixt and Between: The Liminal Period in Rites of Passage', in Melford E. Spiro (ed.), *Symposium on New Approaches to the Study of Religion* (Seattle, 1964); Turner, *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Piscataway, NJ, 2008), 94-130.

(<sup>4</sup>) The term 'alternative futures' is from Arif Dirlik, 'There is More in a Rim than Meets the Eye: Thoughts on the "Pacific Idea"', in Dirlik (ed.), *What is in a Rim? Critical Perspectives on the Pacific Region Idea* (Lanham, MD, 1998), 351-69, here 365.

(<sup>5</sup>) Eva Horn, *Der geheime Krieg: Verrat, Spionage und moderne Fiktion* (Frankfurt/Main, 2007). For the concept 'geopolitical privacy', see Michael Mann, *States, War and Capitalism* (Oxford, 1988), 32.

(<sup>6</sup>) Cf., conceptually, Ernesto Laclau, 'The Impossibility of Society', in Laclau, *New Reflections*, 92.

(<sup>7</sup>) James N. Rosenau, 'Pre-Theories and Theories of Foreign Policy', in Rosenau (ed.), *The Scientific Study of Foreign Policy* (New York, 1971), 127; Wolfram F. Hanrieder, *West German Foreign Policy, 1949-1963: International Pressure and Domestic Response* (Stanford, CA, 1967), 230.

(<sup>8</sup>) Geyer, 'Cold War Angst', 378; cf. also Michael Geyer and Konrad H. Jarausch, *A Shattered Past: Reconstructing German Histories* (Princeton, 2002), 351.

(<sup>9</sup>) Anders Stephanson, 'Offensive Realism', *boundary 2*, 27 (2000), 181-95, here 186-7.

<sup>(10)</sup> James Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives: Mass-Observation and the Making of the Modern Self* (Oxford, 2010), 19.

<sup>(11)</sup> Cf. conceptually Sahlins, *Islands of History*, xiv; Sahlins, *How 'Natives' Think: About Captain Cook, for Example* (Chicago, 1995), 9.

<sup>(12)</sup> William H. Sewell, *The Logics of History: Social Theory and Social Transformation* (Chicago, 2005), 173.

<sup>(13)</sup> Cf. Suri, *Power and Protest*; Klimke, *The Other Alliance*.

<sup>(14)</sup> Claus Pias, 'Abschreckung denken: Hermann Kahns Szenarien', in Claus Pias (ed.), *Abwehr. Modelle—Strategien—Medien* (Bielefeld, 2009), 169–88.

<sup>(15)</sup> Geoff Eley, 'Finding the People's War: Film, British Collective Memory, and World War II', *American Historical Review*, 106 (2001), 818–38; Moeller, *War Stories*.

<sup>(16)</sup> Frank Biess and Robert W. Moeller (eds), *Histories of the Aftermath: The Legacies of the Second World War in Europe* (New York, 2010).

<sup>(17)</sup> Svenja Goltermann, *Die Gesellschaft der Überlebenden: Deutsche Kriegsheimkehrer und ihre Gewalterfahrungen im Zweiten Weltkrieg* (Munich, 2009), 17, 29.

<sup>(18)</sup> Hinton, *Nine Wartime Lives*, 13.

<sup>(19)</sup> The quotations are from Frank Biess, *Returning POWs and the Legacies of Defeat in Postwar Germany* (Princeton, 2005), 7.

<sup>(20)</sup> Geyer, 'Cold War Angst', 385–6.

<sup>(21)</sup> Marc Trachtenberg, *A Constructed Peace: The Making of the European Settlement, 1945–1963* (Princeton, 1999).

<sup>(22)</sup> Lawrence S. Wittner, 'The Nuclear Threat Ignored: How and Why the Campaign against the Bomb Disintegrated in the late 1960s', in Carole Fink, Philipp Gassert, and Detlef Junker (eds), *1968: The World Transformed* (Cambridge, 1998), 439–58.

<sup>(23)</sup> Geoff Eley, 'A Disorder of Peoples: The Uncertain Ground for Reconstruction in 1945', in Jessica Reinisch and Elizabeth White (eds), *The Disentanglement of Populations: Migration, Expulsion and Displacement and Post-War Europe, 1944–9* (Basingstoke, 2011), 291–314, here 304.

<sup>(24)</sup> On mainstream popular culture, see Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock and Rebels: Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 2000).

(<sup>25</sup>) Perry Anderson, 'Origins of the Present Crisis', *New Left Review*, 23 (1964), 26-53.

(<sup>26</sup>) Of these, Nick Thomas's work is the most precise: Thomas, 'Challenging Myths of the 1960s'; Arthur Marwick, *The Sixties: Cultural Revolution in Britain, France, Italy, and the United States, c.1958-c.1974* (Oxford, 1998).

(<sup>27</sup>) Cf., for example, Jon Lawrence, 'Pioneers of Modernity' [review essay], *History Workshop Journal*, 73 (2012), 330-8; Black, *Redefining British Politics*; Stephen Brooke, *Sexual Politics: Sexuality, Family Planning and the British Left from the 1880s to the Present Day* (Oxford, 2011).

(<sup>28</sup>) Jeffrey Herf, 'Multiple Restorations: German Political Traditions and the Interpretation of Nazism, 1945-1946', *Central European History*, 26 (1993), 21-55.

(<sup>29</sup>) Chun, *The British New Left*.

(<sup>30</sup>) Cf. Davis, 'What's Left?', versus Herbert (ed.), *Wandlungsprozesse in Westdeutschland*, and Paul Addison, *No Turning Back: The Peaceful Revolutions of Post-War Britain* (Oxford, 2010).

(<sup>31</sup>) Cf. for similar developments in different contexts: Steedman, *Landscape for a Good Woman*.

(<sup>32</sup>) Klimke, *The Other Alliance*, 2.

(<sup>33</sup>) Thomas W. Laqueur, 'Bodies, Details, and the Humanitarian Narrative', in Lynn Hunt (ed.), *The New Cultural History* (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1989) 176-204, here 188.

(<sup>34</sup>) Andreas Reckwitz, *Das hybride Subjekt: Eine Theorie der Subjektkulturen von der bürgerlichen Moderne zur Postmoderne* (Weilerswist, 2006), 10-11.

(<sup>35</sup>) Reckwitz, *Subjekt*, 242-74.

(<sup>36</sup>) Sean Chabot, *Transnational Roots of the Civil Rights Movement: African American Explorations of the Gandhian Repertoire* (Lanham, MD, 2012).

(<sup>37</sup>) For general overviews, cf. Klimke, *The Other Alliance*, and Slobodian, *Foreign Front*.

(<sup>38</sup>) Reckwitz, *Subjekt*, 456.

(<sup>39</sup>) Reckwitz, *Subjekt*, 452-99.

(<sup>40</sup>) Oppenheimer, 'West German Pacifism', 372.

(<sup>41</sup>) Slobodian, *Foreign Front*.

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(<sup>42</sup>) Cf. Christopher Booker, *The Neophiliacs: Revolution in English Life in the Fifties and Sixties* (London, 1992), for Britain; and Wolfgang Kraushaar, *1968 als Mythos, Chiffre und Zäsur* (Hamburg, 2000) for Germany.

(<sup>43</sup>) Jürgen Habermas, 'Rede über die politische Rolle der Studentenschaft in der Bundesrepublik', in Kraushaar (ed.), *Frankfurter Schule*, ii. no. 126, 246–9, 250–1; cf. also Habermas, 'Scheinrevolution und Handlungszwang', *Der Spiegel*, 10 June 1968, 57–8.

(<sup>44</sup>) On the historicization of Habermas's thoughts, see Hodenberg, *Konsens und Krise*.

(<sup>45</sup>) Rudi Dutschke, '. . . Professor Habermas, Ihr begriffloser Objektivismus erschlägt das zu emanzipierende Subjekt . . .' (9 June 1967), reprinted in Kraushaar (ed.), *Frankfurter Schule*, ii, no. 129, 251–3, here 251 and 253.

(<sup>46</sup>) On the Protestant context, see Dagmar Herzog, *Sex after Fascism: Memory and Morality in Twentieth-Century Germany* (Princeton, 2005), 154–62.

(<sup>47</sup>) Cf. Geoff Eley, 'Politics, Culture, and the Public Sphere', *positions*, 10 (2002), 219–36.

(<sup>48</sup>) Cf. the key conceptual work by Leerom Medovoi, *Rebels: Youth and the Cold War Origins of Identity* (Durham, NC, 2005), especially 30.

(<sup>49</sup>) See Ali, *Street Fighting Years*, and Rowbotham, *Promise of a Dream*, in comparison with Ute Kätzel, *Die 68erinnen: Porträt einer rebellischen Frauengeneration* (Munich, 2008); Lethen, *Handorakel*, and Schneider, *Rebellion und Wahn*. On the background, see Joseph Maslen, 'Autobiographies of a Generation? Carolyn Steedman, Luisa Passerini and the Memory of 1968', *Memory Studies*, 6 (2013), 23–36.

(<sup>50</sup>) Wittner, 'Nuclear Threat'.

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