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Markus Tauschek (Hrsg.): *Macht, Politische Kultur, Widerstand. Studentischer Protest an der Universität Kiel*, Münster/New York: Waxmann 2016, 198 pp., hardcover 24.90 €, ISBN 978-3-8309-3388-5.

Macht, politische Kultur, Widerstand: Studentischer Protest an der Universität Kiel (*Power, Political Culture, Resistance: Student Protests at the University of Kiel*) is notable among other essay anthologies not only by its elaborate layout, but also by its background: the edited volume is not a collection of academic essays, but the result of a research class held by editor Markus Tauschek on the occasion of the 350th anniversary of the *Christian-Albrecht-Universität* of Kiel in 2015. Using an approach rooted in cultural studies, he worked with 18 graduate students of cultural anthropology to account for the history of student protests in Kiel. With one of the oldest and most important universities in northern Germany, Kiel is an apt location to address change in student culture: while far from being a centre of student protests, the university still functioned as a regional cultural hub.

Tauschek investigates the period ranging from the revival of academic life after the end of the Second World War up to the year 2014, when the University Directorate teamed up with the students to rally for better funding from the state government. Although this relatively long time span poses the inherent risk of glossing over details, it is nevertheless convincing: not focusing on the student protests of 1968 (which is what one would automatically expect from a volume like this) helps broaden the outlook for long-term (and maybe only local) changes and continuities.

An introduction by the editor outlines the theoretical approach the essays have in common: looking beyond the surface of the history of protest events, the authors focus on different forms of action and communication, on materialities and interpretative frames of protests (p. 14). How did protest events affect the participants? Which media was used for communicating protest and did the emergence of new forms of media (easier printing of leaflets, open letters, banners or the internet) open new fields of protest? The relevance these questions have is obvious for everyone who has ever set foot in a student demonstration. The overlap of political and private spaces, the multitude of appropriations of symbols and symbolic appropriations (of university spaces, for instance) and the different motivations of the partaking students—which usually consist of a vague combination of political engagement, tests of courage, peer pressure, experimenting with new roles and a fascination for the event character of ‘creative’ forms of protests—make the potential of a ‘close reading’ of protest events obvious, beyond the reproduction of position papers. Editor Markus Tauschek, however, qualifies the ambitious approach from the beginning: the essays should be understood as sketches and work reports, not as highbrow academic contributions.

A look at the table of contents shows that most of the essays, in fact, do adopt the characteristics of a documentary. By sketching selected protest events in chronological order, the authors seek to comprehend “how students conquered action spaces of political culture” (p. 11) at the University of Kiel. The remarkably well-done layout, including numerous pictures and reproductions of sources, demonstrates that the target audience of the volume are not only academics but also interested laymen.

Due to the great number of essays, I will not review in detail every single one. The events covered range from a boycott of the university canteen in 1954, the conflicts between leftist students and conservative professors in the 1960s and 1970s to the Kiel version of the Germany-wide ‘education strikes’ in 2009. The spectrum of actors’ perspectives discussed is impressively wide. Not only are the protesting students’ points of view taken into account, but also the reactions of the University Directorate and that of individual professors or students who did not take part in protests or who may have in fact vehemently opposed them. Jan Husemann, in his essay about a protest rally that escalated into physical violence, even conducted an interview with a former police officer who was on duty that day.

Obviously, the essays are of varying quality and length. While some are hardly more than protest event summaries from newspaper articles or interviews, others do remarkable work on source material. Hannah Kemper’s contribution is just one example. In her piece, she vividly depicts radicalisation processes at the height of the student movement of 1968 by comparing two single protest actions. While the forgery of entrance tickets for a university event in May 1968 showed clear traits of anti-ritual parody, which had become typical for the student movement of that time, a conflict about the right to use a seminar room at the end of 1969 quickly escalated into the use of physical force. The chronological order the essays appear in reveals the long-term, yet non-linear, change of the relationship between political student culture and the status of academic knowledge. While academic knowledge production seemed to be perceived as a highly political issue by protesting students in the 1960s and well into the 1980s, the impression is created that protests from the 1990s onward, which mainly focused on the underfunding of the universities, implicitly reproduced a bourgeois notion of *Bildung* that needed to be defended from politics.

The essays thus manage to make transparent and open to scrutiny the development of different forms and issues of protest, of self-positionings and framings of the actors. The background of the volume provides cause for criticism, however, as it essentially gives the impression that it is a collection of term papers, yet the essays themselves lack some of the key characteristics of such academic texts. Not all essays show a clear leading question; in some cases, the hypothesis or question seems to have later been added to a description of events. Occasionally, the contributions also lack historical contextualisation, which, sometimes, leads to misunderstandings about how local-specific certain events or developments were. That politically left-leaning university groups in the 1970s used Marxist vocabulary when campaigning for student parliament, as one

of the essays highlights, is hardly surprising. In general, the reader wonders throughout whether protests in Kiel varied significantly from those in the rest of Germany, or if they were mainly local adaptations of bigger campaigns. A summarising synthesis would have benefited the book in this regard, as the overview article the volume opens with is too abstract and compact to fulfil this task.

Some of the approaches announced in the introduction are also not fully realised in many essays. The role of ephemeral processes of community formation, group dynamics or the question of interdependencies between forms, media and issues of protests are rarely directly addressed, which sometimes leads to argument constructions that are too cautious. Moreover, especially the last few contributions, which cover events after 2006, show a certain fascination with the protests (which the authors themselves may have been part of). The impression sometimes arises that the familiarity of the world described in these essays results in an adoption of the vocabulary of the sources that is too uncritical. The last point of criticism is the inclination in some essays to use stilted cultural scientific jargon where it does not seem necessary (letters that need to be “located on a textual level” appear in several contributions).

Nevertheless, the aim of these remarks is not to discourage potential readers (especially as they do not apply to all essays), as the mentioned shortcomings are easily compensated by a certain student charm the volume exudes. Overall, it serves its purpose quite well in documenting the developments and the variety of student protests on the occasion of the anniversary celebrations of the *Christian-Albrechts-Universität*.

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