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Peace Movements in Western Europe, Japan and the USA since 1945: Introduction¹

The historiography of peace movements after the end of the Second World War is still developing, both empirically and conceptually. Many countries in Western Europe are still a *terra incognita* concerning the history of their peace movements during the Cold War, not only with regard to the work that is available in English. Most of the comparative literature on recent peace movements in different countries was inspired by the massive wave of protest against the deployment of Euromissiles in the early 1980s—this was the occasion for a variety of monographs and edited volumes written by sociologists and political scientists.² It is one of the characteristic features of this subject that there are still three very distinct and different approaches, although this handicap could turn into an advantage in the very near future. First, contemporary historians are interested in the “new” social movements as both an indication and an agent of rapid social change. The decisive historical caesura and point of reference for those historians who aim at the historicisation of social movements are the protests of 1968 in Western Europe and the USA. Of course, taken on their own, it is sometimes difficult to identify “peace” as a separate issue among the large scale social and political upheaval of these years.³ Second, those scholars who consider themselves to be conducting “historical peace research” are genuinely interested in the history of peace movements. However, this academic current has an institutional framework only in the USA and in Germany with, respectively, the Peace History Society and the *Arbeitskreis Historische Friedensforschung*. These societies attempt both to reflect and to extend the conceptual foundation of their work, with a normative orientation towards non-violence.⁴ Third, starting with Neil Smelser’s ‘Theory

- 1 During the preparation of this volume I received help and encouragement from colleagues in several countries. My thanks go to Martin Baumeister (Munich), Richard Bessel (York), Lutz Klinkhammer (Rome), Jürgen Mittag (Bochum), Holger Nehring (Oxford), Nicolas Offenstadt (Paris), Melvin Small (Detroit), and Jeffrey Verhey (Berlin). Special thanks go to the Arbeitskreis Historische Friedensforschung, especially to Detlef Bald (Munich), who provided a grant for the translation of an article in this volume.
- 2 See for example Katsuya Kodama/Unto Vesa (eds.): *Towards a Comparative Analysis of Peace Movements*, Aldershot 1990; Wilfried v. Bredow/Rudolf H. Brocke: *Krise und Protest. Ursprünge und Elemente der Friedensbewegung in Westeuropa*, Opladen 1987.
- 3 See two early and still important accounts in English and German: Carole Fink/Philipp Gassert/Detlef Junker (eds.): *1968. The World Transformed*, Cambridge 1998; Ingrid Gilcher-Holthey (ed.): *1968. Vom Ereignis zum Gegenstand der Geschichtswissenschaft*, Göttingen 1998; see the articles by Natalie Atkin, Massimo De Giuseppe/Giorgio Vecchio, Wilfried Mausbach and Sabine Rousseau in this volume.
- 4 See Peter van den Dungen/Lawrence S. Wittner: *Peace History: An Introduction*, in: *Journal of Peace Research* 40 (2003), pp. 363–375; Charles F. Howlett: *Studying America’s Struggle Against War: An Historical Perspective*, in: *History Teacher* 36 (2003), pp. 297–330; Benjamin Ziemann (ed.): *Perspektiven der Historischen Friedensforschung*, Essen 2002; compare Karl Holl: *Peace Movements*,

of Collective Behavior' in 1962, there is an impressive body of sociological literature on social movements as a characteristic feature of post-war societies which needs to be taken into account by historians working in this field.⁵

Although each of these lines of enquiry has produced a substantial body of work, they could all benefit from more intensive and reflexive cooperation. It is one of the aims of this volume to argue for such a cooperation and to highlight some of its achievements. Further, this volume seeks to provide the reader with an up-to-date account of recent historical scholarship on peace movements since 1945 in four Western European countries, in Japan and in the USA, to provide some basic information on major events and developments and to guide the reader to the relevant literature and other resources. All contributions stress peculiarities and ask very specific questions for future research within a national framework. All of them also point out general theoretical issues and transnational connections between peace movements in different countries at the level of organisations and common political goals, and in regard to shared cultural symbols and patterns of protest. As many contributions in this volume show, the protests against the US-troops in Vietnam were an important starting point for the global dissemination of patterns and languages of peace mobilisation. They emerged as mass movements in 1965 and lasted until the regime in South Vietnam was defeated by the troops from communist North-Vietnam in the spring of 1975. The international demonstrations against the war in Vietnam were not only a laboratory for the invention of practices and cultural symbols of peace protest, they were also a shared and distinctive experience for peace protesters in many countries and therefore a decisive watershed in the emergence of a transnational peace movement.⁶

These remarks are not intended to minimise the importance of the global movement for nuclear disarmament that emerged in the aftermath of the Second World War, initially as a reaction to the American bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, which reached its heyday during the early 1980s, when several million people in North America, Asia, Australia and Western Europe took part in demonstrations for a nuclear arms freeze and against the deployment of US-missiles, and a substantial peace mobilisation even occurred in many countries of the Soviet bloc. But it seems justified to see the Vietnam movement as a turning point in a peace movement that transcended national borders, since the transnational contacts between the national nuclear disarmament movements were largely restricted to contacts between organisations, at least during the first decades. It seems as if a common pattern of cultural symbols and an awareness of being part of a global movement only developed during the 1980s, and

History of, in: *International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences*, Amsterdam 2001, vol. 16, pp. 11147–11151.

5 Neil J. Smelser: *Theory of Collective Behavior*, New York 1962; as an exhaustive and very helpful compilation see David A. Snow/Sarah A. Soule/Hanspeter Kriesi (eds.): *The Blackwell Companion to Social Movements*, Oxford 2004.

6 The best short analysis of the Vietnam peace movement in the US is Melvin Small: *Antiwarriors. The Vietnam War and the Battle for America's Hearts and Minds*, Wilmington 2002; see the review article by Charles Chatfield: *At the Hand of Historians. The Antiwar Movement of the Vietnam Era*, in: *Peace & Change* 29 (2004), pp. 483–526.

this may be interpreted in part as a heritage of the revolt of 1968. A crucial factor for the importance of 1968 for the development of transnational social movements may have been the intensive media coverage of these protests in general and those against the Vietnam war in particular. Both the war and the protests against it provided ample opportunities for haunting media reports, whereas the risks and dangers of a nuclear war always remained somehow abstract.⁷

This assessment of the protracted emergence of a transnational peace movement after 1945 partly results from my reading of the magisterial description of the world nuclear disarmament movement by Lawrence S. Wittner.⁸ Wittner's trilogy, three massive volumes during the last decade, is not only an indispensable point of reference for any future study of peace movements since 1945, it is also an impressive example of world history, bringing together and masterfully condensing many issues and questions of the three relevant approaches mentioned above. Yet, although Wittner has written a brilliant description of this particular social movement, his trilogy also has some conceptual and theoretical shortcomings.⁹

The first major conceptual problem of Wittner's account is the rather explicit master narrative which provides the framework for his description of the course of events and gives meaning to a pattern of long-term developments behind the frequent ups and downs of peace mobilization. The key to his master narrative is the distinction between "doves" and "hawks". These two terms are nowhere explained and not even mentioned in the index, although they provide most of the analytical agenda of the books. The term "doves" basically refers to the constituency of the antinuclear movements, whereas "hawks" is the label for the military

7 From a growing body of literature, compare Hans Günter Hockerts: '1968' als weltweite Bewegung, in: Venanz Schubert (ed.): 1968: 30 Jahre danach, St. Ottilien 1999, pp. 13–34; Michael A. Schmidtke: „1968“ und die Massenmedien – Momente europäischer Öffentlichkeit, in: Jörg Requate/Martin Schulze-Wessel (eds.): Europäische Öffentlichkeit. Transnationale Kommunikation seit dem 18. Jahrhundert, Frankfurt/M. 2002, pp. 273–294; Dieter Rucht: Transnationale Öffentlichkeiten und Identitäten in neuen sozialen Bewegungen, in: Hartmut Kaelble et al. (eds.): Transnationale Öffentlichkeiten und Identitäten im 20. Jahrhundert, Frankfurt/M./New York 2002, pp. 327–351. About media coverage of the protests in 1968, particularly in German TV broadcasts, see the ongoing work by Meike Vogel (Bielefeld). Compare also the work by Melvin Small, discussed further below.

8 Lawrence S. Wittner: *One World or None. A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement Through 1953*, Stanford 1993; idem: *Resisting the Bomb. A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1954–1970*, Stanford 1997; idem: *Toward Nuclear Abolition. A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1971 to the Present*, Stanford: Stanford University Press 2003, 657 pp., £ 25.50, (paperb.). For a short synopsis of his argument see idem: *The Transnational Movement against Nuclear Weapons, 1945–1986: A Preliminary Survey*, in: Charles Chatfield/Peter van den Dungen (eds.): *Peace Movements and Political Cultures*, Knoxville 1988, pp. 265–294; see the article by Holger Nehring: *Die Anti-Atomwaffen-Protteste in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland und in Großbritannien. Zur Entwicklung der Ostermarschbewegung*, in: *Vorgänge* 42 (2003), pp. 22–31, who stresses divergent national traditions, although British and German antinuclear activists claimed to be part of an international movement.

9 The reviews in the H-Peace roundtable in May 2004 do focus on empirical shortcomings of the three books: <<http://www.h-net.org/~peace>> [13.9.2004], but see the more general criticism in the review by Holger Nehring: <<http://hszokult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/rezensionen/2004-3-007>> [13.9.2004].

brass and important politicians who supported a policy of “peace through strength” and therefore rejected and opposed most of the efforts for nuclear disarmament. Thus, the massive upsurge of peace mobilisation in the early 1980s is characterised as the “revolt of the doves”, and interpreted as a rather natural reaction against an earlier “rise of the hawks” mainly in the US-administration. This terminology indicates the one differentiation that makes the story more complicated: the existence of a minority of “doves” on the other side of the rift, particularly some Democratic congressmen and the Social Democrats in several European countries.¹⁰

Under the scrutiny of a “second order observer”, or, to use another name for the same operation, a deconstruction,¹¹ two major flaws become visible. The first is the empirical question: can the majority of the military brass really be described as “hawks” without any restrictions; the world is rarely so black and white. Analysing the different sketches for a peaceful world, we have to search rather for the multiple shades of grey among both the military and the peace protesters. The perception of the benefits and dangers of nuclear weapons in the governments and the military of some major western countries was far more complex and ambivalent than Wittner is ready to accept. The other, more serious problem is the underlying identification of the “doves” with the “good” cause, which proves that the main distinction is not an analytical, but rather a moral one. This moral coding of his narrative enables Wittner to tell the surely “heartening” story of citizens throughout the world who fought bravely and courageously against the dangers of a nuclear armageddon. This is only one further example of a “heroic” master narrative which aims to foster identity politics. This is a common thread in many works on the history of pacifism, but it is an insufficient framework to deal with the complexity of past peace movements.¹² The *dangers* of the nuclear arms race observed by the “doves” were inherent and inevitable *risks* of political decision-making from the viewpoint of the “hawks”: the same, a political decision, is different, and the different is the same. For this reason Wittner’s key distinction lacks the analytical power to analyse one of the central paradoxes of peace mobilisation.¹³

Another problem that is particularly present in the third volume is Wittner’s conceptualisation of public support for the movement. He makes ample use of opinion polls to demon-

10 See Wittner: *Toward Nuclear Abolition*, chapters 6–11.

11 Niklas Luhmann: *Deconstruction as Second-Order Observing*, in: *New Literary History* 24 (1993), pp. 763–782.

12 See the critique in: Jeffrey Verhey: *Die Geschichtsschreibung des Pazifismus und die Friedensbewegung*, in: Ziemann: *Perspektiven*, pp. 272–285. Quote: Wittner: *Toward Nuclear Abolition*, p. 487. Jeremi Suri tried to counter Wittner with a denunciation of the “pathological elements” of antinuclear activism. For obvious reasons, this moralistic allegation failed to break up the moral coding of Wittner’s argument and was easily dismissed by him. See the debate in <<http://www.h-net.org/~peace>> [13.9.2004].

13 See the contribution by Thorsten Bonacker and Lars Schmitt in this volume. “Danger” is the term used throughout by Wittner, see for example idem: *Toward Nuclear Abolition*, p. 483. In general, compare Niklas Luhmann: *Risk. A Sociological Theory*, Berlin. New York 1993; for an English introduction into sociological systems theory see William Rasch: *Niklas Luhmann’s Modernity. The Paradoxes of Differentiation*, Stanford 2000.

strate the widespread support for the movement, but he tends to mistake the results of polling for public opinion. This is a problematic tendency in itself, at least in the light of recent research that shows that opinion polling not only reflects, it also constructs public opinion.¹⁴ But the more serious problem is that Wittner cites the results of opinion polls in a superficial manner, to substantiate the perception of a public climate in favour of arms control and reduction. Only very rarely is the exact wording of the questions in the polls given, and Wittner frequently assumes a popular mood in favour of nuclear disarmament is an indication of a public opinion supportive of the movement and its goals.¹⁵ But as Melvin Small has put it in a comparable context: "(...) to say that the polls reflected increasing dissatisfaction with administration policy and to attribute that dissatisfaction to the antiwar movement are two different things."¹⁶ A sophisticated use of polls as sources for public opinion on disarmament issues would point out the contradictions in the data, and would try to explain the often apparent discrepancy between overwhelming support for arms reduction and "peaceful" solutions in general and the rather limited support for particular peace movement proposals.¹⁷ A key issue seems to be the question of unilateral disarmament. In 1983, 77 percent of a sample of Greeks polled on the Euromissiles opposed the deployment of cruise and Pershing II missiles "even if the Soviet Union failed to withdraw its SS-20s".¹⁸ This is an impressive figure, but one can doubt whether pollsters would have found a similar figure in any other European country at this time. A sample of people in West Germany polled by the *Institut für Demoskopie* in July 1981 opposed the idea of unilateral disarmament with a majority of 47 percent. Only 33 percent of the sample approved unilateral disarmament in general, and 20 percent were undetermined. This state of public opinion in the Federal Republic was only reversed during the second half of the 1980s, after Mikhail Gorbachev had come into power and had demonstrated his readiness to initiate unilateral arms reductions.¹⁹

A more general problem of Wittner's narrative stems from his "realistic" approach to the relationship between the system of international relations and the emergence of peace movements. According to this argument, the disarmament movement and the "nuclear arms race" developed "simultaneous[ly]" after the late 1970s, because the former was a "direct response" to the latter and the "heightening nuclear danger". In this rather mechanistic and somewhat teleological reasoning, the peace movement had to intensify in the early 1980s, because it "was not yet sufficient to halt the unravelling" of the détente of the 1970s. And the historic

14 Thomas Osborne/Nikolas Rose: Do the Social Sciences create Phenomena? The Example of Public Opinion Research, in: *British Journal of Sociology* 50 (1999), pp. 367–396.

15 See Wittner: *Toward Nuclear Abolition*, esp. pp. 149, 177, 197, 338.

16 Melvin Small: The Impact of the Antiwar Movement on Lyndon B. Johnson 1965–1968, in: *Peace & Change* 10 (1984), pp. 1–22, p. 2.

17 For a brilliant attempt in this direction see Michael Geyer: *Cold War Angst. The Case of West German Opposition to Rearmament and Nuclear Weapons*, in: Hanna Schissler (ed.): *The Miracle Years. A Cultural History of West Germany, 1949–1968*, Princeton 2001, pp. 376–408.

18 Wittner: *Toward Nuclear Abolition*, p. 163. The support for unilateral nuclear disarmament in Great Britain never went higher than 31%: idem: *Transnational Movement*, p. 278.

19 Allensbacher *Jahrbuch der Demoskopie*, vol. 9 (1984–1992), Munich 1993, p. 1063.

mission of the once again strengthened movement, which was successfully accomplished, was to prevent a “nuclear war”.²⁰ There is, of course, nothing to back up this kind of counterfactual reasoning. Wittner can not produce a single piece of evidence to substantiate his assumption that the world was on the brink of nuclear annihilation, because a leading politician or general was going to decide to use the bomb. Even more problematic is the fact that Wittner ignores a growing body of literature which focuses on protest as something created by protesters rather than as a necessary reaction to a latent political crisis.²¹

The basic argument of this approach can be summarised as: protest movements emerge when a conflict is generated by protest communication, and because of this communication the movements are able to connect with specific audiences, to build on certain individual motives and commitments and to institutionalise themselves. It is not a political crisis like the arms race that produces protest communication, but rather the *perception* of this crisis that provides a starting point for protests. Built around a constructivist theoretical design, this approach is particularly interested in the framing of protest communication that addresses causes and responsibilities which pose a threat to world peace. These frames also provide the protest communication with collective patterns of interpretation, which make it possible to find resonance for the goals of protest in specific audiences.²² A good recent example is the issue of anti-Americanism in West German public opinion during the 1980s. The widespread public rejection of the deployment of middle-range missiles on German soil owed a lot to a communicative frame that focused on the US as an enemy rather than as an ally. These perceptions, which were partly based on a genuine feeling of German patriotism, but also reflected the projection of more general cultural and political problems on the superpower USA, had their symbolic centre piece in the “troika” of Reagan-Haig-Weinberger and were grounded in a highly gendered discourse on the “male” power craziness of US foreign policy makers.²³ Another consequence of this theoretical agenda is to stress the volatile and highly fragmented collective identity of protest movements. Protest movements have to be constantly reproduced through the use of symbols, rituals and other forms of performative communication.²⁴ Although most of the rank and file of the nuclear disarmament movements came from the “university educated middle-class”, their shared social background had to find

20 Wittner: *Toward Nuclear Abolition*, quotes pp. 90, 485.

21 For the following, see the article by Thorsten Bonacker and Lars Schmitt in this volume.

22 See Jürgen Gerhards/Dieter Rucht: *Mesomobilization. Organizing and Framing in Two Protest Campaigns in West Germany*, in: *American Journal of Sociology* 98 (1992), pp. 555–596.

23 See the articles by Belinda Davis and Wilfried Mausbach in this volume; Max Paul Friedman: *Cold War Critiques from Abroad: Beyond a Taxonomy of Anti-Americanism*, in: *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute Washington* 34 (2004), pp. 113–126. Wittner: *Toward Nuclear Abolition*, pp. 149, 238, fails to identify this mood as a source for public mistrust in US defense policy and only briefly mentions anti-Americanism as a major obstacle for transatlantic peace movement cooperation.

24 See Belinda Davis: *Provokation als Emanzipation. 1968 und die Emotionen*, in: *Vorgänge* 164 (2003), pp. 41–49. Many detailed and impressive descriptions of performative acts can be found in the important study by Michael S. Foley: *Confronting the War Machine. Draft Resistance during the Vietnam War*, Chapel Hill/London 2003; see also the stimulating reflections in Joel P. Rhodes: *The Voice of Violence. Performative Violence as Protest in the Vietnam Era*, Westport, Conn. 2001.

expression on a symbolic level.²⁵ The gendered discourses of peace protest fostered and legitimated the protest movement's public appeal, but sometimes they also tended to obstruct the construction of a collective peace movement identity.²⁶

Peace movements as a form of protest communication should be able to sustain themselves as long as they have a background, a social environment which can be used as a reason to protest. When we follow this approach, two crucial questions emerge. The first one deals with a problem that was also a subject for reflections on the "resources" of "peace organisations" within the framework of the resource mobilisation theory. These resources can be seen as the "funds", the "organisational structures" and the "constituencies" of peace movements.²⁷ From the perspective of communications theory, we should not reduce protest movements to their organisations, despite the fact that organisations provide social movements with stable addresses that allow one to communicate with them even if there is no actual protest happening. Generally speaking, protest communication only marginally relies on the formation of clearly defined membership roles, which is an important feature of organisations. Rather, it employs personal commitments and motives. A key to this form of mobilisation is communication in a moral language, one that tends to disparage those who are identified as culprits and that cherishes positive values like civil disobedience or peace and individuals who can be connected to these values.²⁸ One vivid example is the folk singer Joan Baez, who had a number of high-profile appearances as a leading figure of the Vietnam antiwar movement after 1964.²⁹ Recently interviewed about the defining moment that inspired her to develop her political conscience, her belief in non-violent peace action, she remembered a visit to Baghdad at the age of ten with her father, during which she read 'The Diary of Anne Frank'.³⁰

Another crucial issue for protests, as for any other form of communication, is the problem of understanding. Every communicative operation only comes to an end if "alter", the recipient of an utterance by "ego", is able to understand the utterance, i.e., to differentiate between the enunciation and the information of the message and to reconcile this information with his own expectations. Seen from this perspective, communication is not the transfer of a

25 See Wittner: *Toward Nuclear Abolition*, pp. 132 (quote), 145.

26 See the article by Belinda Davis in this volume. Gender relations are neglected by Wittner: *Toward Nuclear Abolition*, pp. 69, 83, 154, and conceptualized in a very traditional manner in idem: *Gender Roles and Nuclear Disarmament Activism, 1954–1965*, in: *Gender & History* 12 (2000), pp. 197–222.

27 See Charles Chatfield: *Adapt or Die: The Social Dynamics of Peace Movements*, in: Guido Grünewald/Peter van den Dungen (eds.): *Twentieth Century Peace Movements. Successes and Failures*, Leuven 1995, pp. 33–54, pp. 35–38.

28 See the contribution by Thorsten Bonacker and Lars Schmitt in this volume; see also Wolfgang Krohn: *Funktionen der Moralkommunikation*, in: *Soziale Systeme* 5 (1999), pp. 313–338.

29 See Small: *Antiwarriors*, pp. 13, 28, 154.

30 See the interview by Nigel Williamson in *The Guardian*, 27.8.2003, G 2, pp. 12–13; compare Wilfried Mausbach: *Auschwitz and Vietnam. West German Protest Against America's War During the 1960s*, in: Andreas W. Daum/Lloyd C. Gardner/Wilfried Mausbach (eds.): *America, the Vietnam War, and the World: Comparative and International Perspectives*, Cambridge 2003, pp. 279–298, p. 281.

piece of information, but rather an operation that is able to result in a shared horizon of expectations. Working like this, communication does not depend on transmission in a technical sense, but rather on connectivity. Hence, the decisive question is: with whom should peace movements seek to connect with their protest communication? The conventional wisdom says the political elite, because the main goal is to influence the process of political decision-making, and this is, of course, the main perspective of Wittner's trilogy. But before protests can address and influence politicians, they have to reach out to a broad spectre of possible sympathisers, who might be willing to join in a huge peace rally or to sign a petition. According to the sociologist Niklas Luhmann, who has developed some of the basic concepts of communications theory, this form of connectivity follows a distinction between a centre and a periphery of protest communication.³¹ However, there seems to be a strong portion of idealisation in the assumption that protest movements are the self-evident mouthpiece of the concerns and requests of a silent majority of the population. This situation is due to the fact that not only the usual parameters of social status like income, reputation or higher education diplomas are unequally distributed among the population, so, too, are the possibilities of voicing general demands in the public. Even if the speaker of a peace movement was in harmony with the fear of war in a working-class audience, he still might not have been able to connect because his middle-class habits separated him from his audience, which could differentiate between the enunciation and the information of his speech.³² Perhaps much more often than we assume it was not only the "distant nature of foreign policy issues" that hampered peace mobilisation, but also the distance between the key protesters and the people they tried to connect with.³³

A comprehensive account such as Lawrence Wittner's trilogy on the global nuclear disarmament movement since 1945 has to work hard to condense the complexity of historical change, and thus has to omit a lot of seemingly indispensable topics and deliberations. With regard to the history of peace movements in countries like France, Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Japan and the USA, which are covered in this volume, all of these histories are embedded in the particular context of that nation-state and society. As some contributions to this volume stress, it is fruitful to see peace movements rather as a gateway to peculiar social developments than as a separate issue, one remote from the general trends of national history. One example is the history of peace movements in the United Kingdom, where the perspective of social movement theory might allow one to challenge the still dominant self description of British society as a class society. On the other hand, we find examples like the USA, where peace activism has been distinct from the centre of the national politic fabric for a long time, and has only lately managed to move from the margins to the mainstream of political culture.³⁴

31 Niklas Luhmann: *Protest. Systemtheorie und soziale Bewegungen*, Frankfurt/M. 1996, p. 184.

32 See the convincing argument in Lars Schmitt: *Kritische Wissenschaft und Friedensbewegung. Soziologische Selbstreflexion zur Stärkung der Bewegung*, in: *W & F. Wissenschaft und Frieden* 22 (2004), no. 3, pp. 49–52.

33 Quote in Sam Marullo/David S. Meyer: *Antiwar and Peace Movements*, in: Snow et al.: *Blackwell Companion*, pp. 641–665, p. 659.

34 See especially the articles by Holger Nehring, Volker Fuhr and Natalie Atkin in this volume.

Among the national case studies dealt with in this volume, France and Italy seem to follow a similar pattern, one that is significantly different from that of all other Western European nations and the US. In both countries, the two most important peace movement organisations were closely aligned, respectively, to the Communist Party and the Catholic Church, whereas Communist peace activities in the US and in the Federal Republic of Germany were hotly embattled and received severe blows from the anticommunist frenzy of the 1950s.³⁵ This parallel development of two highly centralised peace movements with a set of stable normative orientations in France and Italy needs further investigation, although the gradual demise and final collapse of Communism in 1989 has turned at least one of them into a historical subject. For Catholic peace activism, it seems again as if the protest movements of 1968 moved the activism decisively in the direction of an increasing transnational flow and interconnection of intellectual ideas and conceptions for a “just” and peaceful social order. This had global repercussions not only among Catholics, but also among Protestant movement activists. The pivotal point was the emergence of liberation theology in Brazil and other Latin American countries after the mid-1960s, which provided a language and symbolism of morality and humanistic dedication that fuelled peace activists in many European countries. This issue has not yet been substantially researched in depth due to the gap between church history, located in theological departments, and general history that is characteristic for the historical discipline in many countries. Even then it is perhaps not an exaggeration to say that liberation theology was—on a global scale—the most powerful political ideology on the left during the 1970s and 1980s.³⁶

All further readings of the articles in this volume will be left to the individual reader. I would like here to raise five general points that should be more intensively researched and more thoroughly conceptualised in future studies on peace movements in the period after 1945. A couple of them do focus on the role of symbols and symbolic performances for the public visibility of peace movements, which is basically a consequence of the constructivist approach outlined above. If peace movements are not a “natural” reaction to an ever-present danger, but rather a communicative effort to observe risks as dangers, then we have to focus on the symbolic actions that allow to gain public legitimacy for this claim.

My first point concerns the historical connections between the man-made mass death of the Second World War, that reached a climax in the genocide against European Jewry committed by Nazi Germany and the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki that unbound Pro-

35 See the articles by Sabine Rousseau and Massimo De Giuseppe/Giorgio Vecchio in this volume. For a social history of the Communist Party in the Federal Republic see the innovative and fundamental account in Till Kössler: *Abschied von der Revolution. Kommunisten und Gesellschaft in Westdeutschland, 1945–1968*, Düsseldorf 2004. For a nuanced description of Communism and Anticommunism in the US peace movement, see Robbie Lieberman: *The Strangest Dream: Communism, Anticommunism, and the U.S. Peace Movement, 1945–1963*, Syracuse 2000. The cultural practices of anticommunism in Western Europe during the 1950s are still a neglected topic.

36 See the article by Massimo De Giuseppe/Giorgio Vecchio in this volume. Compare Benjamin Ziemann: *Zwischen sozialer Bewegung und Dienstleistung am Individuum. Katholiken und katholische Kirche im therapeutischen Jahrzehnt*, in: *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 44 (2004), pp. 357–393, p. 377.

metheus in a way that was probably beyond the imagination of most of the people who had encouraged and promoted progress in industrial warfare during the 19th century. In an important collection of articles, Richard Bessel and Dirk Schumann have recently pointed to the apparent paradox that there was an upsurge of cultural expressions for violence and mass death in the aftermath of the First World War, whereas the second postwar transition from 1945 to the 1950s seems best to be characterised by “silence” about the mass murders from 1939 to 1945 and by “a rush to (re)establish normality”. The burgeoning consumer culture of the 1950s and the restorative ecclesiastical triumphalism of the Catholic Church in Germany after 1945 reveal the intensity with which many people tried to escape from the violent ruptures of the 1940s.³⁷ There is, of course, the example of Japan, where the two atomic bombings triggered a national consensus in favour of demilitarisation and rejection of any military engagement. This consensus, which formed the background for the development of Japanese peace movements, was embedded in a national cult of victimisation which meant that one’s own atrocities committed in Korea and other occupied countries during the Second World War were not remembered.³⁸ It is likely that a more sensitive reading of the semantics of peace movements in Western Europe and the USA in the decades after 1945 will also reveal frequent references to destruction, mass death and systematic annihilation during the Second World War. These more or less hidden connections between the violence of war before and peace protest after 1945 need to be further investigated.³⁹ For later decades, it is already obvious how pertinent the invocation of mass death during the 1940s seemed to be for many peace activists. The Australian pediatrician Helen Caldicott, born 1938 and a leading member of the nuclear disarmament movement since the late 1960s, frequently referred to her fear of a “nuclear holocaust” as a main motivation for her commitment.⁴⁰

Another topic that has been largely neglected so far is the role of experts as iconic figures for peace movement mobilisation. Traditionally, pacifist organisations had their movement intellectuals, who could work as speakers at mass demonstrations and elsewhere to foster the reputation and legitimacy of the movement. The almost nonagenarian philosopher Bertrand Russell in Great Britain and the theologian Albert Schweitzer in the Federal Republic, who during the late 1950s and early 1960s were symbolic rallying points for antinuclear protest, are well known examples of this kind of intellectual support. Their public authority originated mostly from their widely assumed moral integrity, their general respectability as intellectuals and, last but not least, their age, which denoted a lifetime of experience. This aura of a specific type of intellectuals remained stable during most of the 1950s and 1960s. It is interesting to note that the West German Chancellor Konrad Adenauer easily dismissed the spectacular “Göttingen appeal” of 18 prominent German atomic physicists against nuclear arma-

37 See Richard Bessel/Dirk Schumann: Introduction: Violence, Normality, and the Construction of Postwar Europe, in: eidem (eds.): *Life after Death. Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s*, Cambridge 2003, pp. 1–13, quote p. 2.

38 See the article by Volker Fuhr in this volume.

39 See the scattered evidence in Holger Nehring: *Gewalt, Frieden und soziale Bewegungen nach 1945*, Hagen 2004 (Studienbrief der FernUniversität Hagen: Historische Friedensforschung).

40 Quoted in Wittner: *Toward Nuclear Abolition*, p. 29.

ment of the *Bundeswehr* in 1957 as illusionary and unrealistic, and at the same time privately expressed his deep concerns about a public appeal by Albert Schweitzer, who was awarded the Nobel Peace Prize that year.⁴¹

Starting perhaps in the late 1960s, a new type of intellectual knowledge came to the forefront of peace protest, and their testimonies assisted the legitimacy of pacifist mobilisation. These experts were academics who had a professional relationship to peace and disarmament issues, either as physicians, who could point out the medical dangers of a conventional or nuclear war, as (atomic) physicists, who could claim to be experts on nuclear fission and weapon systems, or as peace researchers, who taught the public about the possibilities of conflict resolution. Future research should follow the rise of these new types of peace experts, which was related to the development of a knowledge society, and scrutinise the constative as well as the performative function of their public assertions.⁴²

Another largely neglected aspect of the symbolic performance of peace movements is their use of pictures and pictorial symbols. One aspect of this topic are the emblems of peace movements, for example the white dove on a blue background, the proverbial “peace sign” that was developed for the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, or the logo of the Nevada-Semipalatinsk test sites movement that showed “a native Kazakh sharing a peace pipe with a Native American”.⁴³ These logos are part of the peace protesters’ attempts to develop a framework for collective identity and collective action. But the importance of pictures for peace mobilisation goes beyond the search for popular icons that can be used as buttons, stickers, etc. Every protest communication needs to develop a visionary imagination of a kingdom-come, of a world that transcends the vices and the moral corruption of the contemporary, functional differentiated society and is able to offer a prospect for harmony, integration and the abolition of alienation. This issue is well known as a part of the antisemitic protest communication of the Nazi movement during the Weimar Republic, which had both a vivid imagination of the moral corruption and degeneration of the Jewish “race” and a broadly developed pictorial language that envisioned a utopia of racial purity, violent regeneration of the body politic and the community spirit and was substantiated in paintings, photographs, posters and monuments.⁴⁴ Set against this evidence, we can recognise the lack of empirical research about the pictorial visions of post-war peace protests. Which symbols, subjects and artistic techniques enabled peace movements to visualise and aestheticise an imagination of a peaceful world, and which models of social order were envisioned in these

41 See Wolfram Wette: *Der Beitrag des Nuklearpazifismus zur Ausbildung einer Friedenskultur*, in: Thomas Kühne (ed.): *Von der Kriegskultur zur Friedenskultur? Zum Mentalitätswandel in Deutschland seit 1945*, Hamburg 2000, pp. 144–167, pp. 148–149.

42 Compare the conceptual remarks in Stephen Hilgartner: *Science on Stage. Expert Advice as Public Drama*, Stanford 2000.

43 Wittner: *Toward Nuclear Abolition*, quote p. 418; compare Hans-Martin Kaulbach: *Picasso und die Friedenstaube*, in: Georges-Bloch *Jahrbuch des Kunstgeschichtlichen Seminars der Universität Zürich* 4 (1997), pp. 165–197.

44 The best account for this pictorial vision is Sabine Behrenbeck: *Der Kult um die toten Helden. Nationalsozialistische Mythen, Riten und Symbole 1923 bis 1945*, Vierow 1996.

pictures?⁴⁵ There is an abundance of antiwar-pictures in the visual art of the 20th century, but it is hard to discover many examples of pacifist paintings or posters with a substantial positive vision for peace.⁴⁶

But the creation of pictures for peace mobilisation was not only a task for artists and illustrators. Protest communication always relies on the performative power of human bodies as well, and is inventive in the use of bodies as signifiers for manifest conflict. The classic example, of course, is the mass demonstration, an assembly of people marching down the street, waving banners and voicing their concerns in chants and songs.⁴⁷ But there have been many other forms and examples of protest that used bodies as symbols, and there is a tendency that the agglomeration of a large number of human beings did not always succeed in drawing the attention of wider public to the protesters. Many bodily protest performances came near to the tradition of *tableaux vivante* and were successful and spectacular with a rather small number of active participants. Some of the most impressive examples happened during the Vietnam antiwar movement in the USA, which worked as a laboratory for the invention and testing of significant and signifying bodily protest happenings.

During the early stages of the movement, some cases of self-immolation occurred, including one by Alice Herz, a 82-year old peace activist and refugee from Nazi Germany, and one by the 32-year old Quaker Norman R. Morrison, who burned himself in front of the Pentagon on November 2, 1965. A final climax in the use of human bodies for protest against the Vietnam war was the demonstration of 600 members of VVAW (Vietnam Veterans against the War) in front of the Capitol on April 23, 1971. They threw their combat medals onto the Capitol lawn, and many of them appeared “in wheelchairs, on crutches or with missing limbs”, their bodies giving evidence about the destructive powers of wartime violence and legitimising their rationale for protest at the same time.⁴⁸ Particularly the latter case is, seen from a conceptual angle, revealing for the importance of bodies as signifiers of protest. More than any form of intellectual or moralistic reasoning, the mutilation of their own bodies was an argument for and witness of the personal commitment of these soldiers. As a spectacular event, this gathering was also important for the movement because it received a tremendous and largely positive media coverage, although only a small number of participants was involved. Bob Haldeman, the White House chief of staff and Nixon’s key adviser, was frustrated by the sympathetic coverage of this happening and lamented that the media had “by

45 For more theoretical background to this argument see Thomas Kater/Albert Kümmel (eds.): *Der verweigerte Friede. Der Verlust der Friedensbildlichkeit in der Moderne*, Bremen 2002.

46 For the 1920s compare Annegret Jürgens-Kirchhoff: *Kunst gegen den Krieg im Antikriegsjahr 1924*, in: Jost Dülffer/Gerd Krumeich (eds.): *Der verlorene Frieden. Politik und Kriegskultur nach 1918*, Essen 2002, pp. 287–310; for some contemporary examples see James Mann (ed.): *Peace Signs. The Anti-War Movement Illustrated*, Zürich 2004.

47 See the examples of mass demonstrations and peace rallies in Holger Nehring: *Die Proteste gegen Atomwaffen in der Bundesrepublik und Großbritannien, 1957–1964 – ein Vergleich zweier sozialer Bewegungen*, in: *Mitteilungsblatt des Instituts für soziale Bewegungen* 31 (2004), pp. 81–107; compare also Nick Thomas: *Protest Movements in 1960s West Germany: A Social History of Dissent and Democracy*, Oxford 2003.

48 See Small: *Antiwarriors*, pp. 21–22, 140–141, quote p. 141.

their own obsession created a major thing out of what should have been almost totally ignored".⁴⁹

Although it is easy to understand Haldeman's anger, he missed the importance of mass media for protest communication, and vice versa. The media are crucial for peace movements because they create public attention for their concerns and help them gain influence on the thematic agenda of the political system. Over the last decades, a structural coupling between the media and social movements has emerged that has led, on the part of the latter, to the careful staging of "pseudo events" which are designed purely to get media coverage. The Greenpeace campaigns since the bombing of their flagship *Rainbow Warrior* in the harbour of Auckland in 1985 are ample evidence of this tendency.⁵⁰ The media, for its part, is interested in "news", which means information that makes a difference. As long as social movements can provide incentives to report about conflicts, the mass media is able to operate with its code information/non-information and will show an inclination to cover protest events, notwithstanding whether they do so with a positive or a negative bias.⁵¹ This mode of operation exerts a strong pressure on protest communication, because after a while even "the largest crowd in American history" is no longer "news" for the journalists, who might have reported about the "largest crowd in..." at several earlier instances.⁵² These are at least some conceptual suggestions for historical work on the relation between protest movements and the mass media. Unfortunately, with the exception of the pioneering work done by Melvin Small, there has been little substantial work in this area so far.

The same assertion is true for the fifth and last desideratum I would like to raise. It helps us to understand the ambivalence of protest communication, and opens up the much debated and still not very clearly defined issue of the "achievements" of peace movements.⁵³ At stake is the interaction between peace protest and the decision-making of the military and political elite. This is, of course, a major topic in Lawrence Wittner's description of the nuclear disarmament movement. Wittner lavishly praises the sweeping success of the movement in the 1980s, claiming they forced the two superpowers into the INF treaty of 1987 and into some other measures that curbed the nuclear arms race. Perhaps due to the lack of declassified documents for the 1980s, only rarely is there detailed evidence for the specific mechanisms and direct links between pressure from "below" and retreat from "above".⁵⁴ The interaction between protest and power is the topic of the very ambitious book by Jérémie Suri. Suri

49 Compare Melvin Small: *Covering Dissent. The Media and the Anti-Vietnam War Movement*, New Brunswick, NJ 1994, pp. 143–154, quote p. 152.

50 Niklas Luhmann: *Die Gesellschaft der Gesellschaft*, Frankfurt/M. 1997, quote p. 862; see Wittner: *Toward Nuclear Abolition*, pp. 377–378.

51 Niklas Luhmann: *The Reality of the Mass Media*, Cambridge 2000.

52 See the remarks in Small: *Antiwarriors*, p. 143.

53 See Karl Holl: *Why do Peace Movements fail?*, in: Grünewald/van den Dungen: *Twentieth Century Peace Movements*, pp. 3–14; Peter van den Dungen: *Achievements of Peace Movements*, in: *ibid.*, pp. 15–31.

54 The most impressive episode demonstrates how activists in Oregon pushed a 'dovish' Democratic politician into the senate and used him to promote a testing moratorium. See Wittner: *Toward Nuclear Abolition*, pp. 439–441.

interprets the emergence of détente in the 1970s as a reaction to the global protest movements of 1968. Suri gives a parallel and brilliantly conceived account of domestic and foreign policy developments in no less than six countries—Britain, France, Germany, China and the two superpowers—and is able to catch the heated atmosphere and the languages of dissent in cities as different as Paris, Berkeley, Berlin, Moscow and Prague. Particularly instructive are his remarks about the often overlooked structural reasons for the explosion of student unrest in the late sixties, which were related to the large scale expansion of higher education in most countries in the west and in the east. He rightly relates the upheaval at the universities to the crowded campus dormitories and to the lack of personal freedom.⁵⁵

Nonetheless, Suri falls short when it comes to producing detailed evidence of the connection between student unrest and the decision-making which led to a policy of détente. One of the rare examples is the 1966 reflections by Egon Bahr, the mastermind of the Social Democratic *Ostpolitik* and later the foreign policy adviser to Chancellor Willy Brandt, about the existence of a “new generation” that led to “rising extremism on the right” and “on the left”. Even then, this “spread of radicalism” perhaps more “accompanied” than actually triggered or influenced the efforts by Bahr and Brandt to open new diplomatic channels to the Soviet government and to facilitate the acceptance of the status quo in relations between the Federal Republic and Poland, the GDR and the Soviet Union.⁵⁶ For unknown reasons, Suri does not rely on the detailed and careful research Melvin Small has presented on the influence of the antiwar movement on the decision-making processes of the Johnson and Nixon administrations.⁵⁷ What is still missing, then, is a thorough long-term analysis of the perceptions and images of the peace protests among the military brass and the diplomatic elite. This analysis must pay attention to patterns of cultural distance and misunderstanding and to points of empathy. Such an endeavour could also contribute to future research on the “costs” of the Cold War, which Gustav Schmidt recently included in his agenda for future research.⁵⁸ As to

55 Jeremi Suri: *Power and Protest. Global Revolution and the Rise of Detente*, Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press 2003, vii +355 pp., \$ 29.95 (cloth), see in particular pp. 88–94, 195–197; compare idem: *The Cultural Contradictions of Cold War Education: The Case of West Berlin*, in: *Cold War History* 4 (2004), iss. 3, pp. 1–20. However, this point could have been strengthened with the arguments in Talcott Parsons/Gerald M. Platt: *Age, Social Structure, and Socialization in Higher Education*, in: *Sociology of Education* 43 (1970), pp. 1–37. Also some of Suri’s conceptual ideas are flawed, particularly his description of De Gaulle’s presidency as a form of “charismatic” leadership, which does harm to the intentions of Max Weber’s concept of charismatic authority. See Suri: *Power and Protest*, pp. 51–58, 86–87, 237.

56 Suri: *Power and Protest*, pp. 216–224, quotes p. 220, 222; for a different interpretation of *Ostpolitik* see Gottfried Niedhart: *Ostpolitik: Phases, Short-Term Objectives, and Grand Design*, in: *Bulletin of the German Historical Institute Washington, Supplement 1* (2003), pp. 118–136; idem/Oliver Bange: *Die „Relikte der Nachkriegszeit“ beseitigen. Ostpolitik in der zweiten außenpolitischen Formationsphase der Bundesrepublik Deutschland im Übergang von den Sechziger- zu den Siebzigerjahren*, in: *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 44 (2004), pp. 415–448.

57 Compare Small: *Impact*; idem: *Influencing the Decision Makers. The Vietnam Experience*, in: *Journal of Peace Research* 24 (1987), pp. 185–198; idem: *Johnson, Nixon and the Doves*, New Brunswick 1988.

58 Gustav Schmidt: *Cold War*, in: *Encyclopedia of the Social and Behavioral Sciences*, Amsterdam 2001, vol. 3, pp. 2194–2200, p. 2200.

the part of protesters in their interaction with *Realpolitik*, it is misleading to blame them for not “working to change institutions from within”.⁵⁹ Protest communication is not designed to function as a part of the opposition within the political system, an opposition preparing itself to come to power one day, an opposition disciplining itself for this entry into political responsibility. Protest can allow itself to be reckless and imprudent, because this attitude is essential for this form of communication, which tends to object within society against society.

Many more questions and conceptual issues for future research in the history of peace movements since 1945 could be raised, but this would go beyond the scope of this introduction.⁶⁰ This field of enquiry is, as outlined above, still not very intensively developed and is in constant flux. Although major achievements have already been made, every single future contribution will raise the complexity of this subject, a subject that is still under construction.

59 Jeremi Suri: Review of Wittner: *Toward Nuclear Abolition*: <<http://www.h-net.org/reviews/show-rev.cgi?path=111501087135521>> [16.9.2004].

60 To name a last one: the connections and blockades between peace protest and social movements with other thematic concerns still need to be systematically enquired. Although one could generally assume a joint interest in peace, resulting in synergies, a different pattern can be observed frequently. As a starting point for further reflections see Simon Hall: *Response of the Moderate Wing of the Civil Rights Movement to the War in Vietnam*, in: *Historical Journal* 46 (2003), pp. 669–701.