

Gildea, Robert; Mark, James; Warring, Anette (Hrsg.): *Europe's 1968. Voices of Revolt*. Oxford: Oxford University Press 2013. ISBN: 978-0-19958-751-3; 400 S.

Rezensiert von: Caroline Hoefflerle, Department of History and Political Science, Wingate University

Europe's 1968 is a welcome addition to new scholarship on the protest movements of the Long Sixties. Its collective biography approach uses nearly 500 life history interviews of activists from over 100 activist networks from across Europe to shed new light on the meaning of the protests of the 1960s and 1970s. This remarkable collection of thirteen essays was the result of an international collaborative „Around 68“ project involving fourteen scholars from Eastern and Western Europe, six of whom are based in British universities. Intentionally omitting well-known material from the movements in Paris and Berlin, these scholars focus our attention on the lesser-known activists from Scandinavia, Italy, Hungary, East Germany, Poland, and Spain. They uncover a wealth of new information on how 68ers from these and other European countries remember their motivations for becoming activists, their ideologies and strategies, and the long-term meaning and significance of their activism.

Seeking to understand the international similarities and differences of the activist movements, these essays reveal that activists were inspired by Third World liberation struggles against imperialism as well as the legacies of the Second World War, but that individual activists understood these differently in Eastern, Western, and Southern Europe because of differences in regional and national political contexts. Activists crossed national borders and interacted with each other on many levels, and many believed they were part of the same international revolutionary movement. „They had overlapping aims and ambitions, were inspired by the same heroes and causes, and used space in similar ways. New Left activists in both West and East saw themselves as alienated from and opposed to bureaucracy, technocracy, capitalism and consumerism...“ (Robert

Gildea and James Mark, Conclusion, p. 329) Everywhere activists sought cultural transformation. Yet activists from the communist bloc generally perceived their protests differently from their western counterparts, activists living under dictatorships diverged from those living in democracies, and everywhere men and women experienced cultural revolution in a variety of ways. For example, activists in western democracies generally struggled towards a socialist revolution, while those in Eastern socialist countries and those in dictatorships sought liberal democracy. While male activists pursued sexual liberation, female activists also wanted sexual equality within relationships and their movements. All activists faced state repression following 1968, and this forced them to rethink their strategies and goals. Some in western Europe felt that violent actions were the only way to maintain media interest in their movements and escalate class conflict towards a socialist revolution, while others went underground or joined communes and squatter communities to achieve revolution in other more non-violent ways. Ultimately, the protests of 1968 were transnational across all of Europe, but varied considerably among individuals and regions.

This collection of essays is particularly useful to scholars not only of recent European history, but also to scholars of the global Long Sixties. It adds new voices, new perspectives, and new theoretical approaches to the meaning and memory of this important period in world history. Each chapter has a useful introduction of the historiographical context of the particular topic of the chapter, and is packed with quotations and evidence drawn from interviews and secondary sources to support its conclusions. It also has a useful and thorough bibliography.

Like most collections of essays, however, it suffers from unevenness in the quality of the essays and in a general lack of consistency in its argumentation and narrative. Indeed, there is little narrative at all in this dense collective oral history. Individuals and activist groups drop in and out of each essay, leaving the reader feeling overwhelmed with specific data, little sense of historical context or chronology for the events mentioned, and lit-

the sense of their overall meaning. Most essays assume a great deal of prior knowledge of the history of Europe in the Long Sixties and do not effectively integrate the new material gleaned from their interviews into an existing narrative. At least part of this problem is a result of the organization of the essays into different aspects of 1968 based on the life interview structure. Perhaps this is the best way to organize an international life interview oral history, but it obscures the narrative and argument of the collection and leads to much repetition as well as the omission of contextual information.

Despite these organizational problems, Europe's 1968 fills in many gaps in the literature on this topic and provides a much better understanding of the transnational dimensions of 1968 and its collective and individual memory. The scholars who produced it have worked very hard indeed and deserve much praise for this significant accomplishment.

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