

Going Green: The Emergence and Entanglements of the Green Movement in Australia, the USA and Germany, 1970 to the Present Day

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Germany, Australia and the United States have a strong tradition of environmentalism. Since 1970 all three countries have seen the rise of substantial Green Movements which have exhibited a willingness to engage in acts of civil disobedience. Topics that have been of concern for these movements are renewable energy, pollution and nuclear power plants. The rise of such activities has seen a multiplication in the number of protest groups, a broadening of their scope to encompass not only a range of environmental issues but also social equity concerns, and a unification of single issue protests into multi-issue events. They also enabled networking and cooperation among different groups and the emergence of leading 'Green' personalities at the national level.

In November 2013, a group of scholars from different continents and disciplines were drawn together at the Rachel Carson Center (RCC) in Munich for two days of presentation, discussion and comparative analysis of the cultural and intellectual settings in which these Green Movements in Australia, Germany and the USA emerged. Firstly the workshop aimed to analyze the ties, transfer of ideas and knowledge between scientists, activists and popular movements as well as transitional influences and diffusion across Europe, North America and Australia-Pacific (Oceania) exemplified in the United States, Germany and Australia as representative countries, since all three nation-states have been at the forefront of post-1970 environmentalism that prompted Green activism in each country. Secondly, the workshop explored the nuances of the political and social theories elaborated by the Green movements

in all three countries, particularly in relation to the question of radical democratic practice, the connection between sustainability and social justice, and the local versus global relationship. This was all part of a larger initiative to bring together scholars towards publication of a history of Green Movements in these countries. Helmuth Trischler and Astrid Mignon Kirchhof welcomed all participants and introduced the Rachel Carson Center, its scientific foci and the international fellows program. They suggested discussing all presentations along the following themes: 1. Role of experts 2. Transfer of ideas and limits of transfer and 3. Implementation and application of ideas.

In the opening talk, entitled „Nature's Anthropological Monuments or Green Heroes? Aborigines in the European Discourse on Nature Protection,“ ANNA-KATHARINA WÖBSE (Bremen) explored the ideas of nature researcher Paul Sarasin in the early 20th century, particularly the role played by Aboriginal Australians in the development of his nature protection scheme. Analyzing Sarasin's concept of „anthropological reserves“ and the stereotypes of „unspoiled natives,“ she demonstrated how Aborigines shaped the environmental imagination of the time including that relating to nature protection schemes. Wöbse then considered the role of popular culture as a vehicle for the European reception of the Aboriginal cause, including Werner Herzog's film *Where the Green Ants Dream*, the song *Beds are Burning* by the Australian band Midnight Oil, and Bruce Chatwin's book *The Songlines*. This generated debate as to the extent to which Aborigines affected European discourse on nature protection, with a focus upon the other possible influences such as, in the case of Sarasin, the anthropological theories of Franz Boas. How can politics, colonialism and anthropology in the humanities, public debate and popular culture be organized in such a way as to make sense of these influences?

The second discussion by SABINE SAUTER (Tübingen), „Australia's Dust Bowl: American Influences in Australia's Environmental Movement 1930s–1980s“ explored the role of the USA dustbowls for scientific exchange which resulted in new methods of soil con-

servation, forestation, crop rotation and fertilizer use. The US influenced not only technical methods in Australia but also the country's legislation and education. This ranged from utilitarian to deep ecology, Sauter demonstrated, and prompted a need to diffuse ecological thinking to a broader public through the notion of an imbalanced equilibrium between people and the environment, which was no longer seen as a resource to be exploited but something that needed to be conserved for agricultural production, and shifted from the idea of needing to discipline Aboriginal people to seeing their methods of agriculture. In the 1980s the transfer of ideas also spread vice versa from Australia to the rest of the world. Under the Australian Labor government a federal program with multiple initiatives was funded to research land degradation and mitigate soil erosion problems. One of these initiatives – „Landcare Australia“ – was not only enormously successful in the own country, but also spread out into twenty countries around the world, among them the USA. Sauter's discussion generated further debates as to whether or not the links were primarily scientific rather than cultural; for example, there were smaller populations to move in the Australian case, and soil erosion could have had more than one cause. There were also differences in techno-scientific and public 'expertise.' How might these national and local differences be explained and accounted for?

The third talk, „Shifting Foundations? Green Histories in Australia and their Northern Hemisphere Inheritances“ by CHRIS MC-CONVILLE (Melbourne) explored local and transitional histories of Australia's new environmentalism in the 1970s through three themes. First was a green historical reflection on wilderness with consideration of the 1970s Franklin River Blockade; secondly responses to urban social movements such as Green Bans; and thirdly the question of landscape through the Wilderness Society and 'Lock the Gate' movement against gas exploration. McConville demonstrated that although Australia had limited outside influence owing to its geographical location, it should be seen as having exported a particular way of thinking about the environment to other parts of the

world, such as the emphasis on archeological heritage in the case of the Franklin River Blockade.

FRANK ZELKO (Vermont) considered in his paper „From Basisdemokratie to Umweltmulti: The Establishment of Greenpeace Deutschland“ how the centralized, apolitical, corporate-like „Umweltmulti“ attempted to build a base for itself in a West German environmentalist culture; one that was deeply committed to grassroots democracy, egalitarianism, and consensus-based decision-making. There were political arguments between those who wanted Greenpeace to be a basic democratic organization and those who aimed to take over the American model of a professional operation organization with top-down hierarchies. Although it is difficult to measure the extent of Greenpeace's success, and indeed the founding itself was a complicated affair, emphasis on the high-profile protests of the 1980s, with their effects including Boehringer shutting its Hamburg facilities in 1984, highlighted the importance of Greenpeace Deutschland. This generated questions as to the international nature of the organization: was Greenpeace Deutschland looking to internationalize, and nonetheless, where did its traditions originate from?

Next came ASTRID MIGNON KIRCHHOF (Berlin) with the topic „It's Women's right to differ': Petra Kelly and Helen Caldicott – Two Prominent Activists in the International Anti-Nuclear Movement.“ Caldicott and Kelly established an international network via their anti-nuclear activism, the success of which, Kirchhof argued, arose from ecofeminism and the difference feminism theory. This espoused the contemporary assumption of woman's closer affinity with nature – with a focus on spirituality, emotion and intuition – and therefore a fundamental distinction between women and men which both predestined and entitled the former to fight against a male-dominated technocratic world. Difference theory was important for bringing women together for this purpose, and it was perceived as both a social and biological difference. Was this, however, their main binding theme – of bridging women across borders and finding connections between them and empowering them – that made them successful? Which

other avenues might also be considered?

Discussions continued with CHRISTOPHER ROOTES' (Kent) case studies of 1970s and '80s organizations Friends of the Earth, Earth First!, and green parties in a paper titled „Exemplars and Influences: Transnational Flows in the Environmental Movement.“ The paper emphasized reasons to reconsider diffusion of such organizations and their ideas, including different contexts, constraints and opportunities, strategic choices, local narratives and path dependency. Earth First!, for example, diffused knowledge via literature, while the strongly internationalist Friends of the Earth focused on personal contacts and science-guided campaigning. For green parties, methods of diffusion are less clear-cut, due to their autonomous beginnings, contexts and opportunities. However they included personal links, circulation of literature and mass media. The issue of language was discussed; did other networks exist in other languages? Communication in English was undoubtedly easiest and fastest, but the question of language leaves further areas for consideration.

STEPHEN HEALY (Sydney) closed session with his paper „Environmental Governance and the Green Movement.“ The problem of how the broader community might be mobilized towards achievement of sustainability is a long-standing issue that recent Australian events point to potential solutions. Using the case of the 'Climate Commission' in Australia, which was reestablished from its closure in 2013 by Prime Minister Tony Abbott as the 'Climate Council,' Healy outlined its potential for bringing the general population into engagement with expertise to achieve constructive action: a 'Larrikin Epistemology.' Such an epistemological model may provide a vehicle for action of fundamental importance in addressing climate change, which requires a broad based public initiative focused as much upon what people do, and how this is achieved, as upon science and technology. In other words, as Healy argued, it requires not merely expert knowledge but also sustained and extensive changes in public behavior and practices in relation to environmental governance not only in Australia, but also in other parts of the world.

In a final discussion the group summarized their findings and considered ways in which to collate their research and about which conclusions can be drawn from the papers, in relation to the transfer of ideas across three continents. It was broadly agreed that in Europe, North America and Oceania (Australia and the Pacific) the successes and failures of Green politics reflect unstable linkages between popular movements, expert knowledge and mediated forms of communication. Even though Green movements are essentially activist in actions and membership, they have been established through professional expertise, in fields of environmental science in particular. Over the course of the 20th century and especially through the years 1970 to 1990 environmental movements drew in a wider range of members, so that communicating expertise became increasingly mediated. Activists began to rely heavily in mass media as a way of arousing political concern for the environment. These tensions between faith in expertise and popular politics are reflected in Green groups' struggles to control the flow of ideas and to recast media messages. Environmental expertise is itself under siege, most obviously by climate change deniers and opponents against environmental protection, but often from Green activists being impatient with the methods of scientific research. Much of the history of environmental politics, its limitations as well as successes can be seen in this tension. The meeting of scholars with the support of the RCC and Deutsches Museum also reflected the importance for historical and sociological collaboration towards understanding Green Movements, indicating a need for further research.

Conference overview:

Stephen Healy (Sydney): Environmental Governance and the Green Movement

Astrid Mignon Kirchhof (Berlin): 'It's Women's right to differ': Petra Kelly and Helen Caldicott – Two Prominent Activists in the International Anti-Nuclear Movement

Chris McConville (Melbourne): Shifting Foundations? Green Histories in Australia and their Northern Hemisphere Inheritances

Christopher Rootes (Kent): Exemplars and In-

fluences: Transnational Flows in the Environmental Movement

Sabine Sauter (Tübingen): Australia's Dust Bowl: American Influences in Australia's Environmental Movement 1930s–1980s

Anna-Katharina Wöbse (Bremen): Nature's Anthropological Monuments or Green Heroes? Aborigines in the European Discourse on Nature Protection

Frank Zelko (Vermont): From Basisdemokratie to Umweltmulti: The Establishment of Greenpeace Deutschland

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