

Linksalternative Milieus und Neue Soziale Bewegungen in den 1970er Jahren

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Jacco Pekelder

Towards Another Concept of the State: Historiography of the 1970s in the USA and Western Europe

After years of neglect, the 1970s have recently entered the array of academic interest. In the USA and in Western Europe a growing number of historians are finally pulling the decade out of the shadows of the 1960s and the 1980s. As can be expected in such an early phase of academic exploration, there is still little that ties all publications about the Seventies together. Instead, the representation of this important decade suffers from a degree of fragmentation that blinds out the grander narratives. Of course, it is unrealistic to ask of every single historian to already take a bird's eye view of the decade, especially since we are still in such an early phase of studying the Seventies. In effect, with all the historical sources that are still waiting to be explored, most researchers will have to get on their knees and look at things from below. In order not to overreach themselves, they will have to narrow down the themes of their projects to well-delineated topics and to restrict their attention to only (a part of) a single country. The writer of these lines has himself among other things published a detailed study about a relatively minor aspect of the Seventies; the loose network of left-wing Dutch activists and intellectuals sympathizing with terrorists of Germany's Red Army Faction (RAF).¹

However understandable this focus on manageable themes may be, it does entail the risk of narrowing down the line of questioning, too, which would be a shame. All the more so, since some historians, in their obsession with detail, betray a tendency to overstate the uniqueness of the phenomena they study, anyway. Disregard of comparable developments elsewhere does not have to be, but historiography about the 1960s has for instance shown that fragmentation into so many national narratives is hard to avoid. Not until fairly recently have historians begun to seriously take into account international and transnational elements in their writings about the Sixties. It would be a shame if researchers of the 1970s needed as long a time to take that same turn.

¹ Jacco Pekelder: *Sympathie voor de RAF – De Rote Armee Fraktion in Nederland, 1970–1980*, Amsterdam 2007, and Jacco Pekelder: "Dynamiken des Terrorismus in Deutschland und den Niederlanden," in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 35 (2009), No. 3, pp. 402–428.

Therefore it seems useful to present a critical evaluation of Seventies' historiography, comparing the ground-breaking publications of a number of American historians with the efforts of some of their European colleagues. How do both characterize the decade, what political, economic and cultural developments are prominent in their research and, of course, what are the similarities and differences in the way the Seventies are portrayed? Such an overview will assist historians in contextualizing their studies and will heighten their awareness of broader, international and transnational developments that might have an influence on the smaller-scale phenomena they analyze.² Moreover, it will also enable them to provide better explanations to their fellows in the academic community and the public at large as to why it makes sense to commit as much time as they do to the seemingly small problems they study.

Before commencing, it is important to note that when it comes to Europe, my account betrays a bias towards Germany, Britain and of course the Netherlands, because I am especially well acquainted with historiography about these countries. Apart from this, I should mention that my interest in general accounts of the decade sprang from a far more specific interest in left-wing political violence and terrorism in West Germany from the late 1960s to the end of the 1990s. Through the study of the broad milieu of radical left-wing communes, committees, parties et cetera in the 1970s and their reactions to the actions and proclamations of their violent comrades of the RAF and other terrorist organizations, I gathered that there was more to the decade than the general image accounted for.

American Beginnings

Serious academic work about the 1970s began in the USA, where Bruce Schulman (Boston University) in 2002 published one of the first monographs about the decade, "The Seventies. The great shift in American culture, society, and politics." Where many had depicted the decade as monotonous and grey, Schulman stressed its liveliness and resilience. According to Schulman, there remained a certain rebelliousness in the mentality of that decade, reminiscent of the 1960s, but he argued that this was tempered by the knowledge that naïve utopian solutions would not offer a remedy for the unfairness and injustice in the world. The optimism of the Sixties had thus been replaced by skepticism and uncertainty, but this did not necessarily mean that all idealism had withered

² Cf. Philipp Gassert: "Das kurze '1968' zwischen Geschichtswissenschaft und Erinnerungskultur: Neuere Forschungsansätze zur Protestgeschichte der 1960er-Jahre," *H-Soz-u-Kult*, 30.04.2010, <http://hsozkult.geschichte.hu-berlin.de/forum/2010-04-001>.

away, too. With great passion Schulman wrote about the Seventies as an era of a "new sensibility", a decade of irony, ambivalence, tongues in cheeks.³ In short, Schulman portrayed the era as a meaningful and thoughtful time. And next to that, Schulman argued that the Seventies had been a pivotal time, in which crucial changes occurred that together amounted to "a great shift in American culture, society, and politics", as the subtitle of his book rings out.

With this reappraisal of the 1970s Schulman was clearly ahead of the crowd, writing at a moment when most students of contemporary history regarded these tepid times as either an after-party of the frivolously revolutionary Sixties or as a foreplay for the hedonistic bonfire of the Eighties – in short, as an inconsequential impasse between more influential times.⁴ Since then, the 1970s have slowly acquired more interest among historians. In 2006 Edward Berkowitz (George Washington University) presented a second serious monograph about the decade, and gave it the programmatic title "Something happened," to correct everybody who was still clinging to the image of the 1970s as a dull and uneventful period.⁵ Apart from that, several collections of essays were published in the US, sometimes with a stress on social issues and popular culture,⁶ and sometimes with more attention to political developments.⁷

With two or more historians in a room, you might expect a discussion about periodic delineation, and Schulman and Berkowitz are not about to disprove this rule. Schulman on the one hand sketches the Seventies as a 15-year period, starting right after 1968. In his opinion this double-faced year, with its revolts, its political assassinations, its crushing of the Prague spring and its Republican conquest of the presidency, marks the end of the Sixties and the beginning of the Seventies. According to Schulman the "Long Seventies" did only end with President Ronald Reagan's second victory.

Berkowitz on the other hand narrows the era down to the period 1973–1981. In his eyes the Seventies first took off in the year when American troops finally evacuated Vietnam soil, the oil-producing countries set off the first "Oil Crisis" that prompted the era's long economic recession and the Watergate scandal was slowly gaining momentum. It ended already with Jimmy Carter's

³ Bruce J. Schulman: *The Seventies – The great shift in American culture, society, and politics*, Cambridge, MA 2002, p. 144 ff. See also Chapter 6.

⁴ Another early example is David Frum: *How we got here – The 1970s. The decade that brought you modern life (for better or for worse)*, New York 2000.

⁵ Edward D. Berkowitz: *Something happened – A Political and Cultural Overview of the Seventies*, New York 2006.

⁶ Beth Bailey/David Farber (eds): *America in the Seventies*, Lawrence 2004.

⁷ Bruce J. Schulman/Julian E. Zelizer (eds): *Rightward Bound – Making America Conservative in the 1970s*, Cambridge, MA 2008. See also the special Seventies issue of the *Journal of Contemporary History* 43 (2008), No. 4.

defeat against Reagan in 1980. By putting so much weight on 1973, Berkowitz paints a rather deterministic picture of the Seventies, whereas Schulman, while acknowledging the caesura of 1973, seems to take more notice of the long-term cultural, social, and political changes that had already begun before that crucial year. And he seems to appreciate more than Berkowitz does that it was not until the 1984 elections that the Republican attempt to recast the political agenda had effectively succeeded.⁸

Both agree however on the fundamental traits of the Seventies. First, it was an era of political and economic decline, ending “The Great American Ride,” the period after 1945 of “unchallenged international hegemony and unprecedented affluence.”⁹ Marginal growth figures, inflation and unemployment combined to create a hitherto unknown economic situation of stagflation, which drove politicians and economists with their Keynesian policies and the public at large to despair. Secondly, as a result of this “crisis of competence” the public’s “faith in political and professional leaders waned,”¹⁰ and with that the “liberal” (Schulman) or “postwar consensus” (Berkowitz) came to an end. New topics entered the political agenda, like ecology and taxation, and a diffuse neoconservative platform, mostly backing Republican candidates, formed, that was to dominate American politics from approximately 1980 to the congressional elections of 2006 and the presidential race of 2008. This, in turn, led to a shift in the political geography of the US that, especially in Schulman’s narrative of the decade, takes central stage: “Over the course of the long 1970s, the nation’s center of gravity shifted south and west. Political power, economic dynamism, and cultural authority more and more emanated from the sprawling, entrepreneurial communities of America’s southern rim.”¹¹

Thirdly, and Schulman connects this with the “Southernization of American life,” both he and Berkowitz stress the enormous cultural changes of the 1970s, with a “new informality” ruling everyday life, and a “contempt of authority” that, while undermining traditional formal institutions such as marriage, together with a new uncertainty about one’s identity, led to the creation of many new associations and affiliations, and a search for a new spirituality, often to be satisfied in booming evangelical churches, new age retreats et cetera. Both authors add to this a relatively nuanced portrait of popular culture in the 1970s, as inquisitive, soul-searching, ironic and sensitive, albeit always in danger of commercial infringements on the individuality of the artists in-

⁸ In fact the collection *Rightward Bound*, edited by Schulman and Zelizer, makes this last point even more forcefully.

⁹ Schulman: *The Seventies*, fn 3, p. 4.

¹⁰ Berkowitz: *Something happened*, fn 5, p. 6.

¹¹ Schulman: *The Seventies*, fn 3, p. xii.

involved. This is a rather positive explanation of what Tom Wolfe already in 1976 dubbed the “Me Decade,” the unstoppable individualization of social life, to the point where the future of society seems at stake.¹²

As a fourth point typical of the era, both authors mention the “rights revolution”: building on the civil rights movement of the Sixties, during the 1970s several so-called minority groups, women, homosexuals, and handicapped people, claimed and mostly won recognition of their rights and special needs. These campaigns were highly political and highly controversial, partly because of “affirmative action,” sometimes adding to the conservative backlash already mentioned above.

Comparing the Seventies in the US and Western Europe

These American publications focus almost exclusively on US history and hardly mention other western countries, where one would expect similar developments in the Seventies. Therefore it is fortunate that European historians have started picking up brushes and mixing colors to fill their side of the canvas, too. In the following I will attempt to compare their findings to the picture of the Seventies Schulman, Berkowitz and other Americans have designed. Have there been sizeable shifts in Western European culture, society, and politics too, or did the 1970s bring smaller changes, was the turn-around in Western Europe more incremental than the “great shift” in the US?

An initial problem is that there is no monograph about Europe in the Seventies to complement Schulman’s and Berkowitz’ book about the USA. There is a clever French handbook dealing with the 1970s, but that covers the whole world and the author does not present explicit comparisons between the US and Western Europe.¹³ There are however monographs about world or European history in the 20th Century, intriguingly all written by British historians, that also cover the 1970s, but they do not treat the decade with a regard that is comparable to the American approaches. Whereas they position the Sixties as a distinct period and often honor it with a separate chapter (e.g. Bernard Wasserstein’s impressive book “Barbarism & Civilization”), they mostly force the Seventies to shack up with the Eighties. In his book about Europe since 1945 Tony Judt for instance commits a fair amount of pages to the 1970s, but he

¹² Tom Wolfe: “The Me Decade and the Third Great Awakening,” in: *The New Yorker*, 23 August 1976 (reprinted in: Tom Wolfe: *Mauve Gloves and Madman, Clutter and Vine*, New York 1976).

¹³ Philippe Chassaing: *Les Années 1970 – Fin d’un Monde et origine de notre modernité*, Paris 2008.

more or less combines the discussion of the decade with the 1980s under the caption "Recessional: 1971–1989".¹⁴ Not surprisingly, other than Schulman, Judt does not hold the Seventies in high esteem, certainly not when it concerns the culture of the times: "In the life of the mind, the nineteen seventies were the most dispiriting decade of the twentieth century."¹⁵

Comparing these general accounts with the American historiography specializing on the 1970s is of course of limited value, but still it is interesting to note that there obviously is a broad consensus among historians that the Seventies were a crucial turning point in world history. All of them agree that, to quote the widely respected Eric Hobsbawm: "An era was at an end."¹⁶ It was the decade in which "The Golden Years" or, to say it with typical French grandeur, "Les Trente Glorieuses" (the thirty glorious years), came to a close. Around 1970 the exceptional postwar period of more than twenty years of uninterrupted economic growth in the West ended, and from 1973 "an age of crisis" (again Hobsbawm) began. All mention the same factors that Schulman and Berkowitz stressed too: Vietnam and the pressure on the dollar, the end of Bretton Woods, the Oil Crisis, the economic recession, and the revolutionizing of social bonds and cultural habits.¹⁷ While most of them take 1973 as the year the page was turned, and thus display a likeness to Berkowitz, some put more stress on the slow drift into the crisis era from the late Sixties onward, and thus are nearer to Schulman.

Books, collections or magazine specials dealing with certain European countries in the 1970s and/or concentrating on specific themes (culture, economics, politics) have started to appear in respectable numbers over the last years. In my attempt to establish the similarities and differences between American and European descriptions of the decade, I will concentrate on these kinds of specific publications rather than on the general accounts. As one would expect, the specialized publications share the appreciation of the decade as a time of change, and thus of importance, otherwise they would probably not have been published. In a negative way, offsetting the Seventies to the pre-

¹⁴ Eric Hobsbawm: *The Age of Extremes – The Short Twentieth Century 1914–1991*, London 1994; Mark Mazower: *Dark Continent – Europe's Twentieth Century*, London 1998; Tony Judt: *Postwar – A History of Europe since 1945*, London 2007; Bernard Wasserstein: *Barbarism & Civilization – A History of Europe in Our Time*, Oxford 2007.

¹⁵ Judt: *Postwar*, fn 14, p. 477.

¹⁶ Hobsbawm: *The Age of Extremes*, fn 14, p. 286.

¹⁷ Intriguingly, a group of scholars around Niall Ferguson questions the wisdom of the general acceptance of the crisis era hypothesis and tends "to recast the 1970s more as the seedbed of future crises than as the crisis conjuncture itself." (Niall Ferguson: "Crisis, What Crisis? – The 1970s and the Shock of the Global," in: *The Shock of the Global – The 1970s in Perspective*, ed. by idem/Charles S. Maier/Erez Manuella/Daniel J. Sargent, Cambridge, MA 2010, pp. 1–21, p. 20.

vious decades of escalating growth, two German historians have for instance framed history since 1970 as time "after the boom."¹⁸ As this phrase implies too, these books often make the point that the 1970s were the threshold of our own times. Another German historian, Konrad Jarausch, presents the decade as offering "a pre-history of present-day problems."¹⁹

In Western European historiography many of the four points distilled above from the works of Schulman and Berkowitz return. The manner in which the huge cultural changes in the Seventies are depicted is for example very similar to the accounts of the cultural changes in the US. But there are also important differences. Instead of framing the arrival of new groups to the political arena as a "rights revolution," historians describing Western Europe for instance mostly stress the appearance of "single issue movements," or "new social movements," mentioning not only the feminist or women's emancipation movement but also the ecological and the antinuclear movements (and others), and discussing their interaction with actual (established) political parties and established representative institutions. The fact that in multiparty political systems like West Germany or, even more, the Netherlands, some of these single issue movements fairly easily entered the central political arena, be it as an independent party or as an influential group in an established party, strikes many historians as typical for the age. This also counts for the evaporation of traditional affiliations to the large established (Social or Christian Democratic) catch-all parties from which the new political formations profited.

As far as the severe economic problems and the crisis of competence are concerned, it is clear that these were also general phenomena in Europe. Like US leaders, European governments at first tried to tackle the recession of the early Seventies with the Keynesian instruments politicians and economists had grown accustomed to. Likewise, these responses proved to be futile, in part because "spending your way out" of the crisis was not a viable and sustainable strategy anymore when governments were already pumping large amounts of money into the economy and were already heavily indebted.

Just like the US, Western Europe was facing problems of a more structural character than most people initially realized. Already at the outset of the 1970s Western Europe's economy was in a bad shape. In part, the economic take-off of Western Europe after the war had been a result of incomes remaining relatively low well into the 1960s, making European products cheap and export

¹⁸ Anselm Doering-Manteuffel/Lutz Raphael: *Nach dem Boom – Perspektiven auf die Zeitgeschichte seit 1970*, Göttingen 2008.

¹⁹ Konrad H. Jarausch: "Verkannter Strukturwandel – Die siebziger Jahre als Vorgeschichte der Probleme der Gegenwart," in: *Das Ende der Zuversicht? – Die siebziger Jahre als Geschichte*, ed. by Konrad H. Jarausch, Göttingen 2008, pp. 9–26.

figures high. However, already in the course of the 1960s competitiveness of Western European economies on the world market started to slip, because employers – in part forced by narrow labor markets – started paying higher wages and governments started to raise taxes to meet the rising costs of an expanding welfare state. As a consequence profits dropped and inflation rose, and resulting higher prices created new pressure to raise salaries and social benefits.

Even after those in power realized the severity of the situation, governments failed to convince the public, and especially organized interests, especially the trade unions, that Keynesian methods were not going to offer a solution to inflation and rising unemployment figures. In their inability to jump the impasse, governments all over Western Europe appeared powerless and not unlike the situation in the US in Western Europe this crisis of competence gave rise to a break-down of the postwar consensus regarding the ability of governments to steer and structure society and economic affairs. Where in the US the liberal consensus crumbled and Democrats slowly lost their grip, in Europe's case the Social Democrats were at the centre of the story.

Social Democracy under Pressure

Europe's version of the "postwar" or "liberal consensus" was what Tony Judt has named "The Social Democratic Moment." After 1945 all over Western Europe essential points of the Social Democratic political program were implemented. In a number of countries, especially in Scandinavia and, from 1945 to the early Fifties and then again from the mid Sixties, in Great Britain, the Social Democrats themselves were directly responsible for the vast expansion of the welfare state and the ever-growing influence of state institutions on economic enterprise, the redistribution of wealth and many aspects of everyday life. In other countries however, conservative or confessional parties, by themselves or in coalition governments with either Socialist or even rightwing parties, built the welfare state Social Democrats had demanded for so long. Such was the postwar consensus in Western Europe, holding that state regulation of the economy and state moderation of socio-political tensions by dealing out benefits for instance, was elementary to progress and prosperity.

Still, it was a consensus that had a Social Democratic ring to it, and when the break-down started in the early 1970s it was Social Democracy that came under pressure most to come up with new answers – and that had the hardest time to take leave from its former policies. Books about the UK, the Federal Republic, and the Netherlands in the 1970s bear witness to this by the extensive way they portray the plight of the respective Social Democratic parties. German historiography delivers the clearest example of this, because some

German historians even call the Seventies the "Social Democratic Decade" (Bernd Faulenbach), a term they use precisely in this dual sense, that Social Democracy was calling the shots but also faced the greatest dilemmas in the 1970s.²⁰

In a lot of respects for West Germany this image of the "Social Democratic Decade" makes good sense. From 1969 to 1982 the Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands (SPD, Social Democratic Party of Germany) ruled the country in a coalition government with the Freie Demokratische Partei (FDP, Free Democratic Party), which was by far its junior. Two SPD leaders, Willy Brandt (until 1974) and Helmut Schmidt, functioned as Bundeskanzler, be it with styles of leadership that were very different.²¹ It was these Social Democratic leaders that became central to the popular and academic historical image of the 1970s.

The tendency to frame the Seventies as a Social Democratic era in German postwar history is further enhanced by the fact that in the years before and after this period the Christlich Demokratische Union (CDU, Christian Democratic Union), first under Chancellor Konrad Adenauer and his immediate successors Ludwig Erhard and Kurt Georg Kiesinger and from 1982 to 1998 under Chancellor Helmut Kohl, together with its Bavarian partner, the Christlich Soziale Union (CSU, Christian Social Union), has had such a disproportionately long stay in power in the country. So it is understandable that in this light the Seventies automatically appear as the Social Democratic phase in German history. This is however to some extent a distortion of the facts of political life in the Federal Republic of Germany, in which there always have been big differences in the make-up of governments on the federal level and in the states. On the one hand, long before gaining government posts in Bonn, the Social Democrats possessed a fair share of power and influence, especially in Western and Northern states, where they dominated governments for years on end. On the other, in the Seventies, with the Social Democrats seemingly dominant, the Christian Democrats had powerful state governments that could influence federal politics through the States' representatives in the Federal Council, in which they even had a majority from the mid 1970s onwards. These facts make the Fifties and Sixties somewhat less of a Christian Democratic era, and correspondingly, nuance the Social Democratic character of the Seventies.

²⁰ Bernd Faulenbach: "Die Siebzigerjahre – ein sozialdemokratisches Jahrzehnt?," in: *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 44 (2004), pp. 1–37.

²¹ See Peter Merseburger: *Willy Brandt 1913–1992 – Visionär und Realist*, Stuttgart 2002; Edgar Wolfrum: *Die glückliche Demokratie – Geschichte der Bundesrepublik Deutschland von ihren Anfängen bis zur Gegenwart*, Stuttgart 2006, pp. 283–326.

Still, on a policy level the Social Democrats were indeed setting the agenda, at least in the first half of the decade. In foreign policy, for instance, these were the years of Brandt's "Neue Ostpolitik" (New policy towards Eastern Europe), in which he reached agreements with the Soviet Union and Poland that paved the way for a normalization of relations with the German Democratic Republic (GDR), including recognition of the communist government in East Berlin – a near total reversal of the confrontational policies of former governments led by the Christian Democrats. At the same time, with Brandt and Schmidt at the helm West Germany was one of the driving forces behind the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE) that would eventually lead to the signing of the Final Act in Helsinki in 1975. At first the Christian Democrats put up a hard fight to this rapprochement with the Eastern Block and in 1972 they even tried to oust the Brandt government by forcing a vote of no-confidence in parliament, but this failed, and the parliamentary elections later that year turned into a referendum on the "Neue Ostpolitik," with the SPD scoring better than ever before. After this the Christian Democrats grudgingly accepted detente towards the East and after they regained power in 1982 the new Chancellor Helmut Kohl immediately declared that he would continue the established policy.²²

In total contrast to this reconciliation in the domain of foreign policy, in domestic affairs the Christian Democrats kept on contesting the Social Democrat agenda. At first when the Social Democrats and Liberals introduced their aim to "democratize" government and society in West Germany with Brandt proclaiming in his first speech as Chancellor that his government endeavored to "dare more democracy," Christian Democrats just raised their eyebrows. Slowly throughout the Seventies however their opposition to the idea of democratization gained in intellectual strength. The government's proposals to promote participation of workers in industries and students in universities and to give citizens more say in infrastructure and town planning, met with criticism by the Christian Democrats, and sometimes it had to be adapted to pass parliament. After 1972, despite Brandt's huge victory, the government's reform program lost its drive, partly because some of the plans had lacked realism, partly because the economic agenda was starting to demand full attention. After Brandt had stepped down in 1974 as a result of an espionage scandal and Schmidt took over, the reform zeal petered out all together.²³

At that time the Christian Democrats were busy reorganizing themselves in the relative quiet of opposition. Up until the 1970s, their party had not been much more than a vehicle to win elections, with little activity in terms of

²² Faulenbach: "Die Siebzigerjahre – ein sozialdemokratisches Jahrzehnt?," fn 20, pp. 9–12.

²³ *Ibid.*, p. 14 ff.

committee life and little evaluation and development of ideas and party platforms. With Helmut Kohl at the helm – he became its chairman in 1973 – CDU was restructured into a modern party with a range of activities and a far more modern image. As a result, party membership doubled in a few years and press attention for the Christian Democratic cause also increased. Within CDU, conservative intellectuals developed a strategy to counter the government's reform program and especially the democratization ideology that backed it up. They argued that democratization was not the solution for every social or human problem. To the contrary, the claim inherent in government policy that every aspect of society and life had to be democratized formed a potential threat to human freedom, according to CDU intellectuals, because it politicized all aspects of life in the same way as happened under totalitarian rule. In the second half of the 1970s on the basis of these ideas a new aggressive oppositional course developed around the election slogan: "The choice is liberal [meaning free, JP] or socialist democracy." This was backed up by a campaign that stressed the urge to put the so-called "new social question" on the agenda. CDU proclaimed itself to be the defender of the under-represented and unorganized people, like the elderly, the owners of small businesses, working mothers, and the families that were threatened by libertarianism and totalitarianism. The party even claimed to be the organizer of the fight against inhumane city planning and infrastructural projects.²⁴

Although the Christian Democrats did not succeed in winning power in Bonn in the general elections during the 1970s (in 1972, 1976, and 1980), they did well in state elections, which seemed to prove that the party had gotten hold of something. At CDU gatherings talk started of a "Tendenzwende," a swing of the zeitgeist, in favor of conservatism, and the media picked up on this. As a result the "Tendenzwende" turned into a self-fulfilling prophecy. Prominent people were seen to confess their taste for conservative lifestyles and morals, without a hint of embarrassment. Even Chancellor Schmidt, sensing the changing mood, said he was a conservative in many respects.²⁵ His election slogan in 1976, "Modell Deutschland" (the German model), was also rather conservative, because it sounded more like a proud reflection on past accomplishments than as a bold thrust towards the future.²⁶

²⁴ Axel Schildt: "Die Kräfte der Gegenreform sind auf breiter Front angetreten" – Zur konservativen Tendenzwende in den Siebzigerjahren," in: *Archiv für Sozialgeschichte* 44 (2004), pp. 449–478, p. 460 f.

²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 461.

²⁶ It would be worthwhile to study the unexpected dynamics that developed around this "Modell Deutschland," a slogan that began as an advertisement for strong government but soon became a rallying cry for anti-government protesters in Germany and beyond. See Hartmut Soell's biography: *Helmut Schmidt – 1969 bis heute. Macht und Verantwortung*, München

As a vision for the future Schmidt had indeed little to offer besides his own widely acclaimed managerial qualities. This was no small asset, however, at a time when the idea that it had become impossible to govern Western society – a debate was going on about “Unregierbarkeit” that was the German equivalent of the American crisis of competence.²⁷ Schmidt’s dealings with international monetary, financial and trade questions at European and world forums and the stern way he operated in the terrorism crisis in 1977 impressed many Germans. In fact his leadership remained unquestioned until his own party started to break away behind him from the end of the Seventies over issues like the modernization of NATO’s nuclear capacity and the future of nuclear energy in West Germany.

According to Faulenbach, this changing of the agenda did not make the 1970s any less social democratic, because, he argues, the SPD in the course of the decade developed into a stage on which the tensions of the times were played out. At the beginning of the Seventies, when Brandt was Chancellor, the party opened itself to former activists of the student revolt of the 1960s, and in this way it more or less absorbed the zeitgeist into its ranks. At first this seemed an advantage, because young, enthusiast members introduced new themes to the party, and livened up internal debate. After a while however, the downside of SPD’s openness also became apparent when the skepticism about the ability of the government to steer society and criticism of the role of the state, that slowly came to the fore in society as a result of the recession and of new ways of thinking about the environment and the possibility and desirability of ongoing growth, entered the discussions in SPD committees and conferences. The SPD came to reflect the basic characteristic of the Seventies as a “Wendezeit,” a time of fundamental change.

For the United Kingdom and the Netherlands it seems at first harder to maintain the central position of Social Democrats in the 1970s, because other than in West Germany they were not the ruling party all of the time. In the UK to the surprise of many, Labour Prime Minister Harold Wilson was even voted

2008, pp. 575–579 and Thomas Hertfelder/Andreas Rödder (eds): *Modell Deutschland – Erfolgsgeschichte oder Illusion?*, Göttingen 2007. See also some contemporary publications of left-wing authors: Winfried Thomsen: *Modell Deutschland – Jahrbuch für vaterlandlose Geselligkeit*. 666 Radikalauer, n.p. 1978; Joachim Hirsch: *Der Sicherheitsstaat – Das “Modell Deutschland,” seine Krise und die neuen sozialen Bewegungen*, Frankfurt a. M. 1980; Heinar Kipphardt: *Vom deutschen Herbst zum bleichen deutschen Winter – Ein Lesebuch zum Modell Deutschland*, München 1981.

²⁷ Cf. Jens Hacke, “Der Staat in Gefahr – Die Bundesrepublik der 1970er Jahre zwischen Legitimationskrise und Unregierbarkeit,” in: *Streit um den Staat – Intellektuelle Debatten in der Bundesrepublik 1960–1980*, ed. by Dominik Geppert/Jens Hacke, Göttingen 2008, pp. 188–206.

out of power at the beginning of the decade, when parliamentary elections established a Conservative government under Prime Minister Edward Heath. After an unsuccessful attempt to master the recession and a final showdown with the trade unions in the winter of 1973–1974, Heath called early elections that were meant to deliver a fundamental decision against union power. Instead the electorate, dispirited by weak government, decided to punish the Conservatives. Although his party had not won a majority either, Harold Wilson succeeded in installing a minority Labour government with the support of smaller parties like the Liberal Democrats. Two years later Wilson stepped down and was replaced by James Callaghan. Like Heath in 1974, in 1979 Callaghan was ultimately brought down by the inability of his government to control the unions after the strike-ridden and extremely harsh “winter of discontent” (1978–1979) had left the country crippled and dysfunctional.²⁸

The fact that union power was the central issue in the problem of governability of the isles and that this issue was largely fought out within Labour and that this party was identified most strongly with this fight, makes it legitimate to talk of the 1970s in Britain as a Social Democratic decade, in spite of Conservatives ruling part of it. Within Labour, union representatives, supported by left-wing socialists like Tony Benn, battled with moderates like Wilson and Callaghan over the party platform. Although the unionists were making gains in the party itself, to their frustration the parliamentary party remained on the whole more in line with the government. This fostered extra-parliamentary extremism among union leaders who repeatedly declined requests of the Labour government to scale down wage rise demands in yearly negotiations with employers. Instead they succumbed to communist union activists, outside Labour, and demanded huge increases to compensate for equal inflation figures, showcasing the government’s inability to reverse Britain’s economic decline.

Callaghan tried to inject more realism in his party, for instance by reading the funeral rites for Keynesian politics at the 1976 party conference, shortly after being elected as party leader. “We used to think that you could spend your way out of a recession and increase employment by cutting taxes and boosting government spending. I tell you in all candour that that option no longer exists.” He called upon his party comrades “to [face] up to fundamental choices and fundamental changes in our society and our economy,” something that they had postponed far too long. “This is what I mean when I say we have been living on borrowed time. [...] The cosy world we were told would go on forever, where full employment would be guaranteed by a stroke of the chancellor [of the exchequer]’s pen, cutting taxes, deficit spending – that cosy world is

²⁸ Judt: *Postwar*, fn 14, p. 537 ff.

gone..."²⁹ In spite of these and other genuine efforts, Labour leadership did not succeed in bringing the party nor the unions around. Instead Benn and the left introduced an alternative economic strategy, which according to British historian Alwyn Turner would have amounted to a "siege economy buttressed by import controls," that was unsustainable in the modern age. Strikes remained endemic: in 1977 some 10 million days were lost in industrial disputes, which was four times higher than in France and utterly incomparable with West Germany's 86,000 lost days.³⁰

Like the German CDU the British Conservative Party used the period in opposition as a time to reorganize. Since the late 1960s the party had been plagued by the vitriolic nationalist Enoch Powell, who had created deep controversy in British politics with the so-called "rivers of blood"-speech on immigration he delivered in April 1968. Conservative party leader Heath had immediately thrown Powell out of his shadow cabinet, but that had not ended the man's political career. From the backbenches he remained an effective speaker for the extreme rightwing constituency of the Conservatives (at a time the British Nationalist Party was also attracting more voters), attacking not only Labour but ever so often his own party leadership too. This infighting only ended a few months after Heath lost the elections to Wilson, when in February 1975 Margaret Thatcher defeated him and several other challengers, in a leadership contest within the Conservative parliamentary party.

This is not to say that Thatcher's triumph immediately set the party on a monetarist course, away from established policy patterns, although as party leader at her first party conference she pleaded for "a decisive act of will [...] to say 'Enough'", and establish a decisive turnaround in British politics. Surely, she appealed to the intellectual monetarism of rightwing think tanks, but at the same time, as Turner rightly stresses, she also attracted "a public that was mistrustful of intellect, and she took care to emphasize her remoteness from the political elite."³¹ In a way she portrayed herself as a Powell-like rebel, regardless of the fact that she was party leader and not at all a backbencher. It wasn't until she beat Labour in the general elections of 1979 that everybody in the UK became fully aware of the rightwing revolution she had in stock. As the realization sank in, Thatcher's popularity figures plummeted, and with hindsight it seems clear that her government was in fact saved by some Argentine generals and their decision to make history by invading the Falkland Islands.

In the Netherlands the Partij van de Arbeid (PvdA, Labor Party) was the leading force in an uneasy coalition government from 1973 until 1977. In the

late 1960s the Social Democrats had developed a very confrontational style towards the three traditional Christian Democratic parties (catholic, orthodox protestant and national protestant) that were still operating as separate units, although they often found each other in joint coalition governments (in fact the Catholic party had even been part of every government since 1918). With this confrontational style the Labor Party had succeeded in integrating parts of the Sixties protesters, but it had worsened the relationship with the Christian Democrats so much that it hardly seemed possible to make a coalition government when the results of the 1972 elections pointed in that direction. In the end, after negotiations that took over five months, in 1973 a government under Social Democrat leader Joop den Uyl was finally installed, with ministers of the Labor party, two (of three) Christian Democratic parties and a few smaller left-wing parties. This government presented itself as a left-wing, not centre-left, cabinet – the only one with this signature in Dutch history. That was also the reason why the two Christian Democratic parties, despite sending ministers to the Cabinet, kept at some distance and regularly took an oppositional stance in parliament.³²

The fact that there was such a government, and that it ruled for about four years, can be interpreted as proof of a Social Democratic decade in the Netherlands. But in a way, Joop den Uyl's cabinet came too late. Already at the end of 1973 within a year of its installation the country was hit by the Oil Crisis, in which the Netherlands together with the US was singled out by the Arab oil producing countries in a boycott because of their Israel friendly stance during the Yom Kippur war. This meant that the ambitious reform program of the Social Democrats in the Netherlands, that was somewhat similar to that of Germany's SPD and aimed at spreading wealth, education and well-being more evenly among all Dutch citizens, had to be scaled down. In an early speech in which Den Uyl, reacting to the Oil Crisis, announced fuel saving "car free Sundays" he warned the public, referring to the past decades of unlimited growth based on extremely inexpensive oil and gas: "Those times will never return."³³

In their strange semi-oppositional situation, the three Christian Democratic parties merged into one formation, called Christen-Democratisch Appèl (CDA, Christian Democratic Appeal), and the Catholic minister of Justice, Dries van Agt, developed into a strong oppositional figure within Den Uyl's own cabinet. Interestingly, it was not a clear party platform, an alternative for the Social Democratic program that united the Christian Democrats. Monetarists still had

²⁹ Alwyn W. Turner: *Crisis? What Crisis? – Britain in the 1970s*, London 2008, p. 187 f.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 188 f.

³¹ *Ibid.*, p. 122 f.

³² See: Duco Hellema: "Das Ende des Fortschritts – Die Niederlande und die siebziger Jahre," in: *Jahrbuch 18* (2007), pp. 85–101.

³³ Anet Bleich: *Joop den Uyl 1919–1987 – Dromer en doordouwer*, Amsterdam 2008, p. 293 ff.

no clear mandate in any Dutch party, except maybe the rightwing liberals of the Volkspartij voor Vrijheid en Democratie (VVD, People's Party for Freedom and Democracy), although in all big parties criticism of ongoing deficit-spending and other Keynesian measures was growing. Instead, CDA was founded more on the shared Christian background of the three parties and a wish to resist the challenge both the Social Democrats and falling numbers of churchgoers had confronted them with since the late Sixties.

Den Uyl, a poetry-citing, messy but well-spoken intellectual with a visionary tinge, was a highly popular figure in left-wing circles, especially in larger urban areas, but he mobilized his opponents too, and by posing as an Anti-Den Uyl, Van Agt successfully built himself up as the champion of the Christian Democrats and the countryside. In 1977 Den Uyl succeeded in winning more votes than ever, but almost all of them came from other left-wing parties. In the end this frustrated the formation of a second Den Uyl cabinet, because after months of haggling Van Agt broke off the negotiations and within weeks formed a cabinet with the VVD. Whatever was left of a Social Democratic decade in the Netherlands was put to rest at the beginning of 1978, with the installation of the first Van Agt government.³⁴

Red Decade

That many historians give so much attention to the Social Democratic features of the 1970s is to a certain degree also a reaction to other historians putting great emphasis on another striking aspect of Western Europe in the Seventies: the decade's left-wing radicalism. Far more than in American historiography, the rise of extremist groups and the violence they produced themselves and attracted from the side of police and security services, take centre stage in many historical accounts of the 1970s.³⁵ Evidently, the extremism and political violence made a bigger impact on postwar European societies than it did in the US. An important ground-breaking German monograph in this respect therefore framed the Seventies, actually the period 1967–1977, as the "Red Decade."³⁶

³⁴ See Johan van Merriënboer/Peter Bootsma/Peter van Griensven: *Van Agt Biografie – Tour de force*, Amsterdam 2008.

³⁵ An exception is: William Graebner: *Patty's Got A Gun – Patricia Hearst in 1970s America*, Chicago 2008. And Jeremy Varon compares West German left-wing terrorism with American revolutionary violence in: *Bringing The War Home – The Weather Underground, The Red Army Faction, and Revolutionary Violence in the Sixties and Seventies*, Berkeley 2004.

³⁶ Gerd Koenen: *Das rote Jahrzehnt – Unsere kleine deutsche Kulturrevolution 1967–1977*, Cologne 2001.

Its author, historian Gerd Koenen, was himself in the 1970s an activist in a small, but industrious Communist party in Frankfurt am Main. He presented his book as the long awaited explanation of those activist years he and other members of the protest generation owed to themselves, their children, parents, and friends. The aim of his book was thus to explain what motivated activists like himself to see themselves as actors in a world revolution that with hindsight was only happening in their own imagination. In the Netherlands, journalist Antoine Verbij, himself a part-time agitator in the Seventies, closely followed Koenen's example and published a monograph about, what he called, "ten red years" of Dutch left-wing radicalism, with which he conveniently meant the exact period 1970–1980.³⁷

In Germany Koenen's book really put the Seventies on the map, but it was only one of several factors that led to a strong emphasis on left-wing extremism in German historical accounts of the 1970s. Of more impact was the wider debate about the heritage of the protest movement of the 1960s and its aftermath in the 1970s, specifically its meaning for democratic governance and open society in Germany. Especially since the downfall of Soviet-style communism in 1989 and the German Unification in 1990, the lasting relevance of the "1968" protest generation became the subject of heated debate. From an American perspective, one could call this the German equivalent of the American "culture wars."

When the Greens, the party considered especially representative of the protest generation, entered government in 1998 as the junior partner of the Social Democrats, whose Chancellor Gerhard Schröder was also strongly identified with "1968," this put extra fuel on the flames. In 2001, shortly before Koenen's book appeared, Green Minister of Foreign Affairs and Vice Chancellor Joschka Fischer, who had been a leading activist in Frankfurt am Main in the 1970s, was confronted with photos and a video in which he was attacking a police officer with a stick and he was also associated with an attack against a police vehicle with a Molotov-cocktail that had nearly killed an officer. At the same time he was called to the witness stand at a trial against former left-wing terrorist Hans-Joachim Klein with whom he had lived together in a large student commune in Frankfurt.³⁸

Shortly thereafter, the 9/11 attacks against the USA gave an extra boost to public and academic interest in 1970s' left-wing extremism.³⁹ Instantly, people

³⁷ Antoine Verbij: *Tien rode jaren – Links radicalisme in Nederland, 1970–1980*, Amsterdam 2005.

³⁸ See: Wolfgang Kraushaar: *Fischer in Frankfurt – Karriere eines Außenseiters*, Hamburg 2001.

³⁹ See for example: Oliver Tolmein: *Vom deutschen Herbst zum 11. September – Die RAF, der Terrorismus und der Staat*, Hamburg 2002.

wanted to learn more about Germany's own experience with terrorism at the hands of left-wing groups like the Red Army Faction and the Bewegung 2. Juni (June 2 Movement). From then on, a tidal wave of publications about RAF and related themes set in that has yet to come to a halt.⁴⁰ This has indeed led to a picture of the Seventies as an "age of extremes," to appropriate Eric Hobsbawm's characterization of the short 20th Century, and as a period of political perversions.

The development in the Netherlands was comparable, but the debate was somewhat more moderate than in Germany. Already at the end of the 20th Century there was a critical reappraisal of the 1960s and 1970s and intellectuals and politicians started raising questions about the alleged permissiveness that the protest generation had bestowed upon society and the political naivety in its contacts with murderous communist regimes.⁴¹ As in Germany, after 9/11 Dutch interest in the Seventies increased even more, in part also because the Netherlands had its first experiences with terrorism in that era, partly home-grown, partly imported from other countries, mainly Palestine, Germany, and Northern Ireland.⁴² Some rightwing publicists abused the automatic association of Seventies extremism with recent Islamist terrorism, especially the murder of film maker Theo van Gogh by a Moroccan immigrant's son, to discredit the liberalism that was said to have weakened Dutch society from the 1970s on.⁴³

Since the publication of Koenen's book there has been a sharp debate in Germany and abroad about the question how representative the radical groups were for the whole decade. Koenen himself has warned that it would be unwise to dismiss the activities of the radical left as a fringe affair, and in fact he even states that they were central to the decade. Surely, the intricate web of 'old' and 'new left' activists, from young left-wing Social Democrats, via Trotskyites, Maoists, to anarchists, or so-called Spontis (spontaneous groups), never

⁴⁰ Recent overviews of historiography are: Klaus Weinbauer/Jörg Requate: "Einleitung: Die Herausforderung des 'Linksterrorismus'", in: *Terrorismus in der Bundesrepublik – Medien, Staat und Subkulturen in den 1970er Jahren*, ed. by Klaus Weinbauer/Jörg Requate/Heinz-Gerhard Haupt, Frankfurt a. M. 2006, pp. 9–32; Wolfgang Kraushaar, "Einleitung – Zur Topologie des Terrorismus," in: *Die RAF und der linke Terrorismus*, ed. by idem, Hamburg 2006, pp. 13–61; Jacco Pekelder: "Historisering van de RAF – Geschiedschrijving over dertig jaar links Duits terrorisme, 1968–1998," in: *Tijdschrift voor Geschiedenis* 119 (2006), No. 2, pp. 196–217.

⁴¹ For a comparison of the discussions about the Sixties in different Western European countries see: Hanco Jürgens/Jacco Pekelder, "Einleitung – '1968' als transnationale Kulturrevolution," in: *Eine Welt zu gewinnen! – Formen und Folgen der 68er Bewegung in Ost- und Westeuropa*, ed. by Hanco Jürgens et al., Leipzig 2009, pp. 7–18.

⁴² See Beatrice de Graaf: *Theater van de angst – De strijd tegen terrorisme in Nederland, Duitsland, Italië en Amerika*, Amsterdam 2010.

⁴³ See Ian Buruma: *Murder in Amsterdam*, New York 2006.

posed a danger for West Germany's constitutional order, notwithstanding the grave contemporary estimates by the country's security services. But 1970s' organized left-wing extremism was by far larger than the 1960s' protest movement, from which it originated, and far more than this predecessor, the various extremist groups of the Seventies were expressions of a general socio-political mentality, the decade's zeitgeist. Whereas the Sozialistischer Deutscher Studentenbund (SDS, Socialist German Student Association), the nucleus of the "1968" protest movement, had been confined to bigger university cities, with in general a few handfuls of activists or at most, in West Berlin and Frankfurt am Main, a couple of hundreds, the radical-left or communist groups of the Seventies had at least 80–100,000 members all through the decade. And underneath this very visible surface, there was a somewhat less tangible, very broad and lively milieu of more or less politicized scenes and subcultures, that reached well into the heart of West German society.⁴⁴

Like Koenen, Antoine Verbij stresses the fact that the radicals he describes were less freaky and more representative of the decade than one might think: "The point is that their ideas, attitude and morale did not differ that much from those of large parts of the Dutch population. The decade was a red one, because a lot of Dutch were more or less red. The revolutionaries were the dark red in the red spectrum of the Seventies. In their dreams and thoughts we can see an enlarged version of the dreams and thoughts of many Dutch people."⁴⁵

In a similar vein, the argument has been made that Dutch sympathizers with the German RAF terrorists were, however small the number of activists involved, to a large extent motivated by feelings and ideas that were fairly common to Dutch public sentiment and opinion in the 1970s. First, RAF sympathizers and a considerable portion of the Dutch population at large shared and expressed a fair amount of anti-German feelings, rooted in unease over the fact that 20–25 years after World War II (West) Germany had largely recaptured its former economic and political power in Europe. Secondly, they shared the idea that the left in Germany had always been treated badly, and that therefore stories about the West German authorities maltreating or torturing RAF prisoners and denying them proper justice were very plausible and worthwhile fighting against.

⁴⁴ Koenen: *Rote Jahrzehnt*, fn 36, p. 17 ff. See also: Sebastian Haunss, "Antiimperialismus und Autonomie – Linksradikalismus seit der Studentenbewegung," in: *Die Sozialen Bewegungen in Deutschland seit 1945 – Ein Handbuch*, ed. by Roland Roth/Dieter Rucht, Frankfurt a. M. 2008, pp. 447–473.

⁴⁵ Verbij: *Tien rode jaren*, fn 37, p. 12.

Towards Another Concept of the State

Finally and more importantly, most Dutch RAF sympathizers were motivated too, by an anxiety that what was happening in West Germany against the left and against RAF was not so special. On the contrary, they argued that events in Germany were representative of a general development all-over the western world, even in the Netherlands, of politicians and the presumed puppet masters behind them ('the System,' as it was called in those years) becoming ever more oppressive with the aid of advanced technologies and consumerism. A lot of references were made to a strategy of "preventive counter-revolution," the notion that the ruling classes in all Western capitalist societies were aiming to suppress oppositional voices even before these could let themselves be heard. To that end they preferred to use subtle methods of repression: through the education system and the regulation of labor the populace was inconspicuously pressed into the mould of standard behavior. Fierce press campaigns against marginal revolutionary groups and extreme repression by the police against them were also elements of this preventive counter-revolution. The result was that most people were not aware of the fact that their freedom was actually being taken from them and so the idea to resist the oppression by the state and the capitalist system never crossed their minds.⁴⁶

Of course this whole neo-Marxist informed line of thinking was not shared by the public at large. Still, albeit in an extreme way, the RAF sympathizers offered examples of the disappearance of the belief in the creative powers of central government and the growing feelings of mistrust towards state institutions that many Europeans in the 1970s shared. The apparent incompetence of the state, i.e. the inability to provide for security in socio-economic affairs and in terms of eliminating the terrorist threat, was not only undermining the ruling government and established politics, but was also turning into criticism of the state as such. Especially in Germany, the ruling parties had worsened this problem, because when they experienced the limits of their capabilities to steer society, they had concentrated more on the traditional reserve of state power: security. From the early Seventies they had declared a comprehensive policy to provide for "innere Sicherheit" (internal security) against criminality in gen-

⁴⁶ More about this in: Jacco Pekelder: "Die radikale Linke in Deutschland und die RAF – der Fall Peter Brückner," in: Jürgens et al. (eds.): *Eine Welt zu gewinnen!*, fn 41, pp. 100–117; Pekelder: *Sympathie voor de RAF*, fn 1, p. 318 ff. Compare this with: Sebastian Gehrig: "Sympathizing Subcultures? – The Milieus of West German Terrorism," in: *Between the Prague Spring and the French May – Opposition and Revolt in Europe, 1960–1980*, ed. by Martin Klimke/Jacco Pekelder/Joachim Scharloth, forthcoming.

eral. Especially from the mid 1970s the battle against terrorism took centre stage in this policy complex.⁴⁷

In the confrontation with left-wing terrorism this had seduced politicians into a large build-up of police and security forces and into a policy of "Staat zeigen" (showing the state) by large-scale and very public traffic controls, razzia-style actions against left-wing organizations, newspapers and communes, and the widespread use of computer surveillance and data mining techniques, meant to create the impression of an all-powerful state capable of winning the battle against left-wing terrorism. At first these repressive measures only caused unease in very limited circles of the radical left, who more often than not were directly confronted with them. Somewhat exaggerating the problem, they proclaimed a return of fascism in Germany, which had become the traditional way of criticizing the state since the late 1960s. But they also appealed to fears of an Orwellian totalitarian state, thus connecting criticism of the state to the anxiety about technology that more and more people shared in the 1970s. After the so-called German Autumn of 1977, when the confrontation with the RAF (and state reaction) reached its peak, this kind of criticism started to enter mainstream media. Two of West Germany's most important political weeklies *Der Stern* and *Der Spiegel* for instance presented series about the "Überwachungsstaat" (Control state), respectively titled "SOS Freedom" and "The steel net is closing above us."⁴⁸

Of course this is only one example, but it seems safe to say that Western European attitudes towards the state changed during the Seventies in ways that resembled the American situation. Still, there seems to be one important difference, too. In his monograph about the Seventies Bruce Schulman states that in the US people stopped looking at the state as a source of solutions, and stopped appealing to politicians and government functionaries through political and social activism to take (better) care of them. Instead, since the 1970s the private

⁴⁷ Stephan Scheiper: "Der Wandel staatlicher Herrschaft in den 1960er/1970er Jahren," in: Weinbauer/Requate/Haupt (eds.): *Terrorismus in der Bundesrepublik*, fn 40, pp. 188–216.

⁴⁸ Government's actions started to reflect this criticism from 1978 onwards, when slowly parts of the special anti-terrorist measures were abolished and police and security forces were reined in by the new Interior Minister Gerhart Baum (FDP) and others. See: Klaus Weinbauer: "Zwischen 'Partisanenkampf' und 'Kommissar Computer' – Polizei und Linksterrorismus in der Bundesrepublik bis Anfang der 1980er Jahre," in: Weinbauer/Requate/Haupt (eds.): *Terrorismus in der Bundesrepublik*, fn 40, pp. 244–270. See also: Wim de Jong: "Demokratie, Machbarkeit und die politische Kultur der Niederlanden in den Siebziger Jahren," in: *Forschungsberichte aus dem Duitland Instituut Amsterdam* 4 (2008), pp. 43–52. Compare this with: Nicolas Büchse: "Von Staatsbürgern und Protestbürgern – Der Deutsche Herbst und die Veränderung der politischen Kultur in Deutschland," in: *Bürgersinn und Weltgefühl – Politische Moral und solidarischer Protest in den sechziger und siebziger Jahren*, ed. by Habbo Knoch, Göttingen 2007, pp. 311–332.

entrepreneur became the model for social behavior and "entrepreneurship [...] replaced social and political activism as the source of dynamic cultural and political change in the United States."⁴⁹

In contrast, in Europe the changing attitudes towards the state were expressed more clearly in the emergence of the so-called new social movements and the hitherto unknown civic vitality they expressed. More than in the US, Europe's single-issue movements have put their stamp upon the historical image of Western European societies in the 1970s.⁵⁰ German and Dutch books and exhibitions reflect this identification of European new social movements with the political culture of the era,⁵¹ and there is much to be said for this. These movements brought a new quality to public protest, because they succeeded in mobilizing relatively large audiences in defense of seemingly new themes that hitherto had only been concerns of small elitist fringes, such as the ecology, women's rights, questions of participatory democracy, and third world solidarity.⁵²

With hindsight, the European new social movements can be seen to have functioned as mediators in the process of integrating the leftist alternative milieus, from which most of them sprang, into political systems that – for their part – during the process opened themselves more to an exchange of ideas and arguments with society. Although many of these movements had begun in leftist alternative milieus, they managed to outgrow these and incorporate other citizens who did not share their earlier protest experiences or revolutionary romanticism. Especially in the environmental and the antinuclear movement, but also in local protest movements against urban renewal projects in which squatters worked together with longtime inhabitants of old city quarters, differing value systems (material and post-material, if you will) came in contact and started bleeding into each other. Not only did this lead to a proliferation of values and lifestyles originating in alternative milieus to broader sections of society, but it also had a moderating effect on these leftist alternative protest cir-

⁴⁹ Schulman: *The Seventies*, fn 3, p. 256.

⁵⁰ This contrast might also explain why the concept of new social movements has never attained a similar popularity among American academics (See: Hanspeter Kriesi et al.: *New Social Movements in Europe – A comparative analysis*, Minneapolis 1995, p. 238).

⁵¹ For instance: Gabriele Dietze/Maruta Schmidt/Kristine von Soden (eds): *Wild + zahm – Die siebziger Jahre*, Berlin 1997; Marian van der Klein/Saskia Wieringa (eds.): *Alles kon anders – Protestrepertoires in Nederland, 1965–2005*, Amsterdam 2006; Hans Timmermans (ed.): *70's in Nijmegen – Tien creatieve aksiejaren*, Nijmegen 2007.

⁵² Karl-Werner Brand: "Vergleichendes Resümee," in: *Neue soziale Bewegungen in Westeuropa und den USA – Ein internationaler Vergleich*, ed. by idem, Frankfurt a. M. 1985, pp. 306–334, p. 310.

cles, softening their attitudes towards (local) government and causing their politics to be more pragmatic.

Interestingly, this development did not implicate that the public sphere and indeed government politics lost relevance to the general public in the way they did in the US. Far from it. In Europe the state remained at the center of thinking about social progress and wealth, and no matter how 'new' they were, its social movements basically petitioned their governments to reform the whole of society, instead of implementing the solutions they – as social movements – desired in their own parts of society. It was not until the early 1980s that monetary politics and market oriented socio-economic politics gained dominance and even after that, may be with the possible exception of Thatcherite Britain, the entrepreneur was never to be the kind of role model it was on the other side of the Great Pond.

I began this contribution by stating my desire to find a way to tie the manifold and detailed studies about the 1970s in Western Europe and the US together, or at least increase awareness of both the similarities and differences of developments in scores of Western countries in that tumultuous decade. The examples of the left-wing groups and their resistance against perceived all-powerful states and the emergence of new social movements, that both in sometimes paradoxical ways were mirroring the changing attitudes towards the state, and towards state-citizen-society relations, could in my view provide the knot that ties all research of the 1970s together. It would be desirable if all historians working on the Seventies would relate their projects to this question.