Politics, Symbols and the Public Sphere: The Protests against Nuclear Weapons in Britain and West Germany, 1958–1963

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Historians have increasingly recognised the importance of symbols and symbolic meanings for politics.[1] This article seeks to contribute to this debate by giving an outline of the symbolic politics of the British and West German protests against nuclear weapons in the late 1950s and early 1960s, which were the most important movements against nuclear weapons in Western Europe at the time. More than other political actors, social movements rely on the symbolic meanings of their protests, as they do not have institutional channels through which they can further their aims.[2]

Specifically, this article considers the West German Campaign against Atomic Death ("Kampagne Kampf dem Atomtod") and the Easter March movement as well as its British counterparts, the "Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament" (CND) and the "Committee of 100". Large-scale organised protests emerged in both countries in 1958. Attendance in the British marches declined rapidly from 1963 onwards when the international situation seemed to have become more stable in the wake of the Cuban missile crisis in autumn 1962 and negotiations for a partial test-ban treaty in 1963. In West Germany, the movement changed its focus from nuclear disarmament to disarmament in general and to the Vietnam War from 1963 onwards.

Examining the symbolics of protests illuminates the specific cultural national codes which the protest movements tried to invoke or transcend.[3] We can thus glimpse at the nationally specific processes of social and cultural change in Britain and the Federal Republic. Symbols do not just form a passive reservoir for protest action which can be tapped or transcended. Rather, protesters actively create them. This article tries to analyse the negotiations within the movements about the symbolic politics of protest. It conceptualises the pro-

[1] Thomas Mergel, Überlegungen zu einer Kulturgeschichte der Politik, in: *Geschichte und Gesellschaft* 28 (2002), pp. 574-606. For sociological and anthropological studies cf. Thomas Ballistier, *Straßenprotest. Formen oppositioneller Politik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland*, Münster 1996, and Kathrin Fahlenbach, *Protest-Inszenierungen. Visuelle Kommunikation und kollektive Identitäten in Protestbewegungen*, Opladen 2002.

[2] A more thorough analysis can be found in the author's Oxford D. Phil. thesis on the protests against nuclear weapons in Britain and West Germany, 1957–1964.

[3] Murray Edelman, *The Symbolic Uses of Politics*, Urbana 1967, p. 11.

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tests as the creation of a particular public sphere by means of "street politics" and as crucial factors in establishing an emotional community of protesters both in a national and in a transnational context.[4]

Social movements stage protests not only to impress political opponents. They also seek the attention of the wider public.[5] The creation of such a public sphere which goes beyond the immediate reach of those present is essentially political.[6] This means that there are two levels of political reality: one that refers to the real event, and the other which refers to the drama which is played out in politics.[7] We therefore need to examine the interaction between representations in the media, the movements' self-representations and the politics of the protest movements.[8]

Finding adequate sources which allow a historical examination of these issues can be problematic. Social movements are rather loose coalitions and frequently lack formal organisation. Hence, archival material does not always reveal the symbolic meanings and the dynamics of protests. It is particularly difficult to find information about the local level. Pamphlets, movement journals, newspaper sources, and campaign films are often more helpful for the historian of protest than more traditional archival sources, such as committee minutes or letters. Most of this material is still in the activists' private possession, and a considerable amount has probably been lost. This is particularly true for Germany. In the late 1960s, a fire in the head office of the Easter March campaign destroyed a lot of material. Also, the German Easter Marches' relative lack of formal organisation means that there is no single movement archive like in Britain.

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[4] Cf. Thomas Lindenberger, *Straßenpolitik. Zur Sozialgeschichte der öffentlichen Ordnung in Berlin 1900 bis 1914*, Bonn 1995, here p. 15, p. 17.

[5] Dieter Rucht, Medienstrategien sozialer Bewegungen, in: *Forschungsjournal Neue Soziale Bewegungen* 16 (2003) Issue 1, pp. 7-13; William A. Gamson/Gadi Wolfsfeld, Movements and Media as Interacting Systems, in: *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 528 (1993), pp. 114-125. As a case study: Melvin Small, *Covering Dissent. The media and the anti-Vietnam War movement*, New Brunswick 1994.

[6] Jürgen Gerhards/Friedhelm Neidhardt, Strukturen und Funktionen moderner Öffentlichkeit. Fragestellungen und Ansätze, in: Stefan Müller-Dohm/Klaus Neumann-Braun (eds.), *Öffentlichkeit – Kultur – Massenkommunikation*, Oldenburg 1991, pp. 31-90, p. 40; Friedhelm Neidhardt, Öffentlichkeit, öffentliche Meinung, soziale Bewegungen, in: idem (ed.), *Öffentlichkeit, öffentliche Meinung, soziale Bewegungen*, Opladen 1994, pp. 7-41.

[7] Edelman, *Symbolic Uses of Politics* (fn. 3); Ulrich Sarcinelli, Symbolische Politik und politische Kultur: Das Kommunikationsritual als politische Wirklichkeit, in: *Politische Vierteljahresschrift* 30 (1989), pp. 292-309.

[8] Cf. also Habbo Knoch, Bewegende Momente. Dokumentarfotografie und die Politisierung der westdeutschen Öffentlichkeit, in: Bernd Weisbrod (ed.), *Die Politik der Öffentlichkeit – Die Öffentlichkeit der Politik. Politische Medialisierung in der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik*, Göttingen 2003, pp. 96-122.

Nevertheless, historians can find relevant sources in a variety of places. For the West German Campaign against Atomic Death, the SPD and trade union archives hold an abundance of material.[9] For the Easter Marches, activists' private collections are important, but some collections in public archives are noteworthy. The Hamburg "Institut für Sozialforschung" keeps some valuable material particularly for the Hamburg area.[10] The Hamburg-based "Archiv Aktiv" specialises in gathering material on non-violent direct action.[11] The Archive for Extra-Parliamentary Opposition and Social Movements ("Archiv APO und soziale Bewegungen") at the Free University Berlin is also a useful port of call.[12] All these archives also hold copies of pamphlets, movement papers and press clippings. The archival situation for the British campaign is more straightforward. This reflects both the higher degree of centralisation of British politics and CND's stronger organisation. The CND papers are kept at the British Library for Political and Economic Science and at the Modern Records Centre at the University of Warwick.[13] Material on the Committee of 100 is available in the International Institute for Social History, Amsterdam.[14] The main peace-movement journals, such as "Peace News" and "Sanity", can be found in all British copyright libraries. The newspaper division of the British Library in Colindale is an extremely useful source of information, even for German newspaper sources.[15] Local and regional CND collections can be found easily through the National Register of Archives.[16]

1. The protests against nuclear weapons in Britain and West Germany: an overview

The British and West German anti-nuclear-weapons movements of the late 1950s and the early 1960s not only stood out as the strongest of their kind in Western Europe but also mobilised considerable support by the standard of protest movements in general. In 1959, 20,000 to 25,000 people took part in the final rally of the second annual Easter March between the nuclear weapons establishment in Aldermaston, Berkshire, and central London. For 1960, the estimates for the final rally on Trafalgar Square vary between 60,000 and 100,000 participants. In 1961, about 45,000 people participated.[17] In the Fe-

[9] <http://www.fes.de/archive/index_gr.html>.
[10] <http://www.his-online.de/archiv/index.htm>.
[11] <http://www.archiv-aktiv.de>.
[12] <http://www.fu-berlin.de/APO-archiv>.
[13] <http://www.lse.ac.uk/library/archive>, <http://www2.warwick.ac.uk/services/library/mrc>.
[14] <http://www.iisg.nl>.
[15] <http://www.bl.uk/collections/newspapers.html>.
[16] <http://www.nra.nationalarchives.gov.uk/nra>.

deral Republic, the Easter Marches, founded after the British example, were similarly popular. In 1961, about 23,000 people participated in the final Easter March rally. By 1964, more than 100,000 in the whole of Germany took part. The Campaign against Atomic Death, which had been organised by the SPD and the trade unions, had mobilised more than 200,000 people across West Germany.[18]

Both the British and the West German movement started in the mid-1950s as protests against nuclear weapons tests and the radiation emanating from them. In Britain, a group of left-wing intellectuals founded the CND in early 1958 to bring together previous movements and to campaign for a policy of unilateral nuclear disarmament. In autumn 1960, a more radical group around the philosopher Bertrand Russell and his assistant Ralph Schoenman left CND and founded the Committee of 100.[19]

In West Germany, public awareness of the dangers of nuclear weapons began at around the same time as in Britain, although organisations were formed much later. As in Britain, the West German movement had its roots in concerns about the dangers of nuclear-weapons tests. In early 1958, the Social Democratic Party (SPD) and the trade unions launched the Campaign against Atomic Death when the Adenauer Government made public its plans to acquire nuclear-capable equipment for the German Army. A new movement emerged after the SPD had abandoned the Campaign in the wake of their programmatic reforms at Bad Godesberg.[20] In 1960, a small group of the "Easter Marches of Atomic Weapons Opponents" marched for the first time in northern Germany. From 1961, there were marches all over the country. In September 1962, the movement changed its name to "Easter Marches of Atomic Weapons Opponents – Campaign for Disarmament".[21]

The British and West German movements sought to establish organisational transnational links through the newly-founded "European Federation against Nuclear Arms" and, from 1963 onwards, through the "International

[17] Cf. Richard Taylor, *Against the Bomb. The British Peace Movement 1958–1965*, Oxford 1988, p. 42, p. 57, p. 77, fn. 16.

[18] Lawrence S. Wittner, *Resisting the Bomb. A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement 1954–1970*, Stanford 1997, p. 65, p. 220; Hans Karl Rupp, *Außerparlamentarische Opposition in der Ära Adenauer: Der Kampf gegen die Atombewaffnung in den fünfziger Jahren. Eine Studie zur innenpolitischen Entwicklung der Bundesrepublik*, Cologne 1984, pp. 130-143.

[19] The standard work is Taylor, *Against the Bomb* (fn. 17).

[20] On continuities with earlier protest movements cf. Jost Dülffer, The Movement against Rearmament 1951–55 and the movement against nuclear armament 1957/59 in the Federal Republic: A Comparison, in: Maurice Vaïsse (ed.), *Le pacifisme en Europe des années 1920 aux années 1950*, Brussels 1993, pp. 417-434.

[21] The standard works are: Rupp, *Außerparlamentarische Opposition* (fn. 18); Karl A. Otto, *Vom Ostermarsch zur APO. Geschichte der ausserparlamentarischen Opposition in der Bundesrepublik 1960–1970*, Frankfurt a.M. 1982.

Confederation of Disarmament and Peace". Yet these newly-founded organisations remained by and large inefficient and under-financed bodies. Instead, the "War Resisters' International", with its focus on the radical, assumed the centre for transnational links between the movements, organised the exchange of marchers and brought together pacifists from different countries. By and large, the transnational community of protesters was a product of the simultaneous (self-)representation of the movements in the media: it was communication more than anything else which made the movements appear to be a transnational political force.[22]

2. Forms of protest

The British and West German activists constantly discussed forms of protest. The spectrum of protests ranged from petitions and collection of signatures, open letters and press conferences to protest marches, vigils and the more controversial sit-downs. In the period under examination both societies saw a widening of the repertoires of collective action. They began to include forms of protest in which the action itself, reported in the media, conveyed the message. The shift in protest repertoires was more pronounced in the Federal Republic, however. While CND's main form of protest was the annual march between the atomic weapons research establishment Aldermaston and London, the Campaign against Atomic Death relied on protest forms, such as mass rallies, which followed labour movement traditions. During the second phase of the West German campaign, annual Easter Marches, imported from Britain, also became the main form of protest in the Federal Republic. Due to the essentially reflexive character of these debates, discussions about forms of protest need to be explored on two levels: the level of the movements themselves and the ways in which the movements communicated with their environment.

Initially, both movements presented themselves as educators of the public. In almost every CND pamphlet one can find expressions of regret of the "widespread ignorance of people".[23] The emphasis on education remained until at least 1963 and even gained in importance when CND began to lose some of its support. In mid-1961, the CND conference passed a motion that encouraged "[t]he Campaign [to] spend far more time on putting its case in reasoned arguments and less on demonstrations".[24] Accordingly, the British

[22] Cf. Holger Nehring, Toward a social history of transnational relations: The British and West German protests against nuclear weapons, 1957–1964, in: Jessica Gienow-Hecht (ed.), *De-centering America. New Directions in Culture and International History*, New York 2005 (in preparation).

[23] Notes for the House of Lords Motion, 22 January 1959: Manchester Local Archives and Studies Unit [MLASU] M 11 8/1.

protesters did not seek to disturb public life, but to revitalise it.[25] In 1959, the CND Annual Conference agreed that "to preserve the dignity and unity of the March […] and to prevent invidious distinction or misunderstanding, it should be conducted without shouting of slogans and with periods of silence".[26] And the executive sub-committee of the Campaign recommended again in January 1963 that there should be less "shouting of slogans" on the Marches.[27]

These discussions about respectability were the result of the consensus which had emerged after CND's founding. While the founders had intended CND to be a traditional single-issue pressure group along the lines of previous British voluntary associations, others had sought a more active political stance. Fierce discussions thus ensued in 1958 about whether CND should join the pacifist "Direct Action Committee" officially on its first Easter March from London to Aldermaston.[28] In particular, most in the CND executive committee disapproved of measures of civil disobedience. Civil disobedience was called "dubious" and "dangerous" in many CND communications – terms that were reserved for denoting Communist subversion in the Federal Republic. In response to direct action campaigns, the CND Executive Committee reaffirmed "that the Campaign is a national Campaign designed both for the organisation of meetings and the production of literature, and also for any such action as seems to the Executive likely to advance this purpose – persuasion of Britain to renounce unilaterally production and possession of nuclear weapons".[29]

Although the reality of the Marches did not mirror the strict rules put forward by the organisers, CND maintained its original pressure-group focus as greater numbers of young New Left supporters joined its ranks. Its protests continued to be directed against those in power in Westminster and in Whitehall, the MPs and the British government. Accordingly, the most important protests for CND were those which took place in the heart of London's government district rather than those at missile bases and at governmental research centres. The public sphere created in assemblies therefore remained comparatively more important than in West Germany.[30]

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[24] CND National Executive Committee Minutes, 28 May 1961, p. 3: Modern Records Centre, University of Warwick, Coventry [MRC] MSS. 181.

[25] For pictures cf. Wolfgang Kraushaar, *Die Protestchronik*, *vol. 3: 1957–1959,* Hamburg 1996, pp. 1838-1839.

[26] CND Newsletter, March 1960, p. 3.

[27] CND National Executive Committee Minutes, 12 January 1963, p. 2. Cf. also ibid., 7/8 December 1963, p. 2.

[28] Taylor, *Against the Bomb* (fn. 17), pp. 28-32.

[29] Minutes of the CND Executive Committee, 6 May 1958: MRC MSS. 181.

[30] Cf. Taylor, *Against the Bomb* (fn. 17), pp. 45-49, pp. 76-81.

Those who disagreed with this pressure-group focus tended to leave for the Committee of 100. The Committee found media-oriented protests at missile bases a much more congenial way of campaigning. Rather than campaigning for specific political aims, their goal was to expose the power structures within the British state: the militarisation of British politics and the violence of the British military-industrial complex. They consciously sought to provoke police brutality in order to get it reported in the national media.[31]

Like CND, the SPD intended to "educate" the public during the first phase of the protests. But it sought to influence politics more directly than its British counterpart. Apart from protest marches and vigils, the Campaign against Atomic Death supported plebiscites in spring and early summer 1958 in order to overrule the pro-nuclear decisions of the Christian Democratic majority in the German parliament. After the Federal Constitutional Court had ruled these plebiscites unconstitutional,[32] the Campaign lost much of its focus and was now very much dependent on smaller-scale activities on the local level. Its final action was a petition campaign in favour of a Red Cross Convention on nuclear weapons. Postcards were distributed among the population, which was asked to forward them to the Government.[33]

In West Germany, the emphasis on public education receded with the adoption of the Easter Marches after the British example. The organisers of the first German Easter March had participated in the second British Aldermaston March and looked for an adaptation to the West German context after the SPD's campaign had run out of steam. The Hamburg-based group around the teacher Hans Konrad Tempel had strong roots in the war resisters' movement and a special discussion forum on the non-violent solution of conflicts.[34] Due to the different protest traditions and the different social and political environments, the West German Easter Marches thus looked quite different from the British model. While all British Easter Marches went the 50 miles from the Nuclear Weapons Research Establishment Aldermaston to London (Fig. 1), the West German marches were much more regionalised. The German organisers planned several smaller marches through the rural regions of Northern Germany to what they called the "death centre" Bergen-Hohne, the site of British barracks with nuclear weapons, which was close to the site of the former Bergen-Belsen concentration camp.

[31] Adam Roberts, The Police at Midnight, in: *New Statesman*, 22 September 1961.

[32] Cf. the material of the German Ministry of the Interior: Bundesarchiv Koblenz [BAK], B106/2437-2442.

[33] Cf. draft for a circular, 27 October 1959: Archiv der sozialen Demokratie, Bonn [AdsD], 2/PVAM000007.

[34] Cf. Johannes Bastian, Ein Blick in die Geschichte der Friedensbewegung. Interviews mit Hans-Konrad Tempel und Horst Bethge, in: *Westermanns Pädagogische Beiträge* 34 (1982) Issue 3, pp. 120-123, here p. 121.

Fig. 1: Aldermaston March, London 1958
(Source: <http://www.vredesmuseum.nl/t_vision/paneel12.html>)

Rather than protesting at the heart of political decision-making, the West German protesters chose a method which highlighted their commitment to the cause: they sought to represent themselves as the other and better Germany. Marching through rainy and cold weather over Easter instead of going for a leisurely walk with their families served as a symbol for this commitment (Fig. 2).[35]

From 1961 onwards, there were marches all over Germany, in the north, in the west, in the south west and in the south east. While they now usually ended in larger cities, such as Hamburg, Munich, or Dortmund, their decentralised character continued. This not only had to do with the federal character of the West German polity, but it also reflected the fact that there was, in the late 1950s and early 1960s, still no accepted central place of protest in West Germany, such as Westminster, Whitehall and Hyde Park in London, or the Mall in Washington D.C.[36] Many still regarded Bonn merely as a provisional capital.

[35] Cf. Hans-Konrad and Helga Tempel, "*...daß man da wohnen möge". Vision und Erfahrung eines gemeinsamen Lebens*, Bad Pyrmont 1986, p. 11.

Conditions in Berlin were not conducive to protests either: due to fears of communist subversion, rules were particularly strict there.[37] Active involvement in the marches alone was thus already political. The West German protesters depended much more than their British counterparts on the media to portray them as one coherent movement: only if the media reported the marches through abandoned rural areas could protesters hope to alert the population at large to their cause.

Fig. 2: Easter March 1962, Bergen-Hohne to Hamburg
(Source: <http://www.archiv-aktiv.org>)

The West German Easter March organisers, albeit at least partly influenced by certain traditions of non-violent civil disobedience, did not opt for a radically new approach of campaigning. There were plans to found a West German equivalent to the British Committee of 100 in order to give a material expression to written and spoken demands, but they came to no avail.[38] In the early 1960s, the establishment of a public sphere beyond the labour and peace movements was itself a political act. Instead of going for the traditional Easter walk with their families, the protesters went on the march, thus redefining the

[36] On Washington, D.C. as a national protest site cf. Lucy G. Barber, *Marching on Washington. The Forging of an American Political Tradition*, Berkeley 2002.
[37] Cf. Andreas W. Daum, *Kennedy in Berlin*, Paderborn 2003, pp. 159-160.
[38] Cf. Möglichkeiten einer deutschen außerparlamentarischen Opposition, n.d. [c. 1961]: Christel Küpper collection, Institut für Zeitgeschichte, Munich [IfZ], ED 702-19; letter Heinrich Kloppenburg to Wilhelm Keller, 11 December 1961: Hans-Werner-Richter-Archiv, Stiftung Archiv Akademie der Künste, Berlin, 72.86.519.

Christian message of Easter in explicitly political terms. They went beyond the consensus about democracy which had been established after the Second World War.[39]

The feature which the Easter Marchers, like their British counterparts, emphasised most was "discipline".[40] This emphasis did not remain unchallenged, however. Some people wanted to reconsider the length of the marches: they claimed that four days were too demanding and discouraged potential participants. Others did not regard the marches as manifestations of sombre mourning. Instead, by overcoming the silence and introducing music on the marches, they wanted to establish the marches as signs of life.[41] Traditional pacifists complained, however, that music would ridicule the "earnest" character of the march; they feared, very much in line with the mainstream discourses on popular music, that "jazz bands" would turn the Easter Marches into a "joke".[42] With the advent of a much younger clientele, however, a certain kind of lifestyle, assembled from various youth and labour movement traditions came to characterise the marches. In the later 1960s, they thus appeared as a "left-wing, guitar-playing *Wandervogel*".[43]

By communicating about these unfamiliar forms of protests, the press and the participants turned them into the key characteristics of the whole 1960s. It is important to bear in mind, however, that the majority of protests continued to be local: the national press hardly noticed many petitions, small vigils and traditional protest marches which took place on the local level. Even after these novel ways of protesting had taken hold, more traditional vigils persisted in other kinds of protests. Since 1961, Hiroshima Day (6 August) and Anti-War Day (1 September, commemorating the outbreak of the Second World War) were arenas of protests where silent vigils, often with torches, continued to dominate the scene (cf. Fig. 3). They were intended to counterbalance other

[39] On this consensus cf. Martin Conway, The Rise and Fall of Western Europe's Democratic Age, 1945–1973, in: *Contemporary European History* 13 (2004), pp. 67-88.

[40] Cf., for example, the leaflets in BAK, ZSg. 1-262/1, and in IfZ, ED 702/3.

[41] Helmut Gollwitzer, Osterrede 64, Ostermarsch 63. Bericht über die Kampagne für Abrüstung, p. 9: BAK, ZSg. 1-262/1, fol. 3.

[42] Cf., for example, Jazz, in: *Wir sind jung* (1958) Issue 3, p. 9; Circular by Hans-Konrad Tempel, Hamburg, n.d. [c. May 1961]: Private Archives, Hans-Konrad Tempel, Ahrenburg [AT]. On the discourses about popular music cf. Uta G. Poiger, *Jazz, Rock and Rebels. Cold War Politics and American Culture in a Divided Germany*, Berkeley 2000.

[43] Literally "hiker": an allusion to the Wandervogel youth movement. See *Mannheimer Morgen*, 16 June 1967. Cf. also Detlef Siegfried, Vom Teenager zur Pop-Revolution. Politisierungstendenzen in der westdeutschen Jugendkultur 1959 bis 1968, in: Axel Schildt/Detlef Siegfried/Karl Christian Lammers (eds.), *Dynamische Zeiten. Die 60er Jahre in den beiden deutschen Gesellschaften*, Hamburg 2000, pp. 582-623, here pp. 610-611. On traditions cf. Arno Klönne/Jürgen Reulecke, "Restgeschichte" und "neue Romantik". Ein Gespräch über Bündische Jugend in der Nachkriegszeit, in: Franz Werner Kersting (ed.), *Jugend vor einer Welt in Trümmern. Erfahrungen und Verhältnisse der Jugend zwischen Hitler- und Nachkriegsdeutschland*, Weinheim 1998.

national days of memory, such as Armistice Day in Britain, or the commemorations of 17 June 1953 in the Federal Republic.[44] On these protests, female participants often challenged the male gendering of "courage" and "bravery" by claiming these terms for their own protests.[45] The protesters continued to use the symbols of official commemorations, however – wreath-laying and silent vigils in Britain; vigils and processions with torches in the Federal Republic. Especially the West German movement was unable to transcend the remembrance of the war from a perspective of victimhood.[46]

Fig. 3: Vigil, Campaign against Atomic Death, with Heinz Kloppenburg (left) und Martin Niemöller (right), Cologne, 6 August 1958. (Source: Bundesarchiv Koblenz, BA Bild 183-57383-1)

[44] On Armistice Day in the UK cf., for example, *Peace News*, 7 November 1958, p. 1; on 1 September in the Federal Republic cf. Kriegsgegner protestierten mit Fackeln, in: *Mannheimer Morgen*, 3 September 1965. On the celebrations of 17 June 1953 cf. Edgar Wolfrum, *Geschichtspolitik in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland. Der Weg zur bundesrepublikanischen Erinnerung 1948–1990*, Darmstadt 1999.

[45] Women ask why. An intelligent women's guide to nuclear disarmament, CND pamphlet, n.d. [1962]: MRC MSS. 181/4.

[46] Cf. Sabine Behrenbeck, The Transformation of Sacrifice: German Identity Between Heroic Narrative and Economic Success, in: Paul Betts/Greg Eghigian (eds.), *Pain and Prosperity. Reconsidering Twentieth-Century German History*, Stanford 2003, pp. 110-136, here pp. 131-134; Elisabeth Domansky, A Lost War. World War II in Postwar German Memory, in: Alvin H. Rosenfeld (ed.), *Thinking about the Holocaust. After Half a Century*, Bloomington 1997, pp. 233-272.

In both countries, Quakers and traditional pacifist groups, in particular, highlighted the importance of "non-violent resistance" as an adequate expression of protests against the arms race – a form of protest certain pacifist groups had discussed since the 1920s when critically engaging with Gandhi's non-violent campaigns in India. In contrast to Britain (and despite Britain's strong pacifist traditions), these groups, backed by the West German New Left, gained influence within the West German Easter March campaign.

The West German activists learned about these new forms of protest primarily through the West German networks close to the War Resisters' International (WRI). The journals of the WRI's German branches carried regular reports on protest campaigns in other countries, especially on the campaigns of the British Committee of 100. Personal links also played an important role. The observation of movements in other countries fulfilled two functions for the West German activists: it reassured them of their own goals; and it prompted them to engage more closely with their own protest traditions. These traditions had, initially, little to do with the Marxism of the Frankfurt School, but rather with the writings of the Indian Mahatma Gandhi and the American writer Henry Thoreau. Radical German pacifists had discussed their ideas of non-violent civil disobedience since the 1920s. In the 1950s, the transnational social space around the WRI secured an audience for these ideas, which now reached beyond strictly pacifist circles. The WRI's ideas appealed to the West German protesters in search for new forms of protest as they emphasised human solidarity, actions, and emotions, rather than their precise political message. By using the word "resistance", West German protesters interpreted their activism as compensation for the lack of resistance during the Third Reich.[47] Moreover, the desire to tame violence after the catastrophic experiences of the Second World War seemed to make this strategy particularly appropriate. When the West German student protesters in the late 1960s resorted to campaigns of non-violent civil disobedience, to sit-downs and occupations of buildings, this was not so much due to a simple diffusion of ideas from the United States to West Germany. It was rather because the protesters in the early 1960s had managed to broaden the appeal of radical pacifism.[48]

In Britain, these radical pacifist groups only played a marginal role within the movement. The emphasis on "proper politics" in CND prevented this group from transcending the boundaries of traditional protest politics in Britain.[49] Although the Committee of 100 employed non-violent disobedience

[47] Cf. for similar developments in the United States: James Tracy, *Direct Action. Radical Pacifism from the Union Eight to the Chicago Seven*, Chicago 1996, chapters 1-4.

[48] Wolfgang Kraushaar, by contrast, stresses the import of "civil disobedience" from the United States (cf. Die transatlantische Protestkultur. Der zivile Ungehorsam als amerikanisches Exempel und als bundesdeutsche Adaption, in: idem, *1968 als Mythos, Chiffre und Zäsur*, Hamburg 2000, pp. 53-80).

and gained much more media attention than CND's more conventional protests, its protests did not lead to the growth of a large-scale movement. As the debate about forms of protests in Britain was not primarily waged by reference to Communism but to "proper politics", there was a lack of incentive for many to continue to protest. The reasons for the lack of major student protests in 1960s' Britain have to be sought in this specific interaction between the Cold War and social and political traditions rather than in the specific tranquil features of political culture or socio-economic structures.

3. Media and symbolic politics

The ways in which protest movements appeared in public and how we perceive them today are themselves products of the communications between the protest movements and the public. In order to grasp the symbolics of protest fully, we need to examine the communication between protest movements and their environment as well. The leaflets, flyers, pamphlets, photographs, and even films of the protests are evidence for the protesters' considerable communication efforts. References to all kinds of statistics to describe the participants were themselves direct products of the movements' public relations efforts.[50]

This use of the media was not novel. What was new was that the protest movements were no longer content with a public sphere that only comprised participant observers. To an unprecedented degree, they came to rely on the media to allow mutual observation and thus to generate a public sphere.[51] This medialisation allowed many more to observe the protests even when they were not personally present. Generally speaking, the West German Easter March movement sought media attention much more consciously than CND, which remained within the framework of a more traditional single-issue pressure group.

The British movement already possessed its own media, while the West German movement still needed to establish them. Although the CND executive frequently bemoaned the lack of reporting in the daily press at least until the early 1960s, the fact that many of its members had direct outlets in left-wing publications, such as the "New Statesman", or had connections to the BBC seems to have given their efforts to appear in the media a less dramatic tone

[49] Frank E. Myers, Civil Disobedience and Organizational Change: The British Committee of 100, in: *Political Science Quarterly* 86 (1971), pp. 92-112; Taylor, *Against the Bomb* (fn. 17), pp. 190-269.

[50] Cf. in general Bernd Weisbrod, Öffentlichkeit als politischer Prozeß. Dimensionen der politischen Medialisierung in der Geschichte der Bundesrepublik, in: idem, *Die Politik der Öffentlichkeit* (fn. 8), pp. 11-25, here p. 12.

[51] On this concept of the public sphere cf. Habbo Knoch/Daniel Morat (eds.), *Kommunikation als Beobachtung. Medienwandel und Gesellschaftsbilder1880–1960*, Munich 2003.

than that in the Federal Republic. Also, some of the national newspapers, such as "The Times" and "The Guardian" initially even carried favourable reports about the campaign.[52] From 1960, CND printed its own monthly journal, "Sanity". Peace protesters in Britain also read the weekly "Peace News" which was published by the traditionally pacifist Peace Pledge Union.

While the Campaign against Atomic Death could rely on the SPD's press and public relations machinery and started the journal "Atomzeitalter" (Atomic Age),[53] the Easter Marches found it much more difficult to make themselves known to the general public. Apart from some regional newspapers, many of which leaned towards a Communist outlook, there were virtually no reports on the Easter Marches in the German national press. Ironically, some press reports stated dryly that there was nothing to report.[54] The German Easter March Committee did not have the financial resources to launch its own journal. Instead, it had to resort to producing a monthly ten-page newsletter to supplement its pamphlets and flyers, which contained more factual information and much less essayistic material than the British counterpart. This material focused on "objective" and primarily textual reporting. Only when the journal "Pläne" and journals such as "konkret" started reporting on the Easter Marches did the visualisation of symbols became feasible for a wider audience. In the early 1960s, television was still not important enough in either country to merit specific strategies.[55]

Both movements tapped the dominant cultural codes of rationality and reason against the government's atomic "madness", while the governments accused the protesters of overly emotional and unreasonable behaviour.[56] Particularly in the Federal Republic, this cultural code mattered: extra-parliamentary politics could easily be represented as a revival of National Socialist marches or as results of Communist subversion, particularly as the protesters' vocabulary continued to draw on terms such as "Einsatzgruppen" (task forces) and "Trupps" (troops) to refer to specific tactics.[57] Since the end of the Second World War, with the memory of the street battles of the Weimar Republic and Nuremberg party rallies still fresh in mind, marches had become suspect in German political cultural perceptions. Marches also evoked the evils of mass

[52] Taylor, *Against the Bomb* (fn. 17), p. 29.
[53] Cf. for example, IG Metall archives, AdsD, G1285.
[54] Ostermärsche wurden kaum beachtet, in: *Der Tagesspiegel*, 5 April 1961.
[55] Cf. Knut Hickethier, Medien, in: Christoph Führ/Carl-Ludwig Furck (eds.), *Handbuch der deutschen Bildungsgeschichte*, *vol. VI.1: Bundesrepublik*, Munich 1998, pp. 585-630, especially pp. 602-610.
[56] Cf. Angst – ein schlechter Ratgeber, in: *Westfälische Rundschau*, 18 November 1957; Atomwaffen und Atomangst, in: *Industriekurier,* 28 March 1958. For Britain cf. Benn W. Levy, Britain and the Bomb. The Fallacy of Nuclear Defence, CND pamphlet [n.d.], p. 3: MRC MSS. 181/4.
[57] Circular by Andreas Buro to the members of the working committees, 11 November 1961, annex 3: AT.

society: both the press and the police still assessed protests in terms of the discourse of the masses in the 1920s.[58]

The SPD and trade union organisers emphasised the campaign's character as an enlightening force by staging public meetings at which classical music was played.[59] The Easter marchers consciously sought to avoid the connection to right-wing marches either through silent discipline or a decidedly coloured performance with folk music and skiffle groups.[60] Yet even if the marches became more colourful, the chosen media continued to emphasise rationality and "Sachlichkeit" (matter-of-factness).[61] On the early marches, protesters emphasised their "normal" clothing.[62] The campaign's posters remained black and white, or black and orange, and tried to convey the message without visualisation.[63] From 1963/64, however, the cultural code started to change. There now emerged a very peculiar mixture of enlightening information and more spectacular forms of action, such as political cabaret or specific gags.[64] This change in emphasis not only shows the shift in political aims. It also highlights a different assessment of the audience: the campaigners thought that these new means of campaigning would allow them to reach their audience best.

The British campaign displayed a similar emphasis on rationality.[65] It tapped the specific version of British national identity which had emerged in response to the violence of the First World War and interpreted British society as a "peaceable kingdom": since the 1920s, the civility of extra-parliamentary protests in Britain had become a central demand for their legitimacy.[66] Cros-

[58] Cf. Ostermarsch 63. Bericht über die Kampagne für Abrüstung, p. 9: BAK, ZSg. 1-262/1, fol. 2. On the interpretations of the Hamburg police cf. Klaus Weinhauer, *Schutzpolizei in der Bundesrepublik. Zwischen Bürgerkrieg und Innerer Sicherheit: Die turbulenten sechziger Jahre*, Paderborn 2003, p. 275, p. 277, p. 297. On the discourse on "masses" cf. Axel Schildt, *Moderne Zeiten. Freizeit, Massenmedien und "Zeitgeist" in der Bundesrepublik der 50er Jahre*, Hamburg 1995, pp. 324-350.

[59] Kraushaar, *Protestchronik*, *vol. 3* (fn. 25), pp. 1822-1823.

[60] Minutes of the meeting of the Central Committee, 2/3 June 1962, Kassel, p. 2: AT. For a West German perception of the British marches cf. Kraushaar, *Protestchronik, vol. 3* (fn. 25), p. 1840.

[61] On the semantics of the term cf. Willibald Steinmetz, Anbetung und Dämonisierung des "Sachzwangs". Zur Archäologie einer deutschen Redefigur, in: Michael Jeismann (ed.), *Obsessionen. Beherrschende Gedanken im wissenschaftlichen Zeitalter*, Frankfurt a.M. 1995, pp. 293-333.

[62] Minutes of the meeting of the Central Committee, 2/3 June 1962, Kassel, p. 3: AT; "Wir legen Wert auf gute Rasur", in: *Spiegel*, 14 April 1965, pp. 68-71. Cf. the development: Günter Hammer, Mit Bärten und Gitarren, in: *Westfälische Rundschau*, 26 March 1967.

[63] For this argument see Thomas Mergel, Der mediale Stil der "Sachlichkeit". Die gebremste Amerikanisierung des Wahlkampfs in der alten Bundesrepublik, in: Weisbrod, *Die Politik der Öffentlichkeit* (fn. 8), pp. 29-53, here p. 38.

[64] Cf., for example, Die neue Agitation. Zu den Veranstaltungen des Ostermarsches, in: *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 30 March 1967.

[65] Levy, Britain and the Bomb (fn. 56).

sing these boundaries meant consciously transcending the dominant views about British national identity.[67]

Of central importance for this communication was the emphasis on moral actions and acts of conscience. The movements claimed that, in contrast to politicians, they paid attention to long-term questions of moral conduct in international affairs – the protests were rendered as the expression of truly human interests on a global scale. Specific Protestant traditions played a prominent role here. The idea of a metaphysical trans-moral conscience, which was conceived as an a priori fact of reason rather than a social product and which had developed within a certain strand of Protestant theology in the interwar years, can be found in the communications of both movements.[68] In Britain, the moral lead of the nation within a post-colonial Commonwealth was the second important source of these discourses of morality; in West Germany, the recreation of a morally sound nation after National Socialism played a major role.[69]

The media not only created the movements on a national scale. They also helped to bring about the impression of a movement which transcended national boundaries, although only relatively few direct exchanges took place between marchers. Movement and mass media enabled the activists to observe each other and thus created a common bond of emotions and actions on the marches, while different cultural assumptions and ideas drove the national groups apart. What was far more important was the observation among the activists that they were not alone and that they were united in a common cause when marching together. Communications between the two movements mostly took the form of mutual observation. These mutual observations served as powerful arguments. They demonstrated to the national publics that the protesters expressed the interests of people all over the world, and they also motivated their supporters.[70]

The relationship between the campaigns against nuclear weapons and the media also had more tangible and pragmatic aspects. The early correspondence of CND and of the Easter March Committee is full of complaints about the lack of media attention to their important causes.[71] The West German

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[66] Cf. Jon Lawrence, Forging a Peaceable Kingdom: War, Violence, and Fear of Brutalization in Post-First World War Britain, in: *Journal of Modern History* 75 (2003), pp. 557-589.

[67] Cf. Charles Townshend, *Making the Peace. Public Order and Public Security in Modern Britain*, Oxford 1993, pp. 132-137.

[68] Cf. Heinz Dieter Kittsteiner, Das deutsche Gewissen im 20. Jahrhundert, in: Richard Faber (ed.), *Politische Religion – Religiöse Politik*, Würzburg 1997, pp. 227-242, here pp. 234-235. The comparison shows, against Kittsteiner's argument, that the theology was not specifically German.

[69] Cf. Meredith Veldman, *Fantasy, the Bomb and the Greening of Britain. Romantic Protest 1945–1980*, Cambridge 1994, and Kraushaar, *Protestchronik*, *vol. 3* (fn. 25), p. 1822.

[70] For examples of such performative acts in a different campaign cf. Michael S. Foley, *Confronting the War Machine. Draft Resistance during the Vietnam War*, Chapel Hill 2003.

Easter March Committee collected press clippings much more keenly than CND and the Committee of 100.[72] The Easter March committee even published them for the use of its members and, indeed, the press itself. Since the Easter March Committee lacked its own publications, it produced information packs for the press containing details about the route of the marches and sent them to the local, regional and national press.[73] Thus they tried to establish a public sphere for the movements which they did not yet seem to have. The movements were concerned about being portrayed in a less than positive light. In Britain, the organisers were concerned about being called "cranks" or about being linked to the delinquent young "beatniks". Such attributes, they thought, would prevent many respectable sections of the population from identifying themselves with their aims. During the marches, there was thus an emphasis on appearing as orderly as possible.[74]

In Britain, the activists who disapproved of the Committee of 100's strategy of non-violent civil disobedience often mentioned the possible adverse reaction of the media to these kinds of protests. The supporters of civil disobedience also used the media as an argument for their form of protest. But they departed from a different concept of politics. While the more mainstream CND supporters regarded protest marches primarily as the demonstration of moral integrity, the Committee of 100 intended to use the protests themselves as the message to unveil the violent face of the British state. As Ray Monk has shown in his biography of Bertrand Russell, Ralph Schoenmann, one of the people who ran the Committee of 100, willingly employed the image of an old and helpless-looking man being carried away by the police to generate media attention.[75] And Russell himself mentions the importance of the media for this kind of protest in his autobiography: "[…] so long as constitutional methods were employed, it was very difficult – and often impossible – to cause the most important facts to be known. All great newspapers are against us. Television and radio gave us only grudging and brief opportunities for stating our case […]. It was very largely the difficulty of making our case known that drove some of us to the adoption of illegal methods. Our illegal actions, because they had sensational news value, were reported, and here and there, a newspaper would allow us to say why we did what."[76]

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[71] Cf., for example, minutes of the meeting of the Easter March Central Committee, Frankfurt a.M., 6/7 May 1961, p. 2: AT.

[72] Cf., for example, the very detailed lists for 1961 and 1962 in BAK, ZSg. 1-262/1, fol. 4.

[73] Cf. BAK, ZSg. 1-262/1.

[74] Cf. *Peace News*, 7 April 1961; *CND Bulletin*, January 1959, p. 2. On possible Communist subversion cf. *Peace News*, 11 January 1963, p. 6; ibid., 18 January 1963, p. 6; ibid., 25 January 1963, p. 3.

[75] Ray Monk, *Bertrand Russell. The Ghost of Madness 1921–1970*, London 2000, p. 415, p. 435.

[76] Speech to a Youth CND conference in Birmingham, 15 April 1961, quoted in Bertrand Russell, *The Autobiography of Bertrand Russell, vol. 3*, London 1978, p. 139.

The protests themselves and their portrayal in the media offered the chance to create powerful symbols beyond the written word, such as the arrest of the octagenarian Bertrand Russell by the police at a sit-down outside the Ministry of Defence in 1961 (Fig. 4). These protests were no longer moral statements, like the annual marches; they aimed to unveil the immorality of the political opponent. The media played a central part in achieving this. In West Germany, by contrast, these patterns did not figure prominently until the mid-1960s, when the student protesters and the protests against the Vietnam War staged discussions about new methods of protesting.

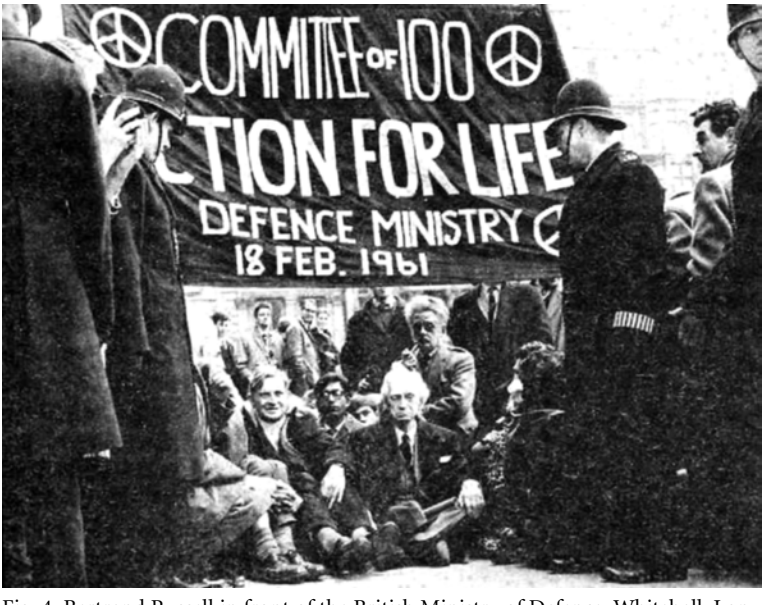

Fig. 4: Bertrand Russell in front of the British Ministry of Defence, Whitehall, London, 18 February 1961 (Source: John Minnion/Philip Bolsover [eds.], *The CND Story: The First Twenty-five Years of CND in the Words of the People Involved*, London 1983, p. 52.)

The differences between CND and the West German Easter Marches were also reflected in the role of intellectuals within the movement. Despite the German traditions of treating intellectuals as mandarins,[77] their involvement was comparatively less important than in Britain. Intellectuals formed the backbone of CND at least until 1960. They provided the Campaign with direct links to the British Establishment (if they were not themselves members) and

[77] Fritz K. Ringer, *The Decline of the German Mandarins. The German Academic Community 1890–1930*, Cambridge 1969.

with connections to the wider Labour movement. Canon Collins, Kingsley Martin, J. B. Priestley, and, until his resignation as President in 1960, Bertrand Russell, and all the other members of the executive played an active role in the everyday running of the Campaign. Even the much more radical Committee of 100 set great store by enlisting famous activists, most importantly Bertrand Russell, although it was run by "amateurs" who did not have direct access to the political system.

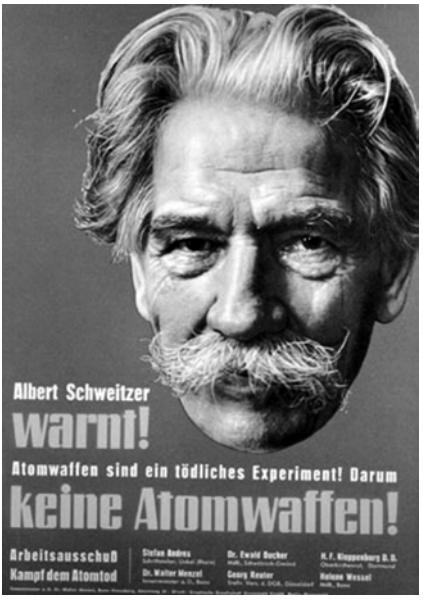

Fig. 5: Poster, Campaign against Atomic Death, 1958. Graphische Gesellschaft Grunewald GmbH (Source: <http://www.dhm.de/lemo/objekte/pict/JahreDesAufbausInOstUndWest_plakatKampfDemAtomtod/>)

In the mainstream movements in West Germany, by contrast, intellectuals contributed to the Campaign with speeches or short statements, or merely with their names. The Campaign against Atomic Death was run by professional organisers and politicians. Physicists like Max Born, famous writers like Alfred Andersch or famous theologians and clergymen like Martin Niemöller gave the occasional speech, but they were not as active as the British intellectuals who had founded CND. The support of intellectuals for the SPD-run campaign was of such symbolic significance that there were true battles between the SPD headquarters and the communist-run organisations for the support

of writers like Erich Kästner.[78] Albert Schweitzer was probably the most respected of these (Fig. 5).[79]

Personalities played a less important role in the West German Easter Marches' media strategies. The Easter Marches were run by amateurs with a political interest. Over the years, perceptions of public relations had changed in the West German movement, while they remained relatively stable in CND. The emphasis had begun to shift from influencing the public in West Germany as a whole to the creation of a public of its own within the Easter Marches. For this, the support of what could be presented as moral leaders was less important than formerly. In Britain, this change took place much more gradually than in the Federal Republic. Even the Committee of 100 did not think that it could be effective without enlisting Russell.

Symbols were central for both internal reassurance and external representation. The British movement developed the most powerful symbol for all anti-nuclear-weapons movements ever since. It was used by the protesters to assure themselves of a common cause in a world which they perceived as antagonistic. The sign, developed by the artist Gerhard Holtom, showed the semaphoric N and D (for nuclear disarmament), surrounded by a circle. The sign was intended to replace the white dove on blue ground which had been used by the communist-sponsored peace movements since the late 1940s. With its straightforward character, it was supposed to convey the message of rationality and objectivity. Even the material out of which badges were manufactured was chosen according to this requirement.[80] It is quite telling that the SPD-run campaign did not develop its own symbol, but chose Albert Schweitzer's head as a sign for the campaign.[81]

For the SPD, the primary aim was not to create a public sphere of its own, but to use the protests for the political aim of trumping the CDU's parliamentary majority in the extra-parliamentary arena. From about 1961 onwards, the British symbol could also be seen on the West German Easter Marches, increasingly interpreted as a rune of death.[82] Similarly, the demonstrators in both

[78] Cf. the material in BAK, Zsg. 1-262.

[79] Cf., for example: Mythos des 20. Jahrhunderts, in: *Spiegel*, 21 December 1960, pp. 50-61 (and the title page of that issue).

[80] Cf. Peggy Duff, *Left, Left, Left. A personal account of six protest campaigns 1945–1965*, London 1971, pp. 115-116, and *Peace News*, 26 June 1959, p. 2. On the general context for this in Britain cf. Raphael Samuel, *Theatres of Memory. Past and Present in Contemporary Culture*, London 1994; for the Federal Republic cf. Paul Betts, The Politics of Post-Fascist Aesthetics: 1950s West and East German Industrial Design, in: Richard Bessel/Dirk Schumann (eds.), *Life after Death. Approaches to a Cultural and Social History of Europe during the 1940s and 1950s*, Cambridge 2003, pp. 291-321.

[81] For a picture, cf. Kraushaar, *Protestchronik*, *vol. 3* (fn. 25), p. 1834.

[82] Circular no. 1, Ostermarsch der Atomwaffengegner, 11 November 1961: AT.

countries would carry posters which were kept entirely in black and white to show the seriousness of the situation.[83]

In the Federal Republic, a change took place with regard to the ways in which the movements assessed the public sphere. While the Campaign against Atomic Death had primarily used more traditional means of "propaganda" to influence the political process, the Easter Marchers increasingly sought to establish a public sphere of their own, whose very establishment was a political act. In Britain, by contrast, only the small Committee of 100 adopted this novel approach to campaigning. Music, such as John Brunner's song "Don't you hear the H-bombs' thunder?"[84] served to promote the protesters' collective identity, and conveyed political messages.

The pictures of the demonstrations displayed a code of legitimate state power until the end of the 1950s. The practice of protests appeared to be limited to certain times of the year and to certain localities, and did not show confrontation. Only at the beginning of the 1960s did confrontational pictures return to the West German media with regard to the Easter Marches and other protests: the police were shown carrying protesters away.[85] The media then interpreted them with a cultural code similar to the one they had used to describe the riots of mostly working-class youth ("Halbstarke"). In Britain, the conflicts of state authorities with "Mods" and "Rockers" formed the reference point.[86]

The West German movement, in particular, did not try to win over its public by showing pictures of police or military violence, but of the apocalypse: pictures of bombed German cities and, increasingly, Hiroshima were used to connect the campaign to the catastrophic war experiences of the West German population.[87] These pictures and descriptions thus served as a place of memory for the Second World War; even the name of the SPD campaign – "Campaign against Atomic Death" – highlighted the reservoir of catastrophic experiences in Germany. Increasingly, these catastrophic experiences were connected to the Holocaust.[88] Comparisons between Auschwitz and Hiroshima could frequently be found within West German campaign communicati-

[83] Cf. Kraushaar, *Protestchronik*, *vol. 3* (fn. 25), p. 1838, and Kurt Vogel, Ostermarsch der Atomwaffengegner, in: *Wir sind jung*, June 1961, Issue 2, pp. 5-7.

[84] <http://sniff.numachi.com/~rickheit/dtrad/pages/tiHBOMBTHN;ttMNRLFGRD.html>.

[85] Cf. Böse Ahnungen, in: *Spiegel*, 24 April 1963, pp. 33-34, and the article on the British "Spies for Peace" campaign ibid., p. 70.

[86] For Britain cf. Stanley Cohen, *Folk Devils and Moral Panics*, St. Albans 1972. For West Germany cf. Schildt, *Moderne Zeiten* (fn. 58), p. 177, and Knoch, Bewegende Momente (fn. 8).

[87] Cf. Internationale der Kriegsdienstgegner, leaflet, n.d. [c. 1963]: BAK, Zsg. 1 – 214/1, fol. 18, and the photograph in Kraushaar, *Protestchronik, vol. 3* (fn. 25), p. 1844, which shows protesters in front of the Kaiser-Wilhelm-Gedächtniskirche in Berlin.

[88] Habbo Knoch, *Die Tat als Bild. Fotografien des Holocaust in der deutschen Erinnerungskultur*, Hamburg 2001, p. 497, pp. 604-605, pp. 902-903.

ons. The activists on the first Easter March also established a direct connection between Hiroshima and the concentration camps of Bergen-Belsen. The Bavarian Easter Marches frequently stopped at the Dachau concentration camp during their protests. The Easter Marches were thus part of the move towards the visualisation of the Holocaust in West Germany.[89] Rather strikingly, a connection was also made between Auschwitz and Hiroshima in British communications.[90] This trope was, therefore, not a specific German form of coming to terms with the past. What was specifically German, however, was the way in which these connections appealed to the cultural codes in the Federal Republic. Whereas British protesters sought to make a connection with the failed policies of appeasement and use this as an argument against power politics more generally, West German protesters appealed to the catastrophic war experience of the West German public.

4. Conclusion

This comparison of the interaction between politics, symbols and the public sphere in Britain and West Germany shows the different ways in which the Cold War and war experiences influenced European societies. While the Easter Marches were regarded by many as the products of Communist subversion, the Committee of 100 activists were regarded as "beatniks" who disrupted the public peace.[91] It was this circumstance more than any other which guaranteed that there were no direct links between anti-nuclear-weapons and student protests in Britain: most CND activists did not want to cross the borders of "respectable politics", at least partly because links to the Labour Party and to the national press remained intact. Communication through the conventional channels seemed sufficient.

While the British Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament adhered, despite challenges from within and from the Committee of 100, to the codes of "good politics" in British political culture, the West German protests against nuclear weapons developed further. The importance of pacifist non-violent traditions, supported by the transnational links through the War Resisters' International, provided it with a reservoir of traditions which opened up new forms of protest. Although the West German protesters did not initially challenge the

[89] Atomwaffengegner demonstrieren, in: *Frankfurter Rundschau*, 21 April 1962; Jugend gedachte der Opfer. Am Antikriegstag: Feierstunde in Bergen-Belsen, in: *Gewerkschaftspost*, October 1963, Issue 10, p. 21. For the background cf. Knoch, *Tat als Bild* (fn. 88), pp. 493-494, and Harold Marcuse, *Legacies of Dachau. The Uses and Abuses of a Concentration Camp, 1933–2001*, Cambridge 2001.

[90] Cf. for example, *Peace News*, 4 August 1961, p. 1.

[91] Cf. Townshend, *Making the Peace* (fn. 67), pp. 132-137.

dominant cultural codes and continued to tap the code of "Sachlichkeit" (matter-of-factness) until 1964, they laid foundations for the staging of student protests. It was precisely the fact that, in the Federal Republic, the boundaries of politics were drawn along the lines of "communism"/"anti-communism" rather than "respectable"/"non-respectable" which prompted the protesters to establish their own and initially small public sphere. This was an important first step towards the emergence of a home-grown protest milieu in the later 1960s.[92]

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[92] Cf. Bernd Weisbrod, Medien als symbolische Form der Massengesellschaft. Die medialen Bedingungen von Öffentlichkeit im 20. Jahrhundert, in: *Historische Anthropologie* 9 (2001), pp. 270-283, especially pp. 280-281.