

## GREENING DEMOCRACY

*Greening Democracy* explains how nuclear energy became a seminal political issue and motivated new democratic engagement in West Germany during the 1970s. Using interviews, as well as the archives of environmental organizations and the Green Party, the book traces the development of anti-nuclear protest from the grassroots to the parliaments. It argues that worries about specific nuclear reactors became the basis for a widespread anti-nuclear movement only after government officials' unrelenting support for nuclear energy caused reactor opponents to become concerned about the state of their democracy. Surprisingly, many citizens thought transnationally, looking abroad for protest strategies, cooperating with activists in other countries, and conceiving of "Europe" as a potential means of circumventing recalcitrant officials. At this nexus between local action and global thinking, anti-nuclear protest became the basis for citizens' increasing engagement in self-governance, expanding their conception of democracy well beyond electoral politics and helping to make quotidian personal concerns political.

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# GREENING DEMOCRACY

*The Anti-Nuclear Movement and Political  
Environmentalism in West Germany  
and Beyond, 1968–1983*

STEPHEN MILDER



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*For Valerie Rouse, Linda Cole, and Patricia Sullivan,  
three teachers who opened the world to me.*

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## *Acknowledgments*

In August 1999, I began a year as an exchange student in Sulzheim, a tiny Franconian village in the shadow of the Grafenrheinfeld nuclear reactor. “It’s best to live so close,” my host mother told me without a hint of sarcasm in her voice. “That way we’ll go nice and quick if anything ever happens,” she explained. Like most Germans of her generation, she had a good idea of what a nuclear accident might be like. She remembered giving up on fresh produce, checking the dates of ultra-pasteurized milk, and stopping her children from playing in sandboxes in order to protect them from radioactive fallout after the Chernobyl disaster, which had taken place some 1,600 kilometers away. The consequences of a meltdown at Grafenrheinfeld had been laid out with no lack of detail for Germans of all ages by Gudrun Pausewang in her children’s book, *Die Wolke*. Like my host mother and her neighbors, I too learned to live with the nuclear reactor down the road, and the potential disaster it represented. Only years later did I realize the extent to which the experience of living with the reactor and watching its influence on both daily life and high politics guided my work on this book.

My year as an exchange student provided the point of departure for this project, but I would never have gone to Sulzheim or considered researching the history of a social movement without having been taught by three inspiring teachers beforehand. Valerie Rousse taught me German and opened the world to me by helping me to imagine a world far beyond suburban Boston, and then pushing me to become an exchange student and explore that world myself. Linda Cole and Patricia Sullivan inspired me to think about the past and the way it shaped the present by teaching me the history of the Civil Rights Movement. This book, which was deeply influenced by their transformative teaching, is dedicated to them.

I learned to use the tools required to analyze the anti-nuclear movement after I returned from Sulzheim and began my studies. As an undergraduate, I was mentored by Andrei Markovits, who has remained a close friend ever

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Like most historians, I am deeply indebted to archivists, and also to other researchers I met in the archives. Getting to know archivists like Volkmar Vogt, Christoph Becker-Schaum, Robert Camp, Anne Vechtel, Wolfgang Hertle, Gerd Auer, and Sophie Barrat was one of the benefits of spending such a long time researching this book. They opened new archival collections to me, introduced me to interviewees, took time to discuss my project, and offered invaluable advice. I am particularly grateful for their help finding elusive references and providing access to the illustrations I have included in this book long after I returned home from the archives. Saskia Richter, who happened to be conducting research at the Archiv Grünes Gedächtnis during one of my early visits there, went out of her way to help me get my bearings at the archive. Her friendly demeanor and collegial approach to research, as well as her important insights into green politics and public participation, will be sorely missed.

The most rewarding part of researching this book was meeting and interviewing the many people involved in the movements it seeks to describe. Though I can only mention a few of my interviewees by name here, I am grateful to everyone who took the time to discuss the anti-nuclear movement with me over the years. Günter and Ute Sacherer hosted me several times and even helped me stop to smell the roses by taking me on a tour of the breathtaking Kaiserstuhl vineyards. Michel Fernex hosted me at his home in Biederthal, showed me his sons' farm, and allowed me access to his late wife's voluminous papers. Walter Mossmann opened the world of the Freiburg Left to me and helped me gain my first insights into the nature of Franco-German cooperation in the Upper Rhine valley. His

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dogged determination to tell the story of Wyhl to anyone who would listen will be missed in the years ahead.

Conducting research and presenting it at conferences required the generosity of friends like Jacob Comenetz, Susann Minter, and the Rilling, Thurn, and Werner families, who opened up their homes time and again.

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## *Note on Translations and Acronyms*

Unless otherwise noted, all translations into English are my own. Except in cases where foreign-language names are widely accepted in English or almost identical to English names (e.g. Paris Ecologie and Electricité de France), I have translated the names of the copious businesses, organizations, and anti-nuclear groupings described in this book into English. When introducing organizations with non-English names, I have provided the foreign-language acronym by which the group is known. After each group has been introduced for the first time, I use either its foreign-language acronym or its English name when referring to it. There is one important exception to this rule: I have used “Die Grünen” and “the Greens” interchangeably when referring to the German Green Party. Finally, I have left the names of books, journals, newspapers, and press agencies (all of which are italicized) in the original languages, but provided translations where these seem useful.

The following acronyms are used in this book (acronyms used to refer to archives are listed in the bibliography):

AEG	Allgemeine Elektrizitäts-Gesellschaft
AFRPN	Federated Regional Association for the Protection of Nature (Association Fédérative Régionale pour la Protection de la Nature)
ARD	<i>Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland</i>
AUD	Action Community of Independent Germans (Aktionsgemeinschaft Unabhängiger Deutscher)
BBU	Federal Association of Citizens’ Initiatives for Environmental Protection (Bundesverband Bürgerinitiativen Umweltschutz)
BGL	Bremen Green List (Bremer Grüne Liste)

*Note on Translations and Acronyms*

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BAK	League of Communist Workers (Bund Kommunistische Arbeiter)
BuLi	Rainbow List – Defend Yourself (Bunte Liste – Wehrt Euch)
BUU	Lower Elbe Citizens’ Initiatives for Environmental Protection (Bürgerinitiativen Umweltschutz Unterelbe)
<i>BZ</i>	<i>Badische Zeitung</i>
CDU	Christlich Demokratische Union
CEA	Commission for Atomic Energy (Commissariat à l’Énergie Atomique)
CLINs	Local Nuclear Information Committees (Comités Locale d’Information Nucléaire)
CRIN	Regional Nuclear Information Committee (Comité Régional d’Information Nucléaire)
CRS	Republican Security Companies (Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité)
CSFR	Committee to Protect Fessenheim and the Rhine Valley (Comité pour sauvegarde de Fessenheim et de la Plaine du Rhin)
CWM	Munich Chemical Works (Chemische Werke München)
DKP	German Communist Party (Deutsche Kommunistische Partei)
DLB	Democratic Movement for the Protection of Life (Demokratische Lebensschutzbewegung)
EDF	Electricité de France
EE	Europe Écologie
EEB	European Environmental Bureau
EEC	European Economic Community
EP	European Parliament
FoE	Friends of the Earth (Amis de la Terre)
FRG	Federal Republic of Germany
FSU	Free Social Union (Freie Soziale Union)
GAF	Nonviolent Action Freiburg (Gewaltfreie Aktion Freiburg)
GAK	Nonviolent Action Kaiseraugst (Gewaltfreie Aktion Kaiseraugst)
GAZ	Green Action Future (Grüne Aktion Zukunft)
GDR	German Democratic Republic
GLH	Hessian Green List (Grüne Liste Hessen)
GLSH	Schleswig Holstein Green List (Grüne Liste Schleswig-Holstein)

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GLU	Green List for Environmental Protection (Grüne Liste Umweltschutz)
GLU-HH	Hamburg Green List for Environmental Protection (Grüne Liste Umweltschutz – Hansestadt Hamburg)
IFOR	International Fellowship of Reconciliation
JEF	Young European Federalists (Junge Europäische Föderalisten)
KB	Communist League (Kommunistischer Bund)
KBW	Communist League of West Germany (Kommunistischer Bund Westdeutschland)
KPD/ML	Communist Party of Germany/Marxists-Leninists (Kommunistische Partei Deutschlands/Marxisten-Leninisten)
KWU	Kraftwerk-Union
ME	Ecological Movement (Mouvement Ecologique)
MEP	Political Ecology Movement (Mouvement d'Ecologie Politique)
MRP	Popular Republican Movement (Mouvement Républicain Populaire)
NASA	National Aeronautics and Space Administration
NATO	North Atlantic Treaty Organization
NSM	New Social Movements
OAPEC	Organization of Arab Petroleum Exporting Countries
PCF	Communist Party of France (Parti Communiste Français)
RAF	Red Army Faction (Rote Armee Faktion)
SA	Sturmabteilung
SB	Socialist League/Socialist Office (Sozialistischer Bund/ Sozialistisches Büro)
SDS	Socialist German Students' League (Sozialistische Deutsche Studentenbund)
SPD	Social Democratic Party of Germany (Sozialdemokratische Partei Deutschlands)
SPV	Alternative Political Association: The Greens (Sonstige Politische Vereinigung: Die Grünen)
SVB	United People's Movement (Solidarische Volksbewegung)
SWR	<i>Südwestrundfunk</i>
taz	<i>die tageszeitung</i>
TMI	Three Mile Island
UK	United Kingdom
USA	United States of America

*Note on Translations and Acronyms*

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USP	Environmental Protection Party (Umweltschutz Partei)
VDEW	Association of Electricity Suppliers (Verband der Elektrizitätswirtschaft)
WDR	<i>Westdeutsche Rundfunk</i>
WFCC	Wyhl Forest Community College (Volkshochschule Wyhler Wald)
WSL	World Federation for the Protection of Life (Weltbund zum Schutze des Lebens)
WWW	<i>Was Wir Wollen</i>