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.

Steph en Milder is Assistant Professor of Politics and Society in the Department of European Languages and Cultures at the University of Groningen.
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GREENING DEMOCRACY

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

STEPHEN MILDEN
For Valerie Rousse, Linda Cole, and Patricia Sullivan, three teachers who opened the world to me.
## Contents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>List of Illustrations</th>
<th>page viii</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Acknowledgments</td>
<td>x</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Note on Translations and Acronyms</td>
<td>xiv</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

```
Introduction: Taking the Democratic Dimensions of Anti-Nuclear Activism | 1
```

```
1 “Today the Fish, Tomorrow Us”: The Threatened Upper Rhine and the Grassroots Origins of West European Environmentalism | 19
```

```
2 A Different Watch on the Rhine: How Anti-Nuclear Activists Imagined the Alemannic Community and United a Region in Resistance | 51
```

```
3 Onto the Site and into Significance? The Wyhl Occupation in Its Contexts, from Strasbourg to Kaiseraugst and Constance to Kiel | 92
```

```
4 “Wyhl and Then What . . .?” Between Grassroots Activism and Mass Protest | 129
```

```
5 Political Questions, Grassroots Answers: Shaping an Environmental Approach to Electoral Politics | 164
```

```
6 Organizing a “Decisive Battle Against Nuclear Power Plants”: Europe and the Nationalization of Green Politics in West Germany | 200
```

```
Conclusion: Protesting Nuclear Energy, Greening Democracy | 238
```

**Bibliography** | 247

**Index** | 268
Illustrations

1.1 Jean-Jacques Rettig on the occupied site in Marckolsheim, 16 November 1974. © Meinrad Schwörer. page 34

1.2 Two posters by local opponents of the Wyhl reactor: Left: A cooling tower planned for the Wyhl reactor is compared to the Freiburg Minster; Right: An advertisement for the July 1974 public hearing on the Wyhl reactor. © Meinrad Schwörer. 45

1.3 Günter Sacherer at a demonstration in Freiburg. © Günter Sacherer. 48

2.1 Poster used by Henri Jenn in his 1974 campaign for the National Assembly from Mulhouse. © Henri Jenn. 58

2.2 Balthasar Ehret on the occupied site at Wyhl. © ABEBI. 73

2.3 Siegfried Göpper (center) speaks to a reporter. © ABEBI. 74

2.4 Margot Harloff submits 90,000 signatures collected by the citizens initiatives against the Wyhl reactor to Emmendingen county officials. © SAFR.W 134 No 096726b. Photographer: Willy Pragher. 76

2.5 Local reactor opponents carry a coffin with the word “democracy” written on it through the public hearing on the Wyhl reactor, 9 July 1974. © Meinrad Schwörer. 78

2.6 Women knit while they occupy the lead stearate plant construction site in Marckolsheim, fall 1974. © AGG. FO-01990-01-rp. 86

2.7 Protesters blockade the border crossing at Sasbach on 26 September 1974. © Leo Horlacher. ASB. 88

3.1 Anti-reactor activists converge on the Wyhl reactor construction site and halt construction, 18 February 1975. © Meinrad Schwörer. 96

3.2 Anti-reactor activists “occupy” a bulldozer on the Wyhl reactor construction site, 18 February 1975. © Meinrad Schwörer. 98

3.3 Police deployed a water cannon to deluge reactor opponents who are occupying the Wyhl reactor construction site, 20 February 1975. © Gerd Auer. 101
List of Illustrations

3.4 After deploying the water cannon, police arrest reactor opponents still occupying the Wyhl reactor construction site, 20 February 1975. © Gerd Auer. 102

3.5 The Schedule for Meetings of the Wyhl Forest Community College is posted on the outside of the Friendship House. © Meinrad Schwörer. 121

3.6 Walter Mossmann performs in the “Friendship House” on the occupied site in Wyhl. © ABEBI. 122

4.1 Police prepare to defend the reactor construction site at Brokdorf against anti-reactor demonstrators, 19 February 1977. © Günter Zint. 148

5.1 Poster used by the Green List for Environmental Protection in its 1978 campaign in Lower Saxony. The headline reads, “Don’t make yourself black with anger, vote green!” © AGG. PL-04033. 177

5.2 René Dumont in Brittany during his 1974 Presidential campaign. © Magnum Photos. 181


6.3 Petra Kelly and Solange Fernex protest in the gallery of the European Parliament in Strasbourg during its opening session, July 1979. © AGG. FO-01702-02-cp. 225

6.4 The conclusion of the Gorleben Trek in central Hanover. © Günther Zint. 225
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
since I took his unforgettable seminar on the European Left in the spring of 2003. In graduate school, where I began to work on this project in earnest, I benefited from the influence of supportive friends, thoughtful colleagues, and dedicated teachers. Alex and Adri Jacobs, Ben Carroll, Ana Maria Reichenbach, Philipp Stelzel, Friederike Brühofener, Patrick Tobin, Lawrence Goodwyn, and Don Reid provided inspiration, encouragement, and much needed opportunities for commiseration. Konrad Jarausch, who supervised my doctoral dissertation, encouraged me to continue studying green politics and environmentalism when I was considering other topics. His emphasis on the need to take concrete realities and ordinary lives into account in order to understand big historical transformations informs the approach to history taken in this book. Christof Mauch went far out of his way to make me feel welcome at the Rachel Carson Center in Munich. During my year there, I had the opportunity to conduct the bulk of the research used in this book, but also to come into contact with leading environmental historians from all around the world.

Without the support of Philipp Stelzel, Jocelyn Olcott, and Bill Donahue, I would never have secured my first tenuous foothold in the miserable academic job market. Since I left Chapel Hill for my first temporary job, James Chappel has read numerous drafts and offered thoughtful and helpful comments on my writing time and again. Don Reid, Tom Lekan, Astrid Eckert, and Silke Mende read chapter drafts, provided valuable feedback, and generously shared their expertise. Karrin Hanshew, Andrew Tompkins, Dolores Augustine, Jan Hansen, Kyle Harvey, Peter Caldwell, and Astrid Kirchhof provided important feedback at conferences and workshops. Sylvia Paletschek, Jan-Henrik Meyer, and Jacob Eder offered valuable opportunities to present my project at colloquia in Freiburg, Berlin, and Jena.

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My thanks are due to Michael Watson at Cambridge University Press, who took a chance on a new author, as well as to Julie Hrischeva and Vel Murugan, who guided me through the uncharted territory of academic publishing. The two anonymous readers engaged by the press provided important comments and feedback on the manuscript, which I have used to improve the text.

The research that comprises this book would not have been possible without generous grants from many sources. The German Academic Exchange Service, the University of North Carolina’s EU Center of Excellence, the German–American Fulbright Commission, the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, as well as the Duke University German Department, the Groningen Research Institute for the Study of Culture, and the Mulerius Foundation of the University of Groningen all supported my work on this project.

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
Acknowledgments

dagged 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.

My parents, Sara and Forrest Milder, who took me to my first protest (in support of increased funding for the Needham Public Schools), have supported me in every way, made my education possible, and helped me find my way to this topic. My sister, Elinor Milder, and my brother-from-another-mother, Grant Ellis, provided characteristically sarcastic responses to life’s inevitable ups and downs. Their witty encouragement helped me to keep up with this project and put my travails into perspective. My partner, Jamie Snow, has been a steadfast source of love and support for more than a decade, living with this project from the time we moved to Chapel Hill to our first visits to archives in Detmold and Karlsruhe, to its completion here in Groningen. Taking the journey together with her has added so many wonderful moments and enriched my life in ways I could never have imagined. The final work on this manuscript was completed just before our son, Henry, was born. It is my hope that the story of popular politics and personal engagement it tells will remind us that we can – and must – work towards a better future for his generation.
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 Elektricität-Gesellschaft
AFRPN  Federated Regional Association for the Protection of Nature (Association Fédérative Régionale pour la Protection de la Nature)
ARD  Arbeitsgemeinschaft der öffentlich-rechtlichen Rundfunkanstalten der Bundesrepublik Deutschland
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

BKA League of Communist Workers (Bund Kommunistische Arbeiter)
BuLi Rainbow List – Defend Yourselves (Bunte Liste – Wehrt Euch)
BUU Lower Elbe Citizens’ Initiatives for Environmental Protection (Bürgerinitiativen Umweltschutz Unterelbe)
BZ Badische Zeitung
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)
Note on Translations and Acronyms

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 Südwestrundfunk
taz die tageszeitung
TMI Three Mile Island
UK United Kingdom
USA United States of America
### Note on Translations and Acronyms

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