

ESSAY

EUROPE IS A PEACEFUL WOMAN, AMERICA IS A WAR-MONGERING MAN? THE 1980S PEACE MOVEMENT IN NATO-ALLIED EUROPE¹

By *Belinda Davis*

The image below represents a flyer put out by the Evangelische Studenten-Gemeinden Westberlin (ESG), calling for viewers to stand up for peace, by attending a demonstration to be held on the occasion of US-American President Ronald Reagan's visit to West Berlin, in June 1982. The specific concern is to prevent the stationing of new nuclear weapons across Europe, in the Cold War West and East. Europeans are implicitly represented in the person of a female protester who, though in dress and heels, demonstrates sufficient strength to kick away an unwanted nuclear rocket.² The message seems forthright and quite simple. But as an exemplar of the era's iconography, the flyer would have communicated a range of meanings and associations. One of thousands of such images and associated texts in West Germany/West Berlin alone, the flyer was part of a popular political movement across NATO-allied Europe, protesting NATO's new "double-track" strategy of rearmament alongside continued détente.³ Such images clearly reached people at some level across the Cold War West. In West Germany alone, the movement brought millions to demonstrate in the streets between 1980 and 1983, and to convene in "convergence marches" (Sternmärsche) on Bonn, numerous times over the course of several years, making this the most successful grassroots mass political movement numerically in German history. In turn, this was the most populous informal political movement ever also within other NATO-allied and non-aligned European countries, and across Europe tout court, as Netherlanders, Italians, Austrians, Finns, and others likewise poured out in remarkable numbers. The movement fostered some six thousand local peace initiatives across western Europe. Feminist, communist, Protestant, Catholic, and other groups joined longstanding peace activists in leading this movement, exemplary of its diversity as well as sheer numerical strength. If indeed these protestors failed to convince political leaders in power to reconsider the stationing of new nuclear weapons in Europe, that so many, and such diverse

¹ Essay relates to source: *Aufstehen für den Frieden!* (1982). The essay and the source are published online in the web portal "Themenportal Europäische Geschichte", URL: <www.europa.clio-online.de/essay/id/artikel-4395>.

² There is some play here concerning whether this woman is "Europe," or whether she is a "European", protecting an (also female) Europe. The essay draws heavily on Davis, Belinda, "Women's Strength Against Their Crazy Male Power". *Gendered Language in the West German Peace Movement of the 1980s*, in: Davy, Jennifer A., et al. (eds.), *Frieden – Gewalt – Geschlecht. Friedens- und Konfliktforschung als Geschlechterforschung*, Essen 2005, pp. 244–265. Metaphors used in the movement were varied and highly fungible; I emphasize here one set of foci.

³ References to West Germany include West Berlin here unless otherwise noted.

populations, joined to occupy public space to express their deep concerns, across several years at least, was itself a significant political success.

This essay thus seeks to explore the political efficacy and broader implications of the gendered metaphors peace activists of Cold War Western-bloc Europe adopted in the 1980s movement, against resumption of nuclear arms build-up. Drawing on sources of both word and image, the essay begins by adumbrating the positive effects peace activists secured in employing but also playing with familiar, binary-gendered imagery, in both recruiting protestors and communicating their message. It also speaks to the auspicious implications of the successful use of the metaphor in the first place: that “the feminine” might no longer be automatically associated with something inferior, weak, or marginal. The piece then turns to consider unintended downsides to gendered metaphors in the context of the peace movement, and the ways in which a binary-gendered model wind up ineluctably reinstating essentialist and negative thinking about gender, generating problems both political and philosophical.

Self-identified women as a group took a prominent role in this peace activism, both through “mixed-gender” groupings, from Church to trade union to communist organizations, and through women-only activism, such as Women for Peace and Greenham Common Women’s Peace Camp. In the former, gendered structures still too often followed the patterns of pacifist movements for the preceding century, via which women constituted the bulk of the membership, specifically related to peace work and did most of the everyday work of the organization, preparing and posting flyers, making phone calls and making site arrangements while men took on the roles of titular leadership. These groupings did however follow on recent developments within the new social movements and other alternative-cultural initiatives of the 1970s that sought (if not always successfully) to challenge hierarchical organization, and conventional notions of “leadership” and of “spokespeople” altogether. This was all the more the case in the women’s-only groupings, even if, to be sure, these were also prone to conflicts over hierarchy and control.⁴

This success of the broad movement in bringing millions to the streets in public protest was at least in part a function of the image of a “feminized” Europe. In the language of this narrative, Europeans were moral and ethical, sensitive and nurturing. It was not least their emotional awareness that created their particular “rationality,” in contrast with the “insanity” of a zealous pursuit of “mutually assured destruction,” perceived as a profoundly male concept.⁵ This

⁴ Compare e.g. Davis, Belinda, “Civil Society in a New Key? Feminist and Alternative Groups in 1970s West Germany,” in Michel, Sonya, et al. (eds.), *Civil Society and Gender Justice: Historical and Comparative Perspectives*, New York 2008, p. 208–223; *ibid.*, *The Internal Life of Politics: Extraparliamentary Opposition in West Germany, 1962–1983* (forthcoming).

⁵ Compare e.g. Theurer, Johannes, Blutig, Blutig, in: *Zitty* 18 (1979), p. 32; Freyhold, Michaela, *Frauen gegen den Krieg, aber wie*, in: Qustorp, Eva (ed.), *Frauen für den Frieden. Analysen, Dokumente und Aktionen aus der Friedensbewegung*, Bensheim 1982, pp. 49–53.

conceptualization reflects three interesting and arguably salutary phenomena. The first is the fact in itself that such large and diverse numbers rallied under the aegis of this feminized Europe, hardly imaginable in the twentieth century up to this point (aside from the question of whether “Europe” itself might have served as such a rallying point). They did so under a banner representing characteristics for the twentieth century stereotypically female (morality, sensitivity, antipathy to violence), now perceived as positive.⁶ Further, this woman was often, as in this flyer, “well-dressed,” communicating (apparently successfully) that popular protest was now perfectly respectable, across classes as genders and in contrast with a broad perception in preceding decades that such protest was the domain of a marginalized and crazy “tiny radical minority,” and dirty, violent youth, whom many imagined as destroying rather than protecting Cold War Western Europe.⁷

The second phenomenon is that this imagery seems simultaneously to have successfully challenged or reworked other gender stereotypes. The woman offering a swift and effective kick in our poster demonstrates a woman’s “rationality,” informed by her sensitivity, and in turn the “strength” it gave her to stand up against its converse, crazy male power. This rationality, long perceived as a positive masculine trait, brought women – or Europeans – to contest the slogan of the West German Lutheran Church: “Don’t be afraid.” In the face of the nuclear destruction centered in Europe, the only “rational” response was rather to “be afraid.” This fear was then to stiffen Europeans’ spines, to bring them the strength – a quality also heretofore perceived as masculine – to stand in opposition to the men in control, men who exhibited power lust in lieu of strength. This embrace and simultaneous reworking of perceived gender characteristics was even in its often contradictory forms a seminal move, anticipating the work of subsequent feminist theorists and activists around the world, including, for example, concerning diaspora sexuality and gender.⁸ From the perspective of the 2003 American war on Iraq, the only military action to have drawn still greater numbers in protest internationally, we

⁶ “Difference” versus “equality” feminism was one rough major divide within the European so-called Second Wave women’s movements (as it had also been in the First Wave). The former reinforced but celebrated notions of fixed gender differences, while the latter group on the whole challenged such notions altogether. The 1980s peace movement reflected the influence of both iterations of feminism, but the former was arguably more audibly expressed in the movement.

⁷ This did not preclude enormous conflict among constituent groupings. Compare Rochon, Thomas R., *Mobilizing for Peace. The Antinuclear Movements in Western Europe*, Princeton, 1988; della Porta, Donatella; Mario Diani, *I movimenti sociali*, Rome 1997; Rüdig, Wolfgang, *Peace and Ecology Movements in Western Europe*, in: *West European Politics* 11 (1988), No. 1 pp. 26–39; Kriesi, Hanspeter, *Sviluppo organizzativo dei nuovi movimenti sociali e contesto politico*, *Rivista italiana di scienza politica* 23 (1993), No. 1, pp. 67–117.

⁸ Compare e.g. Gopinath, Gayatri, *Impossible Desires: Queering Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures*, Durham 2006; Alexander, Jacqui, *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory and the Sacred*, Durham 2006; also Manalansan, Martin F., *Global Divas: Filipino Gay Men in the Diaspora*, Durham 2003.

can say that these activists arguably helped to create new “frames of war,” frames in which these protestors might be recognized as “counting,” as requiring notice.⁹

The third phenomenon was the new life and widespread legitimacy the peace movement gave to feminism in the event. This is particularly remarkable in light of the fact that the European peace movement, from its origins nearly a century earlier, was “negatively” feminized from the start, one characteristic that had for the intervening decades left the movements marginalized.¹⁰ In the early twentieth century, some activists had tried to portray the movement as specifically reflecting positive female characteristics, but with very limited success. Activists turned simultaneously to the strategy of placing men in leadership positions in the movement (except in women-only peace organizations), but the enduring feminine association seems to have proved detrimental.¹¹ That is, peace associations remained marginal because of perceptions, widespread if variable across Europe, that such organizations were for females only, or represented a feminized (and feminizing) point of view, frequently conceived for example as simply weak, and as in opposition to a willingness to stand up for one’s country and its values. In the “new pacifism” of the 1980s movement, many activists themselves, such as those in Women for Peace (Scandinavia, West Germany, the Netherlands, and elsewhere), returned to reinforcing perceived gender-specific characteristics in their appeals. At the same time, concerned for the de facto limiting quality of this emphasis, many turned to highlighting notions of “the masculine” and “the feminine” in everyone. While activists sometimes tied themselves into rhetorical knots with this strategy, it proved effective, at least in some respects.¹² If feminization of the European subject seemed to work to bring increasing numbers into the movement, at the same time, at some level at least, women were no longer the marginalized, the “particular,” the “other.” “They” were the “we,” an identity acceptable and even desirable to adopt, for example following the women who led the march for peace to and

⁹ See Butler, Judith, *Frames of War: When is Life Grievable?*, London 2010; also *ibid*, *Bodies that Matter*, New York 2011; *ibid*, *Dispossession: The Performative in the Political*, London 2013.

¹⁰ This new prominence began at some level from early ’70s, in the form of the new “peace research,” e.g. as carried out through the Deutsche Gesellschaft für Friedens- und Konfliktforschung. See as one seminal text Senghaas, Dieter, *Abschreckung und Frieden. Studien zur Kritik organisierter Friedenslosigkeit*, Frankfurt am Main 1969.

¹¹ Compare for the German case specifically e.g. Chickering, Roger, *Imperial Germany and a World Without War. The Peace Movement and German Society, 1892–1914*, Princeton 1976; Davy, Jennifer, “Manly” and “Feminine” Antimilitarism. Perceptions of Gender in the Antimilitarist Wing of the Weimar Peace Movement, in: Davy, *Frieden–Gewalt*, pp. 144–165; Nehring, Holger, „Security Therapies – Peace Activists and Cold War Normality in West Germany,” unpublished paper; *Ibid.*, *Politics of Security: British and West German Protest Movements and the Early Cold War, 1945–1970*, Oxford 2013; also generally Nehring, Holger; Pharo, Helge, Introduction: A Peaceful Europe? Negotiating Peace in the Twentieth Century, in: *Central European History* 17 (2008), No. 3, pp. 277–299.

¹² Compare Müller, Ingrid, in: *Frankfurter Rundschau* (September 1979), reproduced in Burmeister, Elisabeth, ed., *Frauen machen Frieden. Lesebuch für Großmütter, Mütter und Töchter*, Gelnhausen 1981, p. 20. This was not an entirely new strategy.

encampment at Greenham Common, a nuclear weapons site in England, and the women who took on leadership positions in the 1981 antinuclear march from Copenhagen to Paris. It can be argued that this image of a female Europe is one that Europeans have regularly and positively projected since that time. Additionally, the peace movement united divided European feminists among themselves in many cases, at least in working directly on this issue, in a way that not even campaigns for reproductive choice had done. The emergent Green Party in West Germany grew to parliamentary strength in part by linking feminism and disarmament, care of the earth and non-violence.

These represent noteworthy transformations. But the image and the broader associations were not without their both less functional and less attractive qualities as well. Pace Lawrence Wittner's argument that it was grassroots activism that prevented nuclear war throughout the second half of the twentieth century, the massive protest of the early 1980s did not succeed in demonstrators' direct, major goal of preventing the installation of medium-range missiles on European soil.¹³ This failure cannot be explained simply or monocausally. But it is noteworthy that the rhetoric of some activist leaders often served paradoxically to reinforce "feminine" stereotypes of inescapable, deeply structural and even fundamental vulnerability, of the need to be taken care of, of the inability to escape the control of a powerful "masculine" counterpart, in this case most often specifically (if not exclusively) the United States.¹⁴ It may well be that this rhetoric, running in tandem with language and images meant to challenge long-held stereotypes, undermined the political efficacy of the gendered imagery. The binary gendering of rearmament represented additional problems. One was the reinforcement of gendered associations in a good/bad, self/other framework. Metaphorically, Europe's positive femininity seemed to work only in contrast to America's negative masculinity. Indeed if "femininity" and "masculinity" were fixed notions, and if "femininity" altogether was good, then "masculinity" was a priori bad. This threatened only to reverse rather than transcend the earlier ordering of femininity versus masculinity.

This rhetoric drew finally on some rather unsettling broader narratives. Using the trope of a common feminized "victimization" and a corresponding ineluctable masculine lust for violence, some activists sought to draw direct comparisons between Europeans and female North Vietnamese villagers in the Vietnam war, and between present-day Europeans and the Japanese in Hiroshima and Nagasaki (hence the notion "Euroshima"). In the case of West Germans, this imagery could be especially troubling, as some drew analogies between

¹³ Wittner, Lawrence, *Struggle against the Bomb. History of the World Disarmament Movement*, 3 vols., Stanford 1993–2003.

¹⁴ Compare Brockmann, Dorothee, *Wider die Friedfertigkeit – Gedanken über einen kriegerischen Alltag*, in: *Courage 6* (March 1981), pp. 20–21; Jansen, Mechthild, *Friedenspolitik von Frauen – Nur eine Illusion? Über den Zusammenhang von Frauen und Patriarchat*, Hagen 1995.

themselves and American slaves, and between themselves, even specifically as Christian Germans, and victims of Auschwitz. It is not difficult to imagine how such imagery might have attracted participants to the peace movement. The comparisons offered new and implicitly appealing narratives of the past as well as of the present. Thus in the latter instances it was not that Germans, aware of Germany's history of aggressive, "masculine" violence, chose now to eschew violence, though some activists did advance this message, and certainly our poster here could be read that way. Rather, the rhetoric often seemed to suggest: We are and remain the vulnerable victims of violence, and it is in that narrative that we trace our history. This was a message both pragmatically and philosophically problematic. As early as 1958, Hannah Arendt raised an alarm concerning those, individuals or groups, who claimed to be able to feel the pain, share the experience of another, and especially another "category" of person, rather than by precisely recognizing differences in experience; she continued to write on the problem until her death in 1975, just before the peace movement itself.¹⁵ Some feminist scholars too have now long questioned the practice of white women of privilege proclaiming equivalencies of experience with e.g. subaltern peoples.

While this paper focuses on European peace protest in the Cold War Western bloc, it should be acknowledged that movements for peace flourished likewise throughout the Cold War Eastern bloc (not to mention in the non-aligned nations). The former began as state-sponsored ventures, associated with the Soviet-dominated World Peace Council. Yet, from the beginning of the 1980s, authorities held only tenuous control over these protestors, many of whom soon became closely joined with broader reform initiatives for government reform, in East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, and elsewhere. While overwhelmingly "underground" movements, these initiatives spanned national boundaries, as in the Western bloc and, indeed, they crossed through the "Iron Curtain." The case of the visit of renowned British historian and early CND activist E. P. Thompson to Ferenc Kőszegi's apartment in Budapest in 1982 is only the most prominent example of such cross-fertilization. This activism was in turn formative in the broader movements that brought about the end of the Cold War only a few years later, in 1989.¹⁶

¹⁵ Arendt, Hannah, *On the Human Condition*, Chicago 1958; also her *Lectures on Kant's Political Philosophy*, Chicago 1982.

¹⁶ See for example Silimon, Anke, "Schwerter zu Pflugscharen" und die DDR: Die Friedensarbeit der evangelischen Kirchen in der DDR im Rahmen der Friedensdekaden 1980–1982, Göttingen, 1999; Poppe, Ulrike, et al. (eds.), *Zwischen Selbstbehauptung und Anpassung: Formen des Widerstandes und der Opposition in der DDR*, Berlin, 1995; Bispinck Henrik, et al. (eds.), *Aufstände im Ostblock: Zur Krisengeschichte des realen Sozialismus*, Berlin 2004; Vanek, Miroslav, "The Development of a Green Opposition in Czechoslovakia: The Role of International Contacts," in: Horn, Gerd-Rainer; Kenney, Padriac (eds.), *Transnational Moments of Change: Europe, 1945, 1968, 1989*, Lanham 2004, pp. 173–188; Kenny, Padriac, *Carnivals of Revolution: Central Europe, 1989*, Princeton 2003; Wittner, Lawrence, *Toward Nuclear Abolition: A History of the World Nuclear Disarmament Movement, 1971 to the Present*, Stanford 2003.

However, metaphors of gender seem to have been less in play in the movements on this side of the Berlin Wall.

What were the sources of these patterns in the Cold War West? Peace activists in the 1980s did not draw *ex nihilo* on a gendered image of Europe, any more than on a feminized peace activism, though they were successful in using these images to evoke contemporary concerns and associations. There is a long history of figuring Europe as a woman. In the nineteenth century, this image had been largely a negative one.¹⁷ This image most often related to notions of European military but also economic strength – or vulnerability – and above all, again, in contrast with the United States.¹⁸ Because in the event U.S. military power helped determine the winners and losers of both world wars, many Europeans envisioned a group of “emasculated” losers on the one side, specifically defeated by this physically unstoppable behemoth, and on the other, a set of European victors who were at best the (ambivalently) admiring helpmates of this force.¹⁹ Unsurprisingly, this developing perceived relationship between Europeans and Americans produced European resentments as well as approbation at critical points in the twentieth century, helped along to be sure by American leaders’ bouts of preemptive arrogance, particularly during the Cold War. In this narrative, Germany’s and then West Germany’s relationship with the U.S. bore similarities to those of other European countries, but also demonstrated unique elements. Well before the Cold War, it had been American military forces that had “violated” Germany in World War I, and had contributed to leaving “her” a prostitute in the Weimar Republic.²⁰ It was in turn U.S. economic power, on which Germany depended in that era, that left the country further violated and vulnerable after the 1929 stock market crash. In this scenario, the U.S. might have become a protector, but it could be a highly undependable and dangerous protector.

¹⁷ At the same time, the language of nationalism has led Europeans to regularly refer to their own and those of other European nations and their “avatars” (Marianne, Germania, etc.) as “masculine” or “feminine”, in shifting and often contradictory fashion. Compare e.g. Blom, Ida, et al. (eds.), *Gendered Nations: Nationalisms and Gender Order in the Long Nineteenth Century*, London 2000; also Davis, Belinda, *Home Fires Burning: Food, Politics, and Everyday Life in World War I Berlin*, Chapel Hill 2000.

¹⁸ Compare e.g. Jones, Priska, *Europas Frieden? Zu einer Europa-Karikatur aus dem Kladderadatsch (1926)*, in: Themenportal Europäische Geschichte, URL: <www.europa.clio-online.de/essay/id/artikel-3331> (18.10.2017).

¹⁹ Compare e.g. Biess, Frank, *Homecomings. Returning POWs and Legacies of Defeat in Postwar Germany*, Princeton 2006; Goltermann, Svenja, *Die Beherrschung der Männlichkeit. Zur Deutung psychischer Leiden bei den Heimkehrern des Zweiten Weltkriegs, 1945–1956*, in: *Feministische Studien* 8 (2000), pp. 7–19. „POWs“ stands for prisoners of war.

²⁰ Compare on gendered national images Davis, *Home Fires Burning*; on European and American relations variously Moore, R. Laurence and Vaudagna, Maurizio (eds.), *The American Century in Europe*, Cornell 2003; Markovits, Andrei, *Amerika, dich hasst sich besser. Antiamerikanismus und Antisemitismus in Europa*, Hamburg 2004; De Grazia, Victoria, *Irresistible Empire: America's Advance through Twentieth-Century Europe*, Cambridge 2006; Nolan, Mary, *The Transatlantic Century: Europe and America, 1890-2010*, Cambridge 2012; dies., *Anti-Americanism and Americanization in Germany*, in: *Politics & Society* 33 (2005), No. 1, pp. 88–122.

As the notion of a Cold War became the dominant template for viewing postwar Europe, some regarded America increasingly as a bullying defender, uninterested in consensual partnership. As after World War I, many Germans felt particularly vulnerable to unequal relations. It was a short step in the 1980s to the idea of an America (or a “U.S.+NATO,” or “Reagan-Haig-Weinberger”)²¹ as an oversized boy crazy for his violent “boy toys” or as an abusive husband, one who violated even as he claimed to protect his wife. Europe was the abused wife. Egon Bahr, who defied the West German Social Democratic party line to reject rearmament, averred, “The people are afraid of their protectors.”²² Theologian and leading peace activist Dorothee Sölle asserted in turn that those who rearmed sought to distract attention away from – and at the same time mirrored – the already existing war between the rapist and the raped woman.²³ In an era in which feminists brought to the fore real issues of domestic violence, and of women learning to fight back, the image had a certain appeal. We can find these issues and this rhetoric too in the British case, despite its different wartime relation to the U.S.²⁴

This appeal was in part in writing the story of the arms race in a particular way. The double-track strategy of prospective rearmament alongside continued talks was developed in the second half of the 1970s, particularly at the urging of British Prime Minister James Callaghan and West German Chancellor Helmut Schmidt, in response to concerns that the U.S.S.R. planned to station Soviet SS-20 missiles in “Eastern Bloc” Europe. In 1977, Schmidt gave a widely publicized speech in London, calling on U.S. President Jimmy Carter to agree to positioning missiles on West German soil. NATO leaders agreed to the double-track strategy in 1979, well before Ronald Reagan ascended to power in America in January 1981. But in the era’s popular iconography, it was Reagan who was responsible for a plan to impose rearmament on Europe. The new president made this story all too easy to tell. It was little stretch to substitute Reagan, frequently photographed on his ranch, smilingly challenging the Soviets, for the character of Major Kong in the 1964 British-American Cold War film classic *Dr. Strangelove*. In that film, Major Kong enthusiastically rode a nuclear missile like a bucking bronco. Here now it seemed was another such “cowboy,” wearing a simplistic, Manichean vision of the world as he did his cowboy hat and kerchief, promoting a “better dead than red” mentality at the expense of all of Europe (a Europe conversely wearing “civilized” clothing). Reagan’s secretary of state, Alexander Haig, asserted in his 1981 confirmation hearing that “There are more important things than peace – things which we Americans must be willing to fight for.” Certainly U.S.

²¹ This referred to U.S. President Ronald Reagan, Secretary of State Alexander Haig, and Secretary of Defense Casper Weinberger.

²² Cited in a flyer of the West German Alternative Liste (AL), *Für einen stürmischen Friedensherbst!*, reprinted in Teppich, Fritz, *Flugblätter und Dokumente der Westberliner Friedensbewegung 1980–1985*, Berlin (West) 1985, pp. 73–74. Bahr referred in this instance specifically to NATO.

²³ Sölle, Dorothee, *Man kann die Sonne nicht verhaften*, in: Quistorp, Frauen, pp. 59–63, 60.

²⁴ Compare Liddington, Jill, *The Road to Greenham Common*, Syracuse 1989, pp. 202–203 passim.

leaders led the way in perpetuating a particular gendered image of U.S.-European relations in the Cold War, specifically as the powerful protecting the weak and vulnerable.²⁵

European peace protestors in the 1980s adopted and worked from this imagery, in part to recruit additional demonstrators. Reagan as well as U.S. military officers thus figured dominantly in the “masculinized” images that peace protestors disseminated, likewise drawing on sexualized imagery: with rockets qua phalluses like the papier mâché one Reagan rode in effigy, in a makeshift sculpture on a sidewalk in Amsterdam; or like the gun drawn in place of a penis, e.g. in cartoons by West German artist Marie Marcks.²⁶ Hanne Birckenbach urged West German “men and women” to reject their role of “serving” the United States and “servicing” their rockets.²⁷ Christina Tröber asserted, “The erect penis establishes its monument in a missile-studded ‘bulwark against Bolshevism’.” Tröber claimed this show of strength represented the “men’s” and “male citizens’” fear of their own weakness, which thereby perpetuated the patriarchy and specifically violence against women.²⁸ In some of this imagery, however, “Europe” causes the “erect” missile to become flaccid or to fold. In our own image (while far less sexually suggestive than many), Europe kicks the rocket with her high-heeled shoe, sending it pointing downward rather than up.²⁹ A renowned 1980 issue of the British feminist magazine *Spare Rib* importuned readers to stand up and “take the toys from the boys.”³⁰ Such images caught people’s attention and raised the issue of rearmament in their minds, injecting humor and provocation into the discussion. They challenged fellow Europeans to re-think simplistic Cold War assumptions. For better or worse, they also successfully drew on broader antipathies toward America, critical in bringing new groups to the movement, such as the nationalists who protested alongside communists, for example, in the Italian, Dutch, Danish, and West German movements.

But, once more, the rhetoric and images also produced conundrums and contradictions that are worthwhile to acknowledge. By setting European-American relations in the context of

²⁵ This was part of a long tradition in the U.S. as well. In the Cold War, this was at least in part an inversion of U.S. politicians’ and thinkers’ fears of an American “feminization.” Compare Lori Lynn Bogle (ed.), *The Cold War*, vol. 1, New York 2001, pp. 129ff.

²⁶ Compare e.g. the drawing by Marcks in: Quistorp, *Frauen*, p. 90. Such imagery was also used by American peace activists. Compare files of the Swarthmore Peace Collection, Swarthmore, Pennsylvania, e.g. U.S. Women’s 1980 Pentagon Action.

²⁷ Birckenbach, Hanne-Margret, *Nach den Raketen. Dienende Frauen – dienende Männer*, in: *taz*, 1.7.1982.

²⁸ Tröber, Christina, *Krieg und Frieden gemalt*, in: Schöfthaler, Ele (ed.), *Geschichten von Frauen und Frieden*, Gelnhausen 1982, pp. 18–21; see also speech by Kassel feminists at the June 1981 Sternmarsch, reprinted as *Frieden im Patriarchat ist Krieg für Frauen*, in: Quistorp, *Frauen*, pp. 98–99.

²⁹ Such images reflected discussion of whether “women” weren’t then also violent and whether they needed to be.

³⁰ *Spare Rib* 99 (1980); see also placards at the Women’s International Day for Disarmament, Halifax, England, 1985, spelling out “Take t’[he] Toys from the Boys,” reprinted in Liddington, *Greenham Common*, n.p. (opposite p. 195).

patriarchy, the strategy thereby proclaimed these relations among the most difficult in world history to transform. And by focusing on physical sexual attributes as related to personal characteristics, the rhetoric once more challenged how easily men could be incorporated into the movement and could be “European.” Thus, if women originally led the protest of British men and women at Greenham Common, ultimately the women insisted that the men had to leave, because their gender, and their attendant ‘seduction by violence’, was part of the problem.³¹ Finally, by regularly (if certainly not in every case) ascribing all such power to the American president, rather than also to European political leaders, while propagating such images of this president, protestors may have had the effect of reinstating the sense of Europe’s feared total vulnerability to this cowboy, crazy with his own power. The Finnish chapter of Women for Peace proclaimed, “We don’t want to be the last generation in Europe. We do not want to be exterminated because of the madness of the great powers.”³² This statement described a Europe at the mercy of both the U.S. and Soviet governments, but very often the Soviet Union dropped out of the equation altogether. Peace marchers in England descended specifically on Greenham Common, a former RAF air base in the 1980s affiliated with the U.S. Air Force. Members of the Dutch peace group Weeds wrecked a model of the U.S. White House that was displayed in a model village, in order to emphasize the overweening American posture and presence in the Netherlands and in Dutch decision-making.³³ The Sternmärsche in West Germany descended on Bonn, not on Washington, D.C. nor even on NATO headquarters in Brussels. But it was in a poster promoting the 1981 Bonn demonstration that activists asserted the “major power insanity and the merciless toughness demonstrated against all of those who get in the way of Washington’s interests. The new U.S. government under President Reagan...wants to lead the U.S. toward domination of the entire world.”³⁴ In our own flyer too, Reagan is the object of concern. Whether he is the object of appeal here or otherwise, it seems to be that he is the one to determine whether there will be “new nuclear weapons in Europe” or not. It appears further he may be responsible for “nuclear weapons in Europe...in West and East” as well. The notion of “Euroshima” conceptually united all of Europe but only as a victim of an uncontrollable American enemy, an “intimate enemy.”³⁵ While the role of U.S. officials in driving the nuclear race may be clear, there are questions about the efficacy of having reinforced the image of a corresponding supine, virtually defenseless Europe.

³¹ Liddington, Greenham Common, p. 255; also pp. 235–236.

³² Cited in Wittner, *Struggle Against the Bomb*, vol. 3, *Toward Nuclear Abolition*, p. 153.

³³ Rochon, *Mobilizing for Peace*, pp. 123–124.

³⁴ Joint poster against rearmament, reproduced in Teppich, *Flugblätter*, p. 77.

³⁵ AL, flyer *Friedensherbst*; compare Günther Gillesen, *Panzerangriffe werden riskanter*, in: *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* 17.8.1981, p. 8; compare also Liddington, *Greenham Common*, p. 238, and p. 227, with an appeal specifically to mothers.

Some of the movement's imagery and rhetoric built on this gendered division moreover to overlay additional, static binaries that may likewise have offered dubious utility. Thus for example activists opposed an American male lethal embrace of technology with an explicitly or implicitly European female life-giving oneness with nature and Christianity.³⁶ West German theologian Dorothee Sölle staked out the boundaries between a Christian Europe and Americans, for whom "power" was a "substitute religion," and a sign of their actual weakness.³⁷ Such characterizations proved useful at the time. A feminization of Jesus, for example, acted as a means to allow European men back into the category of protestors for peace.³⁸ Indeed such rhetoric characterized women as responsible for using their natural, God-given qualities to convince men to join them.³⁹ Such imagery brought together groups in the Netherlands like the Interchurch Peace Council (IKV), Pax Christi, and Women for Peace. But this imagery betrayed conceptual difficulties. For one thing, while it may have been unproblematic and effective to aver that Jesus's teachings advance peace and not war, the related, often implicit assertion that Europe had the lock on Christianity, and especially that Europe was specifically Christian, creates some uneasiness. Historian Jill Liddington notes in this vein generally the increasingly Manichean, and, in her view correspondingly problematic, language that emerged in segments of the British peace movement, similar to that of Reagan himself. Paradoxically, she ascribes this phenomenon to the influence of certain American activists, arguably more influential in Europe than they were in the U.S.⁴⁰

³⁶ Compare e.g. Römelt, Sigrid, *Frauen wagen Frieden – eine christliche Initiative*, in: Schöfthaler, *Geschichten*, pp. 55–56; also Liddington, *Greenham Common*. This discussion responded to yet another characterization among some American officials and policymakers: that "Europe" was concerned for weapons build-up because of Europeans' "anti-modernism" in the face of "science." Rochon, *Mobilizing for Peace*, pp. 31ff.

³⁷ Sölle, Dorothee, *The Strength of the Weak. Toward a Christian Feminist Identity*, Philadelphia, 1984; see also *Unsere Rettung wäre eine europäische Volksbewegung gegen den Massenmörder Atomwaffe. Ein Gespräch mit Alva Myrdal*, in: Quistorp, *Frauen*, pp. 74–77. Sölle and most others normally differentiated between "Americans" and "the U.S." or "the U.S. government." Indeed rhetoric often emphasized unequal power relations that pit "the U.S. government" against "Europeans." See too Römelt, Sigrid, *Frauen wagen Frieden – eine christliche Initiative*, in Schöfthaler, *Geschichten*, pp. 55–56. Paradoxically, this period saw a lasting "Christian awakening" in America, leading more recently to a switch in identification as to who is "more" and "less" Christian.

³⁸ Compare *Die neue Friedensbewegung–Aufmarsch gegen die Rüstung*, in: *Der Spiegel* 25, 15.6.1981; see conversely Vinocur, John, *The German Malaise*, in: *The New York Times Magazine*, 15.11.1981, p. 40. This came in contrast with the image of a powerful, macho Jesus, who backed rearmament in the apocalyptic battle against the godless Soviet enemy, a notion some pro-rearmament American and other activists advanced. On the long European history of figuring a feminized Jesus, compare Bynum, Caroline Walker, *Jesus as Mother: Studies in the Spirituality of the High Middle Ages*, Berkeley 1984.

³⁹ Burmeister, Elisabeth, *Brief einer Hausfrau*, handbill reprinted in Burmeister, *Geschichten*, pp. 44–45.

⁴⁰ Liddington, *Greenham Common*, pp. 215–216 passim.

The opposition of Europeans' Christian embrace of peace and nature to the U.S. government's frenzy for deadly technology offers up other conceptual problems, particularly in the West German case. In a published reflection, Michaela Freyhold mapped out one on top of the other images of U.S. control over West Germans, male desires for sexual destruction played out against women, and the power of (unspecified) Holocaust perpetrators over their victims, as the context for understanding the U.S. government's "extermination machine."⁴¹ Dorothee Sölle depicted a cold, male technology, out of touch with both nature and God, in describing the American Pentagon as "the greatest death factory of the world."⁴² Borrowing here on the language of the U.S. television mini-series *Holocaust*, aired in 1979, Sölle and others easily adopted U.S. peace activists' notion of a "nuclear holocaust," perpetrated by U.S. military power.⁴³ West Germans and Europeans were thus in turn victims of the "slavery" of U.S. foreign policy.⁴⁴ This was why all the "oppressed of the world" (including women and/or Europeans) had to come together in response.⁴⁵ West German appeals also made connections between themselves and women whose husbands had been in concentration camps and with those who had suffered under bombing (often specifically characterized as U.S. bombing) during the war as well as with the plucky German "Trümmerfrauen" left to repair this damage after the war was over.⁴⁶ Certainly contemporary U.S. government rhetoric too often blithely referred to mythological images of America, ignoring realities of Americans' own past. The European images may also have been effective in attracting a wide range of activists to the movement. But it seems worth considering (as in the American case as well) some of the costs of some of this imagery, practical and otherwise.

Gendered rhetoric continues from both the European and American sides in describing one another and their relations. This seems in part Europeans' continued effort to respond to and refigure offensive American characterizations, such as of those of "EU-nuchs" and "Euroweenies," and in turn to recast power relations.⁴⁷ Metaphors can be a powerful political tool for such important change. One may argue that gendered metaphors and others have in the intervening decades contributed in some ways to transforming European-American relations

⁴¹ Freyhold, *Frauen*.

⁴² Sölle, *Mann kann die Sonne nicht verhaften*, p. 63.

⁴³ *Ibid*, *The Arms Race Kills*, Philadelphia 1983.

⁴⁴ *Ibid*, pp. 68–75.

⁴⁵ AL, flyer *Friedensherbst*.

⁴⁶ Compare Weber, Doris, *Erinnerungen an Gestern*, in: Schöfthaler, *Geschichten*, pp. 86–88.

⁴⁷ Compare Kagan, Robert, *Of Paradise and Power. America and Europe in the New World Order*, New York 2003. Kagan enthusiastically embraced Ronald Reagan's foreign policy. "EU-nuch" plays on the English term, "eunuch," for a castrated male; "weenies" is colloquial for an "emasculated" male. See also Michel Martin, host of "Tell Me More," broadcast of U.S. National Public Radio, 13 October 2009, concerning "A Spanking Ban in the U.S.?", URL: <<http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=113745389>> (18.10.2017), suggesting that some US-Americans might find Swedes (who imposed such a ban in 1979, as representing violence against children) to be raising their children as "weenies."

for the better. But such imagery can also lock individuals, representatives of nations, and delegates of transnational bodies into disadvantageous and constraining positions; it can shape and reinforce past and present “realities” in a form that fixes thinking in unproductive fashion. Perhaps least useful is the way such imagery reinstanciates particular notions of gender difference itself. Ongoing careful attention to the broader functionality and resonances of such metaphors remains critical.

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