University of Groningen

Behinderte Anerkennung? Interessenorganisationen von Menschen mit Behinderungen in Westdeutschland seit 1945 . By Jan Stoll. Frankfurt and New York : Campus Verlag. 2017

Milder, Stephen

Published in:
German History

DOI:
[10.1093/gerhis/ghy010](https://doi.org/10.1093/gerhis/ghy010)

IMPORTANT NOTE: You are advised to consult the publisher's version (publisher's PDF) if you wish to cite from it. Please check the document version below.

Document Version
Publisher's PDF, also known as Version of record

Publication date:
2018

[Link to publication in University of Groningen/UMCG research database](#)

Citation for published version (APA):

Milder, S. (2018). Behinderte Anerkennung? Interessenorganisationen von Menschen mit Behinderungen in Westdeutschland seit 1945 . By Jan Stoll. Frankfurt and New York : Campus Verlag. 2017. *German History*, 36(2), 323-325. <https://doi.org/10.1093/gerhis/ghy010>

Copyright

Other than for strictly personal use, it is not permitted to download or to forward/distribute the text or part of it without the consent of the author(s) and/or copyright holder(s), unless the work is under an open content license (like Creative Commons).

The publication may also be distributed here under the terms of Article 25fa of the Dutch Copyright Act, indicated by the "Taverne" license. More information can be found on the University of Groningen website: <https://www.rug.nl/library/open-access/self-archiving-pure/taverne-amendment>.

Take-down policy

If you believe that this document breaches copyright please contact us providing details, and we will remove access to the work immediately and investigate your claim.

Downloaded from the University of Groningen/UMCG research database (Pure): <http://www.rug.nl/research/portal>. For technical reasons the number of authors shown on this cover page is limited to 10 maximum.

direct elections to the European Parliament in 1979 (p. 201). Not the plans of leaders such as Solange Fernex and Petra Kelly for a decentralized, eco-pacifist Europe but the practical organization of a national-level campaign won the day. Die Grünen unified in 1980 and entered parliaments shortly thereafter (long before their French counterparts, Les Verts). A movement whose initial commitments were transnational and grassroots thus acquired national and electoral contours. This gave ecological issues a prominent place in formal politics, but in Milder's telling, it also domesticated a more radical earlier potential.

Nonetheless, anyone who still doubts environmentalism's larger political relevance will find this book a formidable challenge. From encampments that modelled 'the basis for an alternative society' (p. 119), to electoral initiatives that 'prefigure[d] . . . a wholly new polity' (p. 245), to unorthodox tactics that 'renew[ed] . . . parliamentary praxis', Milder's protagonists recast 'what democracy . . . looked like' (p. 242) for the contemporary age. These are large claims, and he makes a compelling case. Yet how exactly the self-transformative experiences of an activist minority influenced the perspectives and practices of broader groups is not explored. And while Milder presents the internal dynamics of political environmentalism in rich detail, we learn little about its relation to other strands of post-war extra-parliamentary politics, which also developed new action repertoires and reshaped subjectivities. More attention to comparisons and connections would have helped readers assess Milder's claims for the distinctive contribution by 1970s environmentalism to a larger 'renewal of democracy' (p. 239). Here, a second issue arises. In his zeal to burnish the movement's democratic credentials, Milder brushes aside those who would correlate its goals and its typical forms to a 'disaggregation' of 'society' (Daniel Rodgers, cited p. 52) in the post-boom era, which shifted both the sociological and imaginative coordinates of politics relative to the preceding age of mass parties, unions and conventionally 'materialist' concerns. Milder does not deny that there was a different conception of 'the social' at stake for his actors; he only insists that it too could ground a 'meaningful progressive politics' (pp. 243, 8). That is doubtless the case, but the question of whether and how political environmentalism—also of the grassroots, participatory kind—was shaped by deeper transformations that might have constrained as well as expanded democracy's horizons is not addressed.

Such discussions would more fully contextualize but need not diminish the contribution of 1970s anti-nuclear activism to the recent history of democracy, for which Milder so eloquently argues. This book makes an important intervention with which not only scholars of the environmental movement and the nuclear age but also anyone interested in protest, popular politics and political imaginaries in post-war Western Europe should contend.

doi:10.1093/gerhis/ghy006

Advance Access publication 26 February 2018

Sean A. Forner
Michigan State University

***Behinderte Anerkennung? Interessenorganisationen von Menschen mit Behinderungen in Westdeutschland seit 1945.* By Jan Stoll. Frankfurt and New York: Campus Verlag. 2017. 418 pp. €39.95 (paperback).**

Behinderte Anerkennung explores the history of 'interest organizations for people with disabilities' in West Germany. The book is a shortened version of Jan Stoll's doctoral dissertation, written at the University of Kiel as part of a DFG-funded project on 'The History of People with Disabilities since 1945'. Relying primarily on interest organization publications and

government documents, Stoll pieces together the histories of a variety of organizations that articulated the interests of disabled people in the Federal Republic, from its founding until the 1980s. Concepts from the field of disability studies, as well as literature on the social and political history of the Federal Republic, frame his study.

Spanning some 40 years, Stoll's book has an impressive scope for a history of interest organizations; in fact, the period's length allows him to show the diversity of these groups, and to chart the rise and fall of three organizational waves. The book is organized chronologically, with a separate section devoted to each wave. Stoll works systematically in each section, asking the same questions about each wave's goals and intentions, the success of its efforts and the ways in which disabled interest groups were pressured to fit the majority society. This systematic approach can be long-winded and repetitive, but it forms the basis for a well-evidenced description of the ways that the representation of the interests of disabled people changed over time.

Stoll begins with a look at the two primary associations for disabled veterans, which were organized locally or regionally even before the Federal Republic was founded in 1949. These mass organizations, which measured their membership in hundreds of thousands, were second only to trade unions in terms of size and influence in the 1950s. They approached politics in a top-down fashion, relying on personal relationships between organizational leaders and lawmakers (many of whom were themselves members of disabled veterans' associations) and participation in government advisory commissions in order to directly articulate their needs and shape legislation.

Initiatives for parents of disabled children, which emerged in the 1960s, comprised the second wave of disabled interest organizations studied by Stoll. These groups also had a federal organization, the *Lebenshilfe*. Unlike the veterans' groups, however, the locus of their action was at the local level. Alongside parents, these locally organized initiatives typically included professionals in the treatment and rehabilitation of disabled young people. Accordingly, they advocated concrete local projects, such as special schools or group homes. Stoll problematizes the heterogeneous mix of parents and professionals in these groups, arguing that it sometimes caused difficulties in interest articulation (for example, doctors and parents had different opinions on whether or not disabled children should be required to register with state authorities), and also because disabled people themselves played little part in shaping these groups' work and objectives.

Insufficient opportunities for input by disabled people motivated the third wave of disabled interest organizations that Stoll studies. Relying primarily on reports from their own publications, Stoll develops a variegated picture of the grassroots organizations that emerged to represent the interests of disabled people in the 1970s. These groups ran the gamut from local clubs for disabled people, to activist organizations focused on disabled access, to the radical 'cripples' movement', which fought for the emancipation of people with disabilities and rejected the involvement of the non-disabled in its work. Though these groups were quite different, they shared an understanding of disability as a social category rather than a personal defect. As a result, they advocated the reform of 'majority society' so that people with disabilities could be integrated into it. While the disabled clubs did so by partnering with non-disabled people and spreading awareness about their condition, disabled access activists used public protests including civil disobedience in order to draw attention to their systematic exclusion from public spaces. The cripples' movement took a far more radical approach, arguing that people with disabilities had to emancipate themselves and that they could only eventually be integrated into majority society after it had been fundamentally transformed.

Despite their different strategies, the 1970s groups' shared emphasis on disabled people's right to articulate their own needs united them in protest against a series of official events organized from the top-down throughout the FRG in 1981 to celebrate the United Nations' International Year of Disabled Persons. The activists saw that year, when they participated in several mass protests and disrupted ceremonial events, as the height of their movement. It was difficult for the disabled people's movement to find its footing and keep moving forward afterwards. Thus, Stoll concludes the final section of his study by looking at the ways in which the movement was 'normalized' during the 1980s. Like the other 'new social movements', to which Stoll compares the disabled movement, political access via the Green Party and the professionalization of movement institutions, including publications, were important parts of this process. A cursory overview of links with the international movement towards recognition of human rights in the late 1980s marks the book's chronological endpoint.

The three sections of Stoll's book could almost stand alone as studies of interest organizations during distinct periods in the Federal Republic's history. One might even argue that organizations for wounded veterans had little in common with initiatives formed by parents of children with mental disabilities or birth defects caused by medications. Likewise, the structural differences between the centrally organized veterans' associations and the grassroots initiatives of the 1970s mean that Stoll must study those groups rather differently, looking at federal legislation in the former case and local action in the latter. Despite these differences, Stoll's systematic approach enables him to create a useful comparative framework, and thus allows readers to see how larger trends in the development of West German interest group politics played out in the particular case of interest groups for people with disabilities. At the same time, however, his approach diminishes the overlaps and contestations between groups from different waves (though he is careful to point out that groups from earlier waves did not simply cease to exist when the next wave came along and sometimes mentions their interactions). Nor does he show conclusively that protagonists of groups from the different waves tended to perceive themselves as part of the same, ongoing struggle—even if he argues convincingly that the groups had something in common in that their characteristics reflected changing ideas about what it meant to be disabled. These issues are inherent to a work on this scale, and thus can be seen primarily as new areas for research suggested by Stoll's impressive study, which will undoubtedly be the basis for this further work. Covering the entire lifespan of the 'old Federal Republic' and systematically analysing many different types of interest organizations for people with disabilities, Stoll has succeeded in creating a comprehensive and detailed overview of an important, yet under-researched subject.

doi:10.1093/gerhis/ghy010

Advance Access publication 28 February 2018

Stephen Milder
University of Groningen

***"Selbst ist der Mann": Do-it-yourself und Heimwerken in der Bundesrepublik Deutschland.* By Jonathan Voges. Göttingen: Wallstein Verlag. 2017. 647 pp. €54.00 (hardback).**

This is one of those books that makes you think: it is almost unbelievable that nobody has written about this before. The history of home improvement, a most common activity in Germany and a high-selling market, ranks among these topics. Until now, those interested in the emergence of 'do-it-yourself' (DIY) as a concept, an industry, and an activity, had to