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## Holger Nehring

Visiting Scholar

### Education

M.A., Modern History, Politics, and Philosophy, Eberhard-Karls-Universität (2000)

Ph.D., Modern History, Oxford University (2005)

### Research Interests

Social, political, and cultural history of Western Europe during the post-World War II era, social history of the Cold War in Britain and Germany since 1945, historical peace research

### Mershon Project

Nehring's research project, "The Last Battle of the Cold War: Peace Movements, German Politics and the End of the Cold War," investigates the impact of social movements on politics in East and West Germany during the Cold War era.

Nehring studies the construction of ideology during the Cold War, derived primarily from symbols and images. He examines how the threat of nuclear annihilation during this period existed in pictures and imagined scenarios transmitted and magnified through the media. The images of military combat exercises and the destructive power of nuclear weapons created fear and formed the essence of Cold War propaganda.

Activists challenged such mainstream symbols and fears, developing their own collective imagination. Nehring seeks to understand how social movements mobilized symbolic politics and changed the destructionist ideology that characterized conventional perceptions of nuclear war.

He studies how the last battle of the Cold War in 1980s Germany was waged not with tanks and weapons on battlefields, but between and among East and West Germans and their governments through symbolic political



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demonstrations and protests.

In investigating social movements during this era, Nehring focuses on four main subjects:

- The expansion of political activism in East and West Germany during the late Cold War era.
- The ways communist vs. anti-communist logic was overcome as the exclusive ideology for Cold War politics.
- The changes in conceptions of gender roles, particularly the connection between male citizenship and conscription.
- The ways social movements unveiled the mainstream destructionist logic of the Cold War.

Nehring's research reveals the importance of social movements that spurred change in cultural norms and prompted reconsideration of the basic assumptions of mainstream Cold War politics.

### **Selected Publication**

*Life against Death: West European Protests Against Nuclear Weapons and the Cold War* (Oxford University Press, forthcoming)

"A Peaceful Europe? Negotiating Peace in the Twentieth Century," ed. by Helge Pharo (*Contemporary European History*, 2008)

"Constitutions, Violence and Civil Society," eds. by José Harris and Robert Gerwarth (*Journal of Modern European History*, 2008)

"Americanized Protests? The British and West German Protests against Nuclear Weapons and the Pacifist Roots of the West German New Left, 1957-1964," in *Decentering America*, ed. by Jessica Gienow-Hecht (Berghahn Books, 2007)

"The Era of Non-Violence: 'Terrorism' in West German, Italian and French Political Culture, 1968-1982" (*European Review of History*, 2007)

*Global Debates about Taxation*, ed. by Florian Schui (Palgrave-Macmillan, 2007)

"Diverging Perceptions of Security: NATO and the Protests against Nuclear Weapons," in *Transforming NATO in the Cold War: Challenges beyond Deterrence in the 1960s*, ed. by Andreas Wenger (Routledge, 2006)

"National Internationalists: British and West German Protests against Nuclear Weapons, the Politics of Transnational Communications and the Social History of the Cold War, 1957-1964" (*Contemporary European History*, 2005)

"Politics, Symbols and the Public Sphere: The Protests against Nuclear Weapons in Britain and West Germany, 1958-1963" (*Zeithistorische Forschungen*, 2005)

"The British and West German Protests against Nuclear Weapons and the Cultures of the Cold War, 1957-64" (*Contemporary British History*, 2005)

"The Growth of Social Movements," in *A Companion to Contemporary Britain, 1939-2000*, ed. by Paul Addison/Harriet Jones (Blackwells, 2005)

"Towards a Transnational Social History of 'a Peaceable Kingdom': Peace Movements in post-1945 Britain," in *Peace Movements since 1945*, ed. by Benjamin Ziemann (Klartext, 2004)

"Westernisation -- a New Paradigm for Interpreting West European History in a Cold War Context" (*Cold War History*, 2003-04)

#### **Selected Honors, Awards and Service**

Fellow, Royal Historical Society (2008-)

Associate Fellow, Cold War Studies Center, London School of Economics (2006-)

Member of the Marie Curie Programme on Transnational Protest Politics (2006-)

Rhodes Scholar (2000-03)

DAAD Fellowship, visiting student at the London School of Economics (1997-98)

Scholar of the *Studienstiftung des Deutschen Volkes* (German National Scholarship Foundation) (1996-2000)

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