
ABOUT THE SERIES

History, as radical historians have long observed, cannot be severed from authorial subjectivity, indeed from politics. Political concerns animate the questions we ask, the subjects on which we write. For over thirty years the *Radical History Review* has led in nurturing and advancing politically engaged historical research. Radical Perspectives seeks to further the journal's mission: any author wishing to be in the series makes a self-conscious decision to associate her or his work with a radical perspective. To be sure, many of us are currently struggling with the issue of what it means to be a radical historian in the early twenty-first century, and this series is intended to provide some signposts for what we would judge to be radical history. It will offer innovative ways of telling stories from multiple perspectives; comparative, transnational, and global histories that transcend conventional boundaries of region and nation; works that elaborate on the implications of the postcolonial move to "provincialize" Europe; studies of the public in and of the past, including those that consider the commodification of the past; and histories that explore the intersection of identities such as gender, race, class, and sexuality with an eye to their political implications and complications. Above all, this book series seeks to create an important intellectual space and discursive community to explore the very issue of what constitutes radical history. Within this context, some of the books published in the series may privilege alternative and oppositional political cultures, but all will be concerned with the way power is constituted, contested, used, and abused.

No oppositional political culture has received more attention from historians in recent years than the student movements of the 1960s. However, even sympathetic studies of the New Left and the Sixties tend to favor a narrative that locates its origins in Europe and the United States, and separates (following Jürgen Habermas) a "good" student left—that advocated broader liberalization and human rights, in the Enlightenment

tradition—from a “bad” one that tragically degenerated into narcissism and violence, inspired by a warped vision of Third World revolution. These dual assumptions are boldly and persuasively challenged in Quinn Slobodian’s superb study of the German student movement of the 1960s, *Foreign Front*. The early chapters trace the crucial role played by thousands of foreign students from Asia, Africa, and Latin America, enrolled in West German universities, in both inspiring and mobilizing the first manifestations of German student protest during the 1960s. Indeed, Slobodian suggests that the international wave of demonstrations following the assassination of Congolese leader Patrice Lumumba in 1961—protests in which African and other Third World students played a central role—would be a more appropriate starting point for a global history of the sixties than the oft-cited Berkeley Free Speech Movement that began in 1964.

It was flesh and blood political actors from the “Third World,” often speaking in the language of democratization and human rights, who helped inject concerns about neo-colonialism and U.S. imperialism into political debates at German universities. To quote Slobodian, “West German Third-Worldism did not inhabit a realm of fantasy separate from political reality for New Leftists,” despite the utopian elements contained in this perspective. The result of his meticulous research and innovative perspective is a book that genuinely decenters the history of the student left and that allows us to appreciate the significance of a Third World politics that amounted to much more than simply a projection of the desires of “Western” students. For all these reasons, it is a very welcome addition to the Radical Perspectives series.