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Special Section: Protest in the City: Democracy and Dissent in 1980s Europe

In the context of heightened Cold War tensions, European politics in the 1980s was dominated by political stagnation in the East and a turn to a conservative-neoliberal agenda in the West. Political and social developments, both domestically and internationally, triggered mass mobilization and, in some cases, militant protest in Europe's urban centers. While urban protest movements in Western Europe advocated the need for participatory democracy and a transformation of society through principles and practices of self-management and self-determination, the main goal of East European dissidents was to reform or abolish dictatorial states and establish a functioning civil society. This special section of the *Journal of Urban History* aims to show that in the struggle for an active and participatory civil society, grassroots opposition movements and urban subcultures across the continent played a pivotal role in broadening democratic processes and values that radically altered the political and social Cold War order.