Editors' Introduction

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In this second issue of *Protest*, we continue full steam ahead in attempting to parse the global ‘protest turn.’ The preponderance of protest activity and movements across the world is more than an impressionistic observation. Mounting empirical evidence showcased by new research confirms the trend in its globality. For instance, a new study by Friedrich-Ebert-Stiftung, Global Social Justice, and the Initiative for Policy Dialogue indicates the increased international prevalence of protests over the past fifteen years. People across 101 countries rallied against democratic and socio-economic developmental “failures” as official political channels fell short of meeting popular expectations the world over (Ortiz et al. 2021). At the time of writing, we note protests by supporters of Georgia’s jailed former President Mikheil Saakashvili (Parulava and Kotkamp 2021). We witness from afar international conglomerations of activists, including indigenous peoples, demanding more serious action against climate change as world leaders meet for the COP26 summit in Glasgow (Pruitt-Young 2021). From objections to formal political processes gone wrong to appeals for better quality of life (subsistence and environment both), our world is gripped by protests, seemingly at any moment in time.

This cross-country, cross-regional phenomenon invites varied scrutiny from a number of scholarly and activist angles—our mandate here at *Protest*. That includes the analytical sophistication to explore discomfiting normative ambiguities and contradictions. Protest is itself a *right* flowing from the freedom of assembly. Yet, protestors can mobilize and march to insist on anti-democratic measures, to express exclusionary or even morally abhorrent positions. Pro-Bolsonaro demonstrations in Brazil (Milz 2020) and the January 6 Capitol ‘Insurrection’ in the US may be just two instructive examples. Beginning

to understand the full spectrum of protest form and content—reflecting the broad scope of human motivation, ideas, values, and behaviors—calls for serious scholarly inquiry and activist rumination.

We are thus excited to present the wide-ranging content of this new issue. Opening up our **research articles** section is veteran scholar miriam cooke, who explores the digital dimension of protest mobilization through her novel concept of “cyberatomism” (cooke 2021, this issue). The dizzying speed at which protest can be organized has a downside, she cautions, stemming from technology-induced atomization of individuals sheltered behind their screens. Taking up a similar theme on the novelty of contemporary protest movements injected with “control” by social media and its many platforms, Lee Artz examines offline-online interplays. He questions the extent to which online activism alone can promulgate political change through an examination of #Black Lives Matter (Artz 2021, this issue). Comparing recent Belarus and Euromaidan protests a few years earlier, Mikhail Minakov tests the effectiveness (with respect to democratization, for instance) of protest movements as mediated by external (Western) support and regime structures (Minakov 2021, this issue). Michael Brigulgio takes us to Malta, exploring protest during the COVID-19 pandemic and suggesting how small state contexts shape the opportunity structures and mobilizational capacities of claim-makers (Brigulgio 2021, this issue).

Our **Special Essays** in this issue focus on two Arab settings. Mansour Nasasra offers an ‘insider’ account to the Shaikh Jarrah protests of 2021, which sparked the ‘Unity Intifada’ of this past spring/summer. Residents of this Jerusalem (Al-Quds) neighborhood resist Israeli occupation from within the occupying power’s borders, marking a turning point in the Palestinian struggle (Nasasra 2021, this issue). Douglas Christensen considers Arab Spring-type protests in Jordan. He suggests that discontent with neoliberalism inflect the 2018 and 2019 mobilization, significant even if the King remains ensconced in the throne (Christensen 2021, this issue).

The **Interviews** section is chock-full of thoughtful reflection by three inspirational women. Basem Ezbidi interviews Hanan Ashrawi, former Spokesperson of the PLO, who traces a persistent thread of multi-modal protest activity among Palestinians—including women—before and since the first Intifada. Such popular mobilization interweaves with the more ‘formal’ political track, including the ineffectual Oslo negotiations and agreements with Israel. Milleray Painamal narrates her experiences on behalf of the Mapuche (indigenous) people in Chile, insisting in the interview on necessary nation-wide and international solidarity when it comes to women’s rights and environmental activism. *Protest* also interviewed writer/artist Molly Crabapple, who contemplates the ‘Occupy Wall Street’ movement a decade after it has fizzled

out, and considers parallels with protest in other locales around the world. In the **Protest Voices** section, Denise Phanord spotlights the gendered aspects and disparities of Haitian bottom-up movements, where women prominently stand out as protestors and more despite their relative marginalization in the country's formal politics. Three incisive **book reviews** will draw attention of researchers and readers interested in recent texts on protest and activism.

Also in this issue, we are pleased to inaugurate our Global Protest Spotter timeline, courtesy of Assistant Editor Anna Ferguson. This 'catalogue' of the past two years of protest activity around the world is not meant to be exhaustive or to do full justice to the intricacies and complexities of such 'episodes.' The timeline instead presents a concise recap of some notable protest 'events' that have taken place in recent months. Perhaps these timeline entries might invite fuller accounts submitted to the journal by prospective authors, pieces we can feature in other sections. Whatever your intellectual or advocacy 'end game' is as far as protest is concerned, we sincerely hope you enjoy this fabulous issue of our exciting new journal. Happy reading!

References

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