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Around the world, social movements have become legitimate, yet contested, actors in local, national and global politics and civil society, yet we still know relatively little about their longer histories and the trajectories of their development. This new series seeks to promote innovative historical research on the history of social movements in the modern period since around 1750. We bring together conceptually-informed studies that analyse labour movements, new social movements and other forms of protest from early modernity to the present. We conceive of “social movements” in the broadest possible sense, encompassing social formations that lie between formal organisations and mere protest events. We also offer a home for studies that systematically explore the political, social, economic and cultural conditions in which social movements can emerge. We are especially interested in transnational and global perspectives on the history of social movements, and in studies that engage critically and creatively with political, social and sociological theories in order to make historically grounded arguments about social movements. This new series seeks to offer innovative historical work on social movements, while also helping to historicise the concept of “social movement.” It hopes to revitalise the conversation between historians and historical sociologists in analysing what Charles Tilly has called the “dynamics of contention.”

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Regions, Industries, and Heritage

Perspectives on Economy, Society, and Culture in Modern Western Europe

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Series Editors’ Preface

Around the world, social movements have become legitimate, yet contested, actors in local, national and global politics and civil society, yet we still know relatively little about the longer histories of those social movements, and the trajectories of their development. Our series reacts to what can be described as a recent boom in the history of social movements. We can observe a development from the crisis of labor history in the 1980s to the boom in research on social movements in the 2000s. The rise of historical interests in the development of civil society and the role of strong civil societies, as well as non-governmental organizations in stabilizing democratically constituted polities, has strengthened the interest in social movements as a constituent element of civil societies.

In different parts of the world, social movements continue to have a strong influence on contemporary politics. In Latin America, trade unions, labor parties and various left-of-center civil society organizations have succeeded in supporting left-of-center governments. In Europe, peace movements, ecological movements and alliances intent on campaigning against poverty and racial discrimination and discrimination on the basis of gender and sexual orientation have been able to set important political agendas for decades. In other parts of the world, including Africa, India and South East Asia, social movements have played a significant role in various forms of community building and community politics. The contemporary political relevance of social movements has undoubtedly contributed to a growing historical interest in the topic.

Contemporary historians are not only beginning to historicize these relatively recent political developments; they are also trying to relate them to a longer history of social movements, including traditional labor organizations such as working-class parties and trade unions. In the longue durée, we recognize that social movements are by no means a recent phenomenon and are not even an exclusively modern phenomenon, although we realize that the onset of modernity emanating from Europe and North America across the wider world from the eighteenth century onwards marks an important departure point for the development of civil societies and social movements.
In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries the dominance of national history over all other forms of history writing led to a thorough nationalization of the historical sciences. Hence social movements have been examined traditionally within the framework of the nation state. Only during the last two decades have historians begun to question the validity of such methodological nationalism and to explore the development of social movements in a comparative, connective and transnational perspective, taking into account processes of transfer, reception and adaptation. Whilst our book series does not preclude work that is still being carried out within national frameworks (for, clearly, there is a place for such studies, given the historical importance of the nation state in history), it hopes to encourage comparative and transnational histories on social movements.

At the same time as historians have begun to research the history of those movements, a range of social theorists – from Jürgen Habermas to Pierre Bourdieu, and from Slavoj Žižek to Alain Badiou, and from Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe to Miguel Abensour, to name but a few – have attempted to provide philosophical-cum-theoretical frameworks in which to place and contextualize the development of social movements. History has arguably been the most empirical of all the social and human sciences, but it will be necessary for historians to explore further to what extent these social theories can be helpful in guiding and framing the empirical work of the historian in making sense of the historical development of social movements. Hence the current series is also hoping to make a contribution to the ongoing dialogue between social theory and the history of social movements.

This series seeks to promote innovative historical research on the history of social movements in the modern period since around 1750. We bring together conceptually informed studies that analyze labor movements, new social movements and other forms of protest from early modernity to the present. With this series, we seek to revive, within the context of historiographical developments since the 1970s, a conversation between historians on the one hand and sociologists, anthropologists and political scientists on the other.

Unlike most of the concepts and theories developed by social scientists, we do not see social movements as directly linked, a priori, to processes of social and cultural change, and we therefore do not adhere to a view that distinguishes between old (labor) and new (middle-class) social movements. Instead, we want to establish the concept of ‘social movement’ as a heuristic device that allows historians of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries to investigate social and political protests in...
novel settings. Our aim is to historicize notions of social and political activism in order to highlight different notions of political and social protest on both left and right.

Hence, we conceive of ‘social movements’ in the broadest possible sense, encompassing social formations that lie between formal organizations and mere protest events. But we also include processes of social and cultural change more generally in our understanding of social movements: this goes back to nineteenth-century understandings of ‘social movement’ as processes of social and cultural change more generally. We also offer a home for studies that systematically explore the political, social, economic and cultural conditions in which social movements can emerge. We are especially interested in transnational and global perspectives on the history of social movements, and in studies that engage critically and creatively with political, social and sociological theories in order to make historically grounded arguments about social movements. In short, this series seeks to offer innovative historical work on social movements, while also helping to historicize the concept of ‘social movement’. It also hopes to revitalize the conversation between historians and historical sociologists in analyzing what Charles Tilly has called the ‘dynamics of contention’.

*Regions, Industries and Heritage* is, at first sight, a somewhat odd addition to a series on the history of social movements. It deals primarily with the history of industrialization and de-industrialization in various regions of Europe. However, it also points towards a different usage of the term ‘social movement’ in nineteenth-century Europe, i.e. a usage of social movement as social progress, which was intimately connected to processes of industrialization. The Industrial Revolution was an important element in the transition from pre-modern to modern times, and the latter brought with it a whole range of social movements, not the least the labor movements and nationalist movements that both, in their different ways, grappled with the transformations of modernity. Hence modern social movements as network of networks seeking to bring about fundamental social and political change in society would be unthinkable without the social movement of industrialization. And when industrial society seemed to run out of steam in Europe in the 1970s and 1980s and post-industrial times beckoned, a whole range of social movements emerged to deal with such post-industrial times in diverse urban and social contexts. Industrialization and de-industrialization as regional processes of social movement have thus been intricately connected to a variety of different social movements.
Asking questions about the role of industrialization and de-industrialization in diverse European regions also marks the point where social movement studies meet economic history and, as the pages of this volume clearly show, it is an economic history that is richly informed by cultural history asking about forms of representation and about the symbolisms and different layers of meaning behind hard economic data and statistics. If the turn to econometrics had signaled the long good-bye of economic history from other sub-disciplines of history, the turn to culture shows how meaningful economic history can be to an understanding of the social and cultural underpinnings of political and social processes.

*Regions, Industries and Heritage* thus demonstrates not only the fruitfulness of approaching the topic of ‘social movement’ from not only a different conceptual but also a different disciplinary angle. And thirdly, it also points to the importance of a different spatial scale – i.e. the region. Most social movement studies still take as their starting point the nation, whether they are single-nation studies or comparisons. The volumes so far published in this series bear testimony to this national tendency of social movement studies. With regard to industrialization and deindustrialization, the contributions in this volume underline the fruitfulness of a regional approach, showing that regional developments shaped industrialization processes and their accompanying social movements perhaps more deeply than national or transnational developments. Hence this volume can also be understood as a rallying cry to take the region as scale of analysis more seriously.

Oerters, Czierpka and Thorade also highlight the diverse ways in which regional developments have been interlinked with both national and transnational ones, thereby getting the reader to think about these categories not as mutually exclusive but as intricately interrelated. What is more, these different spatial scales take on a different meaning both over time and according to the particular non-spatial theme that the observer is looking at. They are fully in flux, to the point where a particular region that might have had a huge importance at one time and for one particular theme completely disappears – as a region, at least – at a different time and for that particular theme. Social movement, thus understood, always contains the making, unmaking and remaking of social processes at specific times and places.

Finally, it seems to us, this volume has two broader implications for the historical understanding and analysis of social movements: first, it highlights how ‘social movement’ links economic and social processes to constructions of identity within regional frameworks that might
well acquire different spatial meanings. It raises questions as to whether concerns with identity were indeed stronger in the allegedly post-ma-
terial era of deindustrialization from the 1970s onwards, or whether the materialist phases of regional industrialization were not always about the identity of particular regions for particular people, as well. Second, this study provides important insights into how historians might bring together two very different meanings of ‘social movement’: an economic and social one – today woefully absent from mainstream social move-
ment studies – and a political and cultural one that only gains its mean-
ningfulness against the background of the former. Social movements, in other words, need social movement in order to be fully understood and analyzed in modern European societies.

Stefan Berger (Bochum) and Holger Nehring (Stirling)