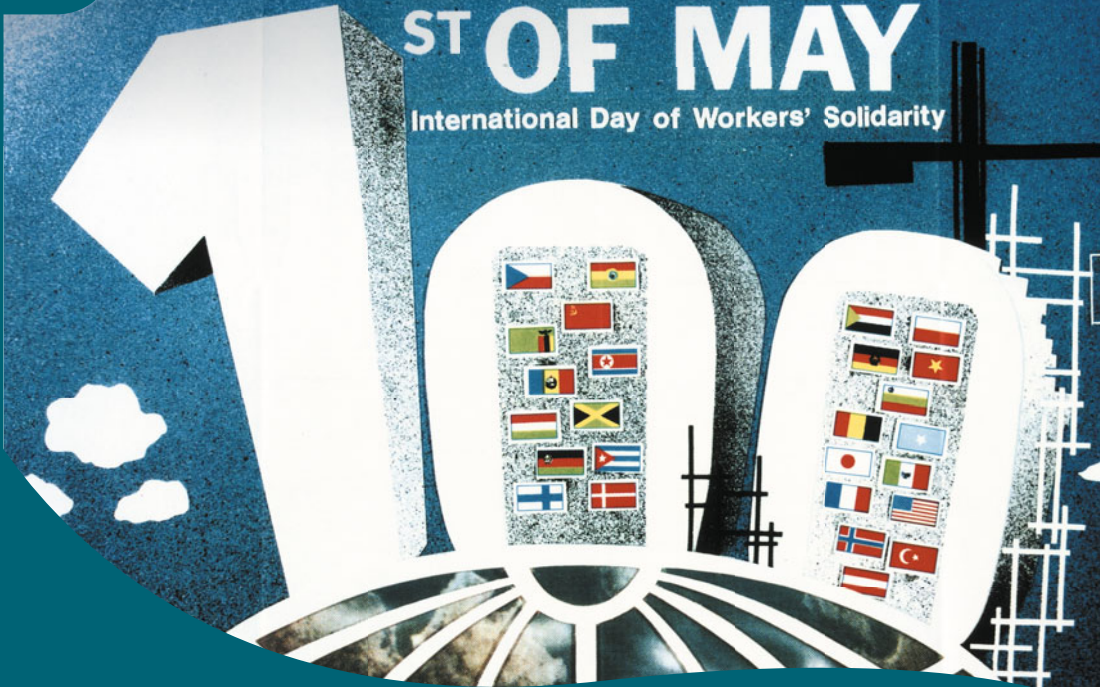




PALGRAVE STUDIES IN THE
HISTORY OF SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

1ST OF MAY

International Day of Workers' Solidarity



Memory and Social Movements in Modern and Contemporary History

Remembering Past Struggles
and Resourcing Protest

Edited by
Stefan Berger · Christian Koller

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Palgrave Studies in the History of Social Movements

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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 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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Protest



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SOZIALE
BEWEGUNGEN

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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 their longer histories 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 labour 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 organisations in stabilising 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, labour parties and various left-of-centre civil society organisations have succeeded in supporting left-of-centre 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 historicise these relatively recent political developments; they are also trying to relate them to a longer history of social movements, including traditional labour organisations, such as working-class parties and trade unions. In the *longue durée*, we recognise that social movements are by no means a recent phenomenon and are not even an exclusively modern phenomenon, although we realise 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 nationalisation 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 comparative, connective and transnational perspective taking into account processes of transfer, reception and adaptation. While 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 as well as 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 contextualise 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 analyse labour 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 therefore do not adhere to a view that distinguishes between old (labour) and new (middle-class) social movements. Instead, we want to establish the concept ‘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 historicise 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 organisations 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 historicise the concept of ‘social movement’. It also hopes to revitalise the conversation between historians and historical sociologists in analysing what Charles Tilly has called the ‘dynamics of contention’.

Stefan Berger and Christoph Koller’s edited collection on *Memory and Social Movements: Remembering Past Struggles and Injustices, Resourcing Protest and Change* brings together a wide range of case studies to address a central question of social movement scholarship that has so far found little systematic attention—the question of how social movements mobilise memory, or more specifically: the past. For different methodological reasons, historians and social scientists have so far been rather reluctant to engage with this problematic. While social movement scholarship has focused on the dynamics of social and political change, the

focus on memory studies on the seemingly stable configurations of collective memory appeared, at first sight, has little to say to those questions. Places of memory, to use Pierre Nora's term, seemed to have little to do with the 'dynamics of contention' as outlined by Charles Tilly and others. So, it took some theoretical and methodological developments to enable productive conversations between memory and social movement scholars to emerge—they had to do with the opening up of social science research for issues to do with space and place, the growing importance of an attention to framing and communication in social movement studies, as well with the move away of memory studies from assumptions of fixed identities towards importance of agency and materiality when constructing memories.

Whereas there have been some early attempts, for example by Dieter Rucht or Ron Eyerman, to engage with the question of how memory matters for the construction of movement identity, such approaches were soon the victim of the critique of the concept of 'collective identity', which seemed too homogeneous to be appropriate for describing dynamic social, cultural and political processes. Likewise, memory studies moved away from approaches focused on the cultural construction of social memories towards perspectives that emphasised the agency of individuals in forging historical memories or in emphasising the materiality of such memories. It was mainly in the context of the emergence of scholarship of memory *movements* in the early and mid-2010s, i.e. political or social movements that asserted certain kinds of memories especially in the context of the legacies of colonialism, that a productive conversation between memory studies and social movement scholarship has become possible again.

In making an important contribution in continuing this conversation and following on from the related project by Sean Scalmer, Christian Wicke and one of the editors of this series, this volume highlights a number of different dimensions of the memory and social movements. First, its chapters highlight how some movement used the past—their own past or the history of the certain problems, for example struggles for labour rights—to communicate. These are case studies about the role of the past in identity construction. Another set of contributions problematises the question of how social movements became actors that championed particular notions of the past—they essentially became memory movements, both by engaging with forms of memorialisation in their own or other societies, but also developing specific readings of their

own histories. Throughout, the contributions highlight that these are not merely urban phenomena, but also relate to rural or semi-rural context. They thus also help decentre memory studies' attention to mainstream metropolitan places and places and thereby give voice to marginalised groups.

In bringing out these complexities, therefore, this volume encapsulates what this series is attempting to do: a conversation between historians and social scientists not only with regard to their concepts but also with regard to the very subject of their research.

Bochum, Germany
Stirling, UK

Stefan Berger
Holger Nehring

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Introduction: Memory Studies Meets Social Movement Studies

Stefan Berger and Christian Koller

For many years memory studies and social movement studies have operated as two separate sub-disciplines without feeling the need to take much notice of each other. Memory studies have their origins in cultural studies and can be traced back to the memory boom of the 1980s that was triggered by the works of Pierre Nora and others.¹ They were initially preoccupied with national memory (as a reaction to the crisis of national historical master narratives) and traumatic national memory in particular. Later, they turned to transnational as well as local forms of memory, but

¹ S. Berger and B. Niven, *Writing the History of Memory* (London, 2014).

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questions of war and genocide remained very much in the forefront of discussion. While the importance, from the nineteenth century onwards, of collective memory and history politics for nationalist movements has been stressed by scholars of nationalism for a long time, the question of to what extent other social movements similarly relied on memory politics was hardly ever tackled. Social movement studies, on the other hand, has suffered from excessive emphasis on so-called new social movements that began emerging in the 1970s. Unlike labour history that is rooted in reflections on the labour movement with regard to its own history, social movement studies often lacked a deeper historical perspective, because its arsenal of medium-range theories was informed more by social science theory than by theories from cultural studies and history.² As a result, there has for a long time been little attempt to consider memory and social movement activism in an integrated, systematic and comparative way.

However, things have been changing for a number of years now.³ Within the last ten to fifteen years, from both sides, we find a range of scholars who have begun to explore the relationship between social movements and memory. As early as 1995, Dieter Rucht pointed out that the mechanisms by which social movements operate rely on memory and identity work.⁴ In 2009, Christian Koller discussed the collective memory of past strike experiences as an element that potentially structured discourse during later industrial actions; questioning whether the accumulation of experiences through strikes really boosted class consciousness automatically as was alleged by traditional labour history.⁵ In 2014, Nicole Doerr outlined how social movement activists have constructed collective memories in order to further their activism in wider

² See, for example, D. Rucht, 'Zum Stand der Forschung zu sozialen Bewegungen', in: J. Mittag and H. Stadtland (eds.), *Theoretische Ansätze und Konzepte der Forschung über soziale Bewegungen in der Geschichtswissenschaft* (Essen, 2014), pp. 61–88.

³ For a comprehensive overview see S. Berger, S. Scalmer and C. Wicke, 'Memory and Social Movements: An Introduction', in: idem (eds.), *Remembering Social Movements: Activism and Memory* (London, 2021), pp. 1–25.

⁴ D. Rucht, 'Kollektive Identität: Konzeptionelle Überlegungen zum Desiderat in der Bewegungsforschung', in: *Forschungsjournal NSB*, 8:1 (1995), pp. 9–23.

⁵ C. Koller, *Streikkultur: Performanzen und Diskurse des Arbeitskampfes im schweizerisch-österreichischen Vergleich 1860–1950* (Münster and Vienna, 2009), p. 40.

society and to build strong internal collective identities.⁶ One year later, Ron Eyerman published a preliminary survey of work carried out on the use made of memory and history by social movements in building strong collective identities.⁷ In 2019, Priska Daphi and Lorenzo Zamponi released a special issue of the journal *Mobilisation* on the topic of social movements and memory, and in 2021, a collection of essays on the same topic, edited by Stefan Berger, Sean Scalmer and Christian Wicke, was published.⁸

A number of recent empirical studies point to the fruitfulness of exploring how memory functions in relation to social movements. These include Dennis Bos's book on the memory of the Paris Commune of 1871, Priska Daphi's study on the relationship between identity, narrative and memory in the European Global Justice Movement, a book by Donatella della Porta and her collaborators on memories and legacies in social movements, Lara Leigh Kelland's account of how various forms of memory work have been crucial in a great variety of US-based social movements, Lorenzo Zamponi's analysis of the role of memory in the construction of media narratives in Spanish and Italian student movements, Luca Manucci's comparison of right-wing populist movements in contemporary Europe that links their success to public memory cultures that commemorate twentieth-century fascism, an essay collection edited by Samuel Merrill, Emily Keightley and Priska Daphi on the interrelationship between digital media, cultural memory and social movements, Daniel Artho's PhD thesis on the memory of the Swiss general strike of 1918 and finally, Ann Rigney's ERC project titled 'Remembering Activism: the Cultural Memory of Protest in Europe'.⁹ These projects

⁶ N. Doerr, 'Memory and Culture in Social Movements', in: B. Baumgarten et al. (eds.), *Conceptualizing Culture in Social Movement Research* (Basingstoke, 2014), pp. 206–226.

⁷ R. Eyerman, 'Social Movements and Memory,' in: A.L. Tota et al. (eds.), *Routledge International Handbook of Memory Studies* (London, 2015), pp. 79–83.

⁸ P. Daphi and L. Zamponi (eds.), *Movements and Memory*, Special Issue on Memory and Social Movements of *Mobilisation* 24:4 (2019), pp. 399–524; S. Berger, S. Scalmer and C. Wicke (eds.), *Remembering Social Movements: Activism and Memory* (London: New Routledge, 2021).

⁹ D. Bos, *Bloed en barricaden: De Parijse Commune herdacht* (Amsterdam, 2015); P. Daphi, *Becoming a Movement: Identity, Narrative and Memory in the European Global Justice Movement* (New York, 2017); D. Della Porta et al., *Legacies and Memories in Movements: Justice and Democracy in Southern Europe* (New York and Oxford, 2018); L.L. Kelland, *Clio's Foot Soldiers: Twentieth-Century US Social Movements and Collective*

have all shown that social movements rely on collective memories to assert claims, mobilize supporters and legitimize their political visions, while also helping to further shape collective memories. This volume fits into this general trend, delving into the synergies between memory studies and social movement studies that include a deeper historical perspective.

The chapters of this collection are based on an international online conference, jointly organized by the Institute for Social Movements of the Ruhr-Universität Bochum and the Swiss Social Archives (Zurich), that took place on 18th and 19th of June 2021.¹⁰ These texts explore how social movements have been constructing and creating memories of their own activity, how specific landscapes of memory have been influencing social movements, and how those movements have been using memory as a cultural resource to further their own goals and ambitions. The case studies represent topical, conceptual and methodological diversity. They cover ecological, urban, peasant, workers, anti-colonial, gay, feminist, pacifist and far-right movements in several countries and display the diverse interrelations that exist between social movements and collective memory. The purpose of this collection is not (yet) to present a uniform conceptual and methodological framework of the connections between social movements and memory, but to show the complexities of these connections and the variety of possible analytical approaches.

Different constructions of ‘the past’ play a variety of roles in the discourses and mobilization strategies of the social movements discussed in this volume. Some of them refer to general ‘lieux de mémoire’¹¹ and the myths of the societies in which they operate. Sometimes, they positively refer to such ‘pasts’, while sometimes they use them

Memory (Amherst, 2018); L. Zamponi, *Social Movements, Memory and Media: Narrative in Action in the Italian and Spanish Student Movements* (Basingstoke, 2019); L. Manucci, *Populism and Collective Memory: Comparing Fascist Legacies in Western Europe* (London, 2020); S. Merrill et al. (eds.), *Social Movements, Cultural Memory and Digital Media: Mobilising Mediated Remembrance* (Basingstoke, 2020); D. Artho, ‘Schandfleck’ oder ‘Ruhmesblatt’? *Die Erinnerungskultur des schweizerischen Landesstreiks 1918–1968* (University of Berne: Unpubl. PhD thesis, 2022): on Ann Rigney’s project see <https://rememberingactivism.eu/> [accessed 8 December 2022].

¹⁰ S. Berger and C. Koller, ‘Tagungsbericht zur Konferenz “Memory and Social Movements”, Digital (Bochum), 18./19 June 2021’, *H-Soz-Kult*, 16 August 2021, <https://www.hsozkult.de/conferencereport/id/fdkn-127587>.

¹¹ S. Berger and J. Seiffert (eds.), *Erinnerungsorte: Chancen, Grenzen und Perspektiven eines Erfolgskonzeptes in den Kulturwissenschaften* (Essen, 2015).

to create ‘counter-pasts’ that focus on hitherto neglected aspects and actors or on the reinterpretation of well-known events.¹² The majority of case studies presented in this volume belong in this category: Jawhar Cholakathodi describes the art installation ‘Sovereign Forest’ which was shown at several international art festivals as well as locally in India and amounts to an ‘object-oriented social enquiry’, building on memory practices, community resistance and social movement activism. Arnab Roy Chowdury’s chapter about Maharashtra-based social movements that campaigned against large dam-building projects shows the use of mythopoetic and historical narratives to underpin and strengthen resistance. Michał Rauszer shows how diverse rural movements in interwar Poland used the memory of the abolition of serfdom to mobilize a counter-memory to the dominant urban one that had erased the memory of serfdom from collective memory because it stood in the way of nation-building. The peasants in interwar Poland used such counter-memories to resist demands from landlords for more work, increased taxation and a drive towards agricultural capitalism, while indicting more generally what they regarded as forms of social hardship. The mobilizing potential of the counter-memory of serfdom also became clear in the context of the resistance by Polish peasants to Communist attempts at collectivizing agriculture after the Second World War. Christian Jacobs’s contribution details the invocation of the colonial past by the leaders of the 2009 general strike in the French Caribbean and their successful de-legitimation of French imperialism, but it also recalls how the strike showed many colonial continuities that persist as vital elements of social and political life in Martinique and Guadeloupe today. Gabriele Fischer and Katharina Ruhland analyse how the gay movement in Germany sought to shape the memory of homosexual victims in the concentration camp of Dachau. Nicholas Moll studies the historical analogies (most notably to the Spanish Civil War, the Appeasement Policies of the 1930s and the Holocaust) that were integral to European protest movements against the war in Bosnia-Herzegovina between 1992 and 1995. Sophie van den Elzen analyses

¹² For environmental movements, for example, see F. Uekötter (ed.), *Ökologische Erinnerungsorte* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Rupprecht, 2014), for far-right movements M. Langebach and M. Sturm (eds.), *Erinnerungsorte der extremen Rechten* (Wiesbaden: Springer SV, 2015), for the Scottish separatist movement C. Koller, ‘Glencoe 1692: Ein Massaker als komplexer Erinnerungsort’, *Historische Zeitschrift*, 296/1 (2013): 1–28.

the transnational circulation of memories of antislavery in nineteenth-century women's movements in France, the Netherlands and Germany to find a close interrelationship, constructed by activists of the women's movements, between the fate of women and the fate of slaves. Sebastian Haumann discusses the use made of working-class memory in attempts to preserve and restore working-class neighbourhoods in West German cities from the 1960s to the 1980s. Stefan Berger analyses the memory politics of right-wing populist parties in Germany between the 1980s and the present day, focussing on the 'Alternative für Deutschland' (AfD).

Other case studies, however, explore social movements that refer to their own history as strategies of mobilization and identity work. Wiktor Marcek's chapter asks about the memorial landscape of the revolution of 1905 in Poland, which in different parts of the nation's divided socialist movement had very different memory impacts. Memorialization of 1905 played an important role in the scripting of Polish independence as a revolution counterposed against the events of 1905—a narrative that gained a lot of popular support in interwar Poland. Christian Koller discusses the memorialization of protest and strike casualties in the Swiss labour movement to explore why none of these incidents produced a memory of martyrdom. Irina Gordeeva analyses the memory of Tolstoyism in the dissident Russian peace movement of the 1970s and 1980s, focussing on the Trust Group that combined pacifism with ecological activism and had strong links with War Resisters' International.

The role of references to the past in the discourses and activities of social movements ranges from mere rhetorical allusion to an outright politics of history. This is not an opposition but rather a continuum from movements with a primarily present and future-oriented focus that use the past as an additional resource to mobilize support, to movements primarily trying to establish new perspectives on the past as a means to bolster their attempts at changing contemporary societies. The latter repeatedly influenced academic historiography and contributed, among others, to the emergence of fields like labour history, historical peace research, women's and gender history, black history and environmental history.

While most chapters in this volume present cases where reference to the past is largely a resource of mobilization, Fischer's and Ruhland's chapter on the memory of homosexual victims in Dachau is an example of outright politics of history. The International Dachau Committee (CID) had originally excluded the memorialization of homosexual victims

(together with ‘asocial’ and criminal prisoners) from artistic representation in the memorial for victims erected on the site of the former roll call square in 1968. In subsequent decades, the gay liberation movement sought to rectify this and increasingly took a confrontational stance vis-à-vis the CID. The pink triangle became a crucial symbol of the gay liberation movement, linking the struggle against the ongoing criminalization of male homosexuality in West Germany to the commemoration of persecution during the Nazi era. Some other case studies are located between politics of history and the use of history for politics. Berger’s chapter, for instance, underlines the diversity of far-right memory politics in contemporary Germany. While there is an attempt to remove National Socialism and the Holocaust as the central anchor point of German identity, far-right memory politics also try to mobilize the memory of xenophobic and anti-immigration sentiments.

As all the contributions to this current volume underline, social movement activists have often acted as memory activists. The recent *Routledge Handbook on Memory Activism*, edited by Yifat Gutman and Jenny Wüstenberg, talks about an ‘activist turn in memory studies’ and introduces a wide range of grass-roots actors seeking to bring about social change through processes that give meaning to the past, e.g., through historical research, collecting artefacts from the past and developing rituals of remembrance. Gutman and Wüstenberg define memory activism as ‘the strategic commemoration of a contested past to achieve mnemonic or political change by working outside state channels’.¹³ There are a wide range of memory activists that are also represented in the pages of our current volume. They range from artists, farmers and environmental activists to members of peace movements, solidarity groups and right-wing memory warriors.

Jawhar Cholakkathodi’s chapter draws attention to people, but also to objects as memory activists, for in his case, the rice seeds of the Sovereign Forest have the ability to create an archive and a memory of a biodiversity that has been increasingly destroyed by land-grabbing industries, such as mining and steel, and by capitalist farming practices. His chapter underlines how much memory studies has to gain from engaging with material culture studies that have long argued for the need to move away

¹³ Y. Gutman and J. Wüstenberg, ‘Introduction: The Activist Turn in Memory Studies’, in: *idem* (eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Memory Activism* (London, 2023), p. 5.

from an entirely anthropocentric and logocentric idea of history.¹⁴ As Cholakathodi reminds us, it is precisely the forces of modernity that are aligned with environmental destruction. Artists like Amar Kanwar draw attention to the nexus between capitalism, community resistance and environmental protection. He also emphasizes the importance of memory practices as a resource for local communities to resist the destructive forces of modernization. Such artistic interventions amount to forms of agonistic memory which intervene on behalf of a vision of greater social justice, and a more solidaristic society, through radical forms of historicization that do not attempt to settle debates about memory or the past, and instead politicizes these debates by showing that we always construct a past with the purpose of enabling a specific future in the present.¹⁵ An archival turn in art practices furthers such agonistic memory practices, as it roots art in the past and asks uncomfortable questions about the link between the past and the present.¹⁶

The memory activists that interrogate the land-grabbing, environment-destroying, practices of industrial modernization in India also question traditional notions of left- and right-wing social movement activism. Whereas in the past and in the global north, many (if by no means all) left-wing social movements have endorsed industrial modernization and have called for a fairer distribution of the spoils of such modernization, in the global south (and not only there) industrial modernization has itself become questionable. Traditional ways of life, of which right-wing social movements in the north have tended to be the champions, is hailed in the global south as progressive, because it is more sustainable in an environment where industrial modernization, as the hallmark of the Anthropocene, has pushed mankind very close to a climate catastrophe. What was once progressive now appears as destructive and what was once

¹⁴ T.J. LeCain, *The Matter of History. How Things Create the Past* (Cambridge, 2017).

¹⁵ A.C. Bull and H. Lauge Hansen, 'On Agonistic Memory', in: *Memory Studies*, 9:4 (2016), pp. 390–404. See also their later thoughts—A.C. Bull, H. Lauge Hansen and F. Colom-González, 'Agonistic Memory Revisited', in S. Berger and W. Kansteiner (eds.), *Agonistic Memory and the Legacy of Twentieth-Century Wars in Europe* (Basingstoke, 2021), pp. 39–68.

¹⁶ On art being an active agent in postindustrial debates about the link between past, present and future see also S. Berger, 'Urbane Künste Ruhr and its Cultural Interventions in the Remaking of the Ruhr Region in Germany', in: *Rethinking History*, forthcoming in 2023.

backwards looking and traditional now seems progressive. What is politically left and what is politically right has thus become the centre of a sustained debate.¹⁷

A second article on India in this collection re-enforces this complication of straightforward left- and right-wing distinctions. Chowdhury points out that the huge dam-building projects of the Indian government in the southern state of Maharashtra were classically progressive modernization projects that were to help drought-stricken areas, but in the end, they mostly benefitted the interests of urban elites and agricultural industrialists rather than the small farmers who suffered most from the droughts. Those opposing the projects in the name of small farmers and dam evictees were often influenced by neo-Marxist ideology. From the 1980s onwards they questioned the usefulness of such ‘progressive’ modernization project for the people. Combining ecological concerns with political demands for greater caste and gender equality, they also championed the rights of indigenous communities. These grass-roots Marxist movements linked their struggles to the memories of anti-caste and anti-colonial movements in India, as well as farmers’ movements fighting for greater social justice for rural farming communities from as far back as the seventeenth century. Counter-myths were created to the myths that allegedly justified the Brahmin superiority over lower castes, i.e., indigenous populations. These served as powerful forms of memory activism allowing the latter to challenge their dispossession.

While it has become more complicated to neatly delineate left and right, it is still fair to say that many more studies on social movements in this volume concentrate more on the political left than on the political right. There are many reasons for this, including the ethical and practical difficulties of researching right-wing movements, the greater sympathies of social movement researchers with the political left and many others. There is, however, still a great need to study right-wing social movements, including their use of memory. In this volume, Stefan Berger explores the long-term continuities of the memory politics of German right-wing political parties from the late 1940s to the present day, focussing on the AfD and its struggle against the cosmopolitan memory consensus in the *Hieraus vielleicht ein “Federal Republic of Germany (FGR)” machen that*

¹⁷ A very western-centric take on this is provided by J. Cronin, G. Ross and J. Shoch (eds.), *What’s Left of the Left? Democrats and Social Democrats in Challenging Times* (Durham, NC, 2011).

formed in the 1980s and was then modified after reunification. Berger's plea for an agonistic memory politics as a more helpful riposte to right-wing challenges than a somewhat helpless cosmopolitanism should be read as a contribution to an ongoing debate about how to deal with right-wing populist memory politics in Germany.

Social movement activism is often urban, which is why the memoscapes of social movements tend to have a very urban feel. However, as Chowdhury and Cholakkathodi demonstrate, it is worth exploring rural social movements, which have been far more prominent in the global south, but can also be found in the global north, as underlined in the chapter by Michał Rauszer. Here it is the memory of serfdom which served as an important resource for peasants fighting for greater social justice in interwar Poland. The rural memoscapes of peasants in interwar Poland were characterized by references to folklore and tradition in a rural public sphere that was somewhat set apart from the assumptions of an urban, metropolitan public sphere, and retained a deal of autonomy from it. Public spheres cannot be understood as unified spaces in which different actors are positioned in relation to each other. Rather, public spheres are often compartmentalized, and different public spheres can act semi-independently of each other, following their own logics, moral compasses and memoscapes. Memory conflicts surrounding issues of transitional justice and memory wars carried out in new social media are two prominent examples of the production of competing public spheres.¹⁸

Apart from the urban-rural split in social movement activism, we have in this volume assembled a range of contributions where classic urban social movements are at the fore. In his contribution, Sebastian Haumann focusses on citizens' initiatives in West Germany that battled the 'modernization' of whole city quarters, which effectively meant the demolition of quarters, and the rebuilding of new, typically high-rise, apartment blocks. Haumann emphasizes that these initiatives not only mobilized memory but were also underpinned by the construction of truthful historical knowledge that reinforced collective memory. They did their own historical research, trying to make it as 'scientific' as possible, in order to

¹⁸ C. Brants and S. Karstedt (eds.), *Transitional Justice and the Public Sphere: Engagement, Legitimacy and Contestation* (London, 2017); Ellen Rutten, Julie Fedor and Vera Zvereva (eds.), *Memory, Conflict and New Media. Web Wars in Post-Socialist States* (London, 2013).

recover a past that could serve as a counterpoint to modernization. They had the past largely to themselves as it did not interest the architects and city planners wanting to modernize these cities who were entirely focussed on the future. Hence it was not so much a memory contest as it was a one-sided mobilization of memory and history on the side of those opposed to modernization. Like with the rural activists in India, these urban activists in West German cities problematized traditional left- and right-wing distinctions, because the left was traditionally in favour of modernization. Social Democratic city administrations often fervently endorsed plans of modernization, whereas the memory activists opposed them. In this sense, they were calling on tradition to plead for conservation and to oppose modernization. Yet these activists often came from a neo-Marxist tradition, becoming active in the wake of a politicized 1968. Thus, the distinction between left and right also became more problematic in the global north from the 1970s onwards. Furthermore, Haumann draws attention to the effective communication strategies of the memory activists which were crucial in shaping this historical knowledge into a powerful collective memory that was often successful in resisting the ‘modernization’ of cities. Functioning communities and neighbourhoods, they argued, had histories and memories, and modernization would amount to a history-less and memory-less dystopia. Their success, Haumann argues, can also be measured in the fact that from the 1990s onwards city planners and architects routinely included research on the histories of city quarters up for development in their respective redevelopment plans.

Another largely urban citizens’ movement discussed in this volume is the solidarity movement for Bosnia-Herzegovina in the Yugoslav civil wars of the 1990s. It had strong associations with activists from the earlier peace movement. The contribution by Nicholas Moll explores how these movements used references to the past as a resource for their actions. The most prominent references he found were to the 1930s and 1940s with references to the anti-fascist struggle, the Spanish Civil War and the occupation of much of continental Europe by German fascist troops and their allies. The Yugoslav civil wars in the 1990s generally underlined the extent to which European memoryscape were still tied to the Second World War as an anchor point of European identity.¹⁹ What is striking

¹⁹ T. Judt, *Postwar. A History of Europe Since 1945* (New York, 2005).