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INSTITUT FÜR SOZIALE BEWEGUNGEN

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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Ana Stevenson

# The Woman as Slave in Nineteenth-Century American Social Movements

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*Every woman in these pages worked*
*so that the children of the future*
*could share a better tomorrow.*

*To the children of today,*
*Benjamin Lucas Curry,*
*Ariana Rose Curry,*
*Emma Sophia Cox,*
*Henry Thomas Cox,*
*Paige Smith Zimmerman,*
*and Harriet Mia Murdoch.*

*These women were dreaming of*
*changing the world*
*for you.*

# 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 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 have 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 historicize 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. 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 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'.

At the heart of Ana Stevenson's volume on *The Woman as Slave in Nineteenth-Century American Social Movements* stands the desire to historicise an analogy that was both extremely widespread and deeply flawed. Comparing women with slaves was often deeply racist, and yet Stevenson's book shows clearly that this analogy served as an analytical framework for dealing with the 'woman question' in a great variety of different American social movements throughout the nineteenth century. Her analysis is highly perceptive in tracing the many changes that this analogy underwent over the course of the nineteenth century and across diverse social movements. Her book is also excellent at analysing the many interconnections between different social movements in using and developing the analogy between women and enslaved people of African descent.

By following the woman-slave analogy in both antislavery movements and proslavery lobbies, in women's rights movements, dress-reform movements, labour reform movements and in suffrage movements as well as, not the least, in free love movements, racial uplift movements and anti-vice movements, Stevenson reveals on the one hand the ubiquity of that analogy in nineteenth-century social movement politics in the United States. On the other hand, she traces the importance of this discourse to a great variety of different and often mutually exclusive political projects, those of political reform and those of a complete transformation of the foundations of American society.

The crucial period in which the discursive construction of the woman-slave analogy was being re-forged was the period of the Civil War and its aftermath. Transnational, transatlantic networks of reformers proved to be particularly important in using the analogy to foster their particular reform projects that invariably had to do with the intersections between race, class, and gender. Yet the writings on the intersectionality of racial, class, and gender identities that have gathered in prominence since the 1980s do not so much build on but transcend the kind of analogical thinking that was at the heart of a 'woman-as-slave worldview', as Stevenson argues in her concluding chapter. For analogical thinking historically all too-often prioritised one identity over the other, in particular those of white women over those of their black sisters, and thus served ultimately a de-radicalised and racist agenda. Overall, Stevenson has provided us with tantalising glimpses of a kind of pre-history of intersectionality, one that points to as many pitfalls as to possibilities and promises. It is a major achievement of this volume to lead the reader competently and elegantly through the many reincarnations of the woman-slave analogy in America's nineteenth century.

Bochum, Germany — Stefan Berger
Stirling, UK — Holger Nehring

A version of Chap. 4, though substantially revised, appeared as "'Symbols of Our Slavery': Fashion and Dress Reform in the Rhetoric of Nineteenth-Century American Print Culture," *Lilith: A Feminist History Journal* 20 (2014): 5–20. Thanks to the Australian Women's History Network and the Lilith Editorial Collective for their permission to reproduce aspects of this journal article.

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And my thanks, finally, to the love of my life—my husband—who is no tyrant.

# Contents

# Abbreviations

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| AASS | American Anti-Slavery Society |
| AERA | American Equal Rights Association |
| AFAAS | American and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society |
| AWSA | American Woman Suffrage Association |
| BFAAS | British and Foreign Anti-Slavery Society |
| FLRA | Female Labor Reform Association |
| NAACP | National Association for the Advancement of Colored People |
| NACW | National Association of Colored Women |
| NAWSA | National American Woman Suffrage Association |
| NDRA | National Dress Reform Association |
| NEWC | New England Women's Club |
| NWP | National Woman's Party |
| NWSA | National Woman Suffrage Association |
| WNLL | Woman's National Loyal League |
| WWA | Working Women's Association |

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