

ABOUT THE SERIES

History, as radical historians have long observed, cannot be severed from authorial subjectivity, indeed from politics. Political concerns animate the questions we ask, the subjects on which we write. For more than thirty years the *Radical History Review* has led in nurturing and advancing politically engaged historical research. *Radical Perspectives* seeks to further the journal's mission: any author wishing to be in the series makes a self-conscious decision to associate her or his work with a radical perspective. To be sure, many of us are currently struggling with what it means to be a radical historian in the early twenty-first century, and this series is intended to provide some signposts for what we would judge to be radical history. It will offer innovative ways of telling stories from multiple perspectives: comparative, transnational, and global histories that transcend conventional boundaries of region and nation; works that elaborate on the implications of the postcolonial move to "provincialize Europe"; studies of the public in and of the past, including those that consider the commodification of the past; histories that explore the intersection of identities such as gender, race, class, and sexuality, with an eye to their political implications and complications. Above all, this series seeks to create an important intellectual space and discursive community to explore the very issue of what constitutes radical history. Within this context some of the books published in the series may privilege alternative and oppositional political cultures, but all will be concerned with the way power is constituted, contested, used, and abused.

Memory and the Impact of Political Transformation in Public Space is the first of two planned volumes on public history with origins in the *Radical History Review*. Both of these collections, by internationalizing issues recognizable to historians in the United States, familiarize the seemingly foreign from a radical perspective and expand the far-too-often U.S.-centric field of public history. A future volume will examine race and empire in

national narratives; the essays in the present volume, each a lively window on to public spaces around the globe—from Sri Lanka and Harbin, China, to South Africa and Scotland—demonstrate how historical interpretations of public sites have shifted with the rise and fall of political regimes and changing political currents all over the world. Nor is “revisionism” anything new; these essays trace reinterpretations as far back in time as the medieval and early modern eras. Moreover, historians play a supporting role at best in these struggles; rather, what we see time and again is the central role of politicians and a politically charged citizenry, with historically specific interests, constraining curators, architects, and those with a dissenting view of the past. The sites of these contests, however, represent a radical expansion of the sphere of public history and the arenas in which the past is contested. Museums and monuments are well known sites for historical presentation. However, in accounts of unbuilt monuments or repressed songs in Nicaragua, this collection reminds us that if History is the winners’ story, then the radical historian exploring the politics of space needs to look for absence and listen to silence.