



# Social Movements and Activism in the USA

*Stephen Valocchi*

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What can we learn when we listen closely to and engage in dialogue with social movement activists?

*Social Movements and Activism in the USA* addresses this question for a group of progressive activists in Hartford, Connecticut, who do community, labor, feminist, gay and lesbian, peace, and anti-racist organizing. Situated within the twenty-first-century landscape of post-industrialism and neo-liberalism and drawing on oral histories, the book argues for a dialogic and integrative approach to social movement activism. The dialogue between scholar and activist captures the interpretive nature of activists' identity, the variable ways activists decide on strategies and goals, the external constraints on activism, and the creative ways activists manoeuvre around these constraints. This dialogic approach makes the book accessible and useful to students, scholars, and activists alike. The integrative nature of the text refers to its theoretical approach. Rather than advancing a new theory of social movements, it uses existing approaches as a tool kit to examine the what, how, who, and why of social movement activism.

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