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Gay men and the Left in post-war Britain: How the personal got political (Critical Labour Movement Studies MUP)

Lucy Robinson

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Available in paperback for the first time, his book demonstrates how the personal became political in post-war Britain, and argues that attention to gay activism can help us to fundamentally rethink the nature of post-war politics. While the Left were fighting among themselves and the reformists were struggling with the limits of law reform, gay men started organising for themselves, first individually within existing organisations and later rejecting formal political structures altogether.

Culture, performance and identity took over from economics and class struggle, as gay men worked to change the world through the politics of sexuality. Throughout the post-war years, the new cult of the teenager in the 1950s, CND and the counter-culture of the 1960s, gay liberation, feminism, the Punk movement and the miners' strike of 1984 all helped to build a politics of identity.

There is an assumption among many of today's politicians that young people are apathetic and disengaged. This book argues that these politicians are looking in the wrong place. People now feel that they can impact the world through the way in which they live, shop, have sex and organise their private lives. Robinson shows that gay men and their politics have been central to this change in the post-war world.

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