



# Young Lives on the Left: Sixties Activism and the Liberation of the Self

*Celia Hughes*

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## **Young Lives on the Left: Sixties Activism and the Liberation of the Self** Celia Hughes

Young lives on the left is a unique social history of the individual lives of men and women who came of age in radical left circles in the 1960s. Based on a rich collection of oral history interviews, the book follows in-depth approximately twenty individuals, tracing the experience of activist self-making from child to adulthood. Their voices tell a particular story about the shaping of the English post-war self. Championing the oppressed in struggle, the young activists who developed the personal politics of the early 1970s grew up in a post-war society which offered an ever-increasing range of possibilities for constructing and experiencing the self. Yet, for many of these men and women the inadequacy of the social, political and cultural constructions available for social identity propelled their journeys on the left. The creation of new left spaces represented the quest for a construction of self that could accommodate the range of contradictions concerning class, gender, religion, race and sexuality that young activists experienced growing up in the post-war landscape.

An important contribution to the global histories of 1968, the book explores untold stories of English activist life, and offers a unique perspective of the social and emotional trials of young sixties adulthood and radical politics. It will be essential reading for researchers and students of twentieth-century British social, cultural and political history. However, it will be of interest to scholars in related fields and to a general readership interested in the social protest movements of the long 1960s.

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