

cesos políticos, sociales y económicos de la región. Cueto y Palmer muestran con erudición y claridad que la salud en América Latina ha sido moldeada por enfrentamientos, migraciones, dictaduras y reformas neoliberales, pero también por resistencias, saberes locales y solidaridades transnacionales. Si bien el foco de la obra está puesto en la mirada médica, deja abierta la inquietud por profundizar en el papel de otros actores —como mujeres, pacientes o profesionales de la enfermería— en la construcción del campo sanitario.

En suma, *Medicina y salud pública en América Latina. Una historia* es una obra indispensable para historiadores de la medicina, profesionales de la salud, estudiantes e investigadores de las ciencias sociales. Su reciente traducción al español representa un aporte valioso no solo por su contenido, sino por su potencial formativo y político que invita a pensar la salud como una construcción histórica, situada y plural, y a reconocer la riqueza y complejidad del legado sanitario latinoamericano. ■

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George Severs. *Radical Acts: HIV/AIDS Activism in Late Twentieth-Century England.* Bloomsbury Publishing; 2024. 256 p. ISBN 978-13-5037-454-6. 22 £

Drawing on oral histories and a variety of archival sources, George Severs explores the history of the HIV/AIDS activist movement in England in the 1980s and 1990s. Considering the unique political context animated by local activism and queer experiences of everyday life, he recounts the solidarity and resistance formed and the deep-seated fears of the gay community of the time. The author explores daily life affected by the epidemic to explain the activists' multifaceted responses to it, as well as the diverse composition of the actors that "formed something larger than themselves" (p. 9). The book is divided into two parts, which are the components of the book's title — the 'radical' and the 'acts'.

Severs begins with the chapter 'The streets' by describing the activities of radical groups, which, although crucial, are often historically marginalized. He deftly outlines the context, allowing the reader to settle into the described

beginnings of the HIV/AIDS epidemic in England and describes the deviant, unapologetic, unruly activist. Early activities, such as helplines of support and information, laid the foundation for huge grassroots, civil disobedience movement operating in many places, resisting policies, neglect, discrimination and exerting pressure on authority, the media, and corporations.

In the second chapter, entitled 'Crossing borders' Severs describes how HIV/AIDS activism was shaped by 'transatlantic queer networks' (p. 43) which facilitated an exchange of information, awareness-raising and inter— and transnational collaboration. The chapter shows how these connections enabled activists to socialize and build affective relationships, offered local and international media coverage and created joint initiatives. The author points out the relative (in)visibility of women and trans people, and their problems with lack of information and opportunities, understanding, sympathetic peers and loneliness. He also explores how, despite these setbacks, women managed to organize and act on an unprecedented scale around the world. In doing so the author remembers to relate to imperial legacy still seen in the postcolonial landscape.

In the second part of the book, 'Acts', Severs explores the activism pursuing to ameliorate the injustices faced by HIV-affected people by means other than protest. 'At work' focuses on 'piecemeal individual' (p. 76) forms of labour —paid employment, voluntary work and emotional labour— as 'meaningful sources and methods of activist expression' (p. 74). Through testimonials, the author explores neoliberal changes that negatively affected the stability of employment, access to sick leave and pay, benefits, disability payments or funding of activist organizations—all laced with the threat of discrimination and fear for a decent livelihood. The author describes the fraught, emotional, and complex relationship between activism and employment and how the nature of working for profit sat uneasily for many HIV/AIDS activists who articulated discomfort with the professionalisation of HIV/AIDS care. Severs also analyses the issues of monopolisation of care by bigger voluntary groups who were becoming more corporate, as well as the competition between HIV/AIDS charities in the context of a shrinking government budget. What I found extremely moving was the subchapter about the daily services denied to HIV-positive people. I could not imagine how painful and unbearable it could be for people in an already difficult life situation, perhaps without a job, after losing loved ones. Severs showed that activism does not only involve direct action, but also utilising vocational skills to offer practical support.

The next chapter describes the significant impact of HIV/AIDS epidemic on the university communities, where a very heterogeneous group of students who, on the one hand, wanted to explore their sexuality without being fully aware

of the potential danger, and, on the other hand, anxiously sought information on safe sex and STIs prevention. As Severs shows, 'diverse coalitions' (p. 100) of students, nurses, administration staff, academics, chaplains and local activists were all involved, and with varying degrees of success, they worked together in multiple ways. They were creating student newspapers, organising educational campaigns, distributing information brochures, setting up a support line, or fighting the resistance of some colleges to implement guidance and training.

In 'Church' Severs demonstrates that religion and HIV/AIDS activism were not mutually exclusive. Religious HIV/AIDS activists, through support groups and educational resources, provided communities where HIV-positive individuals could understand and articulate their identities. Although Severs mentions discriminatory and homophobic voices raised by the priests, he focuses on activists fighting for dignity and respect towards the victims of the epidemic, talking about the numerous peri-religious practices of both believers (of various faiths) and lay people. What was most moving for me was Severs' discussion beautiful practices of funerals and caring for the memory of the dead, the (close to my heart) importance of music for the movement.

The author takes us on an amazing journey, because, although this is obviously a historical book, it presents the record of the movement in a very interesting way. Severs interweaves biographies of important figures, the origins of the organisations and foundations active then (and still today), relevant information on the local and global political and legal contexts and testimonials. The author very often refers to issues already discussed and/or indicates that he will be discussing something later, which not only helps the reader to navigate through the story, but also connects the threads and shows how everything was interconnected and influenced each other. As a result, the book is an enjoyable read, and one that makes us eager to find out more. While reading the book, from time to time I searched for more information about the mentioned events, heroes, organisations, legal acts and even listened to the songs mentioned by the author, because I was aroused by genuine curiosity and a desire to immerse myself in the described plots.

The book provokes many emotions. He caused me to be moved as I read about how many actions were taken by the queer community and allies and about the tenderness and care the activists tried to approach the victims and each other with. Reading about the dilemmas of work, the security of providing the bare minimum for HIV-positive people, I was outraged at the helplessness and sluggishness in action of Thatcher governments, obsessed with the neoliberal ideology of the minimalist state. More than once I had chills following the

evoked memories of people affected by HIV and what they felt when they were finally seen and acknowledged. The author even managed to make me cry on two occasions when I had the opportunity to learn about the vital role played by activists performing services for HIV-positive people, using their vocational skills. I was also made to weep by the musical theme, during funerals and the care for the identity of the buried dead listening to Barbra Streisand, Donna Summer and Jimmy Somerville songs. I also had the pleasure of reading with amusement and laughter at the right-wing effusions of young students, church hierarchs or just ideological shuriken.

While every reader will experience and perceive this work differently, I believe no one who comes across this book will remain indifferent to it —and what it conveys, how it embraces the activism in its fullest forms by exploring its complex spectrum and how it shows that ‘people with everything to lose create networks to not simply survive but find joy and pleasure’ (p. 132). ■

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Caroline Rusterholz. *Responsible Pleasure: The Brook Advisory Centres and Youth Sexuality in Postwar Britain.* Oxford: Oxford University Press; 2024. 270 p. ISBN 978-01-9286-627-1. 30 £

In the introduction of her book, Caroline Rusterholz, a leading scholar of the history of sexual and reproductive health in twentieth-century Europe, succinctly summarises the objective of *Responsible Pleasure: The Brook Advisory Centres and Youth Sexuality in Postwar Britain*: to highlight post-war Britain’s “sociocultural history of young people’s sexuality,” spanning from the 1960s to 2000. To me, it also provides a political overview of Britain’s history of youth sexuality. The book delivers a chronological analysis of changes in youth’s sexual culture in Britain over 40 years and gives a detailed account of the involvement Brook, a national charity that provides sexual health and well-being support to the youth through clinical and educational services, in transforming the nation’s norms, notions and behaviours concerning youth sexuality. Lived experiences, feelings, and individual subjectivity related to sexual health services rarely find space in