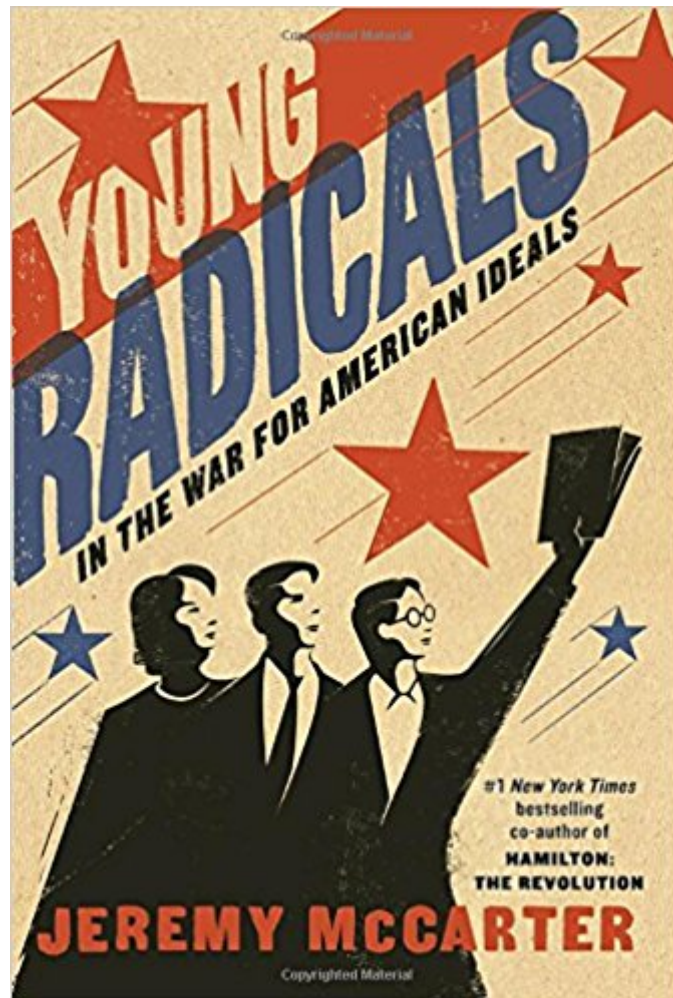




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Young Radicals: In The War For American Ideals



Synopsis

From the co-author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *Hamilton: The Revolution*, the stunning story of five American radicals fighting for their ideals as the country goes mad around them

“Inspiring and entertaining.” —David Brooks, *The New York Times*

“It’s not difficult to see why [Lin-Manuel] Miranda would have been attracted to [Jeremy] McCarter as a writing partner.” —*The Wall Street Journal*

“One of the exciting new nonfiction books this summer.” —*Time*

Where do we find our ideals? What does it mean to live for them—and to risk dying for them? For Americans during World War I, these weren’t abstract questions. *Young Radicals* tells the story of five activists, intellectuals and troublemakers who agitated for freedom and equality in the hopeful years before the war, then fought to defend those values in a country pitching into violence and chaos. Based on six years of extensive archival research, Jeremy McCarter’s dramatic narrative brings to life the exploits of Randolph Bourne, the bold social critic who strove for a dream of America that was decades ahead of its time; Max Eastman, the charismatic poet-propagandist of Greenwich Village, whose magazine *The Masses* fought the government for the right to oppose the war; Walter Lippmann, a boy wonder of socialism who forged a new path to seize new opportunities; Alice Paul, a suffragist leader who risked everything to win women the right to vote; and John Reed, the swashbuckling journalist and impresario who was an eyewitness to—and a key player in—the Russian Revolution. Each of these figures sensed a moment of unprecedented promise for American life—politically, socially, culturally—and struggled to bring it about, only to see a cataclysmic war and reactionary fervor sweep it away. A century later, we are still fighting for the ideals these five championed: peace, women’s rights, economic equality, freedom of speech—all aspects of a vibrant American democracy. The story of their struggles brings new light and fresh inspiration to our own.

Praise for *Young Radicals*

“In this lively, if at times swooningly earnest, portrait of artists, activists, writers and intellectuals, McCarter chronicles a moment in American history when socialism, progressivism, modernism, and feminism all exploded at once.” —*Newsday*

“A brisk pace and sympathetic portraits make for an entertaining, well-researched history of a decade marked by ebullience, hope, and pain.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“McCarter’s prose is engaging, moving, and, at times, laugh-out-loud funny. Recommended for young radicals today who want to understand past attempts to change the world in the face of repression.” —*Library Journal* (starred review)

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Customer Reviews

“Inspiring and entertaining.” —David Brooks, *The New York Times*

“It’s not difficult to see why [Lin-Manuel] Miranda would have been attracted to [Jeremy] McCarter as a writing partner. . . . *Young Radicals* is a brilliant, even inspiring book, full of whip-smart analysis that demands to be read and argued over.” —*The Wall Street Journal*

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“In this poetic, impassioned book, written with a fierce moral urgency, Jeremy McCarter conjures up a clutch of brilliant dreamers — poets, feminists, journalists, and political rebels — whose freewheeling ideas collided with the carnage of World War I and the repressive atmosphere of the postwar Red Scare. More than just an eloquent requiem for its disillusioned young idealists, ambushed by a savage turn in history, it extracts enduring lessons of historical change that redeem their often heartbreaking suffering. *Young Radicals* provides

just the literary antidote we need to counter the cynical forces of reaction in the Age of Trump.

—Ron Chernow, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author of *Alexander Hamilton*

“Jeremy McCarter’s gripping exploration of what drives young people toward revolutionary acts, in even the most desperate days, could not be more relevant to our current political moment. A crucial meditation on progress.”

—Rebecca Traister, *New York Times* bestselling author of *All the Single Ladies*

“At an increasingly polarizing time in American history, Jeremy McCarter’s compelling work on these early twentieth-century American activists provides much-needed perspective and insight. Engaging, thought-provoking, and wonderfully intimate, this book should inspire artists, writers, activists, and anyone who values peace and justice in a time of conflict and war.”

—Bryan Stevenson, executive director of the Equal Justice Initiative and *New York Times* bestselling author of *Just Mercy*

“*Young Radicals* is a highly dramatic, beautiful, and precise story of incredibly brave young people encountering bigotry, greed, ignorance, fear, and murderous rage, all the usual enemies of hope, decency, generosity of spirit, clarity, and courage of thought; it’s the story of their splendid refusals, their well-intended and sometimes fatal compromises, their stunning willingness to sacrifice everything for the country and the world with which they are magnificently, heartbreakingly in love. What makes it essential as well as thoroughly entertaining reading is the incontrovertible argument it makes on behalf of the persistence and power of truth, of the best impulses of our country and of humankind, even in the face of despair-inducing reversals and shattering defeats. As painful as it is to watch Jeremy McCarter’s doomed idealists lose their individual battles, it’s enormously moving and (sorry, but there’s no other word for it) inspiring to understand how, through struggle, they changed the world.”

—Tony Kushner, Pulitzer Prize-winning author of *Angels in America* and Oscar-nominated screenwriter of *Lincoln*

Jeremy McCarter is the author of *YOUNG RADICALS*, the story of idealistic Americans fighting for their ideals in the WWI years, and the co-author of the #1 *New York Times* bestseller *HAMILTON: THE REVOLUTION* with Lin-Manuel Miranda. He wrote about culture and politics for *New York Magazine*, *Newsweek*, and *The New York Times*, and spent five years on the artistic staff of the Public Theater in New York. He studied history at Harvard and lives in Chicago.

Political reading at its best...

Fantastic!

very good read....interesting subject

I applaud Jeremy MacCarter. "Young Radicals" took me by surprise. I didn't check reviews or cover statements but just dived in. It is good history, presented in an easy writing style which can be enjoyed by most readers not just those with interests in history, its periods thereof or academics. I sometimes forget my own knowledge of history is more overview than detail. Another gentle reminder. The names are all familiar. Walter Lippman (journalist), Jack Reed (communist), Max Eastman (radical activist), Alice Paul (suffragette) and Randolph Bourne (philosopher). Bourne is the only one of the five with whom I have no familiarity, but his work is the most prophetic, especially after his early death. That doesn't matter. They first appear in 1912 with varied approaches to the workingman's world: Lippman and Paul are Ivy League radicals, Paul an activist. Reed is a radical activist and poet/writer. as is Eastman. Bourne is very disabled, a philosopher, far-seeing writer and ABD - not published - at Columbia. They're all young socialists bursting onto a well known, growing, but tightly-knit (at that time) radical scene. All hit some walls, move on, mature and change. MacCarter structures the book in a logical but somewhat unexpected manner. He follows each of the five main activists through time periods, e.g. 1912, 1914, 1918, etc. instead of one activist's history all the way through and then on to the next. This makes the book a bit disjointed and harder to follow, but does mix them up later. His structure is a great twist in presentation. It encourages the reader to better think through the logic and relationships amongst them and their world, especially when they're almost easy side-by-side comparisons. There is too much; I'd bore you second hand. One tidbit: Alice Paul helped assure passage of the 19th Amendment and had a major role in the background of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Folks, do you truly know the rise of US workers and their dreams during the Nineteens? Read the book. Highly recommended - a 5. I learned a lot. One last thought. A question to ponder. What do the elections of 1916/1920 and 2012/2016 have in common?

Every decade seems to have its bright fresh new voices. My own favorite was the 20s, when The Algonquin Roundtable brought together such minds as Edna Ferber, Ruth Hale, Dorothy Parker and a bunch of young men who all made their mark in the media, like Harold Ross founding The New

Yorker. Just across the street at the Royalton, George Jean Nathan, HL Mencken and James Thurber hung out. It was the peak of literary creativity. Jeremy McCarter has gone back one further decade, and assembled five fresh young minds to guide us through their era. Their efforts were political; their goals much loftier. Most hung out in Greenwich Village, where it was cheap. It's a great way to view the state of the nation. And it gives life to dimly recognized names. Walter Lippmann, Jack Reed, Max Eastman, Alice Paul, and Randolph Bourne are the protagonists of *The Young Radicals*. We hardly know the names today, but in their time they made their marks, landed hard punches and racked up real achievements. They only had one common trait: a drive. And America before WWI was the perfect environment for it. Their focus was equality, in women's suffrage or workers' rights, or arts and letters. It's hard to imagine them getting anywhere today. The first section gives a lightning round chapter to each of them and how they came to be those radicals. With the basics out of the way quickly, McCarter develops their stories and the connections between them. It continues to move rapidly; the whole 310 pages is over well before you want it to be. It was an era with promise and change just ahead. The future looked brighter than the present. There were ideas about. They flowed freely, and got rational consideration. Woodrow Wilson proposed to end all wars with a League of Nations. Bourne praised America's acceptance and encouragement of every kind of immigrant. Lippmann saw equality as reachable, and Paul saw women voting and running for office. McCarter writes as much as possible in the present tense. It gives the book a more tentative feel and a stronger presence. It makes everything more real. The lives he follows are up and down and never far from disaster. Even when they win, they lose. Even flat out victories are disappointing. The world moved past them, ignoring their ideals. There is constant suspense, constant reversals, and numerous rebounds. It is an exciting time and life is hectic. And it is made worse by highly developed minds, frustrated. It's a gripping book, giving bright life and style to a seemingly bland time. McCarter has done a great service in rehabilitating this era and these characters. They are all sympathetic, subject to criticism, and very much alive. They risk all, every day. He looks to them for inspiration in our uncertain political and social climate. He takes solace in seeing Americans protesting today, when for decades they seemed to just accept everything taken from them. His five protagonists are an inspiration for everyone. David Wineberg

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