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Radical Gardening: Politics, Idealism and Rebellion in the Garden

George McKay

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War is the natural occupation of man ... war-and gardening.

Winston Churchill to Siegfried Sassoon, 1918

In the common public perception, contemporary gardening is understood as suburban, as leisure activity, as television makeover opportunity. Its origins are seen as religious or spiritual (Garden of Eden), military (the clipped lawn, the ha-ha and defensive ditches), aristocratic or monarchical (the stately home, the Royal Horticultural Society). Radical Gardening travels an alternative route, through history and across landscape, linking propagation with propaganda. For everyday garden life is not only patio, barbecue, white picket fence, topiary, herbaceous border... From window box to veggie box, from political plot to flower power, this book uncovers and celebrates moments, movements, gestures, of a people's approach to gardens and gardening. It weaves together garden history with the counterculture, stories of individual plants with discussion of government policy, the social history of campaign groups with the pleasure and dirt of hands in the earth, as well as original interviews alongside media, pop and art references, to offer an informing and inspiring new take on an old subject.

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