



In a New Century: Essays on Queer History, Politics, and Community Life

John D'Emilio

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For gay, lesbian, bisexual, and transgender people in the United States, the twenty-first century has brought dramatic changes: the end of sodomy laws, the elimination of “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell,” a move toward recognition of same-sex marriage, Gay-Straight Alliances in thousands of high schools, and an explosion of visibility in the media and popular culture. All of this would have been unimaginable to those living just a few decades ago. Yet, at the same time, the American political system has grown ever more conservative, and increasing economic inequality has been a defining feature of the new century.

A pioneering scholar of gay history, John D'Emilio reflects in this wide-ranging collection of essays upon the social, cultural, and political changes provoked by LGBT activism. He offers provocative questions and historical analyses: What can we learn from a life-long activist like Bayard Rustin, who questioned the wisdom of “identity politics”? Was Richard Nixon a “gay liberationist”? How can knowing local stories—like those of Chicago in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s—help build stronger communities and enrich traditions of activism? Might the focus on achieving actually be evidence of growing conservatism in LGBT communities?

In a New Century provides a dynamic, thoughtful, and important resource for identifying changes that have occurred in the United States since 1960, taking stock of the work that still needs to be done, and issuing an urgent call to action for getting there.

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