



# The Other Eighties: A Secret History of America in the Age of Reagan

*Bradford Martin*

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## **The Other Eighties: A Secret History of America in the Age of Reagan** Bradford Martin

In this engaging new book, Bradford Martin illuminates a different 1980s than many remember—one whose history has been buried under the celebratory narrative of conservative ascendancy. Ronald Reagan looms large in most accounts of the period, encouraging Americans to renounce the activist and liberal politics of the 1960s and '70s and embrace the resurgent conservative wave. But a closer look reveals that a sizable swath of Americans strongly disapproved of Reagan's policies throughout his presidency. With a weakened Democratic Party scurrying for the political center, many expressed their dissatisfaction outside electoral politics.

Unlike the civil rights and Vietnam era protesters, activists of the 1980s often found themselves on the defensive, struggling to preserve the hard-won victories of the previous era. Their successes, then, were not in ushering in a new era of progressive reforms but in effecting change in areas from professional life to popular culture, while beating back an even more forceful political shift to the right. Martin paints an indelible portrait of these and other influential, but often overlooked, movements: from on-the-ground efforts to constrain the administration's aggressive Latin American policy and stave off a possible Nicaraguan war, to mock shanties constructed on college campuses to shed light on corporate America's role in supporting the apartheid regime in South Africa. The result is a clearer, richer perspective on a turbulent decade in American life.

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