



Rethinking Cold War Culture

Peter J. Kuznick, James Gilbert

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This anthology of essays questions many widespread assumptions about the culture of postwar America. Illuminating the origins and development of the many threads that constituted American culture during the Cold War, the contributors challenge the existence of a monolithic culture during the 1950s and thereafter. They demonstrate instead that there was more to American society than conformity, political conservatism, consumerism, and middle-class values.

By examining popular culture, politics, economics, gender relations, and civil rights, the contributors contend that, while there was little fundamentally new about American culture in the Cold War era, the Cold War shaped and distorted virtually every aspect of American life. Interacting with long-term historical trends related to demographics, technological change, and economic cycles, four new elements dramatically influenced American politics and culture: the threat of nuclear annihilation, the use of surrogate and covert warfare, the intensification of anticommunist ideology, and the rise of a powerful military-industrial complex.

This provocative dialogue by leading historians promises to reshape readers' understanding of America during the Cold War, revealing a complex interplay of historical norms and political influences.

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