



# **Ronald Reagan: The American Presidents Series: The 40th President, 1981-1989**

*Jacob Weisberg*

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# Ronald Reagan: The American Presidents Series: The 40th President, 1981-1989

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**The conservative icon who reshaped American politics and laid the groundwork for the end of the Cold War**

In the second half of the twentieth century, no American president defined his political era as did Ronald Reagan. He ushered in an age that extolled smaller government, tax cuts, and strong defense, and to this day politicians of both political parties operate within the parameters of the world he made. His eight years in office from 1981 to 1989 were a time of economic crisis and recovery, a new American assertiveness abroad, and an engagement with the Soviet Union that began in conflict but moved in surprising new directions.

Jacob Weisberg provides a bracing portrait of America's fortieth president and the ideas that animated his political career, offering a fresh psychological interpretation and showing that there was more to Reagan than the usual stereotypes. Reagan, he observes, was a staunch conservative but was also unafraid to compromise and cut deals where necessary. And Reagan espoused a firm belief, just as firm as his belief in small government and strong defense, that nuclear weapons were immoral and ought to be eliminated. Weisberg argues that these facets of Reagan were too often ignored in his time but reveal why his presidency turned out to be so consequential.

In the years since Reagan left office, he has been cast in marble by the Republican Party and dismissed by the Democrats. Weisberg shows why we need to move past these responses if we wish truly to appreciate his accomplishments and his legacy.

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