



# The Rise and Fall Of The American Left

*John Patrick Diggins*

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**“Informative and useful. . . . A balanced history of leftist American politics in the 20th century. . . . Admirably nonpartisan.” ?Jonathan Yardley, *Washington Post***

Born in America, the American Left was nurtured by intellectuals and activists who read Jefferson and Whitman before they read Marx or Mao. One lesson this brilliant history teaches us is that the fury of radical innocence and wounded idealism so peculiar to American intellectual history springs from native soil. Nor is the American Left a single phenomenon but four surprising eruptions throughout the past century: *The Lyrical Left*, of the First World War years; the *Old Left*, driven by the legacy of World War I, the promise of socialism, and the Great Depression; the *New Left* of the 1960s, combining a revolt against the banalities of middle-class life with civil rights fervor and protest against the war in Vietnam; and now contemporary *Academic Left*, seeking both to question the traditional values of the West and to embrace the causes of women and minorities.

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