

Rethinking the 1950s

Historians generally portray the 1950s as a conservative era when anti-communism and the Cold War subverted domestic reform, crushed political dissent, and ended liberal dreams of social democracy. These years, historians tell us, represented a turn to the Right, a negation of New Deal liberalism, an end to reform. Jennifer A. Delton argues that, far from subverting the New Deal state, anticommunism and the Cold War enabled, fulfilled, and even surpassed the New Deal's reform agenda. Anticommunism solidified liberal political power and the Cold War justified liberal goals such as jobs creation, corporate regulation, economic redevelopment, and civil rights. She shows how despite President Eisenhower's professed conservatism, he maintained the highest tax rates in U.S. history, expanded New Deal programs, and supported major civil rights reforms.

Jennifer A. Delton is Professor of History at Skidmore College. She is the author of *Making Minnesota Liberal: Civil Rights and the Transformation of the Democratic Party* (2002) and *Racial Integration in Corporate America, 1940–1990* (Cambridge, 2009).

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*How Anticommunism and the
Cold War Made America Liberal*

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*In memory of my beloved son,
Daniel Jaschke Levy
1990–2012*

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