



The Obama Question: A Progressive Perspective

Gary Dorrien

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The election of Barack Obama to the presidency in 2008 was hailed by many as a historic event and by some as the end of the Reagan era in American politics. But conservatives have condemned Obama from the beginning of his presidency, and many progressives charge that Obama has betrayed the causes that he espoused in 2008.

This book offers a brilliant critique of Obama's presidency and a powerful case that progressives should not give up on Obama. Gary Dorrien, described by Princeton philosopher Cornel West as "the preeminent social ethicist in North America today," argues that Obama is a figure of "protean irony and complexity." Obama has been a bitter disappointment in many ways, Dorrien contends, yet Obama also has historic achievements to his credit that are too often discounted.

Dorrien emphasizes the importance of Obama's story to his career and devotes chapters to the economic crisis, the health care reform debate, war and foreign policy, banking regulation and the federal budget, and the case for a progressive politics of the common good. Ultimately, Dorrien says, the Obama question is whether or not Obama's presidency will mark the end of the Reagan era--when giant corporations and the wealthy got whatever they wanted, military budgets soared, and American politics was ruled by the fantasy of tax cuts paying for themselves.

Dorrien argues that there is still time to redeem the hope of the 2008 election, bringing an end to the Reagan era. *The Obama Question* will stand as an insightful evaluation of a tumultuous presidency long after the next election has passed.

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