

A definitive history of the grassroots movement to halt American intervention in Nicaragua

A Call to Conscience

The Anti-*Contra* War Campaign
Roger Peace

Unlike earlier U.S. interventions in Latin America, the Reagan administration's attempt to overthrow the Sandinista government of Nicaragua during the 1980s was not allowed to proceed quietly. Tens of thousands of American citizens organized and agitated against U.S. aid to the counterrevolutionary guerrillas, known as "contras." Believing the *Contra* War to be unnecessary, immoral, and illegal, they challenged the administration's Cold War stereotypes, warned of "another Vietnam," and called on the United States to abide by international norms.

A Call to Conscience offers the first comprehensive history of the anti-*Contra* War campaign and its Nicaragua connections. Roger Peace places this eight-year campaign in the context of previous American interventions in Latin America, the Cold War, and other grassroots oppositional movements. Based on interviews with American and Nicaraguan citizens and leaders, archival records of activist organizations, and official government documents, this book reveals activist motivations, analyzes the organizational dynamics of the anti-*Contra* War campaign, and contrasts perceptions of the campaign in Managua and Washington.

Peace shows how a variety of civic groups and networks—religious, leftist, peace, veteran, labor, women's rights—worked together in a decentralized campaign that involved extensive transnational cooperation.



"A ground-breaking book. If a hundred years from now the anti-*Contra* War movement is included on the list of significant American protest movements, there is no question this book will be a major reason why. It clarifies our vision of the 1980s, refutes the dominant Reagan triumphalism, and shows contemporary America to be just as fraught with protest as the 1960s."

—Andrew E. Hunt, author of *The Turning: A History of Vietnam Veterans Against the War*

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