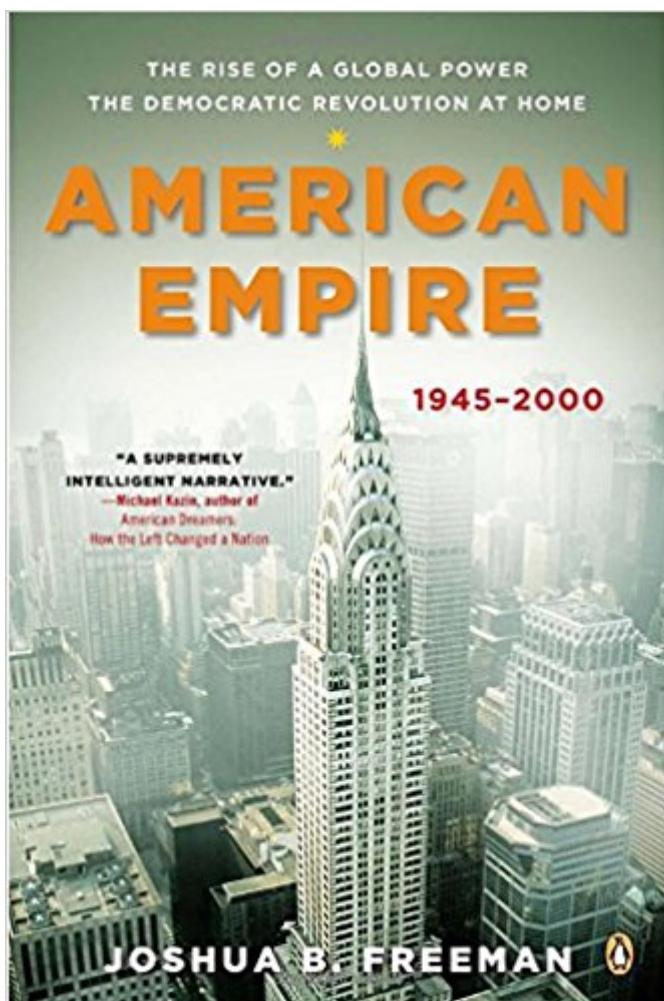


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# American Empire: The Rise Of A Global Power, The Democratic Revolution At Home, 1945-2000 (The Penguin History Of The United States)





## Synopsis

A landmark history of postwar America and the second volume in the Penguin History of the United States series, edited by Eric Foner. In this momentous work, acclaimed labor historian Joshua B. Freeman presents an epic portrait of the United States in the latter half of the twentieth century, revealing a nation galvanized by change even as conflict seethed within its borders. Beginning in 1945, he charts the astounding rise of the labor movement and its pitched struggle with the bastions of American capitalism in the 1940s and '50s, untangling the complicated threads between the workers' agenda and that of the civil rights and women's movements. Through the lens of civil rights, the Cold War struggle, and the labor movement, American Empire teaches us something profound about our past while illuminating the issues that continue to animate American political discourse today.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Ambitious and imaginative" -- Kirkus Reviews "A supremely intelligent narrative." -- Michael Kazin "Compellingly readable and often passionate." - The Nation "The best grand synthesis of postwar U.S. history we have." -- Mike Wallace, Pulitzer-Prize winning coauthor of *Gotham*

Joshua B. Freeman is a professor of history at Queens College and the Graduate Center of CUNY. He is the author of *Working-Class New York*. He lives in New York City.

A very readable introduction to the period. This is really the strong point of the book - it's an enjoyable read and a good general introduction. But it does lack detail in areas that call for it (such as how the Soviets perceived and reacted to the US). The author seems to dismiss the importance of Eisenhower while being very forgiving of Kennedy. The author does a good job of balancing domestic and international history and doesn't favor either. This might be why I enjoyed the sections about LBJ. This is worth reading if you're new to the period and understand its limitations. The author is a talented communicator.

Very insightful as to who actually calls the shots...

Joshua Freeman's history of the second half of America's 20th century is a superb general history. It is gracefully written and admirably clear throughout. Freeman has organized the text chronologically but given each of the four periods he has divided the years from '45 to 2000 into a thematic title and focus. Within each of the 19 chapters Freeman divided among the four themes, he has chosen specific subtopics that range in length from one to perhaps six pages. The organization, choice of topics, and readable nature of Freeman's book make it an excellent choice for teachers/professors and their upper high school or undergraduate students. I purchased Freeman's text, in part, because I have been dissatisfied with other accounts of the recent history of the U.S. I have purchased nearly all of the various American history 'series' texts from major publishers, (Oxford; Norton; Hill and Wang, etc.), and I got Freeman's book because I have read and used Penguin's first volume in its (still to be completed) series, "American Colonies" by Alan Taylor. which is the best general history on colonial American history I have ever read. Freeman's book bodes well for future volumes in its series. Some here seem to think Freeman's treatment "biased," but it is not. His point of view is clear enough but his presentation of information and his interpretations are judicious and fair. This is not a nationalistic hagiography of the U.S. Freeman presents this period of American history as changeable and he is not trying to paper over the differences Americans have had, and continue to have, with each other. Here are two quotations from his narrative taken from among many similar candidates. From his section on the sit-ins: "Both parties adopted strong civil rights planks in their platforms, with the Republican position, pushed forward by New York Governor Nelson Rockefeller, notable for its support for the sit-ins." (160). Or, on page 362: "Perhaps Reagan's strongest card was his self-assurance, his seeming resolve and willingness to take clear, bold action. His firing of the striking air traffic controllers brought him admiration, even among some voters who did not share

antilabor views, for taking a strong stand and sticking with it. His graceful behavior after being shot (in the hospital waiting for surgery he quipped to his wife, 'Sorry, honey, I forgot to duck') cemented his image as calm and self-assured, even, literally, under fire. "This is a thoughtful and honest appraisal of the post-war period and has a place on the shelf of any student of American history. Very highly recommended.

the author really goes into detail of some events (watergate, expanding suburbia, etc.) but skips over a few parts in history (women's movement had 3 paragraphs). i think the book aims to tell people about lesser known American history and it does a good job of that. The chapters can be dense but once in awhile there's a real gem in there.

freeman is right on how US has declined from its great position of strength after WWII until now esp economically although it is unrealistic to think US could have remained as strong as it was after the war that devastated so many of its potential rivals for the near future; he is rightfully critical of both republican & democrat presidents who failed to deal effectively with long term issues just to serve short term goals to keep themselves in power/office; he is especially critical, & i agree 100% with this position, of reagan who i feel 50 or so years from now will go down as a mediocre or poor president instead of being thought of like he is today by many people; our leaders, congress as well as presidents, will not or maybe cannot communicate our true issues & deal with them because the american people just do not want to believe where we are & are headed if we do not changei recomend this book very strongly for those that want to face reality vs the myths that are perpetrated by many in the media

this work added to my knowledge of american history & well worth the reading. it is a book i will want to reread.

It beings quite slowly, but picks up after the first chapter. This book is clearly only for history lovers. It's particularly wonderful for persons such as myself who weren't born in the U.S....

If you like history, if you lived through this era, if you want to remind yourself of the way it happened this is a good book.

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