



Who Owns History?: Rethinking the Past in a Changing World

By Eric Foner

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"Who Owns History? testifies to Eric Foner's lifelong personal commitment to writing histories that advance the struggle for racial equality and economic justice." ?David Glassberg, *The Sunday Star-Ledger*

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Eric Foner answers these and other questions about the historian's relationship to the world of the past and future in this provocative, even controversial, study of the reasons we care about history?or should.

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Who Owns History?: Rethinking the Past in a Changing World By Eric Foner Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

In this series of addresses and essays, many in print for the first time, one of America's preeminent historians does his profession proud. After discussing his own life history beginning with a New York leftist Jewish childhood, during which his family "discuss[ed] the intricacies of international relations and domestic politics over the dinner table" Foner (*The Story of American Freedom*), a professor at Columbia University, writes with erudition and clarity on a variety of historical subjects. At his best, he critically assesses the way American history and historians intersect. In an address he gave last year as president of the American Historical Association, he exhorted his colleagues to examine American history in an international context: "In a global age, the forever-unfinished story of American freedom must become a conversation with the entire world." His critique of Ken Burns's Civil War documentary shows how the much-acclaimed series by depicting the war as a fight between Northern and Southern whites and by essentially excluding the Reconstruction, one of Foner's own specialties exhibits some of the same failings that have plagued historians of the era (which Foner calls "the most controversial and misunderstood era in our nation's history"). Other strong essays include a lecture on blacks and the U.S. Constitution and an analysis of the way historians have looked at socialism in the United States. The essays on history in South Africa and Russia, while thought-provoking, feel a bit dated (they were written in the mid-1990s). But as whole, these writings help to debunk the idea that history is irrelevant in the 21st century. (Apr.)

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From Library Journal

Each individual has a vested interest in knowing the past because the past is in everyone. However, "everyone and no one" owns the past and "the study of the past is a constantly evolving, never-ending journey of discovery," states Foner (history, Columbia Univ.), author of *Reconstruction: America's Unfinished Revolution* and other respected titles on American history. In nine readable essays written between 1983 and 2001 and grouped in three sections "The Politics of History and Historians," "Rethinking History in a Changing World," and "The Enduring Civil War" Foner argues that the historian has a relationship with his or her own world. His style is personable and straightforward, and he effectively presses home his assumptions. From a historian's perspective, though, he adds nothing new; the question "Who owns history?" has been around in various guises for 30 years, and Foner's variation simply restates the theme that academics must be community-oriented if only to stay in touch with the public. Perhaps a more pertinent question would be, "Who determines which history is 'anointed' as the 'true' history?" Nevertheless, Foner is a respected historian, and he ably articulates a viewpoint shared by many of his colleagues. Recommended for academic and large public libraries. Charles L. Lumpkins, Pennsylvania State Univ., State College
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From [Booklist](#)

A prominent Reconstruction historian, Foner is much in demand for speaking at conferences and ceremonies and writing introductions to books. This volume collects various essays he has produced for such occasions. Naturally, given his expertise, most of the essays address American slavery and its legacy, and they echo the prime theme of this collection: how the public perceives and understands history in general. That a popular preference exists for exalting the history of one's country is undeniable, as Foner notes in various recent controversies related to American history as well as among "Soviets" circa 1990, when they were recovering their nationalities and debating their histories. Elsewhere, Foner pays homage to his mentor, famed historian Richard Hofstadter; reviews his own career; revisits the hoary topic of the lack of Euro-style socialism in

America; castigates Ken Burns' *Civil War*; and blasts conservative jurists who subscribe to "original intent."
Valuable insight into a premier historian's passions and viewpoint. *Gilbert Taylor*
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Users Review

From reader reviews:

Corine Ramirez:

Here thing why this Who Owns History?: Rethinking the Past in a Changing World are different and reliable to be yours. First of all reading through a book is good nevertheless it depends in the content of the usb ports which is the content is as delicious as food or not. Who Owns History?: Rethinking the Past in a Changing World giving you information deeper since different ways, you can find any publication out there but there is no book that similar with Who Owns History?: Rethinking the Past in a Changing World. It gives you thrill examining journey, its open up your own eyes about the thing in which happened in the world which is might be can be happened around you. You can actually bring everywhere like in recreation area, café, or even in your means home by train. For anyone who is having difficulties in bringing the branded book maybe the form of Who Owns History?: Rethinking the Past in a Changing World in e-book can be your alternative.

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