



Blessed Among Nations: How the World Made America

By *Eric Rauchway*

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In this concise, argumentative book, Eric Rauchway traces how, from the mid-1800s to the early 1900s, the world allowed the United States to become unique and the consequent dangers we face to this very day.

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Blessed Among Nations: How the World Made America By Eric Rauchway Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

American exceptionalism is an old idea, but in at least one respect, historian Rauchway (*Murdering McKinley*) argues, it reflects a geopolitical truth that remains relevant to current trends in globalization. From the Civil War to WWI, he finds, the country's unique position in the global economy—unmatched flow of foreign capital and labor to its shores, expansive opportunities on the Western frontier—meant that the U.S., unlike European countries, was not forced to develop complex federal agencies to regulate commerce, assemble statistics, and provide for the unemployed. The small steps the U.S. did take in this direction, Rauchway contends, were distinctively shaped by the country's relationship to globalization. Efforts to regulate credit and monopolies, he says, arose not in response to Socialist agitation but out of distrust of foreign bankers among recent migrants in the West. Lacking strong, centralized government institutions experienced in large-scale economic matters, the U.S. was unprepared after WWI to take the leading role in the global economy, a failure that, he argues, led to the Great Depression and would eventually scare Americans into supporting international financial organizations after World War II. Rauchway notes with concern that in the decades since the 1960's, as the U.S. has shifted from international creditor to debtor, the country has again begun "edging away from its commitments to globalization" and leaving the international economy to take care of itself. Though he leaves the implications of his innovative historical analysis on the present largely implicit, he provides valuable perspective for the debate about America's proper role in the world today.

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Review

"Rauchway's book is right on time and right on target." ?*Kirkus Reviews*

"Provocative . . . *Blessed Among Nations* combines the same fluid writing style, bold interpretive approach, and ambitious agenda that made the work of mid-twentieth-century historians like Richard Hofstadter, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., and C. Vann Woodward so important and so broadly relevant." ?*American Heritage*

About the Author

Eric Rauchway has written for the *Financial Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*. He teaches at the University of California, Davis, and is the author of *Murdering McKinley: The Making of Theodore Roosevelt's America* (H&W, 2003).

Users Review

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Jeffrey Richard:

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