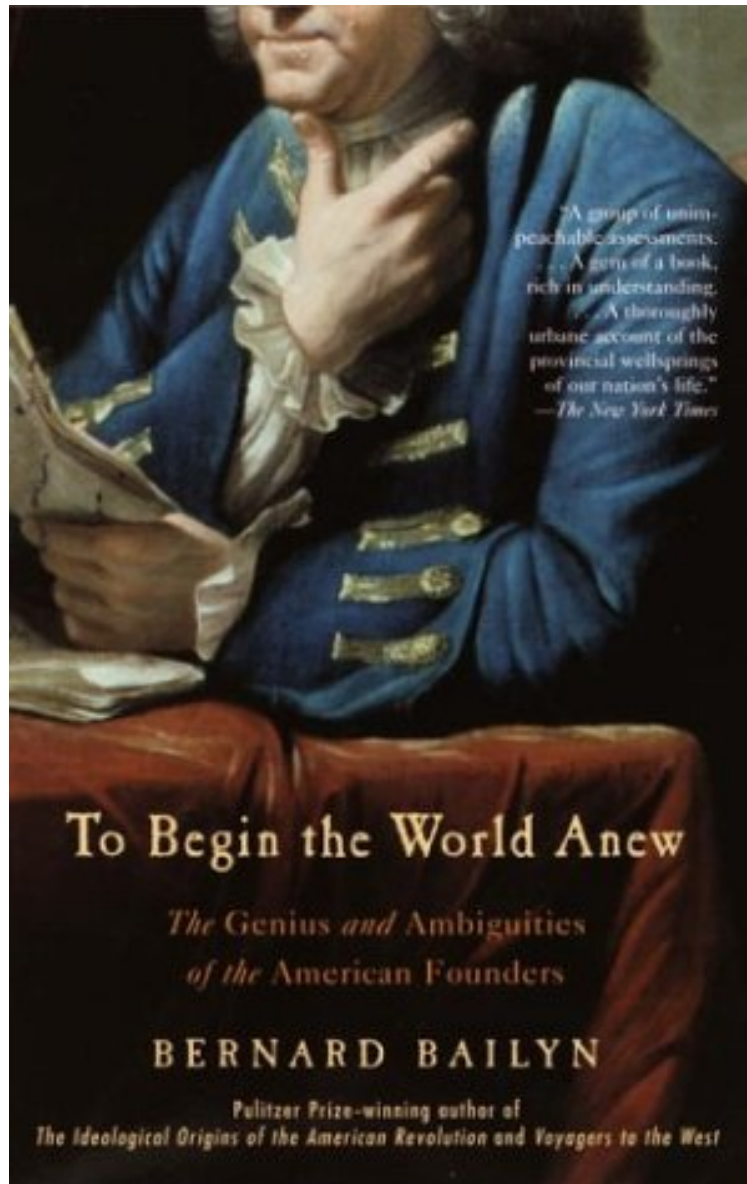


(Get free) To Begin the World Anew: The Genius and Ambiguities of the American Founders

To Begin the World Anew: The Genius and Ambiguities of the American Founders

Bernard Bailyn

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#591870 in Books Bernard Bailyn 2004-02-10 2004-02-10 Original language: English PDF # 1 8.00 x .44 x 5.201, .45 #File Name: 0375713085200 pages To Begin the World Anew The Genius and Ambiguities of the American Founders | File size: 63.Mb

Bernard Bailyn : To Begin the World Anew: The Genius and Ambiguities of the American Founders before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised To Begin the World Anew: The Genius and Ambiguities of the American Founders:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. He discusses comparisons of portraits and great homes and shows how they reflect the American aristocratic ...By Lawrence Roberts

Bailyn is one of the preeminent scholars of the Revolutionary era. He believes in the idea of "American exceptionalism", but does not use that term explicitly. He also does not present it in the sense it is often used today - as a synonym for American superiority. He discusses comparisons of portraits and great homes and shows how they reflect the American aristocratic departure from European aristocracy. This, he believes, reflects the American founders constant questioning and probing of European political theory, which eventually led not only to the Revolution, but the establishment of a then unique Republic through the Constitution. His chapter on Jefferson (the Ambiguities of Freedom) exemplifies the intersection of political theory and reality in the founding of the US. He could not have chosen a better founder to exemplify it than Jefferson. Jefferson (other than Thomas Paine) was the most purely idealistic of the founders, and yet his Presidency and positions he took in his later life contradict some of his idealism. Jefferson's views on free trade, freedom of the press, and the evils of a national bank, substantially contradict many of his pragmatic decisions in these areas as President. Bailyn shows in one short chapter how, as conflicted as Jefferson seemed to be in his actions versus his ideals, his idealistic core and his optimism for the ultimate realization of the full promise of the Revolution remained with him throughout his life. Bailyn, in this book and especially in his classic "Ideological Origins of the American Revolution" focuses on the complexity of the American Revolution and of the social, religious, political, and demographic forces that were occurring in the Revolutionary and Founding era and how they contributed both to events in America. This book, while being quite profound in showing the intricate interconnection of these trends, is very readable. In only 149 pages he packs in an enormous amount of information and astute analysis. I highly recommend it. His students, particularly Gordon S. Wood, Michael Kammen, Jack Rakove have written excellent histories. Other students of his that I have read and whose works I can recommend are Richard Brown and Pauline Maier.

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Every American should read this book

By Wishful Thinker

This book should be a must read for every high school American history student. This very short book has more information in it about the founding of the United States than all the other books I have read while studying and reading about American history over the decades. Thank you Bernard Bailyn. If you don't have an appreciation for the risk the country's founders took, have no idea how clever a diplomat Ben Franklin was, have never read any of the anti-federalist papers, this book will introduce you to all of this in various chapters. But the thinking behind Bailyn's theory of what allowed these men to create a totally new form of government is even more fascinating. It was an amazing time with an amazing group of imperfect, but thinking men -- men who could think beyond conventional wisdom and who, fortunately, were around to carry the country forward for close to a half century. I can't remember if Bailyn touched on this but Jackson was the first president not involved with the country's founding. When I thought of the changes that occurred beginning with his presidency, I stopped for a moment and thanked the founding fathers for what they did and for staying around to direct the country for near a half century.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. An Interesting Short Work, but Read "The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution" Instead

By Roger D. Launius

For more than forty years no one has been a more persistent student of the ideology of the American Revolutionary generation than Bernard Bailyn. His Pulitzer Prize-winning book, "The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution" (1967), served as my entre to his ideas and it remains a masterwork. In it he made the case that the nation's founders were radicals with a difference, committed to an ideology predicated on the radical social and political thought of the English Civil War and emphasizing the rights of the citizens and opposition to the abuse of authority. It was a breath of fresh air when I first read the book in graduate school in the early 1980s. "To Begin the World Anew: The Genius and Ambiguities of the American Founders" offers something of a coda to that seminal book. It is a fine work overall, but one that offers little that is new beyond his earlier efforts. It is, however, a wonderful short work that offers insight into discrete aspects of the revolutionary world of the founders. In "To Begin the World Anew," really a collection of five essays prepared over several years, Bailyn continues to emphasize the power of the republican ideology to shape the course of history and lays out these themes in discussions of the American revolution as a creative enterprise, Thomas Jefferson and the paradox of freedom and slavery, Benjamin Franklin in Paris, the power of the "Federalist Papers," and the role of American revolutionary ideals on other democratic efforts worldwide. As always, Bailyn is fascinated by the delta that always exists between the ideal motivating action and the less than perfect implementation of it. Accordingly, the knife-edge dichotomy between the argument for the Constitution as a means of creating a stable and productive nation is balanced against very real concerns for the rights of individuals. Bailyn explicitly probes this problem in his essay on the "Federalist Papers" but also does so in his other essays in this volume. In general, "To Begin the World Anew" is a respectable restatement of ideas previously well expressed in Bailyn's writings. If one wants to read only one work by Bernard Bailyn for a sense of his thought on the Revolutionary era, however, the appropriate book remains "The Ideological Origins of the American Revolution."

Two time Pulitzer Prize-winning historian Bernard Bailyn has distilled a lifetime of study into this brilliant illumination of the ideas and world of the Founding Fathers. In five succinct essays he reveals the origins, depth, and

global impact of their extraordinary creativity. The opening essay illuminates the central importance of America's provincialism to the formation of a truly original political system. In the chapters following, he explores the ambiguities and achievements of Jefferson's career, Benjamin Franklin's changing image and supple diplomacy, the circumstances and impact of the Federalist Papers, and the continuing influence of American constitutional thought throughout the Atlantic world. *To Begin the World Anew* enlivens our appreciation of how America came to be and deepens our understanding of the men who created it.

From Publishers Weekly While the five essays in this slim volume neither pack the stylistic wallop nor make the powerful contributions to knowledge of so many of the author's previous works, they are vintage Bailyn. The two-time Pulitzer-winning historian's focus is the creative imagination applied to statecraft. His subjects are the nation's founders, whom he believes to be idealists as much as realists. As usual, Bailyn's ebullient if nuanced admiration for the Framers carries the reader along. Characteristically, he emphasizes how the Framers' provincialism allowed them to spring free of European modes of thought to create something genuinely new. Bailyn (*Voyagers to the West*, etc.) brilliantly uses pictures to reveal the different aspirations and bearing of the British and founding gentry. A superb chapter also uses iconography to demonstrate how Benjamin Franklin took an active hand in fashioning and altering his own likeness in paintings and medals and then used them to create crucial sympathy in France for the American cause. Of all the "tempered idealists" he deals with, none tangles Bailyn up, as he does just about everyone else, like Thomas Jefferson. But essays on the Federalist Papers and the complex, paradoxical, ever-changing reception of American constitutionalism abroad rescue the work from momentary confusion. One comes away with a rounded appreciation of the founders' limitations, failures and moral failings as well as their extraordinary achievements. 65 bw, 4 pages color illus. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal A Pulitzer Prize winner twice over, historian Bailyn offers character sketches of the Founding Fathers. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist Eminent historian Bailyn analyzes different aspects of the American Revolution in these essays, which are thematically framed as explorations of the contradictions between the actions and the words of some of the Founding Fathers. Jefferson's reputation has, of course, wildly gyrated, and it is currently at a nadir. Bailyn doesn't restore the sage, zinging him for slaveholding, but he writes with nuance about Jefferson's radical ideals about human liberty, which, if not honored personally, have nevertheless proven lasting in the abstract. Another ambiguity Bailyn focuses on is foreign policy, specifically, how the Founders detested power politics but found it necessary to play the game in the alliance with France. Franklin's diplomacy in Paris provides the author's focus for this conflict between realism and idealism, with interesting digressions into the imagery of Franklin. Although the book is slightly academic, the dozens of illustrations and Bailyn's reputation as a Pulitzer winner (*Voyagers to the West*, 1987) will draw history readers. Gilbert Taylor Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved