

# a peoples history of the supreme court

A Peoples History of the Supreme Court: Unveiling the Stories Behind America's Highest Court

**a peoples history of the supreme court** invites us to look beyond the polished marble halls and black robes to understand how this pivotal institution has shaped—and been shaped by—the lives of everyday Americans. Rather than focusing solely on landmark decisions or legal doctrines, this perspective highlights the social, cultural, and political forces that have influenced the Supreme Court throughout U.S. history. By exploring the narratives of the people impacted by its rulings, the justices themselves, and the broader movements surrounding the Court, we gain a richer, more nuanced understanding of America's highest judicial body.

## The Origins: A Court for the People or the Elite?

When the Supreme Court was established in 1789, its role was envisioned as a neutral arbiter of the law. Yet, from its earliest days, the Court was deeply intertwined with the power structures of the young nation. The framers of the Constitution designed the judiciary to be insulated from popular politics, meant to safeguard principles like individual rights and federalism. However, this insulation often meant the Court was more responsive to the interests of political and economic elites than to ordinary citizens.

## The Early Justices and Their Backgrounds

Many of the first Supreme Court justices came from privileged backgrounds—lawyers, politicians, and landowners who embodied the elite class of the time. Their decisions frequently reinforced property rights and federal authority, sometimes at the expense of marginalized groups. For example, early rulings often upheld laws that protected slavery or limited the rights of Native Americans and women.

## Landmark Cases Through a People's Lens

The Supreme Court's decisions have had profound effects on the everyday lives of Americans. A peoples history of the supreme court looks at these rulings not just as legal milestones but as moments that altered the social fabric.

## Marbury v. Madison and Judicial Review

This 1803 case established the principle of judicial review, empowering the Court to strike down laws it found unconstitutional. While it strengthened the judiciary, it also set a precedent for the Court's role as a powerful, independent player in American governance. For citizens, this meant that their rights and freedoms could be defended—or restricted—depending on how justices interpreted the Constitution.

## **Dred Scott v. Sandford: A Dark Chapter**

The infamous 1857 decision denied citizenship and constitutional protections to African Americans, fueling tensions that led to the Civil War. From a people's history perspective, Dred Scott exemplifies how the Supreme Court has sometimes upheld systemic injustice, reflecting the prevailing racial prejudices of the era rather than protecting vulnerable populations.

## **Brown v. Board of Education and Civil Rights**

In contrast, the 1954 Brown ruling overturned segregation in public schools, marking a turning point in the civil rights movement. This case illustrates how the Supreme Court can respond to social activism and shifting public consciousness, becoming an instrument for social change and greater equality.

## **Supreme Court and Social Movements: A Two-Way Street**

The Court does not operate in a vacuum. Social movements, political pressures, and public opinion have all influenced its trajectory, making a people's history of the supreme court a story of interaction between law and society.

## **The Role of Public Opinion**

Justices are often perceived as detached arbiters, but they are humans influenced by the times they live in. For example, during the New Deal era, the Court initially struck down economic reforms aimed at alleviating the Great Depression. However, public pressure and political realities led to a shift, allowing transformative legislation to stand. This case shows how citizens' voices and political climates can sway the Court's direction.

## **Activism and the Court**

Movements like women's suffrage, LGBTQ+ rights, and disability rights have all engaged with the Supreme Court to seek justice. Whether through legal challenges or advocacy, these groups have demanded the Court recognize their rights, shaping its docket and decisions. The people behind these movements remind us that the Supreme Court's history is also a history of struggle, persistence, and incremental progress.

## **Behind the Bench: The Justices as People**

Understanding a people's history of the supreme court also means recognizing the humanity of the justices themselves—their backgrounds, beliefs, and the pressures they face.

## **Diversity and Representation**

For much of its history, the Court was dominated by white men from similar socioeconomic backgrounds. This homogeneity influenced the kinds of cases heard and the perspectives embraced. It wasn't until the late 20th century that the Court began to include women, minorities, and justices from more varied walks of life. This shift brought new voices and experiences to the highest court, gradually changing how justice is conceptualized.

## **The Personal Beliefs vs. Legal Philosophy**

Justices often wrestle with their personal convictions and their understanding of the law. Some adhere strictly to originalism or textualism, while others adopt a more pragmatic or living-constitution approach. These differing philosophies illustrate that the Supreme Court is not just a legal institution but a site of ongoing debate about the nation's values and priorities.

## **The Supreme Court in the Modern Era: Challenges and Controversies**

Today, the Supreme Court remains a powerful and sometimes polarizing institution. Its decisions continue to ripple through society, affecting issues like voting rights, healthcare, immigration, and free speech.

## **Transparency and Public Trust**

One ongoing challenge is maintaining the Court's legitimacy in the eyes of the public. Controversies over appointments, perceived politicization, and landmark rulings have at times shaken trust in the judiciary. Advocates for reform argue for changes like term limits or increased transparency, aiming to balance judicial independence with accountability.

## **The Court's Role in a Diverse Society**

As the nation grows more diverse and complex, the Supreme Court faces the task of interpreting a Constitution written centuries ago in ways that address modern realities. This tension between tradition and progress underscores the importance of viewing the Court through a people's history lens—one that centers the experiences and rights of all Americans, not just the powerful few.

# Why a Peoples History of the Supreme Court Matters

Looking at the Supreme Court from a peoples history perspective enriches our understanding beyond legal jargon and case law. It reminds us that the Court's decisions are not abstract rulings but events that affect real people's lives—sometimes advancing justice, other times perpetuating inequality.

By paying attention to the voices of those impacted by the Court's rulings, including marginalized communities and social movements, we gain a fuller picture of American democracy in action. This approach encourages us to think critically about how power operates in the judiciary and inspires ongoing engagement with the legal system to push for a more equitable future.

In the end, the Supreme Court is not just a set of nine individuals making decisions in isolation. It is a living institution deeply connected to the people it serves and the history it helps to write—one story at a time.

## Frequently Asked Questions

### What is 'A People's History of the Supreme Court' about?

'A People's History of the Supreme Court' is a book by Peter Irons that provides a critical and accessible history of the U.S. Supreme Court, highlighting how its decisions have impacted ordinary people and shaped American democracy.

### Who is the author of 'A People's History of the Supreme Court'?

The author of 'A People's History of the Supreme Court' is Peter Irons, a historian and legal scholar known for his work on constitutional history and civil rights.

### When was 'A People's History of the Supreme Court' first published?

'A People's History of the Supreme Court' was first published in 1999.

### How does 'A People's History of the Supreme Court' differ from traditional Supreme Court histories?

Unlike traditional histories that focus on landmark cases and justices' biographies, this book emphasizes the Court's impact on everyday people, exploring how its rulings affected social justice, civil rights, and democracy.

### Is 'A People's History of the Supreme Court' suitable for readers without a legal background?

Yes, the book is written in an accessible style intended for general readers interested in American

history, law, and civil rights, making complex legal issues understandable.

## **What are some key Supreme Court cases discussed in 'A People's History of the Supreme Court'?**

The book covers significant cases such as Dred Scott v. Sandford, Brown v. Board of Education, Roe v. Wade, and Bush v. Gore, analyzing their broader social and political implications.

## **How has 'A People's History of the Supreme Court' been received by critics?**

The book has been praised for its engaging narrative and insightful critique of the Supreme Court's role in American society, though some critics note it presents a more progressive perspective.

## **Are there updated editions of 'A People's History of the Supreme Court' covering recent Supreme Court developments?**

Yes, later editions of the book include updates that address more recent Supreme Court cases and developments, reflecting ongoing changes in the Court's influence and decisions.

## **Additional Resources**

A Peoples History of the Supreme Court: An Analytical Review

**a peoples history of the supreme court** invites a nuanced reconsideration of the highest judicial body in the United States, moving beyond traditional legalistic narratives to illuminate how the Court's decisions have intersected with the lived experiences of diverse American communities. This perspective shifts focus from the Supreme Court as a detached arbiter of constitutional law to an institution deeply embedded within social, political, and cultural currents. By exploring landmark rulings, ideological shifts, and the broader implications of the Court's jurisprudence on civil rights, economic policies, and democracy itself, this article provides an investigative and professional review of the Supreme Court's evolving role in shaping American society.

## **Contextualizing the Supreme Court Within a People's History**

The Supreme Court, established by Article III of the U.S. Constitution, serves as the ultimate interpreter of federal law and the Constitution. Traditionally, historical accounts emphasize its institutional development, key cases, and the biographies of justices. However, a peoples history approach re-centers the narrative around the populations affected by Supreme Court rulings. This framework uncovers how decisions have either upheld systemic inequalities or advanced social justice.

Throughout American history, the Court has oscillated between conservatism and progressivism, reflecting broader societal tensions. For instance, early in the 19th century, landmark rulings such as *Marbury v. Madison* (1803) established judicial review, cementing the Court's power. Yet, subsequent cases like *Dred Scott v. Sandford* (1857) revealed the Court's complicity in perpetuating racial injustice by denying citizenship and rights to African Americans.

## **Judicial Power and Democratic Legitimacy**

A peoples history of the Supreme Court inevitably grapples with the tension between judicial authority and democratic accountability. The Court's unelected status contrasts with its profound impact on legislation and civil liberties. This dynamic raises questions about legitimacy and the role of public opinion in shaping judicial outcomes.

Legal scholars and historians highlight how the Court's decisions sometimes diverge from popular sentiment, exemplified in cases like *Korematsu v. United States* (1944), which upheld Japanese American internment during World War II despite widespread criticism. Conversely, *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) marked a transformative moment where judicial intervention accelerated the civil rights movement, illustrating the Court's potential as an agent of social change.

## **Landmark Cases Through the Lens of Popular Impact**

Examining notable Supreme Court decisions through a peoples history lens reveals the complex interplay between law and society. The following cases demonstrate how rulings have both reflected and shaped the lived realities of marginalized groups.

### **Brown v. Board of Education: Desegregation and Social Mobilization**

*Brown v. Board of Education* overturned the "separate but equal" doctrine established by *Plessy v. Ferguson* (1896), declaring racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional. This decision was pivotal in dismantling institutionalized racism and energizing the civil rights movement. However, the ruling's implementation met resistance, underscoring the limits of judicial power without grassroots activism and federal enforcement.

### **Roe v. Wade and the Contestation Over Reproductive Rights**

The 1973 decision in *Roe v. Wade* legalized abortion nationwide, framing reproductive rights as a matter of privacy under the Fourteenth Amendment. This ruling profoundly affected women's autonomy, sparking ongoing political and cultural debates. A peoples history perspective considers how access to abortion services varies across socioeconomic and racial lines, highlighting disparities exacerbated by subsequent legal challenges and state-level restrictions.

# **Citizens United v. Federal Election Commission: Democracy and Money**

In 2010, *Citizens United v. FEC* redefined campaign finance law by allowing unlimited independent political expenditures by corporations and unions. Critics argue this decision amplifies the influence of wealthy entities in politics, undermining democratic equality. From a peoples history standpoint, this ruling illustrates how the Court's interpretation of free speech can empower economic elites at the expense of broader citizen participation.

## **Ideological Shifts and the Court's Composition**

The ideological balance of the Supreme Court profoundly influences its jurisprudential direction. A peoples history approach examines how appointments and political contexts shape the Court's decisions, affecting diverse communities.

## **The Warren Court and Expanding Civil Liberties**

Chief Justice Earl Warren's tenure (1953–1969) is often regarded as a progressive era in the Court's history. The Warren Court issued numerous decisions that expanded civil rights, voting rights, and protections for criminal defendants. Its rulings reflected and propelled movements for racial equality, gender equity, and individual freedoms, aligning judicial power with social justice aspirations.

## **The Shift Toward Conservatism: The Rehnquist and Roberts Courts**

From the 1980s onward, the Court experienced a conservative realignment, emphasizing limited government intervention and originalist interpretations of the Constitution. Under Chief Justices William Rehnquist and John Roberts, the Court rolled back some civil rights protections and adopted a restrained view of federal power. This ideological shift affected marginalized groups by narrowing access to affirmative action, abortion services, and voting rights.

## **The Supreme Court's Role in Shaping Social and Economic Policy**

Beyond civil rights, the Supreme Court's decisions impact economic policies and social welfare, influencing everyday life for Americans.

## **Labor Rights and Economic Justice**

Cases like *Lochner v. New York* (1905), which struck down labor regulations, demonstrate how the Court historically constrained workers' rights in favor of laissez-faire capitalism. Later rulings, such as *West Coast Hotel Co. v. Parrish* (1937), marked a departure, upholding minimum wage laws and signaling judicial acceptance of government intervention in the economy. These shifts highlight the Court's role in mediating conflicts between capital and labor.

## **Healthcare and Social Welfare**

The Affordable Care Act (ACA) faced significant legal challenges culminating in *National Federation of Independent Business v. Sebelius* (2012). The Court upheld most provisions of the ACA, affirming the government's authority to regulate healthcare. This decision had profound implications for access to medical services, insurance coverage, and public health—issues central to a peoples history understanding of the Court's societal impact.

## **Critiques and Debates: The Court's Accessibility and Representation**

A peoples history of the Supreme Court also considers critiques regarding the institution's accessibility and representativeness. The Court is often perceived as an elite body detached from the realities of ordinary citizens. Its procedures, legal jargon, and lifetime appointments contribute to a democratic deficit in public engagement.

Some scholars argue for reforms such as term limits for justices, increased transparency, and mechanisms for greater public accountability. These proposals seek to realign the Court's function with democratic principles and ensure that its jurisprudence reflects the diverse experiences of the American populace.

## **Representation on the Bench**

Diversity among justices remains limited relative to the country's demographic composition. While recent decades have seen the appointment of the first African American, Latina, and female justices, the Court's makeup still skews toward a narrow professional and socio-economic elite. This lack of representation raises questions about how perspectives from different communities inform constitutional interpretation.

## **Looking Forward: The Supreme Court in a Changing Society**

The Supreme Court continues to be a pivotal institution at the crossroads of law and society. As



debates over voting rights, abortion, affirmative action, and executive power intensify, the Court's decisions will profoundly influence the nation's political and social trajectory.

Adopting a peoples history approach encourages ongoing scrutiny of how the Court's rulings affect marginalized groups and the broader democratic fabric. It reminds us that the Supreme Court is not merely a legal body but a dynamic participant in America's evolving story—one that requires vigilance, critical analysis, and an inclusive understanding of justice.

## **A Peoples History Of The Supreme Court**

**a peoples history of the supreme court: A People's History of the Supreme Court** Peter Irons, 2006-07-25 A comprehensive history of the people and cases that have changed history, this is the definitive account of the nation's highest court featuring a forward by Howard Zinn Recent changes in the Supreme Court have placed the venerable institution at the forefront of current affairs, making this comprehensive and engaging work as timely as ever. In the tradition of Howard Zinn's classic *A People's History of the United States*, Peter Irons chronicles the decisions that have influenced virtually every aspect of our society, from the debates over judicial power to controversial rulings in the past regarding slavery, racial segregation, and abortion, as well as more current cases about school prayer, the Bush/Gore election results, and enemy combatants. To understand key issues facing the supreme court and the current battle for the court's ideological makeup, there is no better guide than Peter Irons. This revised and updated edition includes a foreword by Howard Zinn. A sophisticated narrative history of the Supreme Court . . . [Irons] breathes abundant life into old documents and reminds readers that today's fiercest arguments about rights are the continuation of the endless American conversation. -Publisher's Weekly (starred review)

**a peoples history of the supreme court: A People's History of the European Court of Human Rights** Michael Goldhaber, 2008-12-31 The exceptionality of America's Supreme Court has long been conventional wisdom. But the United States Supreme Court is no longer the only one changing the landscape of public rights and values. Over the past thirty years, the European Court of Human Rights has developed an ambitious, American-style body of law. Unheralded by the mass press, this obscure tribunal in Strasbourg, France has become, in many ways, the Supreme Court of Europe. Michael Goldhaber introduces American audiences to the judicial arm of the Council of Europe--a group distinct from the European Union, and much larger--whose mission is centered on interpreting the European Convention on Human Rights. The Council routinely confronts nations over their most culturally-sensitive, hot-button issues. It has stared down France on the issue of Muslim immigration; Ireland on abortion; Greece on Greek Orthodoxy; Turkey on Kurdish separatism; Austria on Nazism; and Britain on gay rights and corporal punishment. And what is most extraordinary is that nations commonly comply. In the battle for the world's conscience, Goldhaber shows how the court in Strasbourg may be pulling ahead.

**a peoples history of the supreme court: A People's History of the United States** Howard Zinn, Kathy Emery, Ellen Reeves, 2003 This brilliant and moving history of the American people (Library Journal) presents more than 500 years of American social and cultural history, going well beyond the wars and presidencies contained in traditional texts to tell the stories of working men and women. Abridged for use in the classroom.

**a peoples history of the supreme court: A People's History of the United States** Lin Xun, Dead Writers Club, Pointer Institute, Rex Curry, 2016-06-17 Superwriter and Supermodel Lin Xun (that's Lin as the covergirl) is the author of this full frontal exposure of the USA. Find out what is taught in the schools of other countries that the USA doesn't teach in its schools. Xun teaches the USA's history to students in China (and other countries), including facts hidden in the USA's

classrooms such as: (1) that the Pledge of Allegiance to the Flag was the origin of the Nazi salute and Nazi behavior; (2) Swastikas represented crossed S letter shapes for socialist under Hitler (two of the many astounding discoveries by Sociologist Dr. Rex Curry). Xun reveals all on flag bikinis, flag fetishism, flag propaganda, and more. Each book is personally handled, wrapped, and posted by Lin Xun (in the nude). Or by the publisher, depending on who's available. What do other countries think about the USA's Pledge of Allegiance today? Xun tells all as she joins forces with the Dead Writers Club in this eye-popping page-turner. Learn how the USA and its pledge inspired police states globally. Will America escape the madness? Will you? Save yourself from the cult of the omnipotent state! The book *A People's History of the United States* introduces readers to Anarchaeology, Misanthropology, and the Socialist Crusades, the Latest Socialist Dark Age, and the Modern Socialist Inquisitions, which resulted in the Wholecaust (of which the Holocaust was a part). Adolf Hitler, Joseph Stalin, Mao Zedong and other socialists are exposed along with the influence of socialists in the United States upon those dictators. As part of the Dead Writers Club (DWC), Lin Xun has collaborated with the authors Micky Barnetti and Matt Crypto. Another volume by the Dead Writers Club is the self-titled *Dead Writers Club and Drug Detection Dog Training -Libertarian Lawyers Fight Police State USA*. The DWC collaborated on the groundbreaking book *Pledge of Allegiance & Swastika Secrets*. It is a semi-biographical work about the nation's leading authority on the Pledge of Allegiance and his many discoveries about its bizarre past and present. The DWC also assisted with a classic science fiction tale revealing an amazing discovery about time travel.

**a peoples history of the supreme court: Voices of a People's History of the United States in the 21st Century** Anthony Arnone, Haley Pessin, 2023-11-07 Twenty-first century social movements come to life through speeches, essays, and other documents of activism, protest, and social change. Gathering more than 100 texts from social movements that have shaped the 21st century, this powerful book includes contributions from Angela Y. Davis, Nick Estes, Colin Kaepernick, Rebecca Solnit, Christian Smalls, Viet Thanh Nguyen, Howard Zinn, Rev. William Barber, Bree Newsome, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Tarana J. Burke, Dream Defenders, Sins Invalid, Mariame Kaba, Naomi Klein, Keeanga-Yamahtta Taylor, Linda Sarsour, Chelsea E. Manning, Chrishaun "CeCe" McDonald, Julian Brave NoiseCat, H. Melt, and others. Inspired by the original *Voices of a People's History of the United States*, the book features speeches, essays, poems, and calls to action from Black Lives Matter, #MeToo, Indigenous struggles, immigrant rights activists, the environmental movement, disability justice organizers, and frontline workers during the global pandemic who spoke out against the life-threatening conditions of their labor. Together, their words remind us that history is made not only by the rich and powerful, but by ordinary people taking collective action.

**a peoples history of the supreme court: A People's History of SFO** Eric Porter, 2024-03-12 An illuminating profile of the San Francisco Bay Area, and its regional and global influence, as seen from the focal point of San Francisco International Airport (SFO). *A People's History of SFO* uses the history of San Francisco International Airport (SFO) to tell a multifaceted story of development, encounter, and power in the surrounding region from the eighteenth century to the present. In lively, engaging stories, Eric Porter reveals SFO's unique role in the San Francisco Bay Area's growth as a globally connected hub of commerce, technology innovation, and political, economic, and social influence. Starting with the very land SFO was built on, *A People's History of SFO* sees the airport as a microcosm of the forces at work in the Bay Area—from its colonial history and early role in trade, mining, and agriculture to the economic growth, social sanctuary, and environmental transformations of the twentieth century. In ways both material and symbolic, small human acts have overlapped with evolving systems of power to create this bustling metropolis. *A People's History of SFO* ends by addressing the climate crisis, as sea levels rise and threaten SFO itself on the edge of San Francisco Bay.

**a peoples history of the supreme court: The Supreme Court** Peter Charles Hoffer, William James Hoffer, N. E. H. Hull, 2007 For more than two centuries, the U.S. Supreme Court has provided a battleground for nearly every controversial issue in our nation's history. This veteran

team of talented historians produces the most readable, astute, and up-to-date single-volume history of this venerated institution.

**a peoples history of the supreme court: A People's History of the Civil War** David Williams, 2011-05-10 "Does for the Civil War period what Howard Zinn's *A People's History of the United States* did for the study of American history in general." —Library Journal Historian David Williams has written the first account of the American Civil War as viewed through the eyes of ordinary people—foot soldiers, slaves, women, prisoners of war, draft resisters, Native Americans, and others. Richly illustrated with little-known anecdotes and firsthand testimony, this path-breaking narrative moves beyond presidents and generals to tell a new and powerful story about America's most destructive conflict. *A People's History of the Civil War* is a "readable social history" that "sheds fascinating light" on this crucial period. In so doing, it recovers the long-overlooked perspectives and forgotten voices of one of the defining chapters of American history (Publishers Weekly). "Meticulously researched and persuasively argued." —The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

**a peoples history of the supreme court: ABA Journal**, 1999-08 The ABA Journal serves the legal profession. Qualified recipients are lawyers and judges, law students, law librarians and associate members of the American Bar Association.

**a peoples history of the supreme court: Young People's History of North Carolina** Daniel Harvey Hill, 1907

**a peoples history of the supreme court: American Constitutional History** Jack Fruchtman, 2022-01-12 Reveals how the Constitution has evolved over the past 235 years, featuring updated coverage of the 2020 presidential election and constitutional changes made by the Supreme Court up to June 2021 *American Constitutional History: A Brief Introduction, Second Edition* presents a concise and accessible history of the 235-year development of the Constitution since its ratification. The book is organized around five distinct periods in U.S. history—the New Republic, the Slave Republic, the Free-Market Republic, the Social Welfare Republic, and the Contemporary Republic—to demonstrate the evolution of the American republic and its founding document over time. With an engaging narrative approach, author Jack Fruchtman describes how constitutional changes have occurred through both formal amendments and informal decisions by the president, Congress, and the Supreme Court. Updated to cover the period from 2015 to 2021, the second edition examines the controversial presidential election of 2020 in which Donald Trump, despite losing the electoral and popular vote, claimed victory and espoused charges of widespread election fraud. New coverage of the addition of Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh, and Amy Coney Barrett to the Supreme Court is complemented by discussion of important decisions made after 2015, including affirming same-sex marriage, a woman's right to abortion under certain circumstances, the right to own and carry a firearm, and the central place of religious liberty in American society. This book also: Highlights the Constitution's evolution through government regulation of the economy, individual and civil rights, and executive power Reflects the evolution of constitutional changes made by the Supreme Court up to June 2021 Discusses topics such as the ideological origins of the U.S. Constitution, the Civil War and Reconstruction, the civil rights movement, and growth of executive power Includes chapter overviews, summaries, and descriptions of formal constitutional amendments ratified by the states *American Constitutional History: A Brief Introduction, Second Edition* is an excellent introductory textbook for upper-level undergraduate and graduate courses in American history and political science and a must-read for general readers seeking insights into the origins and evolution of the U.S. Constitution.

**a peoples history of the supreme court: American Constitutional History: A Brief Introduction** Jack Fruchtman, 2016-03-21 *American Constitutional History* presents a concise introduction to the constitutional developments that have taken place over the past 225 years, treating trends from history, law, and political science. Presents readers with a brief and accessible introduction to more than two centuries of U.S. constitutional history Explores constitutional history chronologically, breaking U.S. history into five distinct periods Reveals the full sweep of constitutional changes through a focus on issues relating to economic developments, civil rights and

civil liberties, and executive power Reflects the evolution of constitutional changes all the way up to the conclusion of the June 2015 Supreme Court term

**a peoples history of the supreme court: A People's History of the French Revolution** Eric Hazan, 2017-01-31 Discover French history as you've never read it before in this bold account of the French Revolution from the perspective of the lower classes. This blow-by-blow narrative busts pervasive myths and reveals how the French Revolution shaped the Western world. The assault on the Bastille, the Reign of Terror, Danton mocking his executioner, Robespierre dispensing a fearful justice, and the archetypal gadfly Marat—the events and figures of the French Revolution have exercised a hold on the historical imagination for more than 200 years. It has been a template for heroic insurrection and, to more conservative minds, a cautionary tale. In the hands of Eric Hazan, author of *The Invention of Paris*, the revolution becomes a rational and pure struggle for emancipation. In this new history, the first significant account of the French Revolution in over twenty years, Hazan maintains that it fundamentally changed the Western world—for the better. Looking at history from the bottom up, providing an account of working people and peasants, Hazan asks, how did they see their opportunities? What were they fighting for? What was the Terror and could it be justified? And how was the revolution stopped in its tracks? Hazan offers a vivid retelling of events, bringing them to life with a multitude of voices. Only through the people can we fully understand the legacy of French Revolution.

**a peoples history of the supreme court: A People's History of Florida, 1513-1876** Adam Wasserman, 2010 Howard Zinn, author of *A People's History of the United States*, predicted that the bottom class perspective of history would eventually gain ground, enveloping the old way of narrating history as told by the powerful. Since then, numerous historical events have been redefined through the outlook of common people that were involved from the bottom-up, forever altering how we understand history. No more romantic diatribes glittered in patriotic myths. No more traditional heroes, standardized viewpoints, unquestionable facts, or generalized falsehoods. Just plain raw truth that is not afraid to stampede powerful governments with the herd of popular outrage. *A People's History of Florida* follows the *People's History* tradition, documenting the active involvement of African-Americans, indigenous people, women, and poor whites in shaping the Sunshine State's history.

**a peoples history of the supreme court: War Powers** Peter Irons, 2006-05-02 This book examines a fundamental question in the development of the American empire: What constraints does the Constitution place on our territorial expansion, military intervention, occupation of foreign countries, and on the power the president may exercise over American foreign policy? Worried about the dangers of unchecked executive power, the Founding Fathers deliberately assigned Congress the sole authority to make war. But the last time Congress declared war was on December 8, 1941, after the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. Since then, every president from Harry Truman to George W. Bush has used military force in pursuit of imperial objectives, while Congress and the Supreme Court have virtually abdicated their responsibilities to check presidential power. Legal historian Irons recounts this story of subversion from above, tracing presidents' increasing willingness to ignore congressional authority and even suspend civil liberties.--From publisher description.

**a peoples history of the supreme court: Faith, Force, and Reason** David M. Beatty, 2022-03-31 *Faith, Force, and Reason* follows the evolution of the rule of law from its birth in the marshes of Mesopotamia over 4,000 years ago to its battle against apartheid in South Africa in the last twenty-five years. It is recounted through the voices of emperors and kings, judges and jurists, and popes and philosophers who have thought about what the rule of law is all about and how it works. All of law's most momentous achievements – Justinian's *Corpus Juris Civilis*, the *Magna Carta*, and the American Bill of Rights – and most celebrated advocates – Plato and Aristotle, Cicero, Aquinas, Edward Coke, Hugo Grotius, and John Marshall – are featured. So are law's darkest moments: the trial of Socrates, the burning and beheading of witches and heretics, the persecution of Jews, and the proclamation of *Lex Regia* which legalized the dictatorial powers of Roman emperors and medieval kings. *Faith, Force, and Reason* challenges readers to think about the

lessons of the history they have read. What does the rule of law mean in our own time? What does it demand of us as well as our political leaders?

**a peoples history of the supreme court: Encyclopedia of U.S. Political History** Andrew Robertson, Michael A. Morrison, William G. Shade, Robert Johnston, Robert Zieger, Thomas Langston, Richard Valelly, 2010-04-01 Unparalleled coverage of U.S. political development through a unique chronological framework Encyclopedia of U.S. Political History explores the events, policies, activities, institutions, groups, people, and movements that have created and shaped political life in the United States. With contributions from scholars in the fields of history and political science, this seven-volume set provides students, researchers, and scholars the opportunity to examine the political evolution of the United States from the 1500s to the present day. With greater coverage than any other resource, the Encyclopedia of U.S. Political History identifies and illuminates patterns and interrelations that will expand the reader's understanding of American political institutions, culture, behavior, and change. Focusing on both government and history, the Encyclopedia brings exceptional breadth and depth to the topic with more than 100 essays for each of the critical time periods covered. With each volume covering one of seven time periods that correspond to key eras in American history, the essays and articles in this authoritative encyclopedia focus on the following themes of political history: The three branches of government Elections and political parties Legal and constitutional histories Political movements and philosophies, and key political figures Economics Military politics International relations, treaties, and alliances Regional histories Key Features Organized chronologically by political eras Reader's guide for easy-topic searching across volumes Maps, photographs, and tables enhance the text Signed entries by a stellar group of contributors

**VOLUME 1 ?Colonial Beginnings through Revolution ?1500-1783**  
?Volume Editor: Andrew Robertson, Herbert H. Lehman College ?The colonial period witnessed the transformation of thirteen distinct colonies into an independent federated republic. This volume discusses the diversity of the colonial political experience—a diversity that modern scholars have found defies easy synthesis—as well as the long-term conflicts, policies, and events that led to revolution, and the ideas underlying independence.

**VOLUME 2 ?The Early Republic ?1784-1840**  
?Volume Editor: Michael A. Morrison, Purdue University No period in the history of the United States was more critical to the foundation and shaping of American politics than the early American republic. This volume discusses the era of Confederation, the shaping of the U.S. Constitution, and the development of the party system.

**VOLUME 3 ?Expansion, Division, and Reconstruction ?1841-1877**  
?Volume Editor: William Shade, Lehigh University (emeritus) ?This volume examines three decades in the middle of the nineteenth century, which witnessed: the emergence of the debate over slavery in the territories, which eventually led to the Civil War; the military conflict itself from 1861 until 1865; and the process of Reconstruction, which ended with the readmission of all of the former Confederate States to the Union and the withdrawal of the last occupying federal troops from those states in 1877.

**VOLUME 4 ?From the Gilded Age through the Age of Reform ?1878-1920**  
?Volume Editor: Robert Johnston, University of Illinois at Chicago With the withdrawal of federal soldiers from Southern states the previous year, 1878 marked a new focus in American politics, and it became recognizably modern within the next 40 years. This volume focuses on race and politics; economics, labor, and capitalism; agrarian politics and populism; national politics; progressivism; foreign affairs; World War I; and the end of the progressive era.

**VOLUME 5 ?Prosperity, Depression, and War ?1921-1945**  
?Volume Editor: Robert Zieger, University of Florida Between 1921 and 1945, the U.S. political system exhibited significant patterns of both continuity and change in a turbulent time marked by racist conflicts, the Great Depression, and World War II. The main topics covered in this volume are declining party identification; the Roosevelt Coalition; evolving party organization; congressional inertia in the 1920s; the New Deal; Congress during World War II; the growth of the federal government; Franklin D. Roosevelt's presidency; the Supreme Court's conservative traditions; and a new judicial outlook.

**VOLUME 6 ?Postwar Consensus to Social Unrest ?1946-1975**  
?Volume Editor: Thomas Langston, Tulane University This volume examines the postwar era with the consolidation of the New Deal, the onset of the Cold War,

and the Korean War. It then moves into the 1950s and early 1960s, and discusses the Vietnam war; the era of John F. Kennedy; the Cuban Missile Crisis; the Civil Rights Act; Martin Luther King and the Voting Rights Act; antiwar movements; The War Powers Act; environmental policy; the Equal Rights Amendment; Roe v. Wade; Watergate; and the end of the Vietnam War. VOLUME 7 ?The Clash of Conservatism and Liberalism ?1976 to present ?Volume Editor: Richard Valelly, Swarthmore College ?The troubled Carter Administration, 1977–1980, proved to be the political gateway for the resurgence of a more ideologically conservative Republican party led by a popular president, Ronald Reagan. The last volume of the Encyclopedia covers politics and national institutions in a polarized era of nationally competitive party politics and programmatic debates about taxes, social policy, and the size of national government. It also considers the mixed blessing of the change in superpower international competition associated with the end of the Cold War. Stateless terrorism (symbolized by the 9/11 attacks), the continuing American tradition of civil liberties, and the broad change in social diversity wrought by immigration and the impact in this period of the rights revolutions are also covered.

**a peoples history of the supreme court: The Employee** Jean-Christian Vinel, 2013-07-26 A political, legal, intellectual, and social history of employment in America In the present age of temp work, telecommuting, and outsourcing, millions of workers in the United States find themselves excluded from the category of employee—a crucial distinction that would otherwise permit unionization and collective bargaining. Tracing the history of the term since its entry into the public lexicon in the nineteenth century, Jean-Christian Vinel demonstrates that the legal definition of employee has always been politically contested and deeply affected by competing claims on the part of business and labor. Unique in the Western world, American labor law is premised on the notion that no man can serve two masters—workers owe loyalty to their employer, which in many cases is incompatible with union membership. *The Employee: A Political History* historicizes this American exception to international standards of rights and liberties at work, revealing a little known part of the business struggle against the New Deal. Early on, progressives and liberals developed a labor regime that, intending to restore amicable relations between employer and employee, sought to include as many workers as possible in the latter category. But in the 1940s this language of social harmony met with increasing resistance from businessmen, who pressed their interests in Congress and the federal courts, pushing for an ever-narrower definition of employee that excluded groups such as foremen, supervisors, and knowledge workers. A cultural and political history of American business and law, *The Employee* sheds historical light on contemporary struggles for economic democracy and political power in the workplace.

**a peoples history of the supreme court: Reading, Learning, Teaching Howard Zinn** Ed Welch, 2009 Howard Zinn is one of the most celebrated historians and social activists of our time. Raised in a working class family in Brooklyn, he was a shipyard worker and union organizer when World War II began. He served as a bombardier in the European Theatre and this experience shaped his opposition to war as an instrument of foreign policy. He became active in the civil rights movement as well as the anti-war movement from the 1950s to the 1970s. He is perhaps best known as the author of *A People's History of the United States*, published in 1980. This study of Zinn's life and work opens the door to many aspects of historical study generally untouched in traditional secondary and collegiate survey courses in United States history. To Zinn, history is not an objective account of the past to be indelibly carved into the brains of American citizens; rather, history is an ever-changing palette of events as people react to the contexts and cultures they find themselves immersed in. By considering the lives and thoughts of less politically and socially prominent individuals, students have the opportunity to re-examine their own beliefs and assumptions about contemporary American life. Students will gain insight into how history is constructed and recorded through a consideration of the life and writings of Howard Zinn.

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