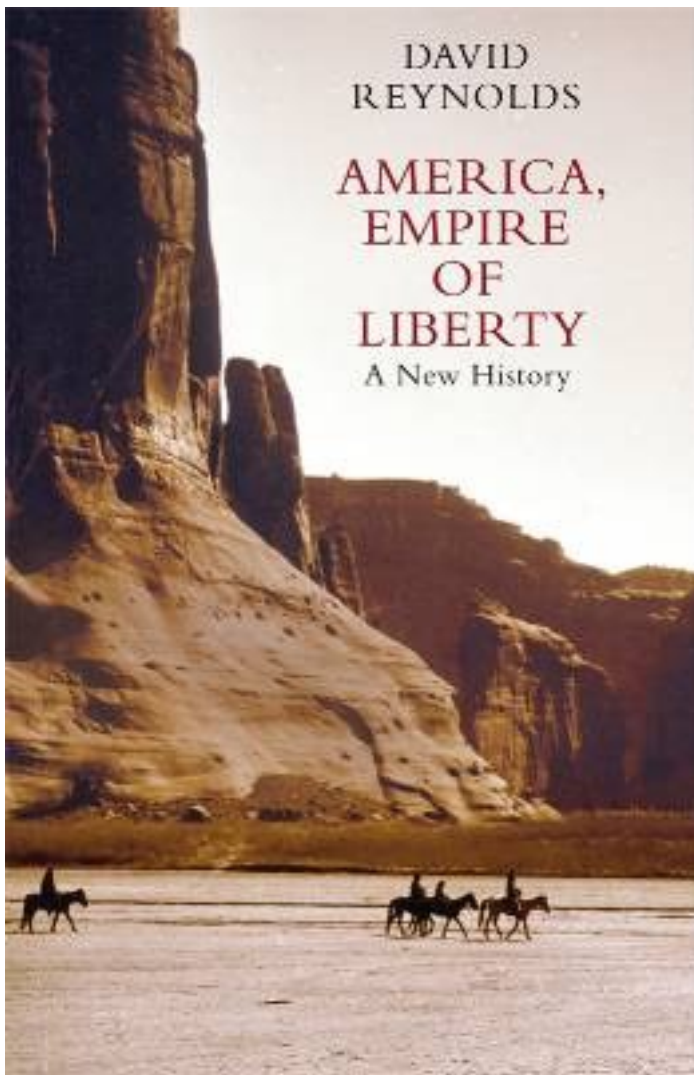


America, Empire of Liberty



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作者介绍:

From October 2008 to July 2009 David Reynolds will present a 90 part BBC Radio Four series on American history. It will be a personal interpretation, developing a broad argument about the dynamics of American history in three crucial themes: Empire, Liberty and Faith. America: Empire of Liberty, will be the unique book that emerges from this series, and Reynolds' s definitive work on the subject.

The story begins in the 18th century, with an extended struggle among the rival empires of France, Britain and Spain for predominance in North America, which Britain eventually wins in the 'first world war' of 1756-63. Coming of age as a military power in its own right in World War Two, the United States establishes a global American empire while waging the Cold War and does not dismantle it thereafter. From its founding, the colonies and the new nation enjoy greater economic and political liberty than Europe, especially through cheap land. But shortage of labour (the flip side of cheap land) makes black slavery economically necessary.

Liberty therefore becomes a crucial issue in the history of this nascent nation. 'Whose liberty?' is the big question in the Twentieth Century – causing often violent agitation about the rights of blacks. This debate then extends to women, homosexuals, guns, the unborn and multiculturalism. The driver behind the American way of life is so often its religious faith, derived from Calvinist Protestantism. Reynolds shows how it can be characterised by a providentialist sense of mission, so powerful in its reach it becomes the underlying evangelical ideology of America and its foreign policy, from Wilson to George W. Bush.

This persuasive interpretation of the history of the superpower of our times will be required reading for years to come.

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