



A Consumers' Republic: The Politics of Mass Consumption in Postwar America

Lizabeth Cohen

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In this signal work of history, Bancroft Prize winner and Pulitzer Prize finalist Lizabeth Cohen shows how the pursuit of prosperity after World War II fueled our pervasive consumer mentality and transformed American life.

Trumpeted as a means to promote the general welfare, mass consumption quickly outgrew its economic objectives and became synonymous with patriotism, social equality, and the American Dream. Material goods came to embody the promise of America, and the power of consumers to purchase everything from vacuum cleaners to convertibles gave rise to the power of citizens to purchase political influence and effect social change. Yet despite undeniable successes and unprecedented affluence, mass consumption also fostered economic inequality and the fracturing of society along gender, class, and racial lines. In charting the complex legacy of our “Consumers’ Republic” Lizabeth Cohen has written a bold, encompassing, and profoundly influential book.

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