



Buying Power: A History of Consumer Activism in America

Lawrence B. Glickman

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A definitive history of consumer activism, *Buying Power* traces the lineage of this political tradition back to our nation's founding, revealing that Americans used purchasing power to support causes and punish enemies long before the word *boycott* even entered our lexicon. Taking the Boston Tea Party as his starting point, Lawrence Glickman argues that the rejection of British imports by revolutionary patriots inaugurated a continuous series of consumer boycotts, campaigns for safe and ethical consumption, and efforts to make goods more broadly accessible. He explores abolitionist-led efforts to eschew slave-made goods, African American consumer campaigns against Jim Crow, a 1930s refusal of silk from fascist Japan, and emerging contemporary movements like slow food. Uncovering previously unknown episodes and analyzing famous events from a fresh perspective, Glickman illuminates moments when consumer activism intersected with political and civil rights movements. He also sheds new light on activists' relationship with the consumer movement, which gave rise to lobbies like the National Consumers League and Consumers Union as well as ill-fated legislation to create a federal Consumer Protection Agency.

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