



America's Forgotten Holiday: May Day and Nationalism, 1867-1960 (American History and Culture)

By Donna T. Haverty-Stacke

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Though now a largely forgotten holiday in the United States, May Day was founded here in 1886 by an energized labor movement as a part of its struggle for the eight-hour day. In ensuing years, May Day took on new meaning, and by the early 1900s had become an annual rallying point for anarchists, socialists, and communists around the world. Yet American workers and radicals also used May Day to advance alternative definitions of what it meant to be an American and what America should be as a nation.

Mining contemporary newspapers, party and union records, oral histories, photographs, and rare film footage, **America's Forgotten Holiday** explains how May Days celebrants, through their colorful parades and mass meetings, both contributed to the construction of their own radical American identities and publicized alternative social and political models for the nation.

This fascinating story of May Day in America reveals how many contours of American nationalism developed in dialogue with political radicals and workers, and uncovers the cultural history of those who considered themselves both patriotic and dissenting Americans.

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Review

“Haverty-Stacke recounts how after WW II, American labor avoided contact with the communists and May Day celebrations. Instead, more workers and their unions became active in the new Labor Day holiday. This readable book, which blends US labor, political, and cultural history, can be used as a companion to any US history or labor history text.”

-*Choice*

“*America's Forgotten Holiday* details the long and proud history of May Day and compels us to recall both its contested meanings and wonder at the forces and motives of those who have obliterated our memory of it. Haverty-Stacke ties together the study of memory with that of public space while nimbly navigating the troubled, sectarian waters of communist and anti-communist history.”

-Daniel J. Walkowitz, New York University

“Donna Haverty-Stacke's *America's Forgotten Holiday* offers a welcome reminder that not many generations ago, May Day brought more outbursts of idealism than new home construction, more social solidarity than consumerism, and the hopes for a democratic future that we need ever more urgently in the torrents of imperial wars today.”

-Paul Buhle, Brown University

About the Author

Donna T. Haverty-Stacke is Associate Professor of History at Hunter College, CUNY.

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