



The Quest for Drug Control: Politics and Federal Policy in a Period of Increasing Substance Abuse (1963-1981)

David F. Musto

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Between 1960 and 1980 various administrations attempted to deal with a rising tide of illicit drug use that was unprecedented in US history. This is a close look at the politics and bureaucracy of drug control policy during those years, showing how they changed during the presidencies of Johnson, Nixon, Ford and Carter and how much current federal drug-control policies owe to those earlier efforts. David Musto and Pamela Korsmeyer base their analysis on a unique collection of 5000 pages of White House documents from the period, all of which are included on a searchable CD-ROM that accompanies the book. These documents reveal the intense debates that took place over drug policy. They show, for example, that staffers and cabinet officers who were charged with narcotics policy were often influenced by the cultural currents of their times, and when the public reacted in an extreme fashion to rising drug use, officials were disinclined to adopt modified policies that might have been more realistic.

Musto and Korsmeyer's investigation into the decision-making processes that shaped past drug control efforts in the United States provides essential background as creative approaches to the drug problem are sought for the future.

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