



Drugs, Power, and Politics: Narco Wars, Big Pharma, and the Subversion of Democracy

Carl Boggs

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This book explores the increasingly broad terrain of drugs in American society with an emphasis on politics. It begins with the War on Drugs initiated by President Richard Nixon in the early 1970s and extends to the current day with the vast power of the pharmaceutical industry (Big Pharma), expansion of global criminal syndicates, militarization of the drug war, and struggles between states and federal government over the legalization of marijuana. From the beginning, the drug war produced increasing authoritarian tendencies in American politics, visible not only in swollen national bureaucracies and burgeoning police functions, but in the rise of the largest prison-industrial complex in the world, a surveillance state, and the weakening of personal privacy and freedoms. At the same time, the legal drug system with some of the most profitable business operations anywhere has expanded to create a huge medical edifice, affecting the delivery of health care, development of modern psychology, evolution of the treatment industry, and many other areas of contemporary life, including the world of sports and recreation. Although prohibitionism remains very much alive, targeting a wide range of illicit drugs, today it is the hundreds of widely-marketed chemical substances sold by Big Pharma that result in some of the most serious health problems affecting society. This book explores the long historical trajectory of both the War on Drugs and the growth of Big Pharma, focusing on social outcomes and political consequences in the US and beyond.

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