



Power to Destroy: The Political Uses of the IRS from Kennedy to Nixon

John A. Andrew III

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John Andrew's groundbreaking exploration of one of the most mysterious of all government agencies takes its title from Chief Justice John Marshall's famous dictum, "The power to tax is the power to destroy." Mr. Andrew confirms what many have suspected for a long time: that presidents, political appointees, and bureaucrats have attempted to use the Internal Revenue Service to punish their enemies. The author combed the papers of presidential staff, IRS officials, congressional critics, and the Watergate Special Prosecution Force, and petitioned under the Freedom of Information Act to obtain IRS documents. What he discovered was a series of projects and investigations that at times resemble a spy thriller. Beginning with the Kennedy administration's Ideological Organizations Project, which investigated, intimidated, and challenged the tax-exempt status of right-wing foundations, Mr. Andrew traces the ways Democrats and Republicans alike used the IRS to accomplish political goals during the 1960s and early 1970s. Seemingly innocuous names like Operation Leprechaun and Project Tradewinds, together with an array of intelligence and surveillance activities, formed a pattern of abuse that threatened the foundations of American political culture. In one of the most powerful and sobering passages of the book, Mr. Andrew chronicles the IRS's Special Service Staff, which carried out activities that were more extensive and intrusive than Nixon's infamous Enemies List?yet received scant coverage in the media. He also offers important revelations about Nixon's ties to organized crime through Bebe Rebozo. *Power to Destroy* is a shocking analysis of how political influence has corrupted the IRS, and how the agency's own crusade for secrecy hides its operations from public scrutiny, even from congressional committees responsible for overseeing its activities.

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