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continue to climb. Yet, our leaders have responded to failure with a refusal to reevaluate the strident calls for more war—a “politics of denial.”

Bertram and her coauthors identify three “fatal flaws” in the punitive paradigm: the “profit paradox,” meaning that law enforcement and interdiction artificially increase drug prices, which increases potential profits and thus draws more entrepreneurs into the drug business; the “hydra effect,” whereby a crack-down on drugs in one area only spreads it elsewhere; and the “punish-to-deter fallacy,” meaning that massive imprisonment has not reduced drug abuse and may even make it harder to build law-abiding lives.

Drug warriors justify their approach by claiming that drugs cause crime and health problems. But the authors demonstrate that most such problems are “collateral damage” from harsh prohibition. By raising prices, punitive policies cause “addiction-based” property crime and “trade-based” violent crime. Criminalizing syringes ensures that addicts will share them and spread the acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS). Threatening cocaine-using pregnant women with jail deters them from seeking the medical care they need. Aiming the drug war artillery selectively at the street level makes for a war against the poor and people of color.

The authors argue that despite all the evidence of failure, drug war politics persist because politicians gain the perfect enemy. They can denounce demon drugs without offending anyone or having to address the underlying sources of drug problems. They are abetted in this scapegoating by an ever expanding drug control complex whose budgets are wedded to the punitive paradigm. Treatment advocates, official commissions, and even presidents who have attempted drug policy reform have been savaged. Checks and balances that, like party competi-

BERTRAM, EVA, MORRIS BLACHMAN, KENNETH SHARPE, and PETER ANDREAS. *Drug War Politics: The Price of Denial*. Pp. xiv, 347. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1996. \$49.50. Paperbound, \$17.95.

Civil, regional, and even world wars eventually end, but the drug war keeps marching along. Since 1920, punishment has been the soul and substance of U.S. drug policy. This has never succeeded in substantially reducing drug problems, and its costs and negative consequences

tion, should have led to debate and re-evaluation have led instead to bandwagon effects and turf wars that only escalated the drug war.

The authors explore legalization and public health alternatives. They argue that legalization would help undo the harms of prohibition but not those of abuse and addiction. They outline a pragmatic and promising public health approach—prevention, treatment, and jobs and services in impoverished inner cities where drug problems are concentrated. But they conclude that only sustained political struggle will overcome the ideological and institutional obstacles to reform.

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