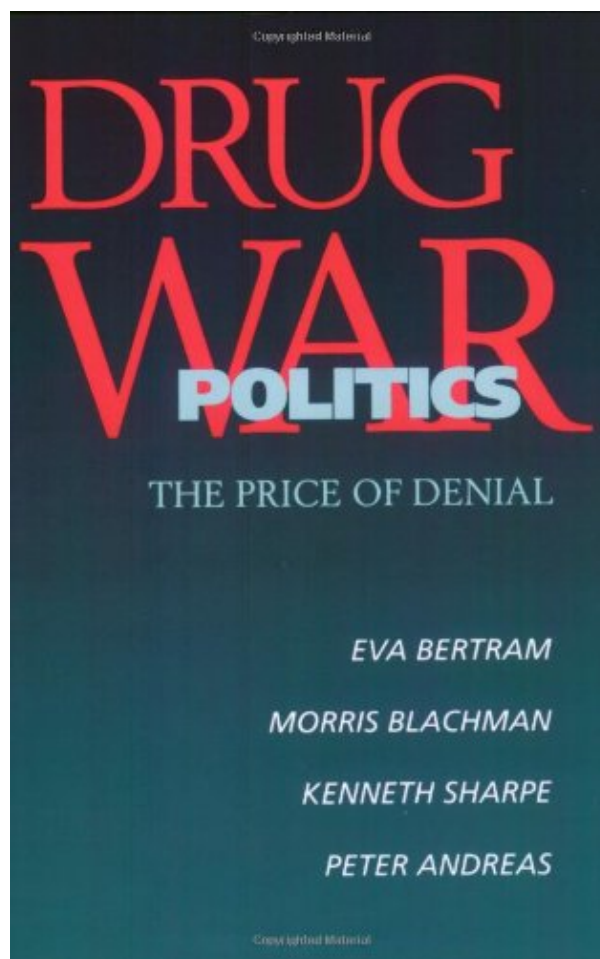


**DRUG WAR POLITICS: THE PRICE OF
DENIAL BY EVA BERTRAM, MORRIS
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DRUG WAR POLITICS: THE PRICE OF DENIAL BY EVA BERTRAM, MORRIS BLACHMAN, KENNETH SHARPE, PETER ANDREAS PDF

Why have our drug wars failed and how might we turn things around? Ask the authors of this hardhitting exposè of U.S. efforts to fight drug trafficking and abuse. In a bold analysis of a century's worth of policy failure, *Drug War Politics* turns on its head many familiar bromides about drug politics. It demonstrates how, instead of learning from our failures, we duplicate and reinforce them in the same flawed policies. The authors examine the "politics of denial" that has led to this catastrophic predicament and propose a basis for a realistic and desperately needed solution.

Domestic and foreign drug wars have consistently fallen short because they are based on a flawed model of force and punishment, the authors show. The failure of these misguided solutions has led to harsher get-tough policies, debilitating cycles of more force and punishment, and a drug problem that continues to escalate. On the foreign policy front, billions of dollars have been wasted, corruption has mushroomed, and human rights undermined in Latin America and across the globe. Yet cheap drugs still flow abundantly across our borders. At home, more money than ever is spent on law enforcement, and an unprecedented number of people—disproportionately minorities—are incarcerated. But drug abuse and addiction persist.

The authors outline the political struggles that help create and sustain the current punitive approach. They probe the workings of Washington politics, demonstrating how presidential and congressional "out-toughing" tactics create a logic of escalation while the criticisms and alternatives of reformers are sidelined or silenced.

Critical of both the punitive model and the legalization approach, *Drug War Politics* calls for a bold new public health approach, one that frames the drug problem as a public health—not a criminal—concern. The authors argue that only by situating drug issues in the context of our fundamental institutions—the family, neighborhoods, and schools—can we hope to provide viable treatment, prevention, and law enforcement. In its comprehensive investigation of our long, futile battle with drugs and its original argument for fundamental change, this book is essential for every concerned citizen.

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Our Nation's Drug War Nightmare

By David Thomson

This five year old book is regrettably as relevant as if put together yesterday. The authors deplore the use of mind altering drugs. Eva Bertram and her cohorts, however, are "troubled by a common pattern in public policy: the persistence of unworkable (criminal justice) policies in the face of overwhelming evidence of their failure...It seemed to be conventional wisdom that the reason force had not worked was not that enough had been applied and that the logical response, therefore, was escalation--not reevaluation."

The vice of political correctness is not limited those of a more Liberal temperament. William F. Buckley is cited as one of the few high profile conservatives willing to publicly challenge the Republican status quo. Politically powerful conservatives relish in "viciously attacking and demeaning critics and sidelining pragmatic alternatives. Less zealous conservatives and liberals, many of whom are skeptics or closet critics, have been willing to go along or have chosen to remain silent," add the authors. Democrats such as President Jimmy Carter attempted to redirect our efforts to treating mind altering drugs as primarily a medical problem. The ensuing tidal wave of public outrage severely threatened his political power. George W. Bush won the 1994 Texas Governors race in part by successfully attacking Texas Democrat Governor Ann Richards for the latter's "actively pushed diversion-to-treatment and in-prison treatment programs in the early 1990s."

The authors point out that our country has reversed its original relative indifference to the mind altering drugs of choice. Logically it is difficult to distinguish between the harm caused by alcohol, tobacco,

marihuana, or cocaine. Heroin, many studies indicate, is far less damaging than alcohol. Another fly in the ointment is the problem of police corruption. Edgar J. Hoover was hesitant to involve the FBI for this very reason. "The logic of the drug war creates enormous pressures," the writers also reveal "to circumvent or transgress...constitutional rights." The Catch 22 circumstances of the drug wars "guarantee that poor and minority residents will be netted by the drug-enforcement system in highly disproportionate numbers." Police agencies prefer going after easier convictions to augment their overall numbers---and if nothing else, people mired in poverty are easier to send to jail because they rarely obtain first class legal assistance. Is the drug war unwittingly racist? Would we persist with today's drug war if more establishment white people filled our jails? American citizens no longer have the right to ignore these awkward questions.

Bertram and her group suggest that it's time we take a serious look at decriminalization. They realistically concede that a social price will have to be paid. Alcohol abuse decreased during our nation's prohibition era. The numbers went back up sharply after legalization. Some individuals will inevitably experiment with legally sanctioned drugs. Nonetheless, life is often about trade offs, balancing off the good against the bad. Taking a chance on decriminalization is not a perfect solution, but likely the lesser of evils. I strongly recommend --Drug War Politics.-- You owe it to yourself to read it thoroughly. The price of denial is indeed too high.

24 of 31 people found the following review helpful.

It does not call for repeal, a terrible mistake.

By Bastiatlaw@aol.com

"Drug War Politics" is an informative work and a must-have for the freedom fighter. Unfortunately, like all other published works except for one, it does not call for the repeal of prohibition. This is a dreadful oversight and it shows just how institutionalized tyranny has become in America.

Calling for reform, legalization, harm reduction etc., simply concedes the "right" of government to prohibit. No such right exists because prohibition laws are repugnant to the spirit of our fundamental legal source: The Declaration of Independence.

I've studied and written volumes on this subject only to discover that the Establishment Curtain makes the Cold War Iron Curtain look like the sheerest of negligees.

If you want the WHOLE truth you must always follow the money trail to its very end. In the case of prohibition you will discover an ever-growing JUDICIAL INDUSTRY that "legally" preys on harmless humans and the taxpayers for \$billions annually. This is the best kept secret in America.

There are but two types of crime. Force and Fraud. Self-medication is neither. Either this is a secret kept from America's legislators and judges or they have taken criminal license with our Constitution's Commerce Clause.

Folks, it's time to unshackle our grand juries by making them fully aware of their right to function independently and issue presentments.

Tinsley Grey Sammons BASTIATLAW@aol.com

3 of 4 people found the following review helpful.

The best book I have read on this topic

By A Customer

This book is much more than the title implies. While it is a through analysis of why the war on drugs is failing it is also visionary in its view of the future. The implications of the next "post drug war era" are explored with a focus on what this means for treatment, prevention and enforcement. Quite simply this book is a must read!

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