

“Drugs and Moral Panic” by Cathi Albertyn researches the panic surrounding the question of drugs and drug addiction. This panic is used by the State to gain White consensus for its repressive acts. However, one must question her contention that drug addiction, by its very nature, can be considered by the State as being “threatened by an alien force or even contraculture.”

Throughout the book attention is paid to reasons why the working class is criminalised but no mention is made of

the more socially costly crimes of the upper and middle classes (apart from their involvement in the state apparatus). Yet nowhere has it been positively proved that the working class is, in fact, the criminal class.

There are many assumptions and conclusions that one would like to argue. So the challenging nature of this book should lead to a deeper analysis of the problems with which it deals in order to verify or reject the conclusions to which the various writers come. □

by DARYL GLASER

IN THE SPIRIT OF FREE ENTERPRISE:

Hermann Giliomee and Lawrence Schlemmer (Eds)
Up Against the Fences; David Philip, Cape Town, 1985.

“Up Against the Fences”, edited by Hermann Giliomee and Lawrence Schlemmer, is a rather paradoxical book. It claims, in its subtitle, to speak on behalf of the impoverished, yet it is addressed very explicitly to the bearers of power and privilege: to reformers in the state and to businessmen. Its almost exclusive purpose is to persuade these parties that the amelioration of influx control, and the adoption of a “rational” urbanisation strategy (p351) will reinforce, rather than undermine political stability (pp156,298,318,332), boost capitalist profits (pp299-300, 341-2) and, moreover, avoid incurring major fiscal costs (pp115-116,ch12,ch27,p351). Like this collection as a whole, urbanisation is, A.M. Rosholt assures us, “linked to the spirit of free enterprise” (p284).

The most striking thing about the book is the conservatism of its vision. It views the demand for the “complete phasing out of the system of influx control” as “inappropriate at this stage” given “very powerful . . . anxieties amongst whites”. It accepts the need to maintain “some form of control over black movement” and insists on nothing more dramatic by way of reform than “adjustments to the policy to make it more flexible and attuned to the varying needs of individuals” (p332). Its attitude to the homelands is no less conservative. In spite of evidence – provided in a vivid contribution by Giliomee and Stanley Greenberg – that the homelands are characterised by “utter destitution and administrative disintegration” (p69), Giliomee, in another article, praises the

homelands as “discrimination-free zones” and sanguinely holds out the hope that the “homelands could still become important elements in a more just, stable federal state” (p56). A full chapter is given to Inkatha secretary general Oscar Dhlomo’s description of the evils of resettlement, and to his reassurances that KwaZulu does not collaborate in the implementation of this policy (ch19). Yet an article in the same book by P.M. Zulu exposes the corruption, regressive economic impact and unpopularity of chiefs and headmen in KwaZulu (ch17). The reader is therefore left wondering whether KwaZulu’s political order is meant to be part of the solution or a part of the problem.

URBANISATION

The alternative urbanisation strategy which emerges from this book is very much in “the spirit of free enterprise”. Relly calls for “a fairly high standard of squatter camp” (p301) while Schlemmer blandly advocates “upgraded informal settlements” (p181). In an example of sociology at its most uncritical, Schlemmer suggests that informal shack areas constitute “a specific type of urban ecology most suited to a marginal urban class with problems of adaptation to the formal system, and to people of lower socio-economic status” (p 189). In the same tenor Philip Smit warns that “over the long term” blacks in South Africa “will not have better houses and sewerage than

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they can afford to maintain themselves" and argues for the gradual elimination of housing subsidies and for the selling off of state housing stock (pp115-16). Schlemmer insists that it would be a mistake for the government to upgrade informal settlements to a level compatible with First World planning standards. Even the "typical site-and-service pattern" – posited by some as the ideal free enterprise solution – is rejected by Schlemmer, who prefers state intervention to provide "basic services" (p190) and nothing more. Moreover, service levies should be "economic" rather than "subsidised" (p351): this would reduce financing difficulties and, revealingly, act as an additional deterrent to urban influx.

What are perceived by the authors to be the advantages of this "rational" urbanisation strategy? Firstly, it will increase the legitimacy of the capitalist system (pp26,331). Secondly, it will offer more effective social control, an attitude summed up in Relly's observation that "modern defensive mechanisms and weaponry" make it "easier to control town-dwellers than rural people" (p298). Thirdly, in the words of the editorial overview, lifting influx control could end up "re-introducing the benefits to industrialists in labour-intensive sectors of supercheap black labour" (p344), weaken trade unions (p342), discourage unemployment-generating mechanisation (p332) and ensure that, in Relly's words, workers' income does not increase "at the expense of national economic growth" (p300). Finally, the proposed urbanisation strategy will be inexpensive, avoiding the businessman's worst nightmare: a tax-and-spend welfare state.

Not surprisingly, in light of this concern to win over politicians and businessmen, radical opinions are almost entirely absent from this book. In spite of claiming to speak for the victims of influx control, not one representative of a black trade union or community organisation is given a voice in this book, Desmond Tutu being the sole, token exception. And apart from Greenberg, who co-authors one article, no scholar of radical inclination is represented. To the extent that the work of Marxist writers is noted at all, it is for the "significant challenge" Jill Natrass believes they pose to capitalism in South Africa (pp26-27). On the other hand, four representatives of the private sector (Rosholt, Oppenheimer, Gavin Relly and Robert Godsell) and two of the Urban Foundation (Jan Steyn and Ann Bernstein) contribute to this book. While some non-radical writers – like Francis Wilson – are well placed to talk about the causes and cures of poverty, the collection as a whole is unmistakably weighted in favour of "privilege" and against those who bear the burdens of poverty and pass books.

The book has its merits. It is a compendium of numerous interesting facts, figures and suggestions on patterns of urbanisation (chs9,12), the operation of the labour bureaux (ch6), market hierarchies and social differentiation in the homelands (chs6,13), the rural resources of migrant workers (ch11), resettlement (ch18) and other important themes. It also offers some useful historical overviews (chs1,4). Some of the empirical work is, however, either rather banal (providing market research-type snapshots of black opinion) or insufficient to support the conclusions drawn from it (such as when Schlemmer, after discovering that shack dwellers consider informal settlements to be the best of a choice of nightmarish options open to them, concludes that such settlements constitute the best of all possible worlds for those of low socio-economic status). More seriously, the collection displays a paucity of complex or original theoretical contributions – consistently enough, given the pragmatic objectives of most of its authors. Moller (ch3), for example, provides an ahistorical and unconvincing "periodisation" of migrant labour, according to which, between the early and contemporary stages of migrant labour, there lay a golden age in which migrant work was voluntary, and migrants were contented, well adjusted, compliant and able to enjoy the benefits of an urban economy while remaining "unaffected by the negative influences of city life" (p31). This kind of contrived and static "phase model" is no substitute for the detailed historical work and theoretical elaboration that one would expect in a book that claims to be the first to deal "at any length" with influx control (p1). What kinds of interests, contradictions and struggles have shaped influx control policies over the decades? How has influx control been affected by the changing priorities of economic sectors, class actors, state managers? How has it in turn shaped the geographical, occupational and racial divisions of labour, or the rate of economic growth? Perhaps above all, how do we account for the present, and nearly universal rejection of existing forms of influx control in the commanding heights of the state and of the private sector? (The answer to this question might go some way towards helping us understand the origins of this book itself.) Finally, what are the obstacles, limits and risks of the "orderly" urbanisation currently being mooted?

One searches Giliomee and Schlemmer's collection in vain for convincing answers to these key theoretical questions.□

**CAPE OF GOOD HOPE:
FOR VASCO DE GAMA**

Day after day, week after heartsick week
The ship plunged southward. The appalling sun
Was north at noon: surely they soon must run
Over earth's frightful rim! But still the bleak
Coast blocked the eastward way they came to seek.
Leftward was pathless land, strait there was none,
And each day ended as it had begun.
The unknown stars at night made hope grow weak.

And then, land's end, the splendid finger of Hope,
And they sailed eastward into a different dawn.
So we, in later voyage, through seas that spawn
A vast despair, along dark coasts must grope
Towards destruction. Can we see the shape
Of our Good Hope, and we, too, round the cape?

Kenneth Boulding

A NOTE TO OUR SUBSCRIBERS

Because of the growing international interest in, and pressure on, South Africa, the March, 1986, number of REALITY was planned to be a special bumper **International** issue. However, our guest editor, Peter Vale of the Institute of Social and Economic Research at Rhodes University, received so many contributions, that we ended up with almost enough for two full issues.

We felt that it would be a mistake to spread these important articles over two numbers of REALITY. Instead we are printing them all in this issue, together with a number of pieces of local interest and comment, and combining our March and May numbers. This means that the next REALITY will appear in July.

Editorial Board