

Drug Prohibition

Part 2 of 3

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Causes of 2014 USA deaths

- All deaths 2.8 million
- Heart disease .8 million
- Tobacco .5 million
- Alcohol 31,000
- Legal drugs 29,000
- Illegal drugs 21,000 0.8% of total!
- Cannabis overdose 0
- From <http://DrugWarFacts.org> (some data scaled)

Comparing causes of death

- Heart disease 40x bigger problem than illegal drugs
- Tobacco 23x bigger
- Suicide 2x bigger
- Firearms 1.6x bigger
- Alcohol 1.5x bigger
- Legal drugs 1.4x bigger than illegal drugs
- Zero cannabis overdose deaths

Comparing harmful effects

- Alcohol worse than cannabis
- "When harm to self and others is summed, alcohol was the most harmful of all drugs"
- From "Drug harms in the UK: a multi-criteria decision analysis," 2010 study by Independent Scientific Committee on Drugs
- We should shift from alcohol to cannabis
- Even better, shift to peaceful hearts

Teens and alcohol vs cannabis

- Cannabis safer overall
- See "Alcohol or Marijuana? A Pediatrician Faces the Question" in <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/17/upshot/alcohol-or-marijuana-a-pediatrician-faces-the-question.html>
- Psychosocial impact about equal
- See “Adverse psychosocial outcomes associated with drug use among US high school seniors: a comparison of alcohol and marijuana” in American Journal of Drug and Alcohol Abuse

Propaganda circa 1920

- Unpopular Mexican immigrants smoked cannabis
- Hemp paper competed with wood pulp paper
- Pharmaceuticals wanted to stifle competition
- Hearst newspapers ran racist inflammatory articles
- See <https://fee.org/articles/the-racist-roots-of-marijuana-prohibition/>
- Racism, corporate greed, and power politics are the roots of drug prohibition

Early prohibition leader

- Harry J. Anslinger
- Chief of Federal Bureau of Narcotics 1930-1962
- Demagogue of the first order

Early propaganda circa 1930

- Harry J. Anslinger
- "Marijuana is a short cut to the insane asylum. Smoke marijuana cigarettes for a month and what was once your brain will be nothing but a storehouse of horrid specters. Hasheesh makes a murderer who kills for the love of killing out of the mildest mannered man"
- From https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Harry_J._Anslinger#cite_note-13

Early prohibition racism

- Harry J. Anslinger
- "There are 100,000 total marijuana smokers in the US, and most are Negroes, Hispanics, Filipinos, and entertainers. Their Satanic music, jazz and swing, results from marijuana use. This marijuana causes white women to seek sexual relations with Negroes, entertainers, and others"
- <https://www.massroots.com/learn/the-man-responsible-for-marijuana-prohibition>

Propaganda, racism circa 1970

- John Ehrlichman, Nixon's policy chief
- "The Nixon campaign ... had two enemies: the antiwar left and black people." "by getting the public to associate the hippies with marijuana and blacks with heroin, and then criminalizing both heavily, we could disrupt those communities. We could arrest their leaders, raid their homes, break up their meetings, and vilify ... Did we know we were lying about the drugs? Of course we did."
- <http://www.nydailynews.com/news/politics/nixon-aide-war-drugs-tool-target-black-people-article-1.2573832>

Real motives for war on drugs

- No relationship to public safety
- Power politics
- Racism
- Promote hate, fear
- Consolidate political power, wealth
- Nasty!

Related wars

- War on drugs
- War on crime
- War on terror
- Two wars in Iraq
- War in Afghanistan
- Tried to start a war in Iran
- All for the same goal - power

End of part 2 – Enjoy life

