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Ancient	1800	1860	1870	1880	1890	1900	1910	1920	1930	1940	1950	1960	1970	1980	1990
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MARIJUANA (CANNABIS) FACT SHEET

ISSUES STUDY COMMITTEE OF THE BRUIN HUMANIST FORUM

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Marijuana is not a narcotic. Although California law calls it a narcotic, it is pharmacologically distinct from the family of opium derivatives and synthetic narcotics. (Wolstenholme, 1965; Watt, 1965; Garattini, 1965; 1 Crim 5351 Calif. District Court of Appeal, 1st Appel. Dist.)

Marijuana is not addicting. The use does not develop any physical dependence (see below). (Mayor's Committee on Marihuana, New York City, 1944; Allentuck & Bowman, 1942; Freedman & Rockmore, 1946; Fort, 1965a, 1965b; Panama Canal Zone Governor's Committee, 1933; Phalen, 1943; Indian Hemp-Drug Commission, 1894; Watt, 1965; I Crim 5351 Calif. District Court of Appeal, 1st Appel. Dist.; United Nations, 1964a, 1964b)

In a small percentage of individuals, a "psychological dependence" can develop, but a predisposition must be present. In his paper, "Dependence of the Hashish Type," Watt (1965, p. 65) concludes: The habit is gregarious and is easily abandoned. Personality defect and incipient or existing psychotic disorder are the essential factors underlying the formation of the habit.

Marijuana is not detrimental to the user's health. Even when used over long periods of time, it does not appear to cause physical or psychological impairment. (Mayor's Committee on Marihuana, New York City, 1944; Freedman & Rockmore, 1946; Fort, 1965a, 1965b; Panama Canal Zone Governor's Committee, 1933; Phalen, 1943; Indian Hemp-Drug Commission, 1894; Becker, 1963)

Marijuana does not tend to release "aggressive behavior." On the contrary, its use inhibits aggressive behavior; it acts as a "tranquilizer." (Mayor's Committee on Marihuana, New York City, 1944; Fort, 1965a, 1965b; Panama Canal Zone Governor's Committee, 1933; Phalen, 1943; Garattini, 1965) Marijuana does not "lead to" or "promote" the use of addicting drugs. "Ninety-eight percent of heroin users started by smoking tobacco and drinking alcohol firsts" (Mayor's Committee on Marihuana, New York City, 1944; Fort, 1965a, 1965b; Panama Canal Zone Governor's Committee, 1933; Phalen, 1943; Garattini, 1965) Marijuana comes from the Indian hemp plant, which was formerly grown widely in the United States for the making of rope, and which still grows wild in many areas. Up until a few years ago it was a main ingredient in commercial birdseed. Leaves and flowering tops provide the cannabis (commonly known in the Western Hemisphere as marijuana, grass, or pot); the resin and pollen, in which the active ingredients are highly concentrated, are the source of "hashish." (Wolstenholme, 1965)

The effects of smoking marijuana have been described as follows: "euphoria, reduction of fatigue, and relief of tension . . . [It will] also increase appetite, distort the time sense, increase self-confidence, and, like alcohol, can relax some inhibitions." (Fort, 1965) A heightened awareness of color and of esthetic beauty, and the production of rich and novel mental associations are also commonly reported effects. Some users report that the marijuana experience is "psychedelic": can result in heightened awareness, or in a consciousness-expanding change in perspective, ideas about the self, life, etc. Marijuana is not, however, like LSD---a very powerful psychedelic. Whereas LSD drastically alters thoughts and

perspective, often "jarring" the user into heightened awareness, marijuana "suggests" or points the way to a moderately deepened awareness. The user is free to follow these potentials or not, as they present themselves. (Mayor's Committee on Marijuana, New York City, 1944; Fort, 1965a, 1965b ; Panama Canal Zone Governor's Committee, 1933; Goldstein, 1966; Becker, 1963; De Ropp, 1957; Indian Hemp-Drug Commission, 1894) Pharmacological studies of marijuana and tetrahydrocannabinol (the major active ingredient) are as yet inconclusive, both because of insufficient research and because of the subtlety and complexity of its effect on the human mind. Garattini (1965) tested maze-learning in rats and found that marijuana caused no change or very slight impairment; Carlini and Kramer (1965) found that maze-learning was significantly improved by an injection of a marijuana extract. Multiple active ingredients are present in the marijuana plant, and these could vary in concentration (e.g., one of the components is sedative, and another is euphoric/psychedelic). (Wolstenholme, 1965; Watt, 1965; Carlini & Kramer, 1965)

As with other psychedelics, the effects of marijuana depend in part on how one interprets, uses, and learns to develop them. As pointed out by many researchers in the area of philosophical/psychological effects, the environment ("setting") is of great importance. Many people have no effects whatever the first time they smoke a marijuana cigarette, but do the second or third time---and thereafter. Everyone has to learn the effects before he can use them to his own benefit. (Becker, 1963; Fort, 1965a, 1965b; Indian Hemp-Drug Commission, 1894)

Some years ago it was estimated that marijuana users numbered "several hundred thousand people in the United States, including many from the middle-class." (Fort, 1965a, 1965b) During the 1960's, however, there has been a rapid increase in the use of marijuana, particularly among "respectable" people: those in the professions, non-bohemian high school and college students, artists, writers, intellectuals, etc. One report on campus use (Goldstein, 1966) estimates that approximately 15% of college students have used or are using marijuana, with the percentage at some large, metropolitan campuses as high as 30-60%. This same report also held that marijuana use is now becoming "respectable," and indulged in by members of student government, campus groups, and fraternities and sororities. (Fort, 1965a, 1965b; Irwin, 1966; Goldstein, 1966)

Marijuana smoking does not constitute a social hazard. Four separate official studies have been conducted on this question, as a part of a larger study: New York City Mayor's Committee in 1944; a committee of the health department of the U. S. Army; another U. S. Army committee, concerned with discipline effects; and a very thorough study by a committee established by the British Government to study the effects in India where it is-and was-in as widespread use as is alcohol here. All of these studies came to the conclusion: marijuana is not damaging to the user or to society, and therefore should not be outlawed. Political and economic pressures prevented authorities in New York from carrying out the recommendations of the Mayor's Committee---the greatest part of the political pressure from Harry J. Anslinger, former U. S. Commissioner of Narcotics. (Mayor's Committee on Marijuana, New York City, 1944; Panama Canal Zone Governor's Committee, 1933; Phalen, 1943 ; Indian Hemp-Drug Commission, 1894)

On the grounds that marijuana is safer and more beneficial than tobacco or alcohol (both of which are physically toxic; both of which are addicting), and that there is no basis for legalizing these two dangerous drugs while outlawing one which is not dangerous, attorneys are challenging the present laws. In the wording of one such legal brief: "The appellant contends that the classification of marijuana as a narcotic in Section 1101 (d) of Health and Safety Code and the marijuana prohibition law is based upon an arbitrary and unreasonable classification having no reasonable relation to the public health, safety, welfare, and morals.... The classification of marijuana as a narcotic is unconstitutional and void in violation of the Eighth Amendment provision against cruel and unusual punishment, and the Due Process clause of the Fourteenth Amendment of the Constitution of the United States." (1 Crim 5351 Calif. District Court of Appeal, First Appel. Dist., pp. 61-62 and Appendix 1, p. 6)

Among the authorities favoring legalization of marijuana, there have been medical doctors, lawyers, psychologists, sociologists, and even some religious leaders. Bishop Pike, for example, supports re-legalization. *Lancet* (1963), the British journal of medicine, in an editorial in 1963, found no good reason for marijuana being prohibited, but good reason why it should be legal. (Irwin, 1966)

Many authorities, however, remain opposed to the re-legalization of marijuana. Predominantly, these are law enforcement" authorities, or politicians (e.g., Attorney General Lynch of California). Although these authorities rarely give verifiable reasons for their insistence that marijuana be illegal, the ones which have been offered prove to be either unsubstantiated "opinions" or out-and-out mistaken data. In this same area, there was a time when law-breakers---taking their cue from the law-enforcement officials---claimed marijuana use as an excuse for their crimes. The fiction of a marijuana-crime relationship has been thoroughly detailed (if there is any correlation at all, it is in a negative direction---crimes of violence are drastically lower than would be statistically expected among marijuana users). (Fort, 1965a, 1965b; Phalen, 1943; Anslinger, 1932;

1 Crim 5351 Calif. District Court of Appeal, First Appel. Dist.; Irwin, 1966; Blum & Wahl, 1965; Boyko, Rotberg, & Disco, 1967; Laurie, 1967) See also below, pages 337 and 339.

Harry J. Anslinger, not one to be daunted by mere facts, included the following comments---both of which are in diametric contradiction to statements by him before committees of the U. S. Congress: "The section noting that many criminals coming before the courts who allege that they were under the influence of marijuana when a crime was committed, and that this defense is usually without foundation and is used with the idea of obtaining lenient treatment by the courts, recommends that a defense of being under the influence of marijuana during the commission of a crime should not mitigate the penalty for a criminal act." (Anslinger, 1932) "The Narcotic Section recognizes the great danger of marijuana due to its definite impairment of the mental and the fact that its continuous use leads direct [sic] to the insane asylum." Even without the aid of Anslinger, arguments opposed to free marijuana use are contradictory, confused, and grossly innocent of verifiable facts. (Fort, 1965a, 1965b; Phalen, 1943; Anslinger, 1932; 1 Crim 5351 Calif. District Court of Appeal, First Appel. Dist.; Irwin, 1966; Blum & Wahl, 1965; *Washington Bulletin*, 1963) In a study of police attitudes and reasoning on "drugs," Blum and Wahl (1965) found much disagreement as to reasons why marijuana should be suppressed. Some officers simply felt that, although marijuana was less dangerous than alcohol, society (and the law) disapproved of marijuana. Reasons given for suppressing marijuana ran from claims that it caused criminal behavior [which is, ex post facto, correct-so long as marijuana use is "criminal"], to the claim that it is more dangerous than alcohol because it isn't as disruptive of behavior and is therefore harder to detect.

Many "expert" groups such as WHO Expert Committee on Addiction Producing Drugs have tended to perpetuate misinformation on marijuana because of poor data [Anslinger was the U.S. spokesman for many, many years at the U.N.], and a conservative reluctance toward "softening" or changing previous policies. In the last few years, however, the World Health Organization has progressively modified its view on marijuana. In 1964 the Expert Committee proposed revised definitions of types of drug dependence, which were subsequently adopted. The new definition of "dependence of the Cannabis type" was as follows: "(1) a desire (or need) for repeated administrations of the drug on account of its subjective effects, including the feeling of enhanced capabilities; (2) little or no tendency to increase the dose, since there is little or no development of tolerance; (3) a psychic dependence on the effects of the drug related to subjective and individual appreciation of those effects; (4) absence of physical dependence so that there is no definite and characteristic abstinence syndrome when the drug is discontinued." (United Nations, 1964b) The Committee actually is saying that there is no reason to keep marijuana on its list: Its definition of dependence of the marijuana type would easily satisfy for a definition of "liking" (i.e., the natural tendency to repeat a pleasant and rewarding, non-harmful experience). Actual dependence on marijuana is extremely rare, and depends entirely on a pre-existing psychological problem-and even this is not "addicting." [See above, p. 333] (Watt, 1965; United Nations, 1964b)

As has been noted by many researchers, scientific as well as governmental groups which have seriously investigated the effects of marijuana on the individual and on society have consistently refused to condemn it or support legislation aimed at suppressing it; law enforcement-oriented groups, on the other hand, including the Narcotics Experts, are very slow indeed to admit any of this evidence into the debate. In spite of this, the Proceedings of the White House Conference on Narcotic and Drug Abuse, 27-28 September 1962, states: "It is the opinion of the Panel that the hazards of marijuana per se have been exaggerated, and the long criminal sentences imposed on an occasional user or possessor of the drug are in poor social perspective. Although marijuana has long held the reputation of inciting individuals to commit sexual offenses and other antisocial acts, the evidence is inadequate to substantiate this. Tolerance and physical dependence do not develop, and withdrawal does not produce an abstinence syndrome." (United Nations, 1965; United States, 1963)

The following, from an editorial in the *Washington Bulletin*, is given here both for the illuminating facts uncovered, and as an example of the more modern approach to the "problem" of marijuana. "Seventy years of institutional documentation indicate that this vision [of marijuana's "dangers"] was a big American fib. Latest such document is the New York County Medical Society Narcotics Sub-committee Report of May 5, 1966: 'There is no evidence that marijuana use is associated with crimes of violence in the United States . . . marijuana is not a narcotic, nor is it addicting . . . New York State should take the lead in attempting to mitigate the stringent federal laws in regard to marijuana possession.' Well, everybody knew that 10 years ago. [U.S.] House Marijuana Hearings, Ways and Means Committee, 1937, page 24, Rep. John Dingall: 'I'm just wondering whether the marijuana addict [sic] graduates into a heroin, an opium, or a cocaine user}' Anslinger: 'No sir. I have not heard of a case of that kind. I think it's an entirely different class. The marijuana addict [sic] does not go in that direction.' Nowadays the Narcotics Bureau [headed during this entire period by Anslinger] propagandizes the idea that marijuana leads directly to heroin, which is obviously silly, as millions of college boys can inform their parents. But the Narcotics Bureau has raised such an unscientific scream on this point that nothing will suffice to prove the obvious except a giant survey of comparative statistics showing that millions of pot smokers are not junkies. When such documents are

at hand, timid but sympathetic medical authorities in key places have declared themselves ready to move toward legislation, licensing or reduction of punishment for marijuana possession to the status of a parking violation." (*Washington Bulletin*, 1966)

The UCLA Law Review, in March of 1967, published an article on California's anti-marijuana laws, from which the following is quoted. ". . . the purpose of this article is to outline the defects in one area of both federal and state criminal law: the control of marijuana-specifically, treatment of possession of the drug, without more, as criminal. The pattern in California, perhaps more than in any other state, has been one of legislative intransigence and increasingly harsh penalties for possession and use of marijuana. The authors take the position that at least a portion of the existing legislation in California against marijuana---Health and Safety Code section 11530, imposing stringent penalties for possession of the drug irrespective of abuse---is an unwelcome disruption of the delicate balance between reason and emotion in the state's drug control laws.... Although the United States Supreme Court normally has given the state legislatures an extended opportunity to clean their own houses, judicial finger-tapping where marijuana is concerned has all the signs of continuing indefinitely. But, unbridled legislative and police suppression of all uses of marijuana, together with savage sentences for even the most innocent uses, might prove to be the source of earlier constitutional review.... The characteristics attributed to marijuana by law enforcement agencies, legislative reports and the communications media are markedly different from, or not supported by, available scientific information.... In this country, the only comprehensive publication at a local or state level scientifically describing the effects of marijuana is the so-called 'LaGuardia Report' . . . reactions which are natively alien to the individual cannot be induced by the ingestion or smoking of the drug.... An even more subtle claim, asserted primarily by law enforcement agencies, is that marijuana is a 'stepping stone' to addictive and disabling drugs. Not only is the alleged causal relationship unsupported in fact, but even the California Attorney General's Office has suggested that the evidence leads to a contrary conclusion.... In addition to the 'stepping stone' thesis, the widely promoted claim that marijuana use causes crime is also lacking in factual support. The LaGuardia researchers, in direct conflict with the routine alarms from law enforcement officials, found that the alleged causal connection does not exist. . . . Indeed, in several subsequent studies it has been shown that there is a negative correlation between crime and the use of marijuana. . . . Unlike 'plain drunk' reckless driving and drunk driving statutes, protecting only against the abuses of alcohol, section 11530 [marijuana] declares a crime even when there is no abuse or victim. Ironically, although it is unlawful to drive under the influence of any narcotic or any drug within the separate statutory classification of 'restricted dangerous drugs' (barbiturates, amphetamine and LSD), these driving offenses are alternatively punishable as misdemeanors, and the penalties are less severe than for possession, without use, of marijuana. And it is only a misdemeanor to 'use' or 'be under the influence of' marijuana." (Boyko et al., 1967)

"These 'new' drugs, however, were neither physically addicting nor illegal; the dangers were considered moderate. In fact, this moderate element of danger might have added an intriguing dimension to the undertaking. The increased use of marijuana on college campuses appears to have a similar background with one added factor: the legal penalties are quite severe, even though, like LSD, the drug is not physically addicting. Students, therefore, rationalize that it is a 'bad' law which they are not obligated to obey (an attitude somewhat similar to the reaction to Prohibition)." (Kleber, 1967)

R. D. Laing, M.D., writing in *Sigma* (Vol. 6), states: "I would be far happier if my own teenage children would, *without breaking the law*, smoke marijuana when they wished, rather than start on the road of so many of their elders to nicotine and ethyl alcohol addiction."

"Summary of conclusions regarding effects. The Commission have now examined all the evidence before them regarding the effects attributed to hemp drugs. It will be well to summarize briefly the conclusions to which they come. It has been clearly established that the occasional use of hemp [marijuana] in moderate doses may be beneficial; but this use may be regarded as medicinal in character. It is rather to the popular and common use of the drugs that the Commission will now confine their attention. It is convenient to consider the effects separately as affecting the physical, mental or moral nature. In regard to the physical effects, the Commission have come to the conclusion that the moderate use of hemp drugs is practically attended by no evil results at all. There may be exceptional cases in which, owing to idiosyncracies of constitution, the drugs in even moderate use may be injurious. There is probably nothing the use of which may not possibly be injurious in cases of exceptional intolerance.... In respect to the alleged mental effects of the drugs, the Commission have come to the conclusion that the moderate use of hemp drugs produces no injurious effects on the mind.... In regard to the moral effects of the drugs, the Commission are of the opinion that their moderate use produces no moral injury whatever. There is no adequate ground for believing that it injuriously affects the character of the consumer . . . for all practical purposes it may be laid down that there is little or no connection between the use of hemp drugs and crime. Viewing the subject generally, it may be added that the moderate use of these drugs is the rule, and that excessive use is comparatively exceptional." (Indian Hemp-Drug Commission, 1894)

"The psychic habituation to marihuana is not so strong as to tobacco or alcohol.... There is no evidence to suggest that the continued use of marihuana is a stepping stone to the use of opiates. Prolonged use of the drug does not lead to mental, physical, or moral degeneration, nor have we observed any permanent deleterious effects from its continued use." (Allentuck & Bowman, 1942)

"There are no apparent reasons for cannabis' status as a Dangerous Drug. It is not addictive, its use does not in Western society cause crime or unacceptable sexuality, and it does not lead to addiction to the hard drugs. The major problem with this drug is that it is illegal. This has three undesirable effects: first, an underground, cannabis-using sub- culture is created and maintained that puts the potential heroin addict one step nearer access to the hard drugs; second, it lessens respect for D.D.A. [Dangerous Drug Act] drugs in the thousands of young people who have tried marihuana or hashish and know from personal experience how harmless the drug is; third, it causes considerable waste of man-power, either through creative and educated people being sent to prison for possession of the drug-a Glasgow doctor was sentenced to six months recently-or through the use of policemen who would be better otherwise employed, to track down the drug and its users." (Laurie, 1967)

"The smoking of the leaves, flowers and seeds of Cannabis sativa [marijuana] is no more harmful than the smoking of tobacco or mullein or sumac leaves.... The legislation in relation to marihuana was ill-advised . . . it branded as a menace and a crime a matter of trivial importance.... It is hoped that no witch-hunt will be instituted in the military service over a problem that does not exist." (Phalen, 1943) "The controls over marihuana under federal [law] and state laws are dissimilar. Under the federal law, marihuana is not considered a narcotic drug. On the other hand, many states have covered marihuana by including it within the definition of 'narcotic drug' since adoption of the Uniform Narcotic Drug Act in 1932. Marihuana is equated in many state laws with the narcotic drugs because the abuse characteristics [under current laws, all use is 'abuse'] of the two types of drugs, the methods of illicit trafficking [all exchange of pot is 'illicit'], and the types of traffickers have a great deal in common.... Because marihuana does not result in physical dependence, the physician need not apply himself to physical complications of withdrawal.... No physical dependence or tolerance has been demonstrated. Neither has it been demonstrated that cannabis causes any lasting mental or physical changes." (A.M.A. Committee on Alcoholism and Drug Dependence, 1967)

"Two of the most common and widely used psychic modifiers are cannabis and alcohol.... First, marijuana is most often used in a social setting, in a group of users who mutually enjoy the effects of the drug. Second, the intent is to heighten enjoyment of outer experiences, e.g., conversation, listening to or performing music, dancing, joking. Unlike the Brahman priest, whose vocabulary during his intoxication is limited to repeating one of the names of his God, the marijuana devotee laughs, giggles, eats without restraint, tells jokes, participates in sexual relationships, and takes pleasure in the company of both men and women, especially if they are also using marijuana. Third, the effects are interpreted by a marijuana-user as analogous to those of alcohol. He prefers marijuana because the effects are more rapid and 'neater'; there is no hangover, and no debilitating physical consequences of chronic use. Thus, the use of cannabis in our society is to attain an experience which, far from renouncing the active life in favor of contemplative, ascetic ideal, affirms the pleasures of sex, music, food, laughter, and human companionship." (Chein et al., 1964)

"A characteristic marihuana psychosis does not exist. Marihuana will not produce a psychosis de nova . . ." "But even excessive marijuana use is less likely to lead to aggressive or anti-social conduct than immoderate consumption of alcohol." (Allentuck & Bowman, 1942; Boyko et al., 1967; Murphy, 1963)

The following excerpt is from a letter to The Princetonian, Princeton University, by the Director of Counseling Services at Princeton. "If and when the severe laws governing marijuana are to receive the review they probably deserve, this will come about only after a significant level of public interest and influential desire has been achieved. . . . In the meantime the underground tide of illegal use will continue to swell and 'lamentable affairs' [arrests] will occur. In judging the reasonableness of current laws, and indeed current clandestine marijuana use, the individual should probe the facts, rather than merely harbor widespread and misinformed assumptions which often yield a sort of sociological hysteria whenever the subject is raised. In the confidential settings of the Counseling Services and the Health Services, whenever the subject of marijuana is discussed we are pleased to find that factual information usually helps clear away much of the undue anxiety stemming from the popular myths surrounding this subject in our society at-large. Recognizing the reality of existing laws, and recognizing the fact that every individual must come to terms with such realities in his own way, we hope we may find ways to be helpful to students currently faced with such quandaries." (MacNaughton, 1967)

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