

Why the illegalization of marijuana was a corrupt decision

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Why the Illegalization of Marijuana was Corrupt For most of human history marijuana has been legal and has actually only been illegal for 1% of the period of time of which it has been in use. Many people assume that marijuana was made illegal through some kind of process involving scientific, medical, and government hearings, and that it was to protect the citizens from what was determined to be a dangerous drug. However, some of the actual reasons that marijuana was wrongly banned include racism, protection of corporate profits, and corrupt legislators along with illegitimate widespread fear among citizens of the United States.

Throughout the 20th century racism towards Hispanics, Negroes, and even Mormons greatly influenced the negative outlook on the use of marijuana. In the early 1900's, western states developed high tensions towards the increase of Mexican-Americans that took business from small American farmers because they worked for cheaper wages. One "difference" that many Americans highlighted during this time was the fact that many Mexicans smoked marijuana and brought the plant with them. However, one of the first state laws outlawing marijuana may have been influenced, not just by Mexicans using the drug, but because of Mormons using it.

Mormons who traveled to Mexico in 1910 came back to Salt Lake City with marijuana. The church's reaction to this may have contributed to the state's marijuana law. In Texas, a senator said on the floor of the Senate: "All Mexicans are crazy, and this stuff (marijuana) is what makes them crazy." In the eastern states racism was again one of the charges connected to marijuana. Some newspaper editorials in 1934 stated that: "Marijuana

influences Negroes to look at white people in the eye, step on white men's shoes and look at a white woman twice. During heavy tensions between whites and all minorities, racism made people fear anything that affected the social order, and as a result many people started to blindly connect marijuana to increases of inappropriate conduct between whites and minorities. Along with rising fears of social disorder, the protection of profits for some major corporations also contributed to the increasing belief that marijuana should be illegalized. Many people across the nation were already losing profits because of Prohibition and didn't need something else to affect their businesses as well.

William Randolph Hearst, the owner of a major newspaper company had many reasons to want marijuana to be banned. First, he had invested heavily in the timber industry to support his newspaper chain and didn't want to see the development of hemp paper in competition. He also was extremely prejudiced towards Mexicans because he lost nearly 80, 000 acres of timberland to Pancho Villa. As a result of this, he told lies about Mexicans and marijuana and how they were causing an increase in violence across the country.

This yellow journalism enabled him to sell an extremely high amount of newspapers which made him very wealthy. In one column sold nationwide, Hearst stated: " Users of marijuana become stimulated as they inhale the drug and are likely to do anything. Most crimes of violence in this section, especially in country districts are laid to users of that drug. " Another corporation, Dupont chemical company, wanted to help Hearst outlaw

marijuana for two main reasons. For one, Dupont had patented nylon and wanted hemp removed as competition.

Also, people could grow hemp themselves and would therefore not have to buy medication from Dupont and other pharmaceutical companies. These companies fearing marijuana competition led to many results, one being the Marijuana Tax Act of 1937. A man named Harry J. Anslinger was an extremely ambitious man and saw the Bureau of Narcotics (a new government agency) as an excellent career opportunity. His main goal was to bring the illegalization of marijuana to the federal level. After two years of planning, Anslinger brought his plan before Congress where the only opposition was from Dr.

William C. Woodward who argued that Harry Anslinger and the Bureau of Narcotics were distorting earlier AMA statements that had nothing to do with marijuana and making them appear to be AMA endorsement for Anslinger's view. Committee members then proceeded to attack Dr. Woodward, questioning his motives in opposing the legislation. After this yellow journalism won over medical science and the bill was passed on where on the floor of the House an American Medical Association committee member stated that the association supported the bill 100 percent.

Thereafter, on the basis of that lie, on August 2, 1937, marijuana became illegal at the federal level. Roger Roffman, a professor of social work at the University of Washington, asserted in July 2009 that "approximately 3.6 million Americans are daily or near daily users." Peter Reuter, a professor at the School of Public Policy and the Department of Criminology at the

University of Maryland, College Park, said that " experimenting with marijuana has long been a normal part of growing up in the U. S. ; about half of the population born since 1960 has tried the drug by age 21. A WorldHealthOrganization survey found that the United States is the world's leading per capita marijuana consumer. The 2007 National Survey on Drug Use & Health prepared by the U. S. Department of Human Health and Services indicates that over 100 million U. S. citizens over the age of 12 have used marijuana. The 2008 survey found that 35 million Americans were willing to tell government representatives that they had used marijuana in the past year. In 2009, according to a Zogby poll and an ABC News/Washington Post poll, between 46% and 56% of US voters would support legalization.

While many people support the fact that marijuana is illegal, they are uneducated in the history of the process to ban the drug. Even though it is proven to have negative effects, if taken in moderation, marijuana has been proven to be less harmful than alcohol. This shows that the large majority of the population does not realize that in the end, a narcotic was banned for reasons that only appealed to certain people, and that because of ignorant members of legislation, the bill was passed without truly being studied in depth.

This was a stupid mistake by our federal government which was backed by people with personal issues without any direct relation to the drug marijuana. Works Cited * Guither, Pete. " Why is Marijuana Illegal? ". drugwarrant. com. Retrieved 17 January 2011. * " Senate". New York Times

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