

Why soft drugs should be legalised essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

There are two ways to try and sort out the drugs problem. One is to legalise and regulate the supply, and the other is to leave it in the hands of criminals. For years we have tried the second option. Banning all forms of soft drugs or lightly regulating them, not allowing them as such but not banning to the extent where people know it is seriously wrong. This is the situation we have found with drugs such as nicotine and tobacco and alcohol.

Another major problem we face is the use of soft drugs especially by the younger generations. A survey revealed that 1 in 12 twelve year olds have tried drugs moving up to 1 in 3 fourteen year olds and 2 in 5 sixteen year olds. This means that about 40% and rising of our secondary school pupils have broken the law. In years to come at this rate the percentage will move up and then those 16 year olds will become adults and this problem will therefore become ever more significant as they become more influential.

We saw a very parallel instance of this dilemma during 1920s America. Drink related crimes had become so numerous that the only way out that the American government saw was to ban it outright. This is what we have tried in Britain and it has almost exactly the same consequences. Gun crime has soared like it did in America in the 20s. We see far too many shootings related to ‘turf wars’ or punishment crimes such as when an employee of a drug dealer makes a mistake.

At some point we have to look at the problem and realise that all crimes, in the major scheme of things are somewhat drugs related. Whether it is a burglar stealing someone’s possessions to fund their drug habit, or the death of a drug abuser, unable to keep up with the payments to his dealer. We

have to realise that getting rid drug dealers is the only way to go. Often they are the centre of the crime in their area.

They are loan sharks to the poorer people and the people who organise the protection rackets for the business owners. No matter where you go you will always find them to do with it. The fact is that people do like to take drugs. Whether it is because they are trying to escape or they are just curious there is an attraction that drugs hold which means that they will always be a problem.

The problem is where they get the drugs from. Presently they are being supplied by dealers who have no care whatsoever in the health of the people they are supplying. It would make no difference to them if they got a bad ‘hit’ and died or took an accidental overdose because they got an overly strong batch. By taking the responsibility of supplying of drugs out of the hands of the criminal we also cut off a massive resource that criminals can use to fund their activities. Prior to the invasion of Afghanistan the country supplied over 75% of the worlds opium from which many types of soft drugs are obtained. The money from these drugs was not being used to fund the countries education system of course but to finance the countries terrorist training camps.

The main drug that the legalising of drugs would affect is Marijuana. This is a drug you either eat or smoke and has actually been used for over 5000 years. It is thought to have been first used in central Asia and China as a folk medicine by healers. It is still used for this nowadays. There are many diseases that it can help.

Multiple Sclerosis is a seriously debilitating disease that is a very painful thing to live through and is a very unpleasant illness to have to watch a loved one live with. It works as very effective pain relief from MS and disorders like it. Glaucoma is a disorder that results in increased pressure within the eye and marijuana can actually drastically improve the chances of a patient of retaining their sight. Though doctors have tried to replicate the effects of marijuana in safer and in legal forms the manufactured versions are nowhere near as effective and sometimes actually carry a higher risk than the drug itself. This is because when you smoke marijuana you take lots of little puffs.

This means that you can stop the effects becoming too great at once by simply stopping smoking whereas with the manufactured pills they are taken as one and have far more serious side effects than smoking it. They can sometimes leave you bed bound for a day or in the case of glaucoma sufferers the replacement called ‘Beta-blocker’ eye drops can activate asthma attacks and cause sluggishness and lethargy. Also even with these drops 10% of patients will still lose their vision. Marijuana can also be used to help AIDS sufferers and people undergoing cancer treatment. As with all manufactured drugs the ones that could be used instead of marijuana are also very expensive and are not always as effective as marijuana. A common conjecture is that marijuana because it is illegal is a lethal drug and is far more dangerous than other drugs like Beta-blocker or even more common prescription drugs.

In fact marijuana has far less toxins and dangerous chemicals in it than lot of prescribed drugs. Another myth is that there are lots of over doses from

marijuana. In fact there are no cases in Britain of an overdose from marijuana because of the way it is taken. It is smoked and because it is taken in small amounts as soon as your body detects a remotely dangerous amount of it in your body it will tell you to stop. As opposed to other drugs which have to be taken as a pill and therefore all at once, giving the body no warning.

These are all reasons why I think that soft drugs are not as dangerous as they are made out to be but we have not seen so far why legalising it would help. Indeed all the above is true where clean drugs are concerned. It is when you get dirty drugs or drugs that have been ‘cut’ with other substances that they get dangerous. A bad batch is a lot more likely to endanger someone’s health than a good one but what is a drug dealer going to care if you or two of his clients die? In fact how is he going to know? Some try it out on good-for-nothings who need a hit but have no money but the fact is the day of the gentleman gangster like Al Capone, who served only the finest alcohol in his bars, are over. This is why we need to hand the business over to respectable people like chemists who actually care and are paid to keep people healthy. Also in this case if people could go to the chemist to get the drugs then they could be educated in a way that that school simply cannot.

For example they could get advice on the safest way to inject or clean needles. Clean needles are another of the big problems encountered by addicts. A dirty one or one that has been used by someone else can potentially spread diseases like HIV or AIDS. Holland has come up with a solution to this. Though they have only legalised the sale and use of small

amounts of marijuana they have also introduced 'shooting galleries' where addicts can go and use clean needles in a clean, supervised location to take their drugs. This rules out the need for sharing of needles and the use of unhygienic areas to take their drugs.

Indeed if you look at the homicide rate of the Dutch where certain drugs have been legalised as compared to somewhere like the US where they are strictly forbidden you can see the drastic difference. In the Holland there are 1.8 per 100,000 as compared to the United States 8.22 per 100,000.

This shows that in countries where laws are more lenient and where people are accepted and helped rather than being ostracised from society crime is affected, in fact major crime is less than 1/4 that of the more extreme countries. This supports the view that keeping the supplying side of things out of the hands of the criminal will reduce crime. It would also stop drug abuse destroying many lives. Once you get hooked, whether physiologically or psychologically coming up with the money is one of the greatest problems.

For example a drug dealer could do anything with the price of drugs. He can raise it or in theory lower it to whatever he wants as there are no bounds. Dependents on him therefore have to get more money elsewhere and this is where many turn to crime as they cannot hold down any jobs because of their addiction. We can only assume that petty crime rates follow the same pattern as homicide rates and that homicide rates in Holland are also lower than in the US.

I can therefore see no reason to keep marijuana illegal and not to legalise it and put it in the hands of the government. This extra control is also what a

lot of people see as the solution to the problem as it is only when responsible people lose control that things get serious. The extra money this brings in could also be used to further fund anti-drugs movements even if they are aimed mainly at hard drugs. One could also point out that if recreational drugs like alcohol and tobacco are legal why should a less harmful drug like marijuana not be as well.