



KEITH EVANS ON DRUGS

By DAVID McDONAGH

In the 1970s, the UK state ran a series of television adverts on the theme that “heroin screws you up”. The message was that if you messed around with this dangerous drug, you would be at death’s door within a few years, if not within a few months. I was rather pleased that I had never felt the slightest temptation to indulge in taking heroin as I repeatedly saw the adverts warning us all against it. But, by the early 1980s, AIDS had emerged as a new scare. Government adverts relating to this new danger appeared on the UK television sets. It was spread only by blood contact, but to conform to the Politically Correct [PC] line, the state held that somehow we were all at risk, rather than drug users who shared needles and, maybe, some homosexual men if they would ever cut themselves in their activities. The state thought it had a duty to warn the drug takers, including the doomed heroin users, that if they were not careful about sharing needles, they might well get AIDS in some ten years time. But this would have been no danger to heroin users if the message of the earlier decade had been correct. There was no way that they could have lasted ten years if the earlier message was correct. Either way, the state was ignorant of those dangers.

Liberty and the Drugs Question

Why the illiberal ban on drugs? The body politic, like the actual human body, very often causes more dysfunctional activity by its reaction to problems than the problems themselves could cause.

And not only in iatrogenic error in medicine but far more often in inept laws from the state; from statute law, [or is it really an attempt at totalitarian regulation?] The UK functioned quite well up to 1914, when it had no regulation on various drugs and no set pub opening hours. The liberal message that the authorities should relax in the short run, and gradually fade away in the long run, is not an endorsement of drugs but is based on the assumption that the negative-sum political activity of the state is highly likely to be dysfunctional rather than being a boon to society. Political solutions impose more trouble on society than the problems to which they may be seen as the solution.

The liberal position is that people should be free, as long as they do not proactively impose on others. This is a normative social liberty rather than the Hobbesian positive freedom that we all do have already as a matter of fact. Social liberty can be seen as a factual option by an opponent who may not value it, or even by an advocate who simply wants to look at whether it is possible as a matter of fact or not. Social liberty is of society and between people whilst Hobbesian freedom is the fact that we can try to do anything we want, be it legal or not. It makes sense to talk about another’s freedom being at the expense of one’s freedom in the Hobbesian sense, and all too many do think in Hobbesian terms about liberty. The liberal idea of social liberty holds that a person who gratuitously attacks another for the fun of it would infringe social liberty, even if not his own Hobbesian freedom. This is not the idea that we should not help others if they are in trouble, but rather that the state deals in unfree and overtly hostile activity towards others. As state

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activity is almost bound to be proactively coercive it cannot quite be free. It harms people in two ways; by taxing the general public and by coercing the people it sets out to help. Moreover, people using drugs are responsible for their own plight. They are not owed aid from others.

Even if the banned drugs were as bad as the people who have made anti-propaganda [I say anti-propaganda as the aim is not to propagate, but to alienate] since the 1870s maintain, the liberal way of solving this problem would be for people to understand this problem for themselves. Banning a thing in demand automatically sets up a black market in smuggling the item, which is then usually a great stimulus to crime in general; most of it illiberal rather than victimless. Legalisation of drugs would allow firms to supply the drugs so that any problem that arises from the use of them can be countered openly and freely.

Today the state's case against drugs seems to be full of hyperbole. Keith Evans has written a short book, that he calls *The Longest War* (2000), that tells of the state's ignorance on drugs. Evans was a UK barrister and, later, an attorney in California but he retired to Wales before writing this book. He worked on drug cases in the UK in the 1960s, and later in California in the 1980s. He is not for the abolition of the laws on drugs, except for cannabis. In what follows, I will also draw on *Ceremonial Chemistry* (1975) by Thomas Szasz. The adage has it: to cite one author is plagiarism, but to cite two is scholarship. Maybe it should be that to fail, or neglect, to cite one author is plagiarism, as plagiarism is to pretend that you are the pristine author.

Evans feels that the basic facts about the war on drugs are unknown. He feels that the greatest danger is to the legal system and that the laws against drugs will be ignored, thereby bring the law

into disrepute. I do not think that the law is as important as he thinks it is. Each person tends to overestimate his own niche in the division of labour and, as Evans is a former UK Barrister and Californian Attorney, this may explain why he overrates the law in society. But it is true that the law criminalises victimless crimes in its drug laws. And that scotches social liberty.

The law is being held in contempt by greater numbers, as Evans fears, but the drug problem and the authorities' ignorance on drugs, is not the only factor in this. There is a general demoralisation in society and the regulation on drugs is far from being the only inept regulation, for there are many statutes that make the law look like an ass.

The History of the War on Drugs

Opium and its derivatives such as heroin, are held to be the most dangerous of the illegal drugs. Opium was used in the first civilisation we know of; Sumer, some 7000 years ago; about 2 000 years before tea was first consumed in China. Alcohol is first recorded some 500 years before the use of tea, but it may well be that animals and pre-men had access to alcohol from rotting fruits. By 3500 BC, the poppy was being consumed in the area now called Switzerland. But around 2000 BC, some 4000 years ago, we find the first attempt at banning recreational drugs, by an Egyptian priest forbidding his pupil to indulge [Szasz, p. 183].

The war against drugs emerged in the USA in the 1870s. From there it spread to other nations. It mainly came to public notice in the 1960s, but it originated some ninety years before. Hence Evans's title. The long war is not cheap and cost about twelve thousand million dollars a year in the 1990s. Nor is any headway being made, nor is there an end in sight. It looks to Evans as if this is war that cannot be won.

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The one drug that Evans does want to legalise is cannabis, also called marijuana or hemp. It was used as a medicine rather than a recreational drug for most of its history, and it was in common use by pharmacists around the world for ailments from loss of appetite to the eye disorder of glaucoma. Evans claims it to be very old, so old that it was brought to America from Asia with the first men who crossed the Baring Strait, and that was way back when the pristine horses made their own way in the opposite direction, from America to Asia. It remained legal in the USA till 1937. Taking the drug modifies perception, as does alcohol, but unlike alcohol, it results in the user becoming calmer rather than more aggressive than usual. Hemp has often been given to babies around the world over the thousands of years it has been in use.

Marijuana v Alcohol

The contrast of hemp with alcohol is stark. Alcohol has been used to encourage people to fight in wars but hemp would be hopeless in encouraging warlike behaviour. Both Hannibal and Caesar gave wine to their soldiers to encourage them to fight whilst delivering an harangue before the battle, and rum was passed round to provide “Dutch courage” before the battle of Trafalgar. Alcohol was used to aid men to go “over the top” in the 1914 war. Violence in the streets, and at football matches, is often fuelled by alcohol. And it often features in domestic violence also. Hemp, by contrast, tends to remove any natural aggressiveness, and would most likely make violence less likely under any circumstances.

Evans found at professional conferences he attended on drugs, that the experts thought it was not worthwhile having a law against hemp. They told him of their actual ideas in discussion after they had delivered their formal papers to the

meeting. Many said that the law against hemp was pointless.

As there is no history of mishap with the use of hemp, it is odd that it has been criminalised. By contrast, alcohol and tobacco have caused all sorts of illness and social disruption, yet remain legal. It seems to indicate that the law has been made in some perverse way and that is contrary to good sense. How did this oddity arise?

Drugs in the USA

Evans holds that it all began with the USA in the 1870s. He notes that the nature of religion in the USA was greatly distinct from England, being way more enthusiastic. Opium was regularly taken in England, but it was taken as moderately as religion. By contrast, religion in the south of the USA was far from moderate or calm. In England, the 1660 outlawing of the two extremes of Catholicism and Puritanism created a moderate broad established Church of England that was almost devoid of the earlier enthusiasm that gave rise to the civil war of the 1640s. America was largely set up by the nonconformists banned from parliament and the colleges in 1660. The enthusiasts were marginalised in England up to 1829, but formed the main stream in the USA.

Evans eulogises the Puritan ethic, saying that, for all its faults, it made the USA a way more peaceful nation than it might otherwise have been. It aided the capacity for hard work and, despite some hypocrisy, it had lots of good things to offer. But he feels that it can be very judgmental. Once a person in authority has assumed that drugs are evil, especially if he has gone public, he is likely to remain wedded to that conclusion. He will not likely try the drugs out for himself, or even associate with those that do so. This problem is clearly reinforced when it becomes

against the law to try out a particular drug. Karl Popper might reply to Evans that it is not so bad to jump to conclusions so long as you regularly attempt to refute them, or at least to put them to the test, and repeatedly. But that is exactly what the authorities are most reluctant to do with most of the things they decide to ban.

The USA experienced a mass immigration from the 1850s to the 70s and this had aided a population increase of some 50%. Many people were worried about the affect on social cohesion of such rapid population growth. There was also a widely felt need to reform institutions, and history books look back on this as ‘the Progressive Era’. The keenness to make things better manifested itself in the desire to provide more schools, housing, factory safety legislation, labelling on bottles, and the like. All this was to be proactively imposed by the state and so scotched social liberty. Part of the assumed ‘progress’ was the temperance movement against alcohol. Evans tells of a lady called Carry Nation, who made the headlines as part of the temperance movement. She entered saloons with a Bible in one hand and a hatchet in the other, and she soon set about demolishing the furniture with the hatchet. Often, she even began on the building itself. She was arrested many times, but many people who only read about her in the newspapers rather thought she was doing a good job. Evans feels that this campaign resulted in a massive demand for prohibition that the politicians felt they simply could not ignore.

Evans holds that racism is another factor in the story of making certain drugs illegal. Szasz holds that it is largely a religious rather than scientific matter that some drugs are thought to be evil, largely owing to the fact that they are part of the rites of a rival ethnic group or maybe of

another race. Szasz seems to suggest it is a matter of in-groups and out-groups that provides motivation for the ban, and if so, this sort of motivation does seem to be very widespread, and maybe something intrinsic to human nature. Contrary to PC, any functioning society needs to have a level of tolerance that allows for quite a bit of discrimination; and this is simply the civil liberty of free association. But the totalitarian drive that is PC today, is intolerant and is ironically offensive to almost everyone in its naïve attempt to stamp out unpleasant experiences for some. So it is dysfunctional and, given its aim, counter productive. It ensures that almost all are offended in an avowed quest to ensure that none are. The war on drugs is another aspect of this totalitarian drive that now calls itself “left wing” whilst pushing the traditional right wing view to control society.

Evans reminds us that racism was not always as non-PC as it is today. A hundred years ago, it openly thrived in the USA, as it did elsewhere, without much censure. The USA had been originally largely settled from the British Isles, hence it still speaks English. This meant it thought of itself as mainly Anglo-Saxon, with a Celtic fringe. But soon many immigrants rolled in to take part in the American dream. It is often forgotten today that before 1917, the USA was thought of around the world as the home of freedom. After 1917, the USSR took its place and was thought of as the new acme by those “on the left” in the twentieth century. The USA in the nineteenth century was thus a magnet for young men from around the world who wished to better themselves, hence the adage common in Europe “Go west, young man!”

Migration and the Drugs Question

Evans holds that three groups in particular, from amongst the large inflow

of newcomers from around the world, were hated by the settled establishment in the USA at the end of the nineteenth century. Those three groups were what are now called African-Americans, Chinese and Hispanics. The first cited were largely shipped into the USA as slaves, and they were still treated as an underclass after slavery was abolished in the 1860s. The Chinese arrived on the west coast and largely worked on the railroads there. Finally, there were the immigrants from Mexico. All three were seen as alien. The latter two groups had drug habits, each then mainly taken by smoking, opium in the case of the Chinese and hemp in the case of the Mexicans.

Evans tends to suggest that the whole problem was down to a few upper class anti-propagandists against drugs and their ignorant audience, but Szasz rightly sees that a fear of competition also played a part in this, and the common longing for security that diversity tends to upset. This was the main factor in the setting up of the trade unions, and why they are maintained today. Not many of their members realise the sort of economics of trade unionism that the late W.H. Hutt exposed in his books. Members of trade unions would be horrified to discover Hutt's views, as they think of the unions in idealistic and friendly terms rather than as the mean and thuggish organisations of Hutt's books. However, whatever the motivation of the members of the unions, they did favour action against the feared aliens who took drugs.

It was opium that first caught the attention of the authorities in the USA. Indeed, they did not notice hemp till the Great Depression of the 1930s. They reacted to opium in San Francisco, later celebrated for flower power in the 1960s, but fairly puritan in the 1870s. They took some time to notice the opium habit that the coolies had but, by 1875 it was

deemed obnoxious to most respectable people, and a law was passed to close down the opium dens the Chinese were deemed to have set up. In 1876, Virginia City and Nevada followed suit. In Idaho, they rested content with a law against white people visiting the opium dens at first, but by the 1880s, they too banned the dens for one and all. By 1896, 22 states had joined the ban on opium dens. It was the beginning of the long drugs war that most people seem to think emerged mainly as part of the pop music rebellion in the late 1960s.

The Story of the Poppy

Back in the 1870s, most people knew next to nothing about opium. It had been used in medicine since the time of Paracelsus (1490-1541) who introduced laudanum around 1525. Various versions of this were freely to be had at the local chemists or pharmacological shops of the UK in the nineteenth century, but many people were only vaguely aware of this. Things were not distinctly different a hundred years later in the 1970s, but the shops no longer allowed such open access to narcotics which, by then, were illegal drugs. The Chinese went into washing clothes in the USA, in addition to their work on the railroads, and having a local Chinese laundry soon became commonplace, yet they were, ironically, still thought of as dirty! As most immigrants are in poverty till they settle, association with them may be thought of as slumming it, and aping their habits may be seen as the road to ruin. The war against the drug habits of the Chinese immigrants to the USA was fuelled by the view of the Chinese as an alien abhorrence, and the anti-propaganda [should I follow Jan Lester and say impropaganda?] against the poppy was little better than poppycock.

The poppy in the UK is used to remember the dead of the 1914 Great War, and the later wars since. People

wear poppies, usually in their jacket buttonholes, to celebrate Remembrance Day [called Veteran's Day in the USA]. In the 1914 war, the poppies sprung up in the wake of the shells digging up the earth. They were so common at the front that they were adopted as a reminder of the trench warfare by those who made it back. Evans feels this is apt, as the poppy has always been thought of as a magical plant. It was thought to be special by the ancient Egyptians. It was held in high regard in ancient Crete. The Greeks of old used poppies to decorate the statues they made of the goddess of agriculture, Demeter. Poppies have been used in religious celebration down the ages. The poppy has the capacity to smooth away the pain of the body, and the cares of the mind too. Coleridge celebrated it in his poem *Kublai Khan* and Lewis Carroll in the Alice stories. But it also can lead to danger if used in excess.

If we split the seedcase of the immature poppy, a milky fluid escapes that can be dried into brown gum. This is opium and it can be chewed, or swallowed, or crushed into a powder. The Greeks and Romans took it in powdered form, mixed with honey. Smoking it was an idea that emerged, indirectly, from America, though it was innovated in China after a tobacco ban there. Raw opium has more than twenty alkaloids, but the most important one is morphine. This was isolated in 1805 and named after the Greek god of dreams. It was soon adopted, around the world, as a very effective painkiller by doctors. It was openly on sale, in many different versions, in the local pharmacists or chemist shops. In 1873, heroin was produced and it was about four times as strong as morphine. Some thought it too dangerous to use, and when it was used, it was usually with some caution. In 1953, the British deleted it from their list of regular medical drugs. It was, by then, outlawed in the USA. codeine is a

weaker form of morphine that is in use in Europe. Evans says that it is not to be had in the USA, but I am told, by a New Yorker that codeine is certainly available, and used widely in the USA in a variety of prescription medications.

Szasz makes clear that in the impropaganda war on drugs the language has been changed by formerly mild words being given new extreme connotations, and that is utterly right. For example, addiction used to mean just a liking for something, whereas nowadays it means that, to a large extent, we lose choice over what we do. Evans notes that all the varieties and derivatives of opium are known as narcotics, from the Greek word meaning go numb. Narcolepsy has the same prefix. The other banned drugs, like cocaine, the amphetamines and hemp are not pristine narcotics, says Evans, but they have come to be generally called such during the war against drugs. And this is now what we will most likely see them called today, if we look up, say, hemp, in a modern dictionary. The English language has been changed by the banning of drugs.

The Story of 'Addiction'.

As I said above, the clearest change the war on drugs has made is in the use of the word "addiction". It simply meant a regular habit back in the eighteenth century, but now has become part of the jargon of the anti-propagandists against drugs. Evans often fights against this change of language, as in his resistance to the widening of the term "narcotics" from just opium and its derivatives to the cocaine and the hemp family, but he unwittingly accepts things in the case of 'addiction'. He feels we need to make a vital distinction between physical addiction and mere mental dependence, but Szasz rightly points out that the word was commonly just used to indicate a

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habit before the banning of drugs. Evans feels it is important to note that with a physical addiction we need further doses to get the same effect, as we build up a bodily tolerance to the drug. We may also develop a need for it so that we can hardly feel fit without it. To suddenly stop taking a drug may well make us unfit after we have got used to it. But mere mental dependence lacks the withdrawal result, that with some drugs has been called “Cold Turkey”. Evans holds that true narcotics are physically addictive, but that hemp is not. A true addict can take up to a hundred times the dose that would kill a tyro outright. Usage soon becomes a real need. He feels that mere mental dependence can apply to any habit but this physical tolerance is different in kind.

Neither Evans nor Szasz seem to mention the popular point that nearly all who served in Vietnam indulged in drugs to make their service bearable but, on returning home, very few had any difficulty in dropping the habit of indulgence. This has often be held to refute the common idea that it is easy to get physically addicted to the range of drugs soldiers used in Vietnam.

Evans feels that technology – though he says science he seems to mean technology – has made narcotics more dangerous, rather in the way wine was made more powerful by distillation into brandy. He has something of an anti-technology outlook here that, later in his book, he tends to develop into a pro-Green outlook. The hypodermic needle and syringe also concentrated the dose way more than it ever could have been in the past. It arrived soon after morphine had been isolated, making opium more risky than it had been of old.

Similarly, coca was a foodstuff in the lands where it was grown for aeons and when eaten as a leaf, it satisfied hunger and provided contentment. But as cocaine, it has been distilled into a

modern high powered drug. And crack cocaine has been further refined, and concentrated, by technology. Evans feels this refinement allowed physical addiction to emerge whereas only mere mental addiction was found when the coca leaf was used in its natural state. That same dangerous intensification is true with natural opium too. Advanced technology is to blame.

One rather important ancient people had little to do with the poppy, but did made a big impact on the world by writing what we now call the Old Testament. The Bible contains no clear mention of poppies, but there are one or two texts in Jeremiah and Ezekiel that might just be vague citations. By contrast, wine is well known to this Middle Eastern tradition and it also features in the major rites of the daughter religion of Christianity. As the Bible was the place where the establishment in the USA looked for wisdom, they got none about the poppy from it. It was, therefore, seen as alien back in the 1880s.

The USA had the pursuit of happiness as a general principle. The use of illegal drugs is a quest for that end. So is the use of legal drugs. But the puritan ethic did not like the easy road to happiness. It disapproved of the drunkenness the Bible was aware of and, with way stronger motivation, it opposed any alien ways of dissipation.

Evans notes that during period of Prohibition, 1920-33, the same Christian movement that banned alien drugs also got alcohol outlawed throughout the USA. This created a black market of bootleggers and organised crime. Before long, judges and officers in the police force were taking bribes to look the other way, as people fairly openly broke the law. In New York, there were soon twice as many illegal saloons as there were legal ones before 1920. It was soon widely known that even judges could be

regularly seen in the speakeasies, as the illegal saloons became known. It was soon the done thing to break the law and this is what Evans, as a lawyer, fears most of all about an unrealistic ban on drugs. By 1933, he says, the disrespect for the law was becoming so dangerous that Prohibition had to be repealed.

Evans feels that though the experiment failed, it was rightly called noble as alcohol is indeed dangerous. It leads to accidents on the roads and to violence in the home. He feels that it is a pity that the crusade against it stood so little chance of success. But he always expects people to oppose being controlled in ways they do not like, even if it is for their own good. Only a complete police state can stamp out something like the drinking alcohol as it was in the USA before the 1920s, or opium as it was in China before Mao took over.

End of Part One

Banning the Opium Trade

Evans holds that opium smoking only became widespread in China in the first place because it was banned. In fact the ban was on tobacco, and it was successful. Chuang-Lieh-Ti (1627-44) issued a decree outlawing the smoking of tobacco. Smoking had by then already caught on in China so, as tobacco stopped coming in from America, people looked around for something else to smoke. They tried out opium and they soon thought it way better than tobacco had ever been. Today, they are back onto tobacco; but only retreated from opium owing to Mao's rather forceful ban.

In the 1890s, the USA was persuaded that it needed a strong navy by, among others, Alfred Mahon, a man who got awarded honorary degrees from both

Oxford and Cambridge within one week for his scholarship in history and philosophy. He was a captain in the American navy. His recommendation aided Congress to denote funds to building up a strong fleet. But this full steam ahead outlook brought a reaction from some quarters, like the New York newspaper, the *Evening Post*. It looked like the abandonment of the tradition of isolationism. Even the then President, Grover Cleveland, doubted the craze for a strong navy. But he was on the way out, and was soon to be replaced by William McKinley, who favoured the new outlook. Soon, war with Spain was underway, and as a result of winning that war, the USA gained Cuba, Puerto Rico and the Philippines. The major anti-imperialist nation had become a small time imperialist itself. In 1901, McKinley was assassinated by Leon Czolgosz, a romantic radical, who thought the deed might be progressive in some way. It ironically aided the budding imperialism of the USA as it advanced the Vice President, Theodore Roosevelt, as the new President, and if imperialism is a vice then he was full of it. He was another romantic, but one in favour of imperialism.

Once in power, Roosevelt sent Taft, a future President, out to the Philippines as Governor. There the Chinese had been getting opium from the Spanish state before the USA conquest, and the question arose as to whether the new rulers would continue to supply it. Taft thought it might help to fund schools in the islands, so he applied to Congress to see if it would be continued, but before the scheme could get underway, it came up for opposition from the new Bishop of the Philippines, Charles Henry Brent, who arrived from the USA in 1902. Brent attempted to stop what he thought was an evil and he enlisted the likes of the Reverend Wilbur Crafts back in the USA to pressurise the White House and the Congress against it. The main

message was that there was to be no compromise with the evil of drugs. It was a rising tide of opinion that was bound to cause a sea-change in Roosevelt's outlook.

Taft had to ban the opium trade under the influence of the Christian lobbying. He soon faced up to the fact that if the state bans, or taxes highly something that is in strong demand, the black market will come into operation, and there will be smuggling as a result. Banning something also gives it the flavour we nearly always imagine that forbidden fruit has. It becomes naughty and thereby nice to many, if not quite to most people.

Hegel said, paradoxically, that we learn from history that men fail to learn from history. Taft set up a committee to see if anything could be done about the smuggling that soon emerged in the wake of the opium ban. It was the *Opium Investigating Committee*, and had on it three people, the new bishop Brent, a local doctor and a major from the army. They carried out their investigation by going on a tour of the Far East, places like China, Japan, what is now called Vietnam, what is now called Malaysia, Indonesia, and the like. Brent wrote up the report of their findings. They concluded that the opium traffic must be stopped. Brent holds that the way to do this is to stop the supply. Evans feels that it is clear that it would have been more germane to Brent's aim to curb the demand for opium instead. Brent had retained his contacts in the USA, and he set out to get President Roosevelt to deal with the opium problem internationally, at the level of a diplomatic national aim. For once that was done, it would not be easy to climb down without a sense of international humiliation. A lot was thereby bitten off by the USA. This is still not generally realised even after more than a hundred years of chewing. In setting up this committee, Taft was nearer to beginning the problem than to

settling it. The law could no more stop the smuggling than Canute could stop the tide from coming in, unless it took onto itself the sort of totalitarian powers that Mao had. Those were the sort of powers needed to dam[n] it, to use a pun.

Evans thinks that persuasion of the opium smokers to give up would have been better than a ban, and he feels in this way, that tobacco is on its way out. But the law is also being used to reinforce that crusade, first in Ireland and later also in the UK, where smoking has been banned in public places. Evans says that this is mainly down to peer pressure, yet he then tells us that California has legally banned smoking of tobacco in public places too. The liberal principle would keep the law out of this sort of quest and leave it to the proprietors of the pubs to allow, or rule out smoking, as they saw fit.

When Roosevelt took on the opium producers in the first decade of the twentieth century, the chief culprit was the British Empire. In the eighteenth century, Britain had become dependent on tea, but China was not interested in the manufactured wares that Britain had to offer in return, and the only return payment was in gold. Before long, opium was found as a substitute for gold and opium was grown in India and Burma and sent into China. China, in turn, worried about the loss of silver to pay for this and called upon the British to put a stop to the evil opium trade. This led to two Opium Wars, 1839-42 and 1856, and the annexation of Hong Kong by Britain as a result of victory in those wars. By the early twentieth century, plenty of opium was being grown in India and Burma to pay for the tea, but tea was also being grown there, and in Ceylon too. The British did not welcome this crusade from the USA to stop exporting opium, anymore than they had welcomed the request from China to stop imports of it, but as the UK was

Christian, they had far more respect for the Christian USA than they had earlier for a heathen China. Bishop Brent's case had some appeal in Whitehall as well as at the White House. The UK establishment were thus in two minds, and decided to be ambiguous in response, effectively biding their time on the issue.

Boredom at The Hague

By 1909, an international Conference, the International Opium Commission, with China, the USA, Britain, France, Austria-Hungary, Portugal, Russia, Italy, Holland, Persia, Japan and Siam in attendance, was held at Shanghai. Turkey accepted the invitation, but it did not attend. Bishop Brent was the chairman. The Conference ended in disagreement, especially between the Americans and the British. The latter managed to dodge explicitly agreeing that opium was evil and this remained a position that only the USA were keen on by the end of this first international conference on the topic.

In the team from the USA was Dr Hamilton Wright. He had done medical research in the Far East, so he could claim first hand knowledge of the evils of opium. He was enthusiastic, but, as is so often the case with enthusiasts, he was also inclined to be tactless. He saw at once that his new job to control opium might entail quite a bit of work, but that was a fact he rather welcomed. He compiled a dossier and many leaflets and questionnaires about narcotics in the USA. He soon set about seeing that the drug companies, the prisons and the police departments were informed as to the dangers of opium, and he campaigned for a federal statute to control narcotics.

Now Brent had an enthusiastic ally, and though they were disappointed at the Shanghai meeting, it was clearly only the

beginning, rather than the end, of their crusade against the poppy. The USA was already committed, diplomatically, to their crusade, and before long, they got the First Opium Convention at the Hague underway in 1911. It was repeated in 1912, 1913, and 1914 too; and finally, in 1914, they got the agreement that narcotics should be criminalised worldwide. Brent and Wright had showed themselves to be relentless in their crusade against evil. But the agreement they got was not sincere, rather it was a result of boredom. The general idea was that, if the parties all agreed to what was said by Brent and his team, they no longer need to hear it again once a year. It was, thinks Evans, a way of ending those boring annual Conventions at the Hague. As the conference only had the ability to recommend outlawing narcotics to their respective nations, not much could come of their agreement; or so they thought. It was clearly not very likely to be endorsed by their home states.

Enthusiasm at Versailles

Just then the world war broke out. On the defeat of the Germans in 1918, they signed the treaty of Versailles, that had as section 295, the ratification of the 1914 conclusions of the Opium Convention at the Hague. All states that ratified that treaty, thereby, ratified the war against drugs in 1919. The limp agreement of 1914 proved to be as good as an enthusiastic endorsement.

While the Hague Conferences were annual events, a new ally in the USA emerged to aid Brent and Hamilton, William Jennings Bryan. Hugh Brogan gives an account of him in his *Longman History of the USA* (1983) p.444ff. He was a lawyer, a public speaker and an editor. Jennings Bryan was passionately fond of the Bible and of America. He saw drugs as the ruination of man and

thought they might lead to his degeneration. Jennings Bryan was not satisfied with man as he found him. He felt that there was an excellent chance for man to become way better than he was and that the Bible could aid this progress, as could the opportunities there were in America. Drugs would go the other way, the way to ruin rather than the way to betterment for all. Drugs were a big threat to this great potential success. So was war, which he sought always to dodge. He ran three times for President, but lost owing to taking the line that the Democrats should support the poor. The Democrats did adopt this position as a result of Bryan's influence, but with dysfunctional reforms that largely wasted money. He greatly aided Woodrow Wilson win the White House, though he later opposed him when Wilson decided to join the First World War. He was a fundamentalist Christian, and later was to take part in the trial to prosecute the Tennessee schoolteacher, Scopes, for teaching evolution in the famous Monkey Trial. Again, he saw Darwin's theory as an obstacle to the great success that the Bible could bring about.

Laws against Narcotics

Just at this time, the drug companies, doctors and the pharmacists who ran chemist shops began to realise they might be in trouble if the juggernaut that Brent had begun continued as unopposed as it had done for the last decade or so. They too had their contacts, and they decided to put up some opposition. Another snag that the Brent campaign met at this time was the clash between federal authority and the various states within the union of the USA. This was all the stronger a clash in the Deep South, where they still tended to see the federal state as the old union foe they had fought against and lost to in the civil war. Rather like the EU, [if it was a bit more advanced in its aim of being a superstate], might meet with a check to

its aims at a national level. the federal law might be objected to at the state level. As a lot of the real business is left to member states in the EU then so is it within the USA. A federal law overrides the independence of the member states and that often causes resentment as a result.

Hamilton Wright welcomed this task and he was keen that a federal law was what was needed. It would make the USA an example to the rest of the world. He whipped up public fear of rapid ruin from the spread of opium. He faced opposition from the Deep South, who particularly hated federal powers. And there they had no opium problem. However, the white Southerners did not like the African Americans, who sometimes used cocaine, so Wright made a case against that in order to get support from the South on opium. To this end Evans says, Wright even began a rumour that cocaine made the user bullet-proof. Whether this was truly believed or just used as an excuse to shoot at people on drugs with the justification that it would not really harm them is not clear, but Evans thinks the former was feared. Wright claimed that cocaine improved the cunning, efficiency and physical strength of the Negroes. It can improve their aim with a gun and it also tends to spur the African American on against the whites, claimed Wright. Evans feels that this anti-propaganda was hugely successful. Wright got his law against narcotics through, and it included a ban on cocaine which was not a narcotic at all, but was added to get the support of the states in the South of the USA. Wright did attempt to get hemp on board too, as that was sometimes used by Negroes, but it was dropped from the bill on 1 March 1915, as it was widely held to be harmless. Oddly, at the acme of his success, Wright suddenly got dropped. Not even Brent or Jennings Bryan would aid him, maybe owing to past tactlessness, and after two years of

attempting to get another state assignment, he finally gave up and emigrated to France, where he drove an ambulance. Before long he got badly injured in an accident, and after that he retired back to the USA but never returned to favour.

Almost as soon as the laws against drugs in the USA were passed, the population divided into two camps; or haply into two active tips of a bell curve, where the vast majority in the middle remained largely indifferent. At one end were those who pitied the addicts, and at the other, those who accepted that they were almost as bad as the pushers or, at least, that they should have no pity if the evil was ever going to be cleared up. The anti-propaganda, or impropaganda, against drugs went on. The New York Health Commissioner, Dr R.S. Copeland, expressed his fears that there were some 150 000 to 200 000 addicts in New York alone in 1920. Years later, in 1968, James M. Hanley, in a similar mood, said the 60 000 known addicts in the whole of the USA were just the tip of the iceberg [Szasz, p.15]. A special clinic was set up to cater to the needs of the addicts by offering the drug of their choice, free, and only 6 000 could be found. The head of the American Association Judicial Council, Dr Alexander Lambert, concluded that the New York Health Commissioner exaggerated. Dr S.D. Hubbard, who worked in the special clinic, agreed. Levi Nutt first estimated 110 000 addicts in the USA as a whole in an attempt to get it right, but the following year he put it down to 95 000 in the wake of a national survey that was just completed. If the drug problem has been growing steadily, as we are often told, and Hanley's later statement was apt, the survey also exaggerated.

The Moral High Ground

Some of those estimates may well have been honest mistakes, but Evans notes that the ironic phenomenon of many enthusiastic moral propagandists, or anti-propagandists, that they will very often resort to lying or making up data, as they hold that their case is basically right anyway, and that they have the moral high ground. We have the interpolations in Josephus made by the enthusiastic early Christians as a blatant example from the distant past, and much Green hyperbole of late. Evans feels that in the story of the war against drugs, Dr Hamilton Wright was one example of one who did such creative research in this sense and that later, Richard P. Hobson was another.

Evans holds that in Shreveport, Louisiana, there is evidence that clinics that gave free drugs worked well to lower the crime rate, and when it was closed down in 1921 the crime rate increased. He seems to favour this free drugs policy. But it is a bit perverse to maintain people in the habit of drug taking if it is thought to be no good for them, and such a policy taxes others who may well not want to maintain such things. To be truly free, such clinics need to be charities that are freely maintained rather than state aided.

By 1921, the customs felt that they could no longer cope with the drug smuggling into the USA. By 1928, a third of all prison inmates were in gaol for drug related crime. The 170 narcotic agents set up to deal with the addicts in 1915 were up to 270 and the cost of attempting to combat drugs had increased threefold. Far from being able to control the drug habit in society generally, the UK state could not even control the use of drugs in their gaols from the 1970s onwards.

Richard P. Hobson

Around 1920, Richard P. Hobson joined the scaremongers about drugs, says Evans. Soon even the authorities felt he is exaggerating in what he finds to say on the topic. But he is a good speaker and he soon has a loyal following. He lost no time in getting on the radio when it emerged. Evans feels that we can only explain his popularity by recalling what the 1920s were really like. They were called the roaring '20s, and they were a bit like the swinging '60s, in that there were new fashions and new music, with youth challenging parents, resulting in a generation gap. The two decades had short skirts in common, and also an economic boom [followed by a slump in the next decades of the 1930s and '70s where things seemed to be tamer, but where many more actually caught up with the *avant-garde* of the earlier decade] but the '20s had Jazz, bobbed hair in the flappers, cinema reaching new heights, and the arrival of the motor car that looked as if it was going places. Prohibition did not mean there was a shortage of booze as a result. If anything, making booze forbidden made demand for it even stronger. Everyone had access to alcohol in the 1920s, despite the ban. But the extraverts who were in the limelight in both decades leads one to overlook the more introverted majority in the background.

What explains the popularity of Hobson, according to Evans, is that the extraverts in the limelight of the roaring '20s are a minority, even one amongst the young. The silent majority might well have been more hostile than indifferent, as the majority usually are. In every generation, most in every age group tends to be conservative, and, as we get older, way more radicals join the majority than older eccentrics go the other way. Indeed, with the final arrival of Prohibition, the '20s were maybe the puritan's hey day in the whole history of

the USA. The old thought the young to be degenerate, and not a few of the young agreed that the flappers were. Drug addicts were thought to be physically degenerate, owing to the affect of the drugs. So, when Hobson made telling points against the fashionable young things, he was playing to a large gallery. Hobson supported Prohibition and lashed out at the degenerate addicts. Hobson produced a pamphlet, "The Peril of Narcotic Drugs", and he got a Congressman to send it through the post, to many people in authority around the USA, by using the post free privilege that the Congressman had. He also sent letters and other messages through the same channel. In his pamphlet, Hobson said that there were over a million drug addicts in the USA. He held that it makes desperadoes out of addicts, and that a single dose can make an addict. This, maybe, is where the UK 1970s TV adverts got the ideas from. Hobson said that ladies' face powder may well include a mixture of opium, so it might unwittingly spread from there. In a radio broadcast to the nation in 1928, "The Struggle of Mankind Against Its Deadliest Foe", he said that illegal drugs were way worse than leprosy in that they could spread faster and were harder to cure, that they caused most of the rising crime wave and that the perpetuation of civilisation depended on enforcing the ban.

The Story of Hemp

Hemp was thrown out of the bill that Dr Hamilton Wright influenced in 1915. Few had ever thought it other than harmless in its long history, though the likes of Susan Greenfield has, of late, been saying in various newspapers, from *The Daily Mail* to *The Guardian*, that it causes schizophrenia. Evans openly favours the legalisation of it. He has found only a few instances, in its long usage, of disapproval before 1936. He

notes that a Turkish Sultan once banned it in Egypt, and that also the Roman Catholic Church outlawed it for a while. Hemp does tend to make people disrespectful of authority. When troops guarding the Panama Canal took it in 1925, they caused a furore, and the *Canal Zone Report* on the event did ask the law to reconsider the legal status of hemp. In considering whether to do so, the USA authorities took into account an earlier report of the British, *The Indian Hemp Commission* of 1894, that explicitly said that hemp caused “no moral injury whatever.” The US authorities agreed with this British report and the earlier 1915 bill (that refused to ban hemp), and decided that hemp was basically harmless.

After all, hemp was seen to be useful back in 1915 and this fact was still common knowledge. It was widely known that hemp was a source of coarse fibres that were put to diverse uses in everyday life. Hemp, a plant [*Cannabis sativa*], was once thought to belong to the plant family of the mulberry tree, *Moraceae*, but today most accept that it is distinct, belonging to *Cannabinaceae*. It was not confined to medical or drug usage but was polymorphous, being put to many other uses. It was used to make rope, indeed the hangman’s rope was usually made of hemp, and a widow left behind after a hanging was called a hemp widow. Hemp was also employed in producing canvas, [the very word was derived from cannabis] for painting pictures on the sails and rigging of Columbus’ ship, and later of the Pilgrim Fathers’ too. The Bibles they read, were all entirely made of hemp too. On Sunday 31 July 1619, the day when English speaking settlement’s first assembly in America met, they made a law that every householder should grow a hemp patch somewhere on their land. Hemp was the pristine plant for making paper. Much later, the *Declaration of Independence* was written on paper made

from hemp, as was Tom Paine’s *Common Sense* (1776) and, indeed, nearly all books in those days. The uniforms of the troops that Washington led against the British were made from hemp. The first Levi Strauss jeans were made of hemp rather than of cotton, as has been the case since the 1850s. Hemp is said to be harder wearing and easier to grow than cotton, needing little pesticides, and no fertilisers. It becomes something of a wonder how cotton ever made headway against this plant. Cotton’s advantage was that it could be refined for uses that hemp was too crude to cater to, like handkerchiefs, fine shirts and delicate clothing.

Eleven years later, in 1936, hemp came to be feared throughout the USA. By 1937 the public clamour for it to be outlawed was irresistible. How did the sea-change occur?

The Decorticator

To explain this, we need to consider the new innovation that was called a Decorticator, a device developed by an immigrant from Germany to the USA, and it refined hemp into fine fibres. This opened up hemp for even more uses, uses that cotton was thought to be better for. It could also be used for newsprint as well as for books. Evans holds that it was far cheaper at doing this than wood could ever be. Evans feels it was the people who had most to lose from the Decorticator that led to hemp’s suppression. The first affected were the cotton producers, but Evans notes that it is not difficult to switch from growing cotton to hemp. It was not so much the cotton growers as the newspaper magnate, William Randolph Hearst (whom the film *Citizen Kane* was modelled on) and the big chemical firm, Du Pont who were behind the call for a ban. Evans feels that it was the pine forests ready to be turned into paper that

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put Hearst against hemp. Hemp would lower the price he could get for his wood if it was allowed to compete for newsprint. The Decorticator could cost Hearst millions, if it was allowed to continue. Du Pont stood also to lose out, and on two fronts. The firm did not want a competitor for man-made fabrics like nylon whilst they also sold Hearst the chemicals he needed to turn his wood into paper. Indeed, they owned the patent on the chemical processes, so it was not only Hearst whom they supplied.

But Du Pont had an even greater investment than the one in man-made fibres. The firm also produced fertilisers and pesticides, both of which would be affected by the free development of hemp which needed no fertiliser, nor much by way of pesticides. Evans endorses the idea that these interests set out to oppose hemp as a plant. The way to do this was by condemning it as a drug. Hearst did the main job through his newspapers, whilst Du Pont supported where they could. In particular, and by chance, Du Pont had a family member who was the first head of the Federal Narcotics Bureau [FNB] set up in 1930: Henry J. Anslinger. From 1936, he attacked hemp as a narcotic in the newspaper campaign that the Hearst press set up.

This cited the derivatives of hemp with its various names of cannabis, pot, hashish, marijuana that came from a weed that was to be seen everywhere in the USA, even growing on the roadsides. It was said that people who took this marijuana were calm at first, but after a while they became filled with a mad lust to kill. This was reinforced by a film made by the FNB: *Reefer Madness* (1936). This named marijuana as the Real Public Enemy Number One. It presented itself as fictionalised, but claimed to be all based on fact, and it held that the effects of marijuana were calming to begin with but led to a total

lack of control that ended up in a violent madness that one might well never recover from.

Anslinger followed up this film with an article called “Marijuana: Assassin of Youth”, where he told of a whole family being wiped out. A boy in Florida had killed all his siblings and both his parents with an axe. He had killed his two brothers and his sister, as well as his parents, in a some sort of drugged daze. He could not recall having done it in the aftermath, but it was quite clear that he had. People who had known him said he was always quiet and steady, but that now he was crazed. He had been recently smoking marijuana.

End of Part Two

Hemp is Outlawed

Anslinger wrote other similar articles, with many statements of how dire marijuana was, and of how one dose might be enough to make almost anyone insane, and that all the experts agreed that continued use of it was bound to end up in insanity. The Hearst press followed this up, almost daily, with headlines like “Murders due to Killer Drug” and “Marijuana Sweeping the United States” in a sustained campaign throughout the year.

Evans feels that the economic depression added to the campaign against marijuana. He cites a similar depression in the 1870s, that might have aided the campaign against opium. But whether it was owing to opium or not, the Chinese had a reputation for hard work, and many whites did put it down to the smoking of opium. Many white workers rightly regarded them as great competitors for their jobs, Evans talks as if the potential work to be done were not infinite. Evans is a bit weak on the basic economic facts in seeing the threat as real, but he is haply right on the motivation.

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Racism played a big part in the moves to outlaw opium in the 1870s, says Evans, and it also played a part in the 1930s too, but this time it was the Hispanics that were targeted. He says that there were thousands of Mexican immigrants in the South West of the USA and that they were providing real job competition. This tended to lead to ill will amongst the whites there. The American Federation of Labour made demands for protection from the immigrants. This anti-Hispanic outlook found acceptable what the Hearst press had to say on the drugs the immigrants used. The Hearst press largely dodged the older term of cannabis, that might have been familiar, and kept to the more alien sounding name of marijuana, associated with the Mexican immigrants. Nor did they often use the even better known name of hemp.

By the time Congress responded to the public campaign of the Hearst press, it was in 1937. One doctor, Dr Woodward, on behalf of the American Medical Association [AMA], confessed to the Congressional hearings that he had not realised, till just a few days before, that marijuana was simply the harmless drug cannabis. Like the rest of the public, he had assumed that the notorious killer drug was something completely new and that it did need to be banned. He did not think it ought to be banned once he knew what it was, but he was the sole representative from the AMA at the Congressional hearing. Yet it was said that the AMA was in complete support of the resulting ban, and that Evans holds this to be a deliberate lie in the final report.

No charge at law was ever brought against the Hearst press, or Du Pont, or Henry J. Anslinger at the FNB, so there has been no official answer as to whether it was a conspiracy on the part of all three to mislead the American public or not, says Evans. Anslinger must have been aware of the findings of Canal Zone

Report, and thus of the main facts about hemp. Yet he never once mentioned that report. He must have known about the 1915 findings too. Similarly, the editors of Hearst's newspapers must have known something of the past reports on hemp, but they too went along with the new campaign against it throughout 1936. Evans feels that it is clear that skulduggery was involved in the banning of hemp in 1937. But, as nothing was decided in court, he feels he needs to be cautious about the circumstances. In any case, thousands of lives have been ruined by the drug laws, and money was also lost in an expensive war on drugs. We can also add the opportunity cost of losing out on the Decorticator and the benefits of refined hemp over its rivals, cotton, synthetic fabrics and newsprint.

After hemp was outlawed in 1937, the press moved on to other topics and things went dormant for a few decades on illegal drugs, as far as Evans can see.

In the rest of the world, the League of Nations [the forerunner of the United Nations] set up a body to regulate opium and other dangerous drugs, called the Permanent Central Board (1925), but this was the year of the Canal Zone Report, and things went quiet in the aftermath. In the UK, the Dangerous Drugs Act was passed to comply with the obligations under the treaty of Versailles in 1920. But when the press ignored the topic of drugs, the demand for them also seems to fall off somewhat. When the 1939 world war breaks out, smuggling tended to become more risky. Martial law tends to lead to soldiers guarding points of entry better as a consequence of their general watchfulness.

The Second World War brought increased consumption of alcohol and tobacco, but the illegal drugs seem to have been forgotten. They may well have been consumed as much as ever, but there is next to no mention of them in

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the press. Until the film *Man with a Golden Arm* (1955), where Frank Sinatra played a heroin addict, there was nothing in the cinema either. This film seemed to coincide with a rise in demand for illegal drugs. Congress tightened up the laws on drugs and recommended the death penalty for supplying heroin to a minor. But the idea in many minds today, that the laws against drugs began in the 1960s is haply owing to this lull during the war and its aftermath, says Evans.

Modern Times: The New War on Drugs

Around the time J.F. Kennedy was assassinated in 1963, the drug war loomed large once again. Earlier, it was a religious idea that opium was evil that motivated the war against drugs. Drugs might ruin the work ethic by supplying instantaneous joy on the way to ruin. This was oddly joined by a more political fear, almost the opposite in outlook, of opium enabling the Chinese to work long hours, thereby providing unfair competition, and taking jobs off ordinary workers. This latter motivation lives on today in the fear of cheating by the use of drugs in sport. The two ideas clearly clash, but the fear of unfair superiority and also the fear of insidious ruin both feature in the syndrome of opposition against drugs. The rise of the new wave of rock and roll with the Beatles and the Rolling Stones, soon bought the idea that a drugs culture was developing in its wake. Viewed by the older people, it was all long hair, promiscuous sex and the road to ruin, whilst the younger generation felt that modern medicine had removed disease from promiscuity, and the contraception pill the fear of early responsibility for offspring. AIDS would later end that carefree outlook in the 1980s for some. The big 1920s generation gap opened up again, and many older people once more thought the youth were deplorable. "They have respect for no persons, not even their

own persons," wrote Saul Bellow of the 1960s' youth. To the religious motive, involving fear of Dionysian ruin, was added the quasi-political motive of the destination of the new youth and their new rites. They were often seen as alien in outlook if not in ethnic group, or race. Evans does not seem to notice that those two motives are almost opposites. *Prima facie* one might expect them to cancel each other out, at least in the short run affects, but an unnoticed contradiction can continue, indefinitely in the human mind and in books too [in what Popper would call World 2 and in World 3]. But this is only so long as the absurdity is not spotted, and there is always the chance that it will be. The idea that taking drugs is so unfair in sport is the idea that it might also lead to long run decline and here the quasi-political motivation links up with the quasi-religious motivation in the long run, despite the short run opposite effect being held.

Evans feels there were two catalysts to aid the war on drugs: the media, made up of the press and broadcasting, and the actively committed anti-propagandists who brought their polemic on drugs to the media. However, his idea of an unaffected catalyst as an analogy is haply inept here. The anti-drug parties seemed to be emotionally involved and affected, whereas a catalyst is supposed to be unaffected by what it causes, like Aristotle's unmoved mover that he holds to be God.

That the anti-propagandists, or impropagandists, were unaffected by a sound knowledge of what they were about, does seem to be the case. Bishop Brent never seemed to know much about the opium that he held to be so evil. He did not know that it is not so easy to become addicted to it, for example. Hobson and Anslinger lied to the Congress of the USA and to its general public, says Evans.

Evans thinks that adverts can get people to believe in almost anything, so he thinks that a press campaign, such as that of 1936 against marijuana, can hardly fail. This is a very naïve idea, and it is ironic in that it holds others to be exceedingly naïve. He thus thinks that the adverts aimed to discredit the opponents in elections are particularly cynical, but why he thinks people ever vote if they see the dirt thrown by both sides, is not clear. It is clear enough that the affects of adverts are way less cogent than Evans thinks to be the case. Most of them have an effect next to zero on most people. Evans feels when the politicians push for solutions to crime in political adverts, they mostly play on the old, who feel vulnerable. The fact that the old are often ill treated, that knowledge of this has more of an effect on the public than the political adverts could have, does not occur to Evans. That the old may fear drugs make people thuggish might well be the case, for they may think it a bit of a mystery otherwise, why so many of the youth are so gratuitously thuggish. That the thugs might be on drugs is a message that might explain things to their elders better than the idea that it is simply fun to do what they do.

Evans feels that it is an irony that it was the virtues of the USA democracy, the free press and the free market that created the war on drugs, but he cannot quite be right on the last, as the ban of drugs is a restriction on trade, *ipso facto*, and thus not quite a free market. He feels that those virtues not only began the war on drugs, but that they also make it next to impossible to end. And where the USA leads the rest of the world tends to follow.

Youth Culture in the 1960s

Henry J. Anslinger later confessed that the 1960s drug explosion took him by surprise, says Evans, and Professor

Musto puts the fad down to an affluent society demanding greater comfort. Evans feels that it was more down to the rise of youth culture, boosted by post-war full employment and the teenage wage. He notes that the word “teenager” first emerged for youth at this time. Youth stars arise not only in popular music but also, as with James Dean, in the cinema, and many, like Elvis Presley, soon straggle both pop’ music and the cinema. All this, claims Evans, brings into being a new sort of citizen and a new political force. Youth now sees that it ought to rebel, and maybe also try to remain young, rather than to adapt and to grow up as soon as possible, as was earlier the desire. What began as a new niche in the market for entrepreneurs to cater to ends up as a social revolution, says Evans. By the time the Beatles emerged, a widespread trying out of forbidden drugs was bound to occur; part of the rebellion that was the new youth culture. The way was led by hemp, which does tend to reduce respect for authority, and thus widened the generation gap still further.

Soon many of the drug taking teenagers were in court. The judges had no idea what marijuana was, apart from the fact that it was an illegal drug. But they felt sure that it was evil and dangerous to society, or it would not be against the law to use it. They usually said as much in summing up and Evans fears that they were seen to be plainly ignorant by the teenagers, as the real affect of drugs was common knowledge in youth culture. The law was brought into contempt as a result, and this is the aspect of the problem that Evans dreads most. As the police often perjured themselves in such cases, the respect for the law fell faster. It was only the fear of the law that counted with the teenagers as all respect for the law had ebbed away. The case the older people made against the drugs was seen as hopelessly ignorant by the youth. The real fear of dangerous drugs

that their parents felt were taken by the offspring as mere vindictiveness. When LSD arrived, the teenagers were keen to try it out, says Evans. Amphetamines were later similarly embraced. The use of heroin rises also.

When the war in Vietnam broke out, a further reason to revolt against the adults emerged for the teenagers. Evans feels that President Johnson escalated that war for his own advantage. The youth of the USA were being drafted into a war that they did not agree with, and soon the nation was divided over the war, and the flower power girls put flowers in the barrels of guns.

The estimate of half a million heroin users in the USA was maybe not an exaggeration at the end of the 1960s, says Evans, and he feels that quite a few of them might well have become addicts. Many reported bad LSD trips around that time. Laws were regularly passed to ban drugs as the authorities become aware of them. But there was not much of a push for the gaol sentences to increase. Later, the division that opened up over the Vietnam war stimulated a demand for tougher action and longer sentences. Richard Nixon was willing to cater to this new demand. He soon took measures that even tended to flout the USA constitution in his quest to stamp out the use of illegal drugs, such as in his 1970 law of “no knock” searches of private houses. He set up the 1972 *Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse*, but it came up with the conclusion that marijuana was more or less harmless. It recommend that marijuana to be legalised! But that was not the result that Nixon wanted. He refused to have anything to do with the report and set up the Drug Enforcement Administration [DEA] to enforce the law more forcefully. His successors, Ford and Carter, were much more relaxed on drugs. But, says Evans, there was a feeling of a loss of confidence in the

1970s’ USA that later Ronald Reagan tackled. The USA, under Nixon, had pulled out of the Vietnam war in what was widely accepted as a defeat, and then came Watergate. That made things feel worse to many people, and it increased the national sense of shame. Reagan reversed all that. He built up the armed forces, that tend to slowly run down under normal conditions unless some special effort is made to renew them. He made the USA feel as if it could walk tall again. He was seen to stand up to the USSR and this triggered the Gorbachev reforms which in turn led to the end of the USSR while Reagan was still in office.

Ronald Reagan and after

But Reagan also declared war on drugs; as had so many of his forerunners. He was for zero tolerance on illegal drug use. Nancy Reagan, as First Lady, saw illegal drugs as a thing she might help to eradicate, and, in 1980, she came up with her “Just Say No” campaign; a campaign she renewed and maintained while she was at the White House. By 1984, the Omnibus Drug Bill led to stiffer sentences and an even greater disregard for the Fourth Amendment than the Nixon campaign of “no knock” searches had done. The assets of drug dealers were taken without due process of law. The Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1988 almost doubled the money used on the war against drugs, allowing the USA to persecute drug growers around the world.

Judges lost discretion in sentencing and one judge, J. Lawrence Irving, resigned in protest against that. He said: “I couldn’t in good conscience impose sentences I felt were Draconian”. But when George Bush Sr. took over from Reagan in 1988, he continued the stiff policy on drugs. This was reacted to by the Supreme Court Justice, Thurgood Marshall who said: “Acceptance of dragnet ...testing ensures that the first,

and worst, casualty of the drug war will be the precious liberties of our citizens.” By 1991, it was declared constitutional to randomly test transport workers for drug usage. This was a clear erosion of liberty in the USA.

It seems unlikely that anyone in high authority, in the major drive against drugs over the hundred years plus, ever tried them out first, though they have converted and recruited many reformed ex-addicts who played a minor part along the way. Neither Brent, Wright, Jennings Bryan, Hobson nor Anslinger is likely to have taken any illegal drugs. Nixon was very odd when he refused to face up to the results of the enquiry he set up. When he was President, Bill Clinton said he puffed at some hemp but did not inhale, and there has been rumours in the UK since that Cameron and Osborne in the Tories had taken some hard drugs in their past, or even of late. Cameron refused to speak about it in his leadership campaign, and he has attempted to maintain that stance since. Later, a few other Tories, including Oliver Letwin, Francis Maude and Lord Strathclyde, have admitted to making some use of hemp in their youth. Vernon Coaker, who had been in charge of drugs at the UK Home Office since 5 May 2006 for Labour, has similarly admitted to dabbling with hemp back in his student days in the early 1970s, and recently, since Gordon Brown became Prime Minister, about four members of his new cabinet also boasted about their indulgence, including his new Home Secretary, Jackie Smith. So those in authority may know a bit more about drugs today. But the politicians Evans talks about were relatively ignorant of about drugs. By contrast, the youth of the 1990s, that Evans spoke to in the USA, seemed to have quite a wide knowledge of the various drugs. They think it is no big deal. The fuss the authorities create makes the authorities look ridiculous, to their eyes. That could

be what spurred the confessions of recent British politicians. That the police did not arrest them, when they might have arrested others who made such a confession, seems to be sheer privilege.

Evans feels he learnt a great deal from the teenagers he met in the USA in the 1990s.

Animal Spirits

Evans recommends the work of Terence McKenna, an anthropologist. McKenna holds that many animals use perception-altering plants. There are many sources of alcohol in the wild. Rotting fruit often ferments into pools that are alcoholic and elephants scoop it up. Chimps also consume from such pools. So maybe this sort of thing actually predates mankind rather than just being very old. Opium was used in the first civilisation in Sumer, but maybe it was used way before then too.

McKenna also has a thesis about the psilocybin mushroom, that is called shroom by teenagers, but has also been called the magic mushroom. It is outlawed as a narcotic by the authorities. It effects a religious sort of experience, that makes the user feel grateful and want to give thanks to God; even if he does not normally think there is a God out there. It yields this feeling of a need to say thanks rather than a high of some sort. It only grows where there is cattle, and McKenna holds that it used to be a part of the normal human diet, and thus determined how our pristine brains developed. It is what made people spiritual and gave rise to religion. About ten thousand years ago, we stopped taking it for some reason [not a ban by the primitive authorities, surely], and we have been less calm ever since. As a result, McKenna holds that the present ‘Dominant Society’ arose, where men fought wars and made slaves out of women. McKenna thinks we lack psilocybin the way that Linus Pauling holds that we lack Vitamin C. Evans

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feels that all this is strange, but not preposterous. It could be that McKenna is right on one or both ideas viz. that we do seek to change our perception naturally or that we do lack psilocybin and that if we were to return to it, war might vanish. Evans does not to understand the liberal thesis that war is the result of the institution of the state that gears society towards war via the taxation that is needed to fund it. The liberal idea is that the free market would have no incentive to war as without taxation it could not be funded.

A third idea of McKenna's is that prior to Columbus, honey was about the sweetest thing known to the old world but then sugar arrived from the new world. The explorers had been seeking spices in the first place, and once they found sugar, they soon set up sugar plants throughout the islands of the West Indies and enslaved the local population to work on them. When the local population died off, they replaced them with slaves they bought over from Africa. Evans tends to think the slaves were kidnapped, and maybe a few of them were, but they were mainly bought off African slavers who had traditionally enslaved prisoners of war long before the Europeans discovered sugar. The African slavers continued the institution long after the liberals declared it to be immoral and various states in the West outlawed it where the liberals had an influence. They had no such influence amongst the African slave traders, or their rulers. So slavery was not outlawed in Africa.

Other Drugs

Sugar is very much a drug, declares Evans. It changes the chemical balance of the body and provides energy immediately, thereby giving us a boost. The boom that sugar gives is followed by a slump, rather like in the Mises theory of the trade cycle.

Coffee is similarly a drug. It too was produced by slave labour. Evans feels that it involved a war of conquest to get slaves, but most of the slaves were sold.

Chocolate is a drug too, thinks Evans. It too gives us a boost and was also largely produced by slaves. It is usually taken with lots of sugar, and both can cause diabetes, even making one blind in some cases. Evans feels that we should, therefore, realise that it is a drug!

Evans feels that, to our shame, our crusade for drugs has been a cause of war, and not only in the two bullying Opium wars that Britain had with China, but also the earlier wars that arose out of the crusade for drugs. Legal or illegal, drugs are always going to be big business. The sugar barons made lots of money, as did those who sold chocolate and coffee. There is money in drugs because people, whether they are harming themselves or not, want them. Evans thinks that drugs are so integral to modern society that it would collapse if they were removed.

A Volte Face by Evans

Evans seems to have suddenly joined the moralisers against drugs when he was in the middle of writing a pamphlet against them. And the case he makes against the drugs seems to show all the hyperbole he was moaning about when he criticised the other crusaders against drugs. That the drugs cause slavery, that they cause blindness, that they need to be a cause of war. On the face of it, none of those claims seems to be true. Drugs can clearly be grown by free labour. There seems to be no clear reason to think that we need to be involved in war to set up a trade in drugs. Few people who eat sugar or chocolate thereby go blind.

Then, in chapter 11, as if his moralising against legal drugs is not enough, Evans suddenly goes Green and he introduces lots of hyperbole and gloom about modern society in general. I suppose he

thinks that all this sort of claptrap is cool, real cool man. He says that society today is in a mess. For most of recorded history, life has been full of hardship, if not itself hard. We have had to face the prospect of premature death, and often very uncomfortable living prior to death. Only the very rich had it easy. In the last hundred years, things have got better in the advanced nations but things remain much as they were before in other parts of the world, says Evans. Recently, owing to technology, progress has been made, he says. By the 1950s, things were good for most in the developed world. Most people since that time have experienced comfort such as only the rich had known for most of the past.

This hyperbole about the past seems too ready to equate being poor with having a hard life. A materially poor life is not, thereby, a hard one, but it is true that we have, in the developed parts of the world, got way richer of late

The recent progress of the developed world was largely based on oil, that all knew was finite, says Evans, In the 1950s it was thought that nuclear power might soon replace it and that progress could go on, but the problems of nuclear waste were underestimated, thinks Evans. Authors like Petr Beckmann, or John Fremlin, might tell him that the problems are exaggerated by the Greens on quasi-religious grounds. The Greens simply seem to hate progress and like people to live in a primitive condition. Acid rain was not realised to be the result of pollution back in the 1950s, says Evans, and although some pollution problems were expected, global warming and the hole in the ozone layer was not. But in the last 50 years, the dire results have emerged for all to see, claims Evans.

And Evans thinks that industrialisation has not even made us richer either! Or, at least, we have become worse off just

lately. He seems to ignore what he earlier said about many being comfortable for the moment – or is it only just lately he feels we are no longer getting richer? Anyway, he feels that both parents need to work today to create the level of comfort that the male would have achieved as the sole breadwinner in the 1950s. This overlooks that, in absolute terms, almost any single breadwinner could do way better today that most could have done in the 1950s; and it is a clear enough fact that Evans has got things the reverse of the facts on the actual value of a single wage today. It is one thing to want all those little extras, and quite another to say that we cannot do without them with great ease and lots of comfort. Moreover, in Iowa USA, in the 1950s, the fashion for both parents to take a job had already emerged, as Bill Bryson reports in his autobiographical book, *The Life and Times of the Thunderbolt Kid* (2006), for Bryson's parents, or rather his mother, decided to join the new trend by taking up a second job in the one household. In the December 1951 issue of *Harper's Magazine*, Nancy B. Mavity wrote that men would soon lament losing their place as the family breadwinner. In fact, Bryson's father was all in favour of his wife's decision to go out to work (p.15f). In many marriages that I have known, it has been the male moaning that the wife should go out to work rather than the woman desiring it. Would Evans think that this 1950s fad for women to go out to work means the people in the USA were worse off than those of the UK back then? It seems, clearly to be not the case. However, Evans feels we are now all struggling, and he thinks that things simply cannot go on as they are. He also thinks that most of us are so wedded to society as it is in the advanced lands, that we simply do not want to face up to this fact. He feels that 82 per cent of our economy is now devoted to making use of fossil fuels in one way or another; and that is another way of saying that we are

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devoting 82 per cent to destroying the planet!

Any change we make will need to ensure that the elderly are not upset and also that the vested interests of the USA, the industrialists and the owners of the firms, are cared for, says Evans. Those are the two groups that fear change most of all, as they have the most to lose. Evans feels that hemp can replace fossil fuels without industrial decline. But is this just a pipe-dream?

A New Future for Hemp

He says that the technology has been long since known. Henry Ford expected to see biomass innovated back in his time. In the 1920s, Ford thought that his cars would be run on biomass rather than gasoline and this would hardly carry any pollution in its wake. Ford held that all his output could be basically grown, as he held that the car itself could be made of plastics that were a by-product of hemp. Evans claims that recent studies done in Hawaii in 1991 and by General Electric in 1992 concluded that about 90% of the energy that the USA needs could be met in this way almost at once.

The two big pollutants that are causing all the big problems are carbon dioxide and sulphur. Biomass would not be injecting stored up carbon into the atmosphere as fossil fuels do, but only about as much as was put in to allow the fuel to grow. So there is no overall carbon dioxide produced, and there is no sulphur involved at all, says Evans.

The 1992 General Electric study recommended trees for biomass fuel. Evans feels that the plants they recommend grow slowly, but hemp is far more efficient in rapid growth than trees, as it is a hardy plant that can be grown almost anywhere. It can be harvested twice a year rather than once; indeed in warm places, like Southern California, it might be harvested up to four times a year. If 6% of the cultivatable land were

devoted to hemp it could make the USA self sufficient in fuel on already existing technology. If more land for hemp was used then the USA could soon export fuel.

Evans feels this would be a big threat to the large firms, but he seems to overlook that firms do regularly update and change things, so such a change is not a fearful thing for them. It would not be too difficult for them to change over to hemp if it is lawful, and if it looks economically viable. But Evans fears that such a readjustment of 82% of the economy would be bound to rub vested interests up the wrong way. Evans also fears that the return of hemp would also be the return of the Decorticator and its threat to newsprint, synthetic fibres and cotton. He sees hemp as the almost complete replacement for oil. He even thinks that hemp can provide the raw materials for plastics and indeed Henry Ford used them back in the 1920s.

Paper made from hemp is also relatively pollution free, says Evans, as it does not need the chemicals that wood pulp does. Evans fears that this will affect the chemical industries and that they will fear it. But the reality is that they adjust all the time.

Whether the soil could support the regular growth of hemp and whether it would be as cheap as Evans thinks it is, I am not competent to judge. *Prima facie* it would seem the likely cost that hemp imposes, rather than any opposition from vested interests that would be the bar to his grand solution to the problems oil has thrown up.

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