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THEMES IN CHEMICAL PROHIBITION

by

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The study of the historical themes in chemical prohibition movements can provide a helpful tool in understanding those institutionalized beliefs and myths which pose powerful barriers to any alteration in social policy on "drug abuse." This paper identifies the nature of those themes and presents the author's perceptions of how these inherited belief systems have severely limited our options for more enlightened and effective strategies for the social control of chemical intoxication.

Chemical intoxicants have been available to humans in almost all cultures since the beginning of time. Each culture through succeeding generations has assumed the task of defining and redefining which chemicals will be blessed, celebrated or tolerated and which chemicals will be forbidden, legally prohibited, and condemned. In like manner each generations has confronted what the policy would be toward those persons who disobeyed the rules about the use of chemical intoxicants. The conversion of these policy definitions into law has often followed prohibitionist mass movements which sought through a variety of propaganda techniques to instill in the culture at large a certain set of beliefs and fears about the drugs in questions. When these movements have been effective at generating statutory prohibition of specific drugs, this set of beliefs and feelings toward certain chemicals and persons who use them evolves over time to the point where they are seen as flowing from unchallengeable sources. At this stage, alternatives to the policies that reflect these prohibitionist themes are viewed as unthinkable.

This paper is based on the following premises:

1. Current strategies toward the use and abuse of mood-altering drugs

continue to be based on a set of beliefs generated from the prohibitionist movements of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

2. The cementing of these prohibitionist beliefs into the very social fabric of American culture is one of the primary barriers to changing an outmoded and nonfunctional social policy. The integrations of these beliefs into our culture has been so complete that to question them is immediately experienced by the culture at large as an attack on the institutions which have proliferated these beliefs, e.g., our national leaders, the law, our educational and religious institutions, and the family.
3. The development of national policies toward mood altering drugs has not and cannot be intelligently addressed until we expose and modify the irrational fears and beliefs upon which current policies are based.

This paper will identify the nature of these inherited beliefs and describe the manner in which they have prevented development of a more enlighten and effective strategy for the social control of mood altering drug use in our society.

THE PROHIBITIONIST THEMES

A review of chemical prohibitionist literature reveals eight themes which appear to emerge from the tactics of most such movements. The tactics utilized to produce these themes are as follows:

1. The drug is associated with a hated subgroup of the society or a foreign enemy.
2. The drug is identified as solely responsible for many problems in the culture, i.e., crime, violence, insanity.
3. The survival of the culture is pictured as being dependent on the prohibition of the drug.
4. The concept of "controlled" usage is destroyed and replaced by a "domino theory" of chemical progression.
5. The drug is associated with corruption of young children, particularly

their sexual corruption.

6. Both the user and supplier of the drug are defined as fiends, always in search of new victims; usage of the drug is considered "contagious."
7. Policy options are presented as total prohibition or total access.
8. Anyone questioning any of the above assumptions is bitterly attacked and characterized as part of the problem that needs to be eliminated.

Each of the above will be reviewed looking at their historical development and their present status.

The Drug is Associated with a Hated Subgroup of the Society or a Foreign Enemy

The association of particular drugs with hated minority groups and foreign enemies has a long and colorful history in the United States. The association of opium with the Chinese, of cocaine with Blacks, or alcohol with urban Catholic immigrants, of heroin with urban immigrants, of Latinos with marijuana, the claim that a myriad of foreign enemies were using these drugs against the U.S., and the image of drug crazed bohemians such as Ludlow, Baudelaire, and DeQuincy all were integral to the propaganda that generated the prohibitionist policies on each of these drugs.

San Francisco passed the first narcotics law in the United States in 1875 for the purpose of suppressing opium smoking. There is little doubt that this law was aimed specifically at the Chinese and reflected more an attempt to control the Chinese as an economic group that it did a concern about the drug opium. The "Chinese Question" dominated California politics in the 1870's. The period is marked by intense racial and class conflict. Racial riots occurred in numerous West Coast cities that resulted in the killing and lynching of Chinese and the burning of Chinese quarters. The California Workingman's Party was organized under the cry "The Chinese must go!" California representatives with the support of their southern counterparts pushed through Congress the Chinese Exclusion Act of 1882 which suspended immigration of Chinese workingmen into the U.S. for ten years. It is doubtful given this background that the 1875 ordinance in San Francisco was aimed at protecting the health and welfare of the Chinese people.^{1, 2, 3 and 4}

Although the practice of smoking opium in the early 1870's was unquestionably limited to the Chinese, the continued association between opium and the Chinese into the 1900's as part of the drive for national legislation to prohibit opium is unfounded. During this period opium had become a primary ingredient in over the counter medications sold as a cure-all for an unending list of ailments. Terry and Pellens in their classic work The Opium Problem summarize all available surveys on opium use and conclude that most of users were white, female, middle-aged, and to be found among the educated and most honored members of society.⁵ Despite this evidence, the association between opium and the Chinese continued. Dr. Hamilton Wright, M.D., a State Department Official, referred to many as the father of American Narcotic laws was before Congress in 1910 propounding the recurring theme of miscegenation with the following comments: "One of the most unfortunate phases of smoking opium in this country is the large number of women who have become involved and were living as common law wives or co-habiting with Chinese in the Chinatowns of our various cities."⁶ As with prohibitions which would follow, people's attitudes toward a specific drug (opium) became inseparable from their feeling about that group of people (Chinese) with which the drug's use was associated.

The association between cocaine and Blacks during the late 1800's and early 1900's was both direct and vicious. Hamilton Wright was again on the scene in 1910 giving Congress the following warning about cocaine: "It was been authoritatively stated that cocaine is often the direct incentive to the crime of rape by the Negroes of the South and other sections of the country."⁷ The following additional example comes from an article by Edward Huntington Williams, M.D., in The Medical Record in 1914:

Once the Negro has reached the stage of being a 'dope taker' (dope here referring to cocaine)...he is a constant menace to his community until he is eliminated....Sexual desires are increased and perverted, peaceful Negroes become quarrelsome, and timid Negroes develop a degree of 'Dutch courage' that is sometimes almost incredible....In the language of the police officer, 'The cocaine nigger is sure hard to kill' - a fact that has been demonstrated so often that many of these officers in the South have increased the caliber of their guns for the express purpose of 'stopping' the cocaine fiend when he runs amuck.⁸

A review of more popular reading of the day would have revealed the following statement in a 1914 Literary Digest article: "Under its (cocaine) influence are most

of the daring crimes committed...Most of the attacks upon white women of the South are the direct result of a cocaine crazed Negro brain."⁹ Or consider the following attributes of cocaine as reported again by Edward Huntington Williams, M.D. in an article in the New York Times:

*The list of dangerous effects produced by cocaine.... is certainly long enough. But there is another, and a most important one, this is a temporary steadying of the nervous and muscular system, so as to increase, rather than interfere with good marksmanship....the record of the 'cocaine nigger' near Asheville, who dropped five men dead in their tracks, using only one cartridge for each, offers evidence that is sufficiently convincing.*¹⁰

As if these racial associations were not enough, a New York Times article on the cocaine "menace" during this period tapped the anti-Semitic constituency with the following: "...there is little doubt that every Jew Peddler in the South carries the stuff." The constant racial associations with cocaine may account for the fact that, between 1887 and 1914, laws were passed in 46 States regulating cocaine whereas only 29 States had enacted such laws to regulate the opiates.¹² Perhaps an added irony is a 1908 report by the Federal Government indicating more than 40 brands of soft drinks which contained cocaine.¹³

Moving along to the next chemical which had long been singled out as a prohibitionist target, we see Congressman Hobson in 1914 in defense of his resolution for an alcohol prohibition amendment using a tactic that had been working well to influence the prohibition of cocaine and opium:

*Liquor will actually make a brute out of a Negro, causing him to commit unnatural crimes. The effect is the same on the white man, though the white man being further evolved it takes a longer time to reduce him to the same level.*¹⁴

Liquor, as the story went, encouraged the southern Negro to "loose his libido on white women, incited...by the nudes on the labels of whiskey bottles." At home and abroad, prohibitionist missionaries began spreading the word that the poor and "colored people" of the earth were dangerous when drunk. As we approached World War I, however, a much bigger target was found. Pabst and Busch were German. Liquor stopped soldiers from shooting straight. Grain for alcohol took food away from starving allies. Liquor was unpatriotic. By the time prohibition of

alcohol was implemented in 1919, alcohol was strongly associated with German war effort, Catholicism, and the growing urban environment with its high percentage of foreign immigrants.¹⁵ The entire prohibition drama was to a great extent a symbolic issue of power - a question of whether the United States would be ruled from the traditions of rural Protestant America or by growing industrial cities with their heavy immigrant Catholic influences.

The next major prohibition effect occurred in the 1930's as momentum was building to outlaw the use of marijuana. Harry Anslinger, in testifying in support of the Marijuana Tax Act of 1937, presented a letter from a Colorado newspaper editor, an excerpt of which follows:

*I wish I could show you what a small marijuana cigarette can do to one of our degenerate Spanish speaking residents. That's why our problem is so great; the greatest percentage of our population is composed of Spanish-speaking persons, most of whom are low mentality because of social and racial conditions.*¹⁶

The association between marijuana and Latinos continued throughout the 1930's and it is doubtful that any of the legislators in 1937 could have even conceived of the possibility of large numbers of their own grandchildren and great grandchildren using marijuana and going to jail under a legal precedent they set.

An added twist to this overall theme was the proposition by Harry Anslinger, Commissioner of the Bureau of Narcotics, that Communist China was growing and producing large quantities of opium and heroin for export to the free world, the United States in particular. This distribution of narcotics within the United States was part of the "Yellow Peril" which threatened to weaken America for the kill.¹⁷ Although Anslinger is most famous for this conspiracy theory of drug abuse, it was by no means original with him. A number of articles in the New York Times during 1918 charged German agents with smuggling drugs to American Army bases and public schools. The following excerpt from the December 18 issue is typical of the tone:

Until well known German brands of toothpaste and patent medicines....naturally for export only... habit forming drugs were to be introduced; at first a little, then more, as the habit grew on the non-German victim and his system craved ever increasing quantities.... in a few years Germany would have fallen upon a world which cried for its German

*toothpaste and soothing syrup...a world of "cokeys" and "hop fiends" which would have been absolutely helpless when a German embargo shut off the supply of its pet poison.*¹⁸

The reporting of the drug abuse "epidemic" of the 1960's and early 1970's and the demands for increasing prohibitions was only qualitatively different from these earlier campaigns with the association between "drugs" and radical left politics, social violence, defiance of respected values, etc. The theme was the same only the hated subgroup and the nature of the foreign enemy had changed.

The above material represents only a small part of the information available to document the prohibitionist's association of a drug with either a hated minority group or a foreign enemy. Similar data can be found when one looks at the short lived movements to prohibit tobacco and coffee.

Richard Hostadter's comment that "Reformers who begin with the determination to stamp out sin usually end by stamping out sinners"¹⁹ seems applicable here. It is open to historical interpretation which the prohibitionists were more interested in prohibiting, cocaine, opium and alcohol or the existence of black, Chinese, and Latinos in the United States. Although a racial theory of the development of drug control policies would be much too simplistic, it is unquestionable that the racial and "foreign conspiracy" associations with different drugs were instrumental in crating the emotional environment from which early prohibitionist laws sprang. There is also little question that modern versions of this theme continue to touch of primitive and powerful fears about the welfare of our country, our institutions, and most importantly the welfare of our children.

The Drug is Identified as Solely Responsible for Many Problems in the Culture, i.e. Crime, Violence, Insanity.

The attributing of crimes of violence, sexual assault, insanity, moral decay, etc. have been an integral part of efforts to prohibit the currently illicit drugs. A key element in this theme is the arbitrary designation of "good" and "evil" drugs with evil drugs possessing powers that can overwhelm all efforts at human control. "The Devil made him do it" is changed to "the drug made him do it." This aspect of prohibitionist philosophy is so often reported, there is no need to belabor the point. A few illustrative examples will be outlined.

A prohibitionist movement, which was short lived but quite capable of attributing the evils of the world and the devastation of human beings to its particular despised chemical, gave wide circulation to a statement by Sir Clifford Allbut, M.D. and Walter Dixon, M.D. which appeared in A System of Medicine in 1909. At the time, Sir Clifford was a professor of internal medicine at the University of Cambridge in England and Dr. Dixon was a professor of pharmacology at Kings College in London. An excerpt follows:

*The sufferer is tremulous, and loses his self-command; he is subject to fits of agitation and depressions, he loses his color and has a haggard appearance. the appetite falls off, and symptoms of gastric catarrh may be manifested. The heart also suffers, it palpitates, or it intermits. As with other such agents, a renewed dose of the poison gives temporary relief, but at the cost of future misery.*²⁰

The substance referred to is coffee, and the statement was circulated for a short time in an attempt to garner support for the prohibition of coffee.

The anti-tobacco forces were much better organized (with cigarettes still illegal in 14 states in 1921)²¹, and their pronouncements received wide distribution. The following statements are representative of those used by the anti-tobacco forces from 1920 to 1935, Louis Lewin, an eminent authority on pharmacology, wrote the following in 1924 which received wide distribution:

*The juvenile female flower of the nation, the 'Emancipata femans vulgaris' (Lewin's term for the feminists of his day,) who should bear fruit in time to come.....frequently fails to do so because the foolish consumption of cigarettes has impregnated the sexual organs with smoke and nicotine and keeps them in a state of irritation and inflammation.*²²

A 1930 issue of the National Advocate reported a doctor's opinion that "Sixty percent of all babies born of mothers who are habitual smokers die before they are two years old."²³ An anti-tobacco publication of 1931 included the following:

*Fifty percent of our insanity is inherited from parents who were users of tobacco; sometimes the victim is a smoker himself, which hastens it on. Thirty percent of insanity cases are caused directly from cigarette smoking and the use of tobacco....*²⁴

Several anti-tobacco publications of the 1920's quoted New York City Magistrate to illustrate the crime producing properties of tobacco:

Ninety-nine out of a hundred boys between the ages of 10 and 17 who come before me charged with a crime have their fingers disfigured by yellow cigarette stains.^{25,26}

Tobacco was also reported to be the hidden cause of increased suicides in the early 1900's:

*The publisher of this book...has had two men in his employ who used cigarettes...They both committed suicide. They became so despondent and so sick of a life as they were living that they murdered themselves. This is the end to which many cigarette smokers come.*²⁷

If we look at the few years preceding passage of the Marijuana Tax Act in 1937, we see equally vociferous statements on the evils and destructiveness of marijuana. An advertisement distributed by the Federal Bureau of Narcotics in 1935 read as follows:

*Beware! Young and Old---People in All Walks of Life! This (picture of a marijuana cigarette) may be handed to you by the friendly stranger. It contains the Killer Drug 'Marijuana' - a powerful narcotic in which lurks Murder! Insanity! Death!*²⁸

In 1936 the International Education Association in conjunction with the Federal Narcotics Bureau published Marijuana or Indian Hemp and Its Preparations which included statements such as:

*Prolonged use of marijuana frequently develops a delirious rage which....sometimes leads to high crimes such as assault and murder. Hence marijuana has been called the 'killer drug.' The habitual use of this narcotic poison always causes a very marked deterioration and sometimes produces insanity. Hence marijuana is frequently called 'loco weed.'...Marijuana often gives man the lust to kill unreasonably without motive. Many cases of assault, rape, robbery, and murder are traced to the use of marijuana.*²⁹

Such reports were not limited to the Federal Bureau of Narcotics. An article in the 1936 March issue of Scientific American included the following:

*Marijuana produces a wide variety of symptoms in the user, including hilarity, swooning, sexual excitement. Combined with intoxicants, it often makes the smoker vicious, with a desire to fight and kill.*³⁰

Up until the end of prohibition of alcohol in 1933, there was a great deal of overlap between those participating in various prohibitionist movements. All of these persons and groups shared an anti-hedonistic ethic which provided a united front politically in their efforts to legally prohibit all pleasure-producing chemicals as well as other pleasurable nonchemical pastimes of humans, i.e., dancing, jazz music, gambling, etc. The years following the end of alcohol prohibition saw the beginning distinctions between good drugs and evil drugs. Those drugs within the experience of the majority of Americans were considered good; those drugs which tended to be used by minority and fringe groups tended to be defined as evil. Thus alcohol, nicotine, and caffeine (coffee) began to become increasingly integrated into the very fabric of American life, whereas cocaine, opium, heroin, and subsequently marijuana and the hallucinogens continued to be defined as evil - physically, emotionally, and morally devastating to the individual and unquestionably destructive to the culture. This definition of certain chemicals as innately good or evil was to germinate from 1933 into the 1960's where we would witness a giant eruption of this issue as adult America was forced to attempt to articulate to their own children the culturally inherited distinction between good drugs (alcohol) and evil drugs (marijuana, etc.).

Survival of the Culture is Pictured as Dependent on Prohibition or Continued Prohibition of the Drug

Implicit in the attribution of society's problems to the use of particular chemicals is the assumption and implication that these problems will disappear as prohibition becomes effective. The elimination of the drug and its use is thus characterized as crucial for the survival of the culture. Such claims have been characteristic of nearly all prohibitionist movements. For example, the following editorial warning appeared in the New York Times on June 28, 1884:

*The decadence of Spain began when the Spaniards adopted cigarettes, and if this pernicious practice obtains among adult Americans the Ruin of the Republic is at hand.*³¹

Purley Baker writing in the Anti-Saloon League Yearbook of 1914 implores: "If our Republic is to be saved, the liquor traffic must be destroyed,"³² and Henry Ford speaking in support of alcohol prohibition stated the following in 1928:

*If the law were changed, we'd have to shut down our plants. Everything in the United States is keyed up to a new pace which started with Prohibition. The speed at which we run our motor cars, operate our intricate machinery, and generally live, would be impossible with liquor. No, there is no chance even for modification.*³³

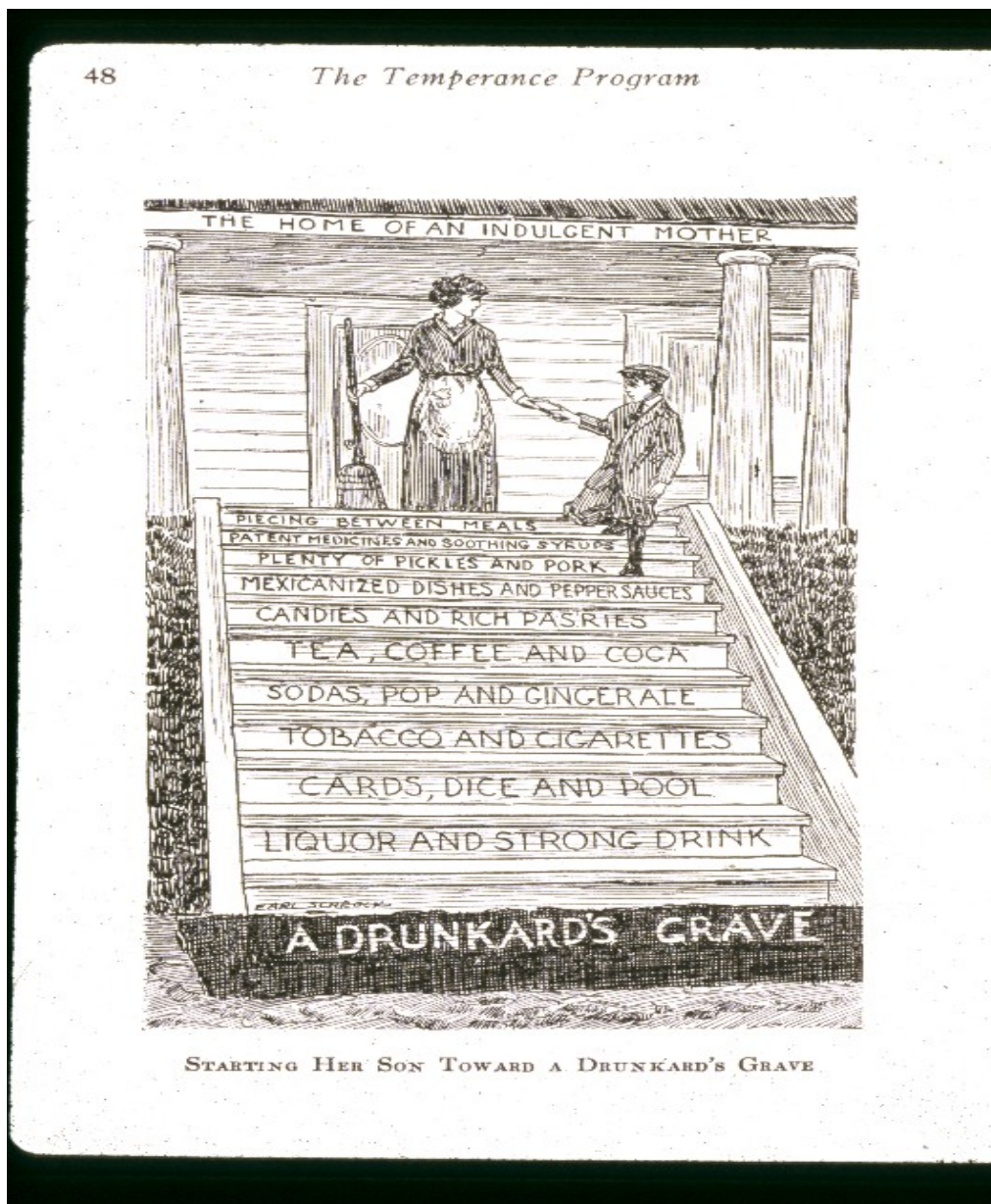
Such pronouncements on the presently illicit drugs have been echoed through the past decades perhaps culminating in the announcement by the President Richard M. Nixon in June, 1971 that "The problem has assumed the dimensions of a national emergency...American's Public Enemy No. 1 is drug abuse."³⁴

Concept of "Controlled" Usage is Destroyed and Replaced by a "Domino Theory" of Chemical Progression

The history of prohibitionist pronouncements is replete with examples which propose a 'domino theory' of chemical usage. Such a theory holds that the use of a particular drug (usually the one presently targeted for prohibition) inevitably and with rare exception leads to the use of other drugs (usually drugs already prohibited or drugs already defined as evil). For example, the publication in 1798 of Essays, Literary, Moral and Philosophical by Benjamin Rush includes the following comments from an anti-tobacco essay: "A desire of course is excited for strong drink, (by smoking tobacco) and these (cigarettes) when taken between meals soon lead to intemperance and drunkenness."³⁵ The following is from a 1912 article in Century magazine:

*The relation of tobacco, especially in the form of cigarettes, and alcohol and opium is a close one...Morphine is the legitimate consequence of alcohol, and alcohol is the legitimate consequence of tobacco. Cigarettes, drink, opium is the logical and regular series.*³⁶

One of the most dramatic and all-inclusive examples of this "domino theory" can be seen in the following illustration from The Temperance Program (1915) of Evangelist Thos.



The contention that alcohol abuse was the basis for morphinism was not uncommon in the late 1800's, and more recently the mystical connection between marijuana and heroin has been central to the rationale for continued prohibition of marijuana.

The destruction of the concept of controlled drug usage implies that everyone who ever used heroin will be a "dope fiend," everyone who drinks will be an alcoholic, etc. In general this strategy equates the use and abuse of drugs and implies that it is impossible to use the particular drug or drugs in question without physical, mental, and moral deterioration. Such a view holds that there are powers within the drug over which no one can exert control. The extreme absurdity of such a view seems apparent when one considers the vast majority of persons who use alcohol in this country with minimal or no dysfunctional consequences and the numbers of users of illicit drugs who do not suffer physical deterioration, who do not progress to compulsive drug usage, who do continue to work, raise children, and maintain the usually expected social responsibilities. The idea that there are overwhelming powers within drugs is probably nowhere better illustrated than in a statement in Marc Olden's 1973 book, Cocaine, in which he states: "It's possible to get a habit just from handling the drug."³⁸ The continued belief in this domino theory of chemical progression and its implications for current policies is perhaps well illustrated by a 1974 survey in which 39 percent of non-marijuana users in the sample cited "marijuana use leads to harder drugs" as the primary reason for their opposition to legalization of marijuana³⁹

The Drug Is Associated With the Moral Corruption of the Young, Particularly Their Sexual Corruption

Chemicals have long been inextricably linked in prohibitionist literature with the sexual corruption of young people. Joan Fran Rauch attacked chocolate in 1624 as a violent inflamer of passions,⁴⁰ tobacco was linked with sexual immorality in the 1850's⁴¹ and the association between opium and the corruption of young women in the 1880's with the publication in 1882 of H. H. Kane's Opium Smoking in America and China in which Kane states:

*Many females are so much excited sexually by the smoking of opium during the first few weeks that old smokers with the sole object of ruining them have taught them how to smoke. Many innocent and over-curious girls have been thus seduced.*⁴²

It has already been outlined how cocaine was extensively associated with sexual attacks on white women by black men during the early 1900's. During the alcohol prohibitionist movement era alcohol was reported to create sexual excess within

and outside of marriage, and alcohol was subtly webbed through stories of Jews "buying up the virtue of Gentile virgins" or Roman Catholic priests "seducing Protestant girls in nunneries."⁴³ In an expose of the white slavery traffic written in the 1930's, we find the arch villain (the alleged pimp) responding to a question on how he procures women for the life of prostitution:

*I secured a large number of girls from high schools, by doping them with my weed.*⁴⁴

There is an added irony on the above theme that occurs as one reads through the prohibitionist literature from different periods. Nearly every drug that has been singled out for prohibition (opium, cocaine, alcohol, marijuana) has been said to provoke uncontrolled sexual desire and provoke sexual attacks upon defenseless women while at the same time the drug is said to produce impotence.

The media coverage of the numerous lifestyle changes of the 1960's constantly associated drugs with communal living, cohabitation, etc. Pictures of teenage girls allegedly prostituting to "support their habits" blazoned across the television screen did nothing but update this age-old association between chemicals and sexual corruption. The inflaming of this fear about the fate of our own children made it difficult if not impossible for most Americans to take a careful and reasoned look at our drug policies.

Both User and Supplier Are Defined as Fiends, Always in Search in New Victims: Usage of the Drug is Considered "Contagious"

The prohibition propaganda which has surrounded the presently illicit drugs represents a blatant manipulation of the symbols of evil that would do credit to Jonathan Edwards. Nothing can so excite an adult population as can anything which appears to threaten their own children. Since the Harrison Act of 1914, the user and the seller of illicit drugs have both been characterized as evil, criminal, insane, and always in search of new victims, the victims are characterized as young children. Drug usage is characterized as "contagious;" its increase (real or imagined) is characterized as an "epidemic." Efforts to reduce drug usage are referred to as the "war" on or "battle" against drug abuse. Person who sell are called "pushers" in spite of increasing evidence that most persons get drugs, particularly their first drug, from friends and not some arch villain who seduced them on a street corner.

Policy Options are Presented as Total Prohibition or Total Access

Prohibitionists have always characterized themselves as being in a moral/religious battle against evil. This quality of the prohibitionist movements eliminated the option of compromise. The choice as they saw and presented it was total prohibition or total access to the hated drugs. It was not the other methods of controlling use did not exist or would not work; it was the idea that all usage was sinful and must be stopped. Like an ongoing morality play, this same issue gets played out repeatedly today with a new cast of characters. As bills are introduced to lower criminal penalties for various illicit drugs, one can anticipate any number of legislators standing to attack reduced penalties as an invitation for use and a first step toward legalization of drug X.

Anyone Questioning Any of the Above Assumptions is Bitterly Attacked and Characterized as Part of the Problem That Needs to be Eliminated

A reading of any number of works which trace the development and evolution of our narcotics policy, all demonstrate the personal hazards in challenging those policies. To attack or challenge existing policies has opened one up for charges ranging from a lack of patriotism to charges that the critic is himself part of the international drugs conspiracy. To most persons, confronting the issues surrounding the inadequacies of existing drug policy is simply not worth the challenges to their own personal integrity.

The Prohibitionist Legacy

The prohibitionist themes as outlined above have left a burdensome legacy that severely limits any attempt to more adequately and rationally address the control of chemical mood alteration in our society. Consider the following:

1. American policies continue to be organized around the notion of "good and bad" drugs, although good and bad may be couched in terms like "safe," "dangerous," "schedule I," "schedule II," and so forth. Our preoccupation with chemistry has prevented us from focusing on the excesses of the behavior. The question is not how do we prevent people from using "bad" drugs - we cannot. The question is how to provide social structures and rituals which decrease the excesses of usage of all drugs and the subsequent high personal and

social cost of such extremes.

2. Our prohibitionist legacy has left us without a commonly understood language to address the excessive use of all mood altering drugs. We are left instead with an emotionally loaded language that continues to channel our thinking into good and bad drugs. A person receiving opiates under a doctor's care is a "patient," a person using opiates without medical supervision is a "drug addict," a person receiving amphetamines from a doctor is under "medical treatment," a person using the same amount of amphetamines without the doctor is suffering from "drug abuse," a physician prescribing drugs is a "healer," a non-physician distributing the same drugs is a "pusher." Chemicals received from doctors are "medicine," the same chemicals received on the street are "dope." A person abusing illicit drugs is an addict, a junkie, a hype, a freak, an acidhead, a pothead, etc. A person abusing nicotine is an ___?___ (no word in language), a person abusing caffeine is an ___?___ (no word in language); a person abusing alcohol is suffering from the "disease" of alcoholism. To be using drugs is to be "dirty," to be free of drugs is to be "clean."
3. The good and bad drug dichotomy has also resulted in an artificial dichotomy in the prevention and treatment field. There is an alcoholism prevention/treatment field and a drug (primarily illicit) drug abuse prevention/treatment field, with neither field addressing in any significant manner the treatment of excessive use of prescription drugs, over-the counter medication, tobacco, etc. or addressing adequately the now large group of clients who are abusing both alcohol and other drugs either concurrently or sequentially.
4. The anti-hedonistic and abstinence stance of the prohibitionist has also influenced our treatment approaches. If one looked at the amount of energy in the 1960's which went into explaining that methadone did not produce euphoria, you would think a cardinal tenet of treatment was that it could not be pleasurable. Treatment has also been consistently defined as "good" only to the point that it produced total abstinence from all psychoactive drugs--a policy which continues to define methadone maintenance clients as second-class citizens on the basis of a criterion that the majority of Americans could not meet.

5. Our preoccupation with "bad/illicit" drugs continues to detract our attention from the overall extent of prescribed psychoactive drug use and the increasing practice of self medication in our culture. If one could step into the future and look back on the major developments in chemical mood alterations, the use of illicit drugs would appear insignificant to the increased usage of approved over the counter and prescribed mood altering drugs.

6. The rigid moral principle of abstinence, the basis of prohibitionist thought, has spawned an equally rigid anti-prohibitionist movement. Where the former saw drugs as totally evil, the latter does not address the real dangers in excessive drug usage. Where the prohibitionists have demonized the drugs, the users, and the sellers; the repeal advocates and reformists have often demonized the laws and those who represent and enforce them. Where the prohibitionists have implied that many of society's problems will disappear with effective prohibition; the advocates of repeal imply that most, if not all, of the "drug problem" will disappear with legalization. Where the prohibitionists see the spread of drug use as part of a conspiracy of a foreign enemy; those for repeal tend to see the spread of drug control laws as the product of an internal conspiracy. Both view our present situation in simplistic terms which totally obliterate the extreme complexity of the issues surrounding the control of chemical intoxication within a heterogenous and rapidly changing culture. There is grave danger in this either/or polarization that is beginning to take shape. Although it is important to acknowledge that our past moral inflexibility has prevented us from accepting potentially effective strategies which could be construed as sanctioning illicit drug use, we must equally acknowledge that the abdication of all controls would not improve our current situation.

7. The continued association between crime, insanity, sexual corruption, miscegenation, evil conspiracies, etc. and illicit drugs makes rationally proposing policy alternatives politically risky for anyone in a position to have those alternatives heard.

CONCLUSION

A powerful system of prohibitionist beliefs and fears about the currently illicit drugs has been woven into the very fabric of our culture. It is this system of beliefs and moral premises, much more so than our technical capabilities, which severely restrict the development of more enlightened social policies on the excessive use of mood altering drugs.

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