

THE FREE YOU

September, 1968 - Volume 2, Number 14

THE SUBJECT IS MARIJUANA

by the rev. mike young

I first ran into Marijuana as something that impinged upon me only a very few years ago. My brother-in-law, then 17, came to my wife and me with the story of a beautiful, ecstatic, glorious experience he had had with Marijuana. We reacted like most normal adults who have only heard the police propoganda. We panicked. The police came out and lectured him. He and several friends were in hot water for a while. But since no Marijuana was found in their possession, no charges were brought.

That experience moved me to do some reading on the subject. Scientific information was not easy to come by, so again all I found was hysterical propoganda - but this time from both sides.

A little over a year ago there were large scale arrests of Gunn High School students here in Palo Alto. Shortly after that, at the request of a mother, I sat in on the local narcotics agent's presentation to a gym class at Cubberly High School. The officer spent the first half hour talking about Marijuana. How terrible and horrible it was. How it caused the user to do vicious and anti-social things - to rape and kill and steal and such. How it would get you "hooked" and lead you on to heroin. It was a pretty frightening speech to one who knew no better.

The next half hour was devoted to a movie made by the National Film Board of Canada, and one of the finest heroin addiction movies available. It was a truthful, straightforward, compassionate account of a man's attempt to break his heroin habit. The two in juxtaposition left the image in the mind of one who had no other information that, if you were going to try something, heroin was the safest drug to try!

At that time I obtained from the officer the pamphlet then being passed out to students. In my research since then I have come across extensive quotations from the pamphlet which was in use in 1937, when the Federal laws were passed. They are identical, unchanged between 1937 and 1966! Never mind that virtually every statement in that pamphlet was long ago proven false, Marijuana is evil because the Narcotics Bureau says so!

(WHAT IS IT?)

Marijuana, or cannabis sativa, is the plant from which hemp comes. Fiber from the male plant has been used for rope and cloth for thousands of years. The flowering tops of the female plant contain a resin called hashish which is eaten, drunk and smoked in the middle and near east. In this country, however, it is used in the form of crude tobacco by drying and crumbling the flowering tops.

It has been around for over three thousand years. Its history runs back into the middle east, India and China; and its origins and first use are lost in the mists of antiquity. It has been used by every culture on the face of the earth. In every place that it has been used it has been outlawed and desperate attempts have been made to stamp it out. Entirely without success!

Marijuana is not a narcotic! It bears no resemblance to any of the drugs which we are in the habit of calling a narcotic: the opium, heroin, morphine, cocaine kind of drugs. It is more closely related to the psychedelic drugs like mescaline and peyote, but mild as an aspirin by comparison.

(WHO USES IT?)

Until comparatively recently, Marijuana was used predominantly by minority groups on the fringes of the culture. Indeed, one of the reasons why the police have been so hard on Marijuana users is that its use has tended to take place in those delightful breeding grounds of anti-social act and attitude - the ghettos of our large cities. In the last few years, however, Marijuana has improved its social standing somewhat. Within the last two months I have personally been offered Marijuana by three separate couples - all up-standing, middle class, respectable people. In all three of these instances Marijuana performs in their social circles essentially the same function that alcohol performs elsewhere. It is smoked together for the pleasurable sensations that it gives, but very rarely to the point of intoxication.

Marijuana is now available on virtually every college campus and on many a high school campus. The use of Marijuana

(see p. 14)

MARIJUANA

(continued from page 1)

now permeates every segment of our culture. It is used by business men and ad executives, doctors and musicians, as well as housewives and teenagers - incasts and outcasts of society. The people who use it are usually those who already, for one reason or another, have reason to believe that the official morality is full of stuff and nonsense. It is very much a part of the moral ferment in our culture.

WHY DO PEOPLE USE IT ?

I don't want to eliminate those who use Marijuana because it is the "in" thing to do in a particular group. That happens. Some people use it as an escape, in the sense that when you are high and happy you are not worrying about the troubles that beset you. (Sounds suspiciously like the three martini lunch, yes?) But most of the people who smoke Marijuana do so because it is pleasant! The results of smoking Marijuana are a pleasant, euphoric "high". It is essentially a sensual experience. Touch, sound, sight, smell and taste are all very much heightened and intensified by the drug. Some people have negative experiences with it, just as some do with alcohol; but the physical effects for which people smoke Marijuana are essentially pleasurable, passive euphoria. The Marijuana smoker is typically not active. There have been allegations that it makes people want to commit sexual crimes. In fact, if anything, it depresses sexuality; although it does heighten the sensations of sexuality. Far from making people commit antisocial acts, Marijuana is an inhibitor of activity. Even during an anxiety period the Marijuana user is far more likely to talk than to act. They tend to sit fairly passively throughout the experience.

WHAT DOES THE FEDERAL NARCOTICS BUREAU SAY ABOUT MARIJUANA ?

Quoting from the 1937 pamphlet that is still the only document that the narcotics people pass out: "Marijuana is a most virulent and powerful stimulant. The physiological effect of this drug produces peculiar psychic exaltation and derangement of the central nervous system. The stage of exaltation and confusion, more marked in some addicts than in others, is generally followed by a state of depression.

"Sometimes the subject passes into a semi-conscious state, experiencing vivid and extravagant dreams which vary according to the individual character and mentality. In some the stage is one of self-satisfaction and well being. In others, it is alarming, presenting the fear of some imminent and indefinite danger, or of impending death. Later the dreams are sometimes followed by a state of complete unconsciousness. Sometimes convulsive attacks and acute mania are developed.

"The narcotic content in Marijuana decreases the rate of heartbeat and causes irregularity of the pulse -(it is interesting that the narcotics people have it exactly backwards - it does not decrease the rate of heartbeat, but increases it) - Death may result from the effect upon the heart.

"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 mental deterioration and sometimes produces insanity.

"While the Marijuana habit leads to physical wreckage and mental decay, its affect upon character and morality are even more devastating. The victim frequently undergoes such moral degeneracy that he will lie and steal without scruple; he becomes utterly untrustworthy and often drifts into the underworld where, with his degenerate companions he commits high crimes and misdemeanors. Marijuana sometimes gives man the lust to kill, unreasonable and without motive. Many cases of assault, rape, robbery and murder are traced to the use of Marijuana." And one wants to ask, "Who are they traced there by?" because none of the studies anywhere at all have ever been able to indicate any connection between the use of Marijuana and criminal activity. Put that in your pipe and smoke it!

(WHAT DO THE RESEARCHERS SAY?)

The earliest study of the use of cannabis was done in 1894, in India by the British. It is entitled "Report of the Indian Hemp Drug Commission." (Note: Cannabis is not used in quite the same way in India. Typically, instead of smoking it in the form of tobacco (marijuana), it is brewed or steeped into concoctions known as "ganga" or "bhange." The commission, after examination of 800 doctors, coolies, yogis, fakirs, heads of lunatic asylums, peasant users, tax gatherers, smugglers, army officers, hemp dealers, ganga palace operators and the clergy, admitted three things:

1. "There is no evidence of any weight regarding mental and moral injuries from moderate use of these drugs."
2. "Large numbers of practitioners of long experience have seen no evidence of any connection between the moderate use of hemp drugs and disease."
3. "Moderation does not lead to excess in hemp any more than it does in alcohol. Regular moderate use of 'gange' or 'bhang' produces the same effect as moderate or regular doses of whiskey. Excess is confined to the idle and the dissipated."

A few years later a pharmacologist by the name of Professor Walton did what was partly a collection of what information was available. He concluded that "the development of any specific fundamental organic change resulting from chronic use of these drugs has yet to be demonstrated." That was before the passage of our Federal marijuana legislation!

The definitive study, so far, of Marijuana was done by the Mayor's commission in New York, when there was a great deal of pressure being brought to bear on Mayor La Guardia to request anti-Marijuana legislation on behalf of the city of New York. Strange, honest man that he was he insisted upon some data first. He managed to get some money from a couple of foundations and called upon the New York Academy of Medicine to perform a research study on the effects of Marijuana. It was started in 1938 and was published in 1944, entitled "The Marijuana Problem in the City of New York." It is usually referred to as the Mayor's committee or the La Guardia Report. It was a two-pronged study. The first was a sociological study trying to determine the extent of the use of Marijuana, how you go about procuring it, what classes it occurs in, what factors seem to lead to use and what relation, if any, use of Marijuana had to anti-social behavior. The second part of the study was a clinical study, wherein they took 77 prisoners, inmates of one of the prisons, and ran a thorough, controlled experiment on them; on the physiological and psychological effects of Marijuana, whether it causes physical or mental deterioration and any possible therapeutic uses. A

(see p.15)

THE FREE UNIVERSITY ARCHIVES

By some accounts we're four years old and by others, two; our age and history depend on who's recounting it and on what version of the Free University he's referring to. We're young, but the people involved from the beginning are slipping away fast, and we're losing track of the roots and touchstones of this major but meandering experiment in now education.

To remedy this situation we've established, god help us, the Free University Archives, a growing collection of correspondence, publications, accolades and rather more hostile reviews charting the birth and growth of what is now the Midpeninsula Free University.

It is important, very important, that none of this material be overlooked; something is vital here, even if we're not always sure what. If you have an old newsletter or any other document, we would be grateful if you would either deed it to us or loan it for copying. Newspaper clippings, old catalogues or whatever - including those from SCORE, the Experiment and the antecedent Free University of Palo Alto - nothing is too negligible to be overlooked. In addition, we would appreciate current clippings from publications we might be overlooking; we're proceeding with recorded interviews with whatever early participants we can unearth.

If you have any material you think we might use - and please give us the benefit of the doubt - call the MFU, 328-4941, or leave a note in Fred Nelson's mailbox at the store.

(from p.14)

little less than half of this 77 had used Marijuana to one degree or another before; but, of course, having been in jail, had been off of it for anywhere up to two years. Several of these people had been using Marijuana regularly, prior to their arrests, for as many as twenty years. The committee was made up of 31 eminent physicians, psychiatrists, clinical psychologists, pharmacologists, chemists and sociologists.

It is a delightful document to read, partly because up until January of this year the only place you could find this document was in half a dozen Medical libraries around the country. It was nowhere else available. At the time of the Gunn High School "bust" I tried to get hold of a copy of it and it was not to be had anywhere in the Bay Area. It is the definitive study on the subject, and was made virtually unavailable.

The conclusions of the La Guardia Committee were the following:

1. Smoking Marijuana does not lead to mental or physical deterioration.
2. That the habitual smoker knows when to stop, as excessive doses reverse its usually pleasant affect.
3. Marijuana does not lead to addiction, certainly not in the medical sense. And while it is naturally habit forming, as cigarettes are, its withdrawal does not lead to the horrible withdrawal symptoms.
4. No deaths have ever been reported that can be ascribed to Marijuana. (Remember what the Narcotics Bureau said? "Death may result from the affect on the heart" - that's their conjecture. No deaths have ever been recorded that can be ascribed to Marijuana.
5. Marijuana is not a direct causal factor in sexual or criminal misconduct. (The report tried and tried and & tried but they could not find any connection at all, - an interesting section of the report.) Juvenile delinquency is not caused by Marijuana smoking, although (for obvious reasons, namely the ghetto concentration that I mentioned) they are often associated.
7. The publicity concerning the catastrophic effects of Marijuana smoking is entirely unfounded. Their 8th conclusion was that it was mord of a nuisance than a menace.

Now it's interesting that during the 1937 hearings before the house sub-committee on the proposed Federal anti-Marijuana legislation, the Marijuana Tax Act, Mr. Anslinger, then the head of the Federal Narcotics Board - he retired about 1963 - was asked by the congressman from Michigan "I'm just wondering whether the Marijuana addict graduates into a heroin or an opium or cocaine user". Mr. Anslinger: "No sir, I have not heard of a case of that kind, I think it is an entirely different class - the Marijuana does not go in that direction."

In 1955 before a similar Senate hearing Mr. Anslinger said that the "Marijuana addict is not a true addict. The real problem," he said, "is the heroin addict." The Senator then asked: "Now do I understand it from you that while we are discussing Marijuana, the real danger there is that the use of Marijuana leads many people, eventually, to the use of Heroin and the drugs that do cause complete addiction - is that true?" Mr. Anslinger: "That is the great problem and our great concern about Marijuana; that it eventually, if used over a long period, leads to heroin addiction." One wants to know what happened to Mr. Anslinger between 1937 and 1955, - because everything that happened between 1937 and 1955 indicates that it does not lead to heroin addiction." One wonders where Mr. Anslinger got his change of heart. Its a little hard to figure out.

In 1956 a book was published entitled "The Pharmacological Basis of Therapeutics" by Drs. Goodman and Gilman - their conclusions: "There are no lasting ill-effects from the acute use of Marijuana and fatalities have not been known to occur. Careful and complete medical and neuro-psychiatric examinations of habitues reveal no pathological condition or disorders of cerebral functions attributable to the drug. Although habituation occurs, psychic dependence is not prominent or as compelling as in the case of morphine, alcohol, or perhaps even tobacco."

And from the proceedings of the White House Conference on Narcotics and Drug Abuse, Sept. 27 and 28, 1962: "It is the opinion of the panel that the hazards of Marijuana per se that have been exaggerated and that long criminal sentences imposed on an occasional user or possessor of the drug are in poor social perspective. (That's an interesting euphemism!) Although Marijuana has long held the reputation of inciting individuals to commit sexual offenses and other anti-social acts, the evidence is inadequate to substantiate this. Tolerance and physical dependence do not develop and with drawal does not produce an abstinence syndrome."

As for the allegation that Marijuana leads to Heroin addiction the President's Commission on Law Enforcement stated, "There are too many Marijuana users who do not graduate to Heroin and too many Heroin addicts with no prior Marijuana use to support such a theory." Indeed, according to Anslinger's own testimony the only conclusion I've been able to draw from this discrepancy between 1937 in not producing Heroin addicts and in 1955 it does, is that to whatever de-

(see p.16)

(from p.15)

gree people do go from Marijuana to Heroin may very well be because since Marijuana is illegal it is available from the same "pusher" that also happens to be pushing heroin. Which is to say that going from Marijuana to Heroin may be because Marijuana is illegal, as much as because of anything else.

Again from the La Guardia Committee's report the section entitled "Emotional Reaction and General Personality Structure." "It is important to note that neither the ingestion of Marijuana or the smoking of Marijuana or the smoking of Marijuana digaretttes affects the basic outlook of the individual except in a very few instances, and then to a very slight degree. In general the subjects who are withdrawn and introversive stay that way while those who are outgoing remain so and so on. Where changes occur the shift is so slight as to be negligible. In other words reactions which are natively alien to the individual cannot be induced by the ingestion or smoking of the drug."

And finally this piece from Newsweek's recent article - in July - "The physical effects of Marijuana typically cause a slight increase in pulse rate, a slight reddening of the membranes around the eyes, although users sometimes become nauseated the drug characteristically increases the appetite. Death from the depressant effects of extremely large doses have rarely been reported. By contrast cirrhosis of the liver, heart conditions and other disorders brought about about by alcoholism claim 20,000 lives in the United States every year; (much less those caused by the use of alcohol behind the wheel.) And Dr. David H. Paulson, Chief of Psychiatric Services at Berkeley, says - "If I had to choose between alcohol and pot, I'd choose pot."

That is the verdict of the researchers. Place that over against the verdict of the Federal Narcotics Bureau, and you have an interesting conflict. Particularly college students today have begun to realize this is one subject about which the establishment has consistently lied. So what do you do with Marijuana? I would not, by any stretch of the imagination, wish to recommend that anyone should go out and try Marijuana, anymore than I would recommend to someone who did not drink that he ought, by all means, to go out and try some alcohol. It is something that you can live through life without - without being greatly impoverished. And, of course, as one jazz musician pointed out, Marijuana has one serious physiological after-effect, viz., that you can spend five years in jail, and that's pretty physiological.

Which brings us to the subject of the law.

The White House Commission on Narcotics and Drug Abuse recommended that the laws be moved over to the Federal Drug Administration and put under the same agency as the various other so-called dangerous drugs like LSD, the amphetamines, tranquilizers and these things. And if we've got to have Marijuana legislation - and it seems to frighten whiskey drinking America sufficiently that we're going to have to have some kind of Marijuana legislation - that's obviously the place for it. It has much more in common with LSD and peyote and some of these drugs, although very very mild by comparison, than it does with heroin, cocaine, morphine and these drugs.

The logical answer, of course, after reading through the research is that, if anything, we ought to have the same kind of legislation about Marijuana as we have about alcohol; viz., control of use and sale and production, and not prohibition. We learned under Prohibition a few things, I think, about trying to prohibit the general public from doing something that it can do within the privacy of its own home without getting caught. We don't seem to have translated that lesson very wisely into this particular case.

There seems to me to be no compelling reason why there should be any law at all against the use of Marijuana by adults. The laws ought to be, as they are with alcohol, against driving under their influence or doing anything else that would be stupid under their influence. To do anything that requires small muscle co-ordination and judgement is just as difficult under Marijuana as it is under alcohol. But then, we haven't had too much luck in convincing the American people that that's true either, have we?

I want to close with one piece from Alan Ginsberg. He is quoted as saying that among the younger poets of his own circle, "Almost everyone has experimented with it and tried writing something with it. It's all part of their poetic - no, their metaphysical education." Ginsberg moreover feels that "pot" is good for much of what ails the world. "I was talking to a Cuban once," he recalls, "and I asked him what the Castro policy was on Marijuana. He said Castro had burned down whole fields of it because Batista soldiers used to get 'high' on it and shoot the peasants. I don't think that's true, at least no because of Marijuana. So I said well, why doesn't Castro nationalize it as an industry and give it to his own soldiers? 'Ah, but the army wouldn't fight then!' the Cuban said." And Ginsberg's answer is: "And that's the whole point of Marijuana - it's a humanizing influence."

(ADDENDA)

ITEM: Over 50% of the American population is under the age of 25. From 50% to 70% of the use of marijuana is by the high school and college age group. From 50% to 70% of the arrests and imprisonments for possession of marijuana fall on the shoulders of those under the age of 30. Whisky-drinking middle-age imprisons pot-smoking youth.

Think about that.

ITEM: Headline 1964: Biologists discover molecular basis of learning. Dr. James McConnell reports that trained flatworms, when fed to untrained flatworms, make untrained flatworms smarter. Dr. Holger Hyden reports that rats can be made smarter by the injection of brain cell tissue from the trained rats. The molecular substance involved in these discoveries is Ribo Nucleic Acid, RNA.

ITEM: Headline, Washington, D.C., January 1, 1969.-Health, Education, and Welfare Officials announced today regulations controlling illicit use of amino acids. According to the new laws, DNA and RNA molecules can be administered only by government approved physicians in a government supported hospital.

Headline: HARVARD BLACKMARKET BARED IN RNA.

SMART PILL FAD NEW CAMPUS KICK.

- "Hey! Did you hear? There's a new shipment of Einstein RNA in the village."

- "I'm giving my wife some Elizabeth Taylor RNA for Christmas. Smuggled in from Mexico. We can all afford to learn new methods, right?"

- "I know it's against the law, but Willy is five years old and can't work quantum theory equations. So, in despair, I've connected with some Max Planck RNA."

ITEM: New York, April 1, 1969, A.P. - the newly organized micro-biological unit of the Health, Education and Welfare Dept., armed with paralysis spray guns and electron microscopes raided an RNA den last night. Over one hundred millionth of a gram of amino acid was seized. Agents estimated that the haul was worth close to \$800,000. Held on charge

(see p.19)

(from p. 16)

of being present on premises where illegal drugs were seized were a poet, a philosopher, and two college-age girls. H.E.W. agents tentatively labeled the contraband molecules as Shakespeare RNA, Socrates RNA, and Helen of Troy RNA. R. Wilhelm Phlympton, President of the American Psychiatric Association - Amino Acid Division, when notified of the raid, said: "Amino acids, RNA and DNA are dangerous substances causing illegitimacy, suicide and irresponsible sexuality. They should be administered only by psychiatrists in government hospitals or army research stations." The four alleged drug-cultists who were held in \$25,000 bail smiled enigmatically, but made no comment.

(This article was extracted from a sermon delivered last year by Michael G. Young, assistant minister of the First Unitarian Church, Palo Alto. Footnotes and a long excerpt from Allen Ginsberg have been omitted. Copies of the sermon may be obtained for 15¢ from the church office, 505 Charleston Rd., Palo Alto.)

Q

by Gail Teel

Several Free University members joined with Stanford's University Christian Movement (UCM) for a special tour of San Quentin State Prison, Wednesday, August 7, 1968. The group, organized by Beryl Ramsey of UCM, was escorted through the gas chamber, "botanical gardens", honor units, death row kitchens, asphalt "yards" and chapel. We then gathered in the "medium-custody" dining hall for discussion.

Mr. Sumner, Program Administrator of the South-West Housing Unit, led the tour and "question-and-answer" period following. The group responded immediately to the feeling that there was an acute lack of information. One young guest asked, "What's bad about this place?" The mechanical answer was "over-crowdedness and old buildings." With additional probing, the gap between theory and actuality could be seen. Of 3898 inmates, approximately 600 are unemployed and on the vocational waiting list. The Vocational Training schools included such areas as auto body, wood shop, leather, copper, jewelry work and painting. Each inmate has a case worker; each case worker is responsible for approx. 170 men. Rate of return to San Quentin is 50%.

With the recent change of management to "unitization", there has been established an "Inmate Advisory Committee", which is San Quentin's answer to the desperate need for inmate-staff confrontation. A select handful of inmates is allowed to meet regularly with Warden Nelson to present a "request". No other avenue for implementing change is available.

With total censorship of mail, the most promising source of communication seems to be through the librarian. With much reluctance, Mr. Sumner disclosed his name.

Several Free U. people managed to carry on a guarded conversation with three inmates. The common ground was exciting: problems of isolation, rejection, discrimination, the need for exploring new ways of communicating, accurate news information, radical activities, and the undeniable right to assemble. After several Free U people were "escorted" out for dropping Free U catalogs in cells of apparent sympathizers, the need for a breakthrough became evident. What can we, as a strong community interested in confronting the haunting issues our society is perpetuating and so rapidly creating? Is the risk of involvement worth it? What about the possibility of turning on one human being "tucked away" for a "debt to society", to the existence of a group of people deeply involved in ending the very apathy that leads to violence. I feel no less than a commitment for action is the next step. But I need help. If you feel any common grounds here and now, let's do it. Please call Marc or Gail at the Free U office, 328-4941.