

# **Prohibition: A Price Too High**

Ted Rogers  
April 18, 1997  
Basic Economics (Macro)  
Instructor Arthur E. Dycke  
Daytona Beach Community College

The war on drugs has reached epidemic proportion. A contagious boondoggle that wastes countless billions of dollars (more than \$100 billion in the 1980s) (Dilulio 53) and costs millions their lives and property. Non-jury property seizure from *suspects* of drug crime has become the incentive as agencies are keeping the *spoils* (Waldman 26). Many more people die every year as a result of the drug war, at home and abroad, than as a result of overdoses from illegal drug consumption ("The War" 36). It is for these deadly reasons, and the economic slow suicide of a drug prohibition that this, America's drug policy, must be re-thought. Drug prohibition, or the *war on drugs* as it is commonly known, is both morally and economically wrong. It is generally not difficult to separate the two, morality and economics, but in this area, drug (illicit) consumption, they are clearly intertwined. Perhaps morality and values play a much larger role in the American economy than the average citizen is aware.

The appointment of more judges to fill newly constructed courtrooms is big business. The building of new prisons is big business. The feeding, clothing, and maintaining of inmates is big business. The exploding number of new employees hired by the Department of Corrections is big business. In the view of many, these factors feed an already large armada of private and public agencies whose primary goal it is to keep drugs illegal to preserve profits and ensure job security and promotional opportunities. The results of making something that is consumed by so many millions of law abiding citizens, as the Alcohol Prohibition of the 1920's did, causes the prices of those products to go up. Thereby, automatically increasing profits, and in the case of "illegalizing" certain commodities, profiteers and black

marketeers and gangsters flourish. The products themselves become less reliable and impure. Many died as a result of the impurities found often in black market alcohol. Many die today as a result of drug prohibition in a multitude of prohibition related ways. The prices for drugs are artificially high which creates theft. This led *hard* drug addicts to steal an estimated \$7.5 billion in property in 1990 alone (Conrad 242). Pharmaceutical cocaine cost \$30. an ounce, on the black market (read street) \$1000. an ounce, and who knows what is in *that ounce*, perhaps a user's unplanned trip to an emergency room. Prohibition and the resulting use of dirty, shared needles is implicated in 10,500 cases of AIDS annually.

Drug law has recently been cited, again, as racist law, in both application and letter. Many newspapers, lawyers, and even the U.S. Sentencing Commission have noted the disparity in sentencing among drug offenders of different races. Disparity also arises in laws more severely written from one substance to another, seemingly reflecting the "color" of the user. The U.S. policy of prohibition (read *war on drugs*) has created an entirely new drug abuse industrial complex. "An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure," but state government funding is being diverted from schools and hospitals to build more prisons (Schaffer). Over 90% of the black men in Washington D.C., have arrest records and most of them for drug crimes, and that certainly affects their future prospects for equitable employment; resulting in angry, unproductive citizens on both sides of this issue. Will our children's future be one of prisoner or prison guard?

The costs of this boondoggle, of drug prohibition, is staggering. It cost between \$20,000. and \$30,000. dollars a year to house one prison inmate, with court cost and other factors totaled, it cost the taxpayer approximately

\$500,000 dollars to jail one drug offender, based on a ten year sentence including court costs (Schaffer). There were more than one million arrest of marijuana suspects in 1996. Our prison population has almost tripled since 1980. For this approach to work how many should we jail? Obvious to the world is the fact that illicit drugs are easily obtained. There has been vitually no results from this type of spending. The famous, or infamous depending on your viewpoint, National Commission on Marijuana and Drug Abuse (a.k.a. Shafer Commission or President Nixon's Blue Ribbon Panel on Drugs) reported in 1973 the annual drug war budget was almost \$800 million, noting a drastic surge, 1000% from 1969 - 73, (Conrad 240) in government resources being spent, that was *then*.

The roots of drug prohibition are first noted in the late 1800's, and are primarily rooted in racism. In various newspapers across the country it was often reported that minorities were *peddling dope* to American boys and girls. Samuel Gompers, President of the American Federation of Workers, the *AFL/CIO*, from 1886 - 1924, was fond of conjuring up terrible pictures of how Chinese opium peddlers enticed little boys and girls into becoming "opium fiends." Condemning them to spend their days in the back of laundry rooms, where their tiny lost souls would yield up their virgin bodies to their maniacal yellow captors (Schaffer). Some of the original laws prohibited only the Chinese from importing opium, not Americans, and in 1890 this law expanded to include that opium manufacture was also limited to Americans only. Congress prohibited the sale of alcohol and opium "to aboriginal tribes and uncivilized races," (Schaffer). This law eventually included Alaskans, Indians, Hawaiians, *railroad* workers, and immigrants at ports of enrty. A "New York Times" article reported that "cocaine niggers" were, under the influence of cocaine, able to "shoot"

better. The "Literary Digest" claimed that, "most of the attacks upon white women of the South are the direct result of the cocaine-crazed Negro brain." In 1902 an American Pharmaceutical Association report stated, "If the Chinaman cannot get along without his 'dope,' we can get along without him," (Schaffer). Harry J. Anslinger, appointed head of the Federal Bureau of Narcotics in 1931, predecessor of the DEA, continued his campaign well into the twentieth century by having his agents follow around jazz musicians, and keeping files on folks like Louis Armstrong and even Kate Smith, intending a large nationwide bust to grab headlines for himself (Herer 68) . Anslinger was largely responsible for the hemp plant becoming outlawed. In fact, Anslinger was not ousted until 1962 by President Kennedy. These practices are only a small fraction of the result of hatred based drug laws—primarily the exercise of racism, having negligible (at least unnoticed by the masses) economic consequences at the time. Malcolm X observed, it was much more difficult to get some prospective Muslims to quit tobacco than to quit dope. Malcolm also boldly observed the state's unjust interest in keeping man timid and weak.

The War Prohibition Act was enacted after America entered World War I, outlawing the manufacture of beer and wine after May 1, 1919 and outlawing all intoxicating beverages after June 30, 1919. America went dry under this act on July 1, 1919. The fighting, WWI, had actually stopped on November 11, 1918, Prohibition, the Eighteenth Amendment, took effect on January 20, 1920. Reverend A. C. Bane declared the nation, "redeemed by prohibition" (Szasz 48), "America will 'go over the top' in humanity's greatest battle.... struggling with the same age-long foe, we will go forth with the spirit of the missionary and the crusader to help drive the demon of drink from all civilization." Reverend Sam Small in 1917, spoke these

powerful words to the Washinton, D. C. Anti-saloon League's convention, "...you and I may proudly expect to see this America of ours, victorious and Christianized, become not only the savior but the model and the monitor of the reconstructed civilization of the world in the future." The Reverend Josiah Strong, coeditor of the magazine "The Gospel of the Kingdom," in 1914 (Szasz 47) wrote, "Personal Liberty is at last an uncrowned king, with no one to do him reverence. ...We are no longer frightened by that ancient bogey...."

The stated intention (Conrad 44) of the Harrison Act of 1914 was to create the Narcotics Division of the Internal Revenue Bureau's a bookkeeping department to supervise collection of tax stamp monies. Anslinger was appointed head of this department (Anslinger was also the former assistant Commissioner for Alcohol Prohibition. Police bureaucrats moved in (Conrad 44) with their own agenda. Creating an issue Congress could march behind—they began to *create* the need for huge subsidies for their enforcement agenda. The Harrison Act in effect led to drugs, previously freely traded, being kept legally out of reach for many. With harassment and humiliation commonplace, many reputable physicians' careers were destroyed. Over zealous Treasury agents and the media campaign alleging the evils of "dope" had arrived. Congress got much more than it had bargained for (so did the citizen taxpayer. In 1937 the Marijuana Tax Act was passed in ten weeks, (Conrad 36) a single bill without a roll call vote.

After over 150 years of federal encouragement the domestic hemp industry, in which American ingenuity gave American farmers a comparative advantage, was abruptly halted. As historian Thorold Rogers stated, "The favors of government are like the box of Pandora, with this important

difference; that they rarely leave no hope at the bottom.” First Lady Nancy Reagan said, “Any user of illicit drugs is an accomplice to murder.” Former U. S. government drug czar William Bennett said, “It [drug abuse] is a product of the Great Deceiver.... We need to bring these people in need the God who heals.” Indeed, in need of an education. Dr. Szasz (Szasz 49) states, “This role of universal religious-therapeutic saviorship seems to fit America’s collective spirit so perfectly that we have preserved the play intact, merely modernizing it. We have replaced the actors: liquor with cocaine, Christianity with Medicine. And we intensified the struggle by equipping the combatants with more powerful weapons: temptations more irresistible than man has ever known....” The anti-drug warriors’ crusade is one against evil(as perceived by the crusader. Dr. Szasz suggests, “It is a fatal weakness of prudential critiques of drug policy that they ignore the ‘religious’ character of the war on drugs” (“The War” 45).

The alcohol prohibition of the 1920’s did not stop Americans from drinking; in fact, the wording does not state *drinking*, it was aimed at manufacture and transport, and when it was repealed the *idea* of [drug] prohibition remained, manifesting itself in progressing criminalization of self-medication (Szasz 50). It is informative to note the words of physician and temperance reformer Dio Lewis (Szasz 25) protesting the arguments of the (alcohol) prohibitionist: he declared, “Every man has a right to eat and drink, dress and exercise as he pleases. I do not mean a moral right, but legal right.” “The drafters of the Volstead Act....” (providing enforcement for the Eighteenth Amendment), writes Szasz, “....*wanted* to prohibit *drinking*, but they did *not* outlaw it [drinking]. They were not interested in people transporting chemicals around in bottles, but that is exactly what they outlawed, the manufacture and transportation.

The history of non-medical drug use, and the development of policies in response to drug use, is some of the most fascinating study material in American history. The varying classifications of drugs, like alcohol, over time has changed, and often reflects racial and class attitudes. In short: “prohibition was in part a response to the drinking practices of European immigrants, who became the new lower class. Cocaine and opium were legal during the 19th century, and were favored drugs among the middle and upper classes. Cocaine became illegal after it became associated with African Americans following Reconstruction. Opium was first restricted in California in 1875 when it became associated with Chinese immigrant workers. Marijuana was legal until the 1930s when it became associated with Mexicans. LSD, legal in the 1950s, became illegal in 1967 when it became associated with the counterculture (Schaffer).”

A possible downside of ending the drug prohibition is the possibility of increased drug use, that is, the number of people using drugs or becoming addicted may increase; however this is very dubious if we study the Alcohol Prohibition, so states economist and Nobel laureate Milton Friedman, (in a television interview on a show entitled “America’s Drug Forum”) who has studied the Alcohol Prohibition. We are a health conscious nation; although 120 proof alcohol is available it does not sell as well as the same products of a lesser potency.

The DEA, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency, has recently published a manual for it’s agents on how to “hold your own in a drug legalization debate.” This manual states the case, as government expenditures, in the logic of; the amount spent to fight the war on drugs is nothing, or so

minuscule compared to other government expenditures and *therefore* should be left alone, even increased—not much of an argument (Schaffer). Some extremist religious figures would have us jail millions of our citizens, an impossible and far too costly policy, though at present this is at the direction we are headed. Perhaps the Messiah would build more prisons than schools and hospitals?

The Partnership For A Drug Free America has put out a pamphlet entitled: “The Wrong Message Of Legalizing Illicit Drugs,” stating that it is wrong to talk about drug policy reform, suggesting that debate itself encourages drug use and is therefore dangerous. We *are* in trouble when discussion becomes dangerous in and of itself! These organizations talk about the harm and crime “caused” by drugs, when most of this harm and crime is a direct result of the prohibition itself, prohibition’s history repeats itself as its costs grow exponentially. Most all arguments against drug policy reform are based in fear and misguided, though possibly well intentioned, moral arguments. The drug warriors’ position against drugs is based in fear of moral decline and devastation of culture and society (Ehrenfeld). This idea [*agenda*] has been around since the New World, a place where man, corrupted by the old world, was re-born uncorrupted (Szasz 33). The drug warrior simply cannot fathom living in a country that “sells,” or allows trade in drugs.

Positions against ending the drug prohibition claim that the Alcohol Prohibition was a success, that more *good* came from Prohibition than harm. George Santayana observed, “Fanaticism consists in redoubling your effort when you have forgotten your aim,” (Szasz 48). The “Atlanta Resolution,” a meeting 1994 meeting between the nation’s governors

spelled out the drug prohibitionist position: “We reject legalization, and other simplistic forms such as decriminalization, because it is morally reprehensible..... Prevention works: We have achieved real progress in decreasing drug use and in understanding what works. However, diminishing resources and public focus now threaten future success. Since the early 1990s there has been decreased attention to the drug issue and increased pro-drug and pro-legalization publicity. We must provide significantly greater resources... ..Effective drug policy requires investment in both supply and demand reduction.....”

The pros of ending the prohibition are many, the war on drug’s costs are too high. Lives and property are lost and destroyed. Citizens, taxpaying and law abiding, are transformed into criminals. Our government sends troops and coercion into other countries, supporting deadly regimes who *traffic* drugs. Wasting our tax dollars under the guise of stamping out (read eradication of nature) coca plants, hemp, and poppies as if these plants are criminals themselves, anthropomorphizing plants! The military police state budgets are over-bloated in an artificial domestic (read *War on the Constitution* / foreign war. More likely, Milton Friedman states, the prohibition is a drug “dealers” heaven. He explains, (my paraphrase) the government prevents any competition from the “little” guy. It takes fleets of airplanes, ships, lots of money, lawyers, and private armies to *traffic* in drugs. The government literally protects the illicit drug market.

Dr. Thomas Szasz says there is no such thing as a drug dealer, he ask if we would call an orange seller an orange *dealer*? The above noted “Atlanta Resolution” was an answer to the “Hoover Resolution,” a proclamation that many prominent Americans, including Federal judges, drug experts

and economists alike such as Milton Friedman, and Joseph McNamara endorsed. This meeting took place on February 26, 1992 at the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. This resolution calls for an objective Federal Commission to “review the evidence” on (read against) U.S. drug policy.

According to authors Herer and Conrad, and as addressed by news commentator Hugh Downs on ABC radio just prior to the Gulf War, cannabis or hemp, can be grown for fuel, possibly freeing us from fossil fuel dependency, something which the *electric car* can not. This “green” fuel industry would employ massive numbers of people and revolutionize the fuel production industry. Studies show that the hemp plant *is* capable of this, as no other plant in the world has been qualified to do on the necessary scale (Herer 47). Henry Ford built automobiles that he not only intended to fuel with “green” fuel but he built them from plants, as seen in “Popular Mechanics” magazine in December 1941, they were lighter and much *stronger* (ten times stronger) than their steel counterparts! As Mr. Downs pointed out, more important than the oil itself is the lives it cost to defend it. Additionally, in October 1916 the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Bulletin 404, reported that hemp hurds for paper could produce better paper and produce paper at a ratio of 4:1 per acre over trees. Also, hemp grows almost anywhere, and in some states can be grown more than once a year, it requires little to no maintenance, no pesticides, and leaves the soil in good shape for the next crop (USDA). This was demonstrated by our founding fathers, and shown in a film by the USDA in 1939 called “Hemp for Victory.” Let’s consider that hemp can and is being used now to a very limited degree, due to the fact that it’s illegal, in clothes, paper, medicine, and food. Hemp seed is second only to soy in providing protein, and

contains all essential proteins required to sustain life (Herer 43).

The economic benefits of a renewable fuel are abundant. The hemp industry is estimated to be able to supply all (in fact author Herer's organization has \$30,000. bet "on the table" if anyone can prove his research wrong) of our industrial needs, should fossil fuels and the cutting of trees be banned in order to "save the planet." Advantages are further gained by replacing many polluting oil based plastics, and the river killing dioxins needed for paper production. In fact, nylon and plastics giant Dupont, newspaper tycoon Hearst, and others, played major, though contemptible, roles in the banning of hemp in 1937 (Herer 26). Our founders would have little trouble imagining the power of this plant—up until 1850 the global economy sailed under "hempen sail."

The hemp industry, if once again allowed to flourish, is estimated conservatively to be worth \$500 billion dollars a year. In February 1938, again "Popular Mechanics" magazine praised the hemp plant (these articles were written before the ban and some published after the ban), and *American ingenuity*. The announcement of the hemp decortivating machine, as predicted by the USDA, caused this magazine to proclaim that hemp would now become a "billion dollar crop" (also the title of the article). The article touted the end of economic doom and gloom, and the return to full employment with this "new" labor intensive industry. There is much history about the hemp plant, nature's number one photosynthesizer (and those who are still trying to eradicate it).

The present state of this problem is revealed in President's Clinton's new 1997 *drug strategy*, which is this year's request of \$15.1 billion. There is no

change in the approach to the drug abuse problem. Despite the lessons from abroad and the past, this is a policy of *more of the same*. The budget for this war has been increasing on a constant basis ever year. After all these years, and incredible amounts of money, we simply puts our sons and daughters behind bars and effectively arrest the police from doing what we expect them to do, protect us from violent criminals. And drugs are just as available, if not more so, than ever before.

A “cult of drug disinformation” (Szasz 77) prevails. This rhetoric is illustrated by William Bennett, the nation’s first drug czar, appointed under President Bush, and a former U.S. Secretary of Education, when he suggested decapitating convicted drug dealers (“Perspectives” 15). When asked about a moral problem with such decapitations, Mr. Bennett said we should trust him(because he “used to teach ethics,” (“Perspectives” 15). He suggested adopting the policies of the Arabs, yet I would suggest that even with all the fingers and hands being chopped off the Arab lands still have plenty of shoplifters! Since few Americans would allow such policies the present direction is headed towards building three to four more prisons for every one we now have, fill them up with drug users and their “dealers,” and hope that works.

The war on drugs, like Prohibition in the 1920’s, has *produced* crime and enormous profits for the anti-drug crusader and drug dealer alike. Government agencies fight over turf and steal one another’s *profits* from (all too often unjust) seizure laws (Waldman 26). The “Report on the Enforcement of the Prohibition Laws” of the United States by the National Commission on Law Observance and Enforcement dated January 7, 1931 (the Wickersham Commission), which studied the Alcohol Prohibition in

1930 during Prohibition, appointed by President Hoover, noted *then* the rampant corruption of law enforcement, attributing it to the Prohibition. Prohibition enforcement, the report stated, was, at best, ineffective and, at worst, spawned law enforcement corruption on a grand scale. Prohibition was not a success and this report explained the reasons why. Drug Prohibition drives up the price of drugs, thus more black market profits and profiteers are created and with them more crime. Crime and the so-called “crimogenic” nature of drugs (as if to suggest that crime is the result of the pharmacology of the *illicit* drug (“Opium of” 34), has been the rallying cry of the prohibitionist. No, most of the crime commonly associated with drug use today is caused not by the use but by the prohibition. And most of the prohibition’s prisoners are simply users, “possessors.” Franklin Delano Roosevelt declared, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.” Perhaps more sage advice is that of the great Stoic philosopher Seneca when he said, “If you wish to fear nothing, consider that everything is to be feared,” (Szasz 59). Slowly however, people are starting to “wake up and smell the coffee” and are becoming influenced by an ever increasing dialog among America’s brightest and their natural American sense of fairness, of right and wrong.

The entire editorial staff of the magazine “National Review,” a conservative political magazine owned by William F. Buckley Jr., has come out in favor of drug legalization.

The states of California and Arizona have seemingly stunned the sleepy American *moral majority* by allowing, by popular vote, medical marijuana — as Uncle Sam races (millions of this year’s drug budget is earmarked to combat the *pro-legalization message*) to spend more of “someone else’s”

money to thwart those radical Californians (and Arizonians) who must have been duped by dangerous people whose sole agenda it is to get everybody “high.” We have, in all, not come very far, since the failed Eighteenth Amendment; except that, we are now spending, and losing, hundreds of billions of dollars every year. In 1973 President Nixon’s Shafer Commission noted that no one has systematically analyzed either the problem to be solved or the solutions to be employed. Thus the “party line” on drug policy remains—more of the same. Despite the fact that all major drug policy studies over the last 50 years recommended decriminalization (Schaffer); a reading of Prohibition’s “Wickersham Commission” report demonstrates these principles, though their recommendations do not (Alcohol Prohibition ended three years later). But the tolls of this albatross *will* greatly increase until it hits everyone so hard that a new approach to *drug abuse* will come to replace the present policy of prohibitionism.

Virtually all of the drug warrior’s positions are based in some misguided would-be moral argument, none of them can come to grips with the discussion on an economic basis. While it may make one appear “righteous” not to put a price on human life, this drug prohibition is killing thousands and those killings’ costs are in the countless billions.

Drug war spending by the U.S. taxpayer this year, 1997, will approach \$16 billion dollars. This funding increased 1000% between 1969 and 1973, in 1981 the budget was just under \$2 billion. Over \$125 billion has been spent since 1986, over \$100 billion was spent in the 1980’s. The American family paid \$14 billion in 1990 alone for prohibition enforcement, including related court costs, jail construction, and maintenance. Of that, (Conrad 242) state and local taxes paid \$5 billion and federal law enforcement \$4.2

billion, according to the GAO in 1991. Prison construction took \$2.5 billion, interdiction \$1.8 billion, and international enforcement \$512 million. Every American family paid out about “\$200 for that piece of the War on Drugs” (Conrad 242). Beyond the smoke and mirrors however, lie the hidden costs. As reported by Senator John Kerry’s Subcommittee on Terrorism and Narcotics hearings in 1988, there are secret CIA/NSA budgets. Add to that the medical costs of each drug related case (approximately 10,500 cases per year) of AIDS costing about \$100,000. each (Conrad 242) in medical expenses, totaling \$1 billion. These two factors added another \$121. to each family’s tax bill (Conrad 243). The legal economy loses approximately \$125 billion per year to the black market. Prohibition’s prisoners *would have* made in salaries another \$2 billion, instead the drug converts citizen taxpayers to inmates costing \$20,000. to \$30,000. per year. These factors (Conrad 243) bring the one year cost of prohibition to around \$150 billion, or \$2,136. per family.

The value of cannabis, or marijuana, harvested is the number one agricultural product, including livestock, in 37 states (Conrad 255). Marijuana generates more money than than 50% of all other agricultural product combined in twelve states, and exceeds, far exceeds, 100% of the value of all other agriculture in four states. Consumers spent, according to the U.S. Office of National Drug Control Policy, the ONDCP, \$352.7 billion (in constant 1994 dollars) on illicit drugs from 1988 - 1993, a six year period.

The *Economist* magazine, on April 2, 1988, reported (Conrad 243), “A small group of drug criminals now probably launders tax-free sums of over \$100 billion a year, more than the gross national products of 150 of the 170 nations of the world.” These estimates are likely too low, since DEA figures

for 1989 are \$55 billion on cannabis alone. Including the \$550 billion loss from the suppression of hemp and cannabis commerce, it is calculated (Conrad 243) that \$9,993. per family is drained out of the U.S. economy each year.

My view of this problem is one in the spirit of the American entrepreneur, capitalism, and a free market, putting any perceived position of moral superiority aside. A free market in *all* drugs would greatly enhance individual responsibility, and freedom. Marijuana should be freed from prohibition immediately. Thus signaling the end to all drug prohibition. We should be freed from the socialistic “therapeutic state” as Dr. Szasz calls it, thus allowing competition among doctors who keep people well. We would no longer have any debate over “physician assisted” suicide, but that’s another story. Farmer’s would be able to grow hemp again, thus helping themselves to a productive subsidy free life, and helping to clean our environment (air) at the same time. New hemp industries would surface sustaining long term employment and production. Freeing us from dependence on oil. This renewable resource would revolutionize agriculture. We may even become the agrarian nation our founding fathers believed we are. Taxpayers would not be paying for ridiculous rules against buying too much over-the-counter cold medicine in Wal-Mart (a new development, DEA sponsored), enforced by armies of police, like the DEA. Chemical giants, pharmaceuticals, and big tobacco would lose their death grip from our society simply by our own change of attitude (toward individual, personal responsibility. America can and would eventually take care of herself. As E. L. Tuveson cautions in his book Redeemer Nation (Szasz 34), “To assume that what is good for America is good for the world, that saving the United States is saving mankind, is to open up a large area

of temptation.... The danger in all this is evident." Szasz points out, (Szasz 33) "Our quest for a free society and a utopian moral order is self-contradictory." Lysander Spooner declares in his Vices Are Not Crimes, (Szasz 44) "*Vices* are those acts by which man harms himself or his property. *Crimes* are those acts by which man harms the person or property of another." Fewer would die, and fewer would be bankrupted. Police would be freed to pursue real criminals, not overly consumed with protecting me from myself in federal and state court rooms. Our judicial system would be "unhandcuffed" from prescribing "treatment" and corruption in law enforcement would dwindle comparatively. This new attitude, or attitudinal adjustment in America, would put most attackers of our Constitution back where they belong, either in a closet afraid to come out or in Red China—I would say Russia but their ideas did not work there either, nor will they ever work.

The monies saved and made by ending the drug prohibition would be spent on programs for low-income families and children, which have effectively reduced both crime rates and health care costs (Conrad 243). Schools, hospitals, and employment programs could be funded. "Offering an additional \$500 million in Job Corps' work training in 1987 would have saved \$9 billion in costs to society for crime, use of public welfare programs and other expenses. Investing \$3,100. per year saves \$15,000. per year for prison," says author Chris Conrad. Funds would also become available for paying down the deficit. Billions upon billions of U.S. dollars would be saved for better purposes, or simply returned to the taxpayers in the form of tax cuts. At least, American families would have *their* money back in *their* pockets to provide for their own needs and charities as they saw fit. A greater spirit of cooperation with other countries would prevail once we as

a government gave up our long-standing role as world policeman, savior, and redeemer. All these things I believe would bring employment, productivity, great prosperity, and unity upon our nation; unlike the divisiveness and devastation—like a murderous thief and a liar—the war on drugs has brought upon us.

The Constitution, indeed the law of our land, gives the individual the right to property, “In its larger meaning, it [property] embraces everything to which a man may attach a value... [and includes that] which individuals have in their opinions, their religion, their passions and their faculties,” James Madison wrote. The Ninth Amendment of the Constitution states that the enumeration of certain rights is not meant to disparage or deny other rights retained by the people. When this was written, all drugs were completely free to be consumed and traded, free from government regulations and interventions. The drugs as property right conception is the capitalist’s view of the relationship between individual and state, incompatible with that of the socialist (Szasz 110).

Paternalistic government has overstepped its authority—has become unfit for freedom (in prohibiting drugs from being sold in a free market economy. Only people can be *committed* to freedom, government can only be *fit* for it. And “government has a vested interest in enlarging its freedom of action thereby necessarily reducing the freedom of individuals,” (Szasz 14). Making certain drugs *illegal* is a communistic idea of property rights, the state’s “property rights.” We attempt to give (or have taken from us) our rights to an alliance between the state and medicine, that the “deadly embrace of the therapeutic state” may “solve our existential tasks of living and dying for us” (Szasz 151). The drug war is immoral and most

importantly unconstitutional.

Morals are something for free, adult individuals to choose for themselves, not to be coerced into by their government, particularly if they are Americans. The right thing to do is to end the drug war, stop drug prohibition, and free Americans from prisons and ignorant attitudes toward self-medication and the intolerance of a few. Enforcing the agendas of prohibition on a “free” people—Americans—has created a backlash of lost freedoms (loss rights) and crime, crippling our police and judiciary, and casts personal responsibility, temperance, and moral stamina to the hounds. The war on drugs has fragmented our society, white militias, black uhuru (freedom), the Unabomber, dividing *its* victims, a war from which *no one* escapes.

The economics of the drug war plunders the nation’s budget, a reckless waste of billions of dollars every year. This war is immoral in that it denies what is right, that right of liberty inalienable to a free people to have and make free choices about their own body and life. For liberty *is* the choice to do right or wrong. The government by, for, and of free people becomes a leftist oligarchy when it prohibits the choices of consumption. It bankrupts its victims economically, spiritually, and morally. It is unconstitutional at its core in that it denies the American rights of private property and privacy, keystones of capitalism. To shake off this albatross is to regain freedom and keep the American ideal intact; not to is to condemn the children of a free people to a destiny of servitude and dependency to the state and, ultimately, to choose between real reform or revolution.

## Works Cited

Conrad, Chris. Hemp: Lifeline To The Future. Los Angeles: Creative Expressions, 1994: 36+44+240+242-243+255.

Dilulio, John J., Jr. "Cracking Down." The New Republic. 10 May 1993: 53+56.

Ehrenfeld, Rachel. "The Movement To Legalize Drugs in the United States: Who's behind It?" Townhall, 9 June 1996: Internet site: <http://www.townhall.com/crc/trends/ot00596.html>.

Epstein, Aaron. "Are Sentencing Parities Different for White and Black Offenders?" Knight-Ridder/Tribune News Service. Newsbank/CD-ROM, Knight-Ridder Washington Bureau, 8 Feb. 1996: 3.

Herer, Jack. The Emperor Wears No Clothes. Van Nuys: Hemp/Queen of Clubs, 1995: 26+43+47+68.

"Just Say Whoa." Time. 19 Nov. 1990: 91.

Morganthau, Tom., and Mark Miller. "The Drug Warrior." Newsweek. 10 April 1989: 22.

"Perspectives: Overheard." Newsweek. 26 June 1989: 15.

"Opium of the People: The Federal Drug Store." National Review. 5 February 1990: 34+36-38+40.

Schaffer, Clifford A. "The Schaffer Library of Drug Policy." The Schaffer Drug Policy Library, 20 April 1997: Internet site:  
<http://206.61.184.43/schaffer/index.htm>

Szasz, Thomas. Our Right to Drugs: The Case for a Free Market. New York: Praeger, 1992: 14+25+33+41+44+4850+59+77+110+116+118+120+122+151.

"The War on Drugs is Lost." National Review. 5 Feb. 1990: 35-36+45.

Timms, Ed. "Debate on Drugs: As Number of Offenders in Prison Rises, Disparity in Penalties Creates Controversy." The Dallas Morning News. Newsbank/CD-ROM, 17 Dec. 1995: 1.

Waldman, Steven., Mark Miller, and Richard Sandza. "Turf Wars in the Federal Bureacracy." Newsweek. 10 Apr 1989: 26.