

The Planned Legalisation of Cannabis in Germany Is Not Scientifically Justified

Young People's Fears of Life are Numbed and Intensified by Drug Abuse and Addiction

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Global Research, October 19, 2021

Region: [Europe](#)

Theme: [Global Economy](#)

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Why are our children involved with drugs? Because the drug trade is a good business with big profits.

If there wasn't much to be made from it, parents wouldn't have to worry, young people wouldn't get their hands on drugs and would perish from them, the market would be empty (1).

However, the legalisation of cannabis demanded in Germany by the Green, Liberal and Social Democratic parties could trigger an economic boom. The state coffers would profit from the most commonly consumed illegal drug in the country; that is, the state would become a dealer. Therefore, the demand for legalisation is purely political and not scientifically justified.

Against the background of recent studies on the severe psychological “collateral damage” of Corona measures among the young generation, legalisation of the gateway drug cannabis is even less to be advocated than in previous decades. The state-imposed restrictions such as lockdowns, “social distancing” and the prohibition of school attendance, musical and sporting activities led to a sharp increase in depression, anxiety disorders and feelings of loneliness in 2020, especially in this age group (2). This precarious emotional basis must under no circumstances be anaesthetised and intensified by the use of easily available illicit drugs and because of the danger of addiction. The consequences for those affected and their family and social environment would be devastating. Personal experience as a father, teacher and psychologist with young people at risk of and addicted to drugs in Germany and Switzerland confirms my independent scientific argumentation.

What would it be like if your child took drugs?

“I am a very normal mother of very normal children – but I am also the mother of a former drug addict.” With this sentence, a mother from a group of parents of drug-

endangered and drug-addicted youths begins her talk. And she continues:

“Yet my husband and I, certainly like the vast majority of young parents, had such a beautiful dream of a family, of our family. Our home should be filled with love, with joy, trust, care, stability and warmth. We were ready and willing to do everything to make that a reality. We also experienced our dream coming true...until...until it turned into a nightmare overnight. Love became blackmail, joy became anxiety, trust became mistrust, care became worry, stability became vulnerability and warmth became fear. (...) We could not imagine at all that one of our children would use drugs or become addicted to drugs.” (3)

Legalisation is in the air

The concerned mother’s talk was entitled “Can you imagine what it would be like...if your child took drugs?” and was given on 11 November 1985. It was the time of a veritable drug glut that had been spreading like an avalanche in Europe since the sixties with the help of a strongly propagated drug ideology. And what is the situation in Germany today, thirty-seven years later? Do parents have to worry?

Yes, they do! Not only the three possible government parties are beating the advertising drum for an immediate legalisation of cannabis. According to “SPIEGEL” of 13 October, a Brandenburg district judge and cannabis activist also thinks: “Legalisation is in the air” (4). German police unions, on the other hand, warn urgently against legalisation (5). With a liberalisation of drug policy, abusive use will not be curbed but, on the contrary, expanded. Even an argumentation of the advocates of legalisation that plays down the health risks has a negative effect.

Cannabis – an intoxicating substance hazardous to health

“Smoking pot” is the scene term for inhaling cannabis or marijuana (crushed leaves or parts of the whole plant) and hashish (the pressed resin of the flowers). Cannabis contains at least four intoxicating cannabinoids (chemical substances). The best known with the largest share in producing intoxication is tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). The dangerous property of cannabinoids is their fat solubility. This means that they are deposited in the human fatty tissue – especially in the peripheral nervous system, in the brain and in the reproductive organs – and develop their effect there.

Since the cannabinoids are broken down and excreted from the body only very slowly, there is an accumulation of toxins. Thus, it takes three days to a week until only half of the THC from a single marijuana cigarette is broken down and excreted. It has been scientifically proven for many years that marijuana damages the lungs, the heart, the immune system, the genetic material, sexual development, embryonic development during pregnancy, the brain and triggers psychoses. For this reason, 184 states – including Germany – have committed themselves in the United Nations Convention on Narcotic Drugs to allow the use of cannabis and other drugs exclusively for medical or scientific purposes. Moreover, the effects of the drug on an adolescent in puberty are completely different and much more harmful than on adults (6).

All these scientific findings have been known for decades and are undisputed among serious experts. An expert article on cannabis consumption entitled “Kiffen vergiften die kreativsten Köpfe” (Smoking pot poisons the most creative minds) by Professor Holm-Hadulla, a

specialist in psychiatry, psychosomatic medicine and psychotherapy, also confirms the previous findings. (6) In it, Holm-Hadulla quotes, among other things, the respected professional journal “New England Journal of Medicine”, which in 2014 summarised and evaluated the scientific data on cannabis consumption and came to alarming conclusions:

“Frequent use of today’s high-dose cannabis products doubles the risk of psychosis. Damage to brain development, which is accompanied by disturbances of motivation, concentration and memory, is considered scientifically proven. (...) Cannabis use during puberty is particularly dangerous. This phase of life is particularly vulnerable because of the neural rebuilding processes that take place during this time. That is why it is disastrous when adolescents start smoking hashish and marijuana and drinking large amounts of alcohol at the age of twelve or earlier. (...) Besides brain changes and psychotic illnesses, cannabis can lead to less obvious but still serious developmental impairments. (...) Thus, cannabis does not serve the emancipatory striving for independence, but the resigned insertion into existing grievances.” (7)

Factors leading to drug use

The decision to use drugs depends on various factors. One of the most decisive is their availability. If there were not very much to be earned from drug dealing, parents would have no worries. The young person would not get hold of drugs and would perish from them, the market would be empty. Furthermore, the already mentioned attitude of the population, especially that of parents and teachers towards drug abuse is of great importance - i.e. the social acceptance or non-acceptance of drugs. Social acceptance means for young people that the drug is harmless and that they can experiment with it. Lack of education, trivialisation or even propagation of drugs lowers the inhibition threshold for getting started. That is why a legal ban is important. It represents a cliff for the young person and thus a protection against sliding into abusive drug use.

One reason for the spread of addiction is the direct personal (i.e. psychosocial) contagion between a drug user and a newcomer due to peer pressure. Especially during puberty, a time of searching for self-discovery, for one’s own identity and a time of trying out new ways of behaving, peers become more and more important for the individual besides parents and teachers. Strengthening the young person’s personality and self-esteem at an early age in the family and at school is therefore the greatest protection. He is then able to say no when drugs are offered to him (8).

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This article was originally published on the author’s blog site, [NRhZ-Online](#).

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Notes

(1) This article is an update and partial supplement of a corresponding article in the “Neue Rheinische Zeitung” (NRhZ) No. 531 of 7.10.2015 “Wie wäre es, wenn ihr Kind Drogen

nähme" <http://www.nrhz.de/flyer/beitrag.php?id=22110>

(2)

<http://www.nrhz.de/flyer/beitrag.php?id=27727>, <https://www.rubikon.news/artikel/das-wagnis-des-wissens>

(3) Lecture by Ms. Elsa Meyer on 8.11.1985. Published in the EK Schriftenreihe No. 1 of the Elternkreis drogengefährdeter und drogenabhängiger Jugendlicher e. V., Bonn.

(4)

<https://www.spiegel.de/panoramajustiz/cannabis-wie-richter-and...cannabisaktivisten-wurde-a-e4ecb378-1419-4980-be54-5a642fae80d9>

(5)

<https://www.spiegel.de/panorama/gesellschaft/cannabis-polizeige...warnen-vor-legalisierung-a-6492feda-b3b6-4e1d-9fe9-9696eaa4a8e0>

(6) <http://www.nrhz.de/flyer/beitrag.php?id=22110>

(7) op. cit.

(8) op. cit.

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