

6 The Indian Hemp Drug Debate

Written by Ernest L. Abel
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India was one of England's most lucrative colonial ventures. The English gentry made fortunes several times over from their investments in India. Exploitation of natural resources was assumed whenever European countries established territorial rights, and Parliament usually gave its blessing to any such enterprises in expectation of sharing in windfall profits.

Sometimes, however, despite the most stringent economic, social, and political regulations imposed on the native peoples of another country, business ventures failed. Such was the case with the British East India Company. The problem was not that the company did not make money—its profits were enormous. But many of the company's top executives were not adverse to pocketing a little extra money at the company's expense. Consequently, while the fortunes of the company's managers skyrocketed, the profits of the company and its stockholders plummeted. By 1770, the finances of the British East India Company were in such a dismal state that it was forced to ask Parliament for a loan so that it could avert bankruptcy.

Parliament debated the issue of extending money to such a poorly managed enterprise for some time, but finally agreed to underwrite such a loan. On condition—the company had to place its operation under direct Parliamentary control.

The company's directors had no other recourse. They had to agree. As soon as the arrangements were made, Parliament began to examine various options to get its money back and then some. Among the suggestions subsequently adopted was a tax directed at India's intoxicating hemp drugs, namely bhang, ganja, and charas.

According to the new law which came into effect in 1798, no one was permitted to manufacture or sell hemp drugs without first obtaining a license from the Zillah, the administrative office set up to collect such revenues. Such a regulation was adopted, the law stated, "with a view to check immoderate consumption, and at the same time to augment the public revenue."

Although professing altruistic motives, the fact that the law also included substances such as tobacco and toddy in its list of taxable drugs indicates that the legislation was clearly motivated by economic considerations. Any thought for the welfare of the people of India was merely

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lip-service to pacify a small coterie of native Indian bureaucrats and the few English government workers who felt that widespread abuse of hemp drugs was endangering the population.

Among those who believed that hemp drugs were ruining the country was the governor general. Drugs such as charas and ganja, along with opium and alcohol, "are of so noxious a quality, and produce a species of intoxication so extremely violent," he warned, "that they cannot be used without imminent danger to the individual as well as to the public."² The sale of all such drugs, he urged, ought to be totally prohibited in India. Poverty, ignorance, disease, crime, political corruption, all of which were endemic to the country, were attributed to drug abuse, especially bhang, ganja, and charas.

The Board of Revenue met to consider these allegations but decided that the dangers to the country and its people were not so dire as the governor general implied, and decided that if curtailment were in the best interests of the country, such curtailment ought to be achieved through taxation. These drugs, it declared, "are not for the most part represented as producing any very violent or dangerous effects of intoxication except when taken to excess . . . we do not recommend that the sale of any of them be altogether prohibited, but shall proceed to state what appears to us the best means of restricting the use of them, and improving the revenue by the imposition of such taxes as are best adapted to the nature of the cause."³

Such measures were routine answers to the country's problems. Back in England, thousands of miles away, Parliament's main interest in India was how to extract more money from the country. The people could intoxicate themselves as much as they liked. As long as England profited from their intoxication and the country remained peaceful, Parliament could not have cared less.

England, in fact, was one of the world's main drug suppliers and cannabis was but a minor revenue-generating resource. The big money lay in opium, and India grew more opium than any other country. Thousands and thousands of pounds of opium were offered annually at public auctions to English merchants who bought the drug and resold it to the Chinese at an enormous profit. When the Chinese government tried to stop the flow of opium into the country, England sent gunboats into Chinese waters to protect British interests. Revenue, not altruism, was Parliament's concern.

In 1838, a survey of the agricultural products raised in East India was conducted under the auspices of the British government. In the course of his report, the official in charge of the

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survey noted that despite the taxes on ganja, it was still used daily by the natives. Furthermore, the drug was being sold illicitly in many places and the colonial office suggested that perhaps India's hemp drugs ought to be banned outright.

Parliament responded in its own inimitable fashion. It considered how to get more taxes out of the people. Since the revenues were not so great as had been anticipated, a new method of taxation was imposed, one based on the weight of drug sold instead of on potency. When this tactic failed to generate any noteworthy increases to the treasury, the overall tax was boosted once more.

In the meantime, Parliament began hearing reports that Sepoys, native Indian soldiers serving in the British army, were using ganja and, as a result, the efficiency of Her Majesty's armed forces was being un-dermined.

Criticism started mounting from other directions as well. Bhang, it was said, was causing indigestion, coughing, melancholy, impotency, insanity, idiocy, and most alarming of all, crime.

Behind the rising complaints against the drug was the nuisance, to England at least, of growing Indian nationalism.

In 1870, the financial secretary of the government of India added his voice to the growing condemnation of cannabis: "Every lunatic asylum report," he stated, "is full of instances of insanity and crime due to the use of ganja."⁴

Surprisingly, little was ever said against bhang or charas. For one thing, bhang was rather weak. It was a beverage consumed as nonchal-antly as a cup of tea. A sizable quantity of bhang would have to be consumed before any serious effects would be experienced.

Charas was a different story altogether. It was the most potent of the three cannabis drugs, and one might expect that if any of these three would be accused of inducing abnormality, it would have been charas. But charas was also the most expensive of the three. It could only be afforded by the wealthy. Hence, the number of those using it to excess was comparatively few.

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Moreover, should a situation arise in which some well-to-do user did require special attention, relatives and friends could afford to keep him out of the public eye.

Ganja, on the other hand, was potent, not very expensive, and popular. Those who enjoyed it usually came from the lower classes. If they ran afoul of the law, there was no one to speak up for them. Generally, they were either thrown into jail or into an insane asylum.

When the outcry against cannabis could no longer be brushed aside, India's local administrators were instructed to look into the charges that cannabis was inciting the natives to criminal acts and insanity. On October 10, 1871, the secretary to the government of India issued a directive in which he stated the conditions that had prompted the inquiry and informed the administrators what they should concern themselves with:

It has frequently been alleged that the abuse of ganja produces insanity and other dangerous effects.... you will be so good as to cause such investigations as are feasible to be carried out in regard to the efforts of the use or abuse of the several preparations of hemp. The inquiry should not be simply medical but should include the alleged influence of ganja and bhang in exciting to violent crime.⁵

The study was conducted without a great deal of fanfare and the report was submitted to the central office. After sifting through the correspondence, the government issued a statement to the effect that there was no proof that cannabis drugs specifically incited criminal activities to a greater degree than did any other drugs. On the insanity issue, the government admitted that while there was "no doubt that its habitual use does tend to produce insanity, the total number of cases of insanity is small in proportion of the population, and not large even in proportion to the number of ganja smokers. . . ."6 No doubt a major consideration in weighing the evidence was that a substantial revenue from the taxes imposed on cannabis was finally beginning to be realized.

While local officials continued clamoring that cannabis was ruining the country, British lawmakers contended that total prohibition would only lead to contraband use. The only way to reduce consumption, the government asserted, was to increase the cost of these drugs to consumers. Such impositions, it admitted, would also raise more income for Her Majesty's coffers.

Local administrators refused to be silenced, however, and in 1877 enough pressure was brought to bear upon the cannabis issue that a special task force was commissioned to look into

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the problem. Once again the government admitted that excessive use of cannabis drugs was harmful, and once again it insisted that the only way of reducing consumption was by increasing "the tax on this article as high as it can possibly bear. . . . The policy of Government must be to limit its production and sale by a high rate of duty without placing the drug entirely beyond the reach of those who will insist upon having it."⁷

THE INDIAN HEMP DRUGS COMMISSION

'Thus far, most of the demands for something to be done about the alleged cannabis problem in India had come from local native administrators. These officials were drawn primarily from the middle and upper classes, and although sincere in their beliefs about the dangers associated with cannabis drugs, they viewed the issue from the point of view of class distinction. To these observers, it was not that the lower classes were poor and destitute, not that their opportunities for betterment were minimal if not nonexistent, not that they lived in squalor and often had to beg or steal to feed themselves and their families, not that they were placed in insane asylums because of failing health due to inadequate nutrition or disease. Instead, all these problems were blamed on the use of ganja and other hemp drugs.

By 1890, however, more and more of the English bureaucracy stationed in India were starting to agree with their local underlings and they began to express their feelings in the newspapers. These statements could not be ignored or dismissed as the exaggerated claims of ignorant native administrators. Nor could they be brushed aside as the rantings of a rabble of dissidents whose criticism of British policy, whatever it might be, was their only interest. The authors of these statements were respectable English gentlemen and as such they attracted attention from other respectable English gentlemen.

Because these statements were issued by English administrators and not Indians, they received a certain amount of attention in England. The ganja menace, at it was being called, eventually caught the attention of the Temperance League, and one of the leaders of that movement, who also happened to be a member of Parliament, requested Lord Kimberley, secretary of state for India, to form a commission to inquire into the cannabis issue in India with a view to determining whether cannabis should be prohibited altogether in that country. Kimberley agreed, and on March 16, 1893, he ordered such a commission to be appointed.

The committee that was finally chosen was composed of four English and three Indian members. Its mandate was extensive. It was to study the method used to cultivate cannabis, the

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kind of drugs made from the plant, and the effects of their consumption on the moral and social life of the people of India. In keeping with Parliament's primary concern, namely revenues, the committee was also instructed to inquire into "the various systems employed for taxing the drugs or cultivation of the plant . . . with special reference to the comparative incidence of this taxation in different parts of India and to the comparative efficacy of the taxation imposed in restricting consumption.... "8

Once they had dealt with the taxation issue, the committee members were to give special attention to two points:

The first of these is the danger lest prohibition, or restrictive measures of a stringent character, may give rise to serious discontent, and be resented by the people as an unjustifiable interference with long-established social custom.... It is believed that in some parts of the country bhang is, in a special degree, the poor man's narcotic and the possible unpopularity of a measure which would deprive the very poorest of the population of the use of a narcotic to which they have always been accustomed should not be over-looked.

Another point to which the attention of the Commissioners should be directed is the probability or possibility that, if the use of hemp drugs is prohibited, those who would otherwise continue to use them may be driven to have recourse to alcohol, or to stimulants or narcotics which may be more deleterious.⁹

Further directives required the commission to recommend "reforms and improvements ... for controlling the cultivation of the hemp plant, and the manufacture, sale, and taxation of hemp drugs," should the evidence warrant the prohibition of any cannabis preparation. On this score, the commissioners were advised that "absolute prohibition, or repressive measures of a stringent nature, may involve inquisitorial proceedings of an unpopular character, and afford opportunities for the army of blackmail.... nio

The commission met on August 3, 1893, and remained in session until August 6 of the following year. During this time, it received written and oral testimony from 1193 witnesses from all provinces of India. These witnesses were either summoned directly or were sent by local authorities to give testimony. A number of witnesses also gave voluntary evidence.

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Few of those who appeared before the commission had expertise in any matter about which they gave testimony. Most were individuals who were supposed to know something about the effects of cannabis drugs because of contact with people who used them. Very few were, or admitted to being, actual users of cannabis drugs.

The majority of the witnesses were English and native physicians, civil and medical officia, magistrates and policemen, farmers, traders, and missionaries. The evidence which they gave consisted of their an-swers to carefully worded questions prepared by the commission.

So that the commissioners could better evaluate the answers re-ceived, all witnesses were requested to indicate the source of their in-formation and how they had arrived at their opinions and statements.

Furthermore, the commissioners also made on-the-spot visits throughout the country to inspect firsthand, the role of hemp drugs in the lives of the people of India.

The commission's findings were recorded and published in a mas-sive seven-volume report. While it is not possible to summarize the entire text, some of the more interesting conclusions are noteworthy:

Extent of Use. Although ganja was the main revenue-generating cannabis drug, bhang, which was not subject to taxation, was the most popular of the three cannabis drugs and was the most widely used drink among the Hindus.

Among the reasons cited for its popularity was that it was cheap, not very potent, and that it did not produce unpleasant effects even after consumption of large quantities. Charas, by contrast, was very expen-sive and could only be afforded by people of better means.

Usage of charas and ganja, the commission noted, was actually declining among the upper classes as a result of its rising cost. In its place, a newly acquired taste for alcohol, which sold at a substantially lower price, had begun to develop among the well-to-do.

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Social and Religious Usage. Although none of the religious books of India required devotees to use cannabis drugs, there was a long-standing tradition of such usage in connection with religious ceremonies throughout the country. Ganja was especially associated with worship of the god Siva. Devotees of this cult believed that ganja was a special attribute of this god and their partaking of ganja in connection with his worship was akin to communion in the Catholic church. The same held true for the Sikh religion. During a holiday called Dasehra, every Sikh was required to drink bhang in commemoration of the founder of the Sikh religion, Gobind Singh.

Effects. To the commission's surprise, neither the native nor the European witnesses had any real knowledge or familiarity with cannabis's effects. Casual users of these drugs could not be readily identified. Moderate users were generally unknown except to those who also used these drugs. Since it was not customary to use cannabis drugs in the presence of someone considered to be inferior, few witnesses would admit using or knowing users of these drugs. The only users who were easily identifiable were the public inebriants who usually appeared intoxicated and dissipated.

Despite the fact that most witnesses readily admitted being unfamiliar with the effects of moderate usage of cannabis drugs, the commission was astounded to find them more than willing to express dogmatic opinions.

Some witnesses know only the medical use of the drugs and are prepared to say nothing but good of them, being really ignorant of their use as intoxicants. There are also witnesses who do not know the use of the drugs as intoxicants, but know only moderate use. They have nothing to say of the drugs as would be said of alcohol by the man who only had seen a glass of wine taken at his own table or at the table of a friend. He knows nothing of the effects of excess. Others again have only experience of excessive consumption. The moderate consumer has not attracted their attention. The ruin wrought in certain classes by excess alone attracted their attention. They feel towards these drugs as that man feels towards alcohol whose experience had been mainly gained among the social wrecks of the lowest parts of a great city."

Any understanding of cannabis's effects, the commission concluded, had to take into account frequency of usage and potency of preparation. Furthermore, the fact that cannabis drugs also contained other substances such as opium, datura, and hyoscyamis, made it extremely difficult to determine whether the adverse effects attributed to ganja and charas were valid. With respect to addiction, the commission noted that while most witnesses believed that moderate

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usage eventu-ally developed into excessive usage, this belief was based primarily on a general opinion that such progression occurred for all intoxicants.

Adverse Physical Effects. Few witnesses were willing to state that moderate use of cannabis drugs was harmful to the body. On the other hand, most witnesses stated categorically that excessive consumption was dangerous. The evidence for this assertion, as was the case for most of the claims the commission heard, was based on casual observation of very few heavy users. In fact, the commission was singularly impressed with the dearth of such claims. "The most striking feature of the medical evidence is perhaps the large number of practitioners of long experience who have seen no evidence of any connection between hemp drugs and disease . " 12

Adverse Psychological Effects. The alleged connection between can-nabis and insanity was a particularly controversial issue. Although most asylum superintendants stated categorically that excessive cannabis usage led to insanity, the commission noted that these officials "know nothing of the effects of the drugs at all . . . and they have generalized from the few cases that were brought to them in which the patient's illness was attributed to cannabis usage. . . . the opinions they have ex-pressed in stereotyping the popular opinion and giving it authority and permanence"13 had only added to the confusion.

Since the testimony of medical experts was so contradictory and vague, asylum statistics were examined. However, this effort proved valueless because of a lack or a concealment of information, lack of agreement as to diagnosis, and simple bureaucratic bumbling. The available information, the commission noted, usually consisted of guess-es by police officers regarding the background and habits of friendless and homeless wanderers.

An examination of 222 cases of insanity reported in 1892, allegedly precipitated by cannabis revealed that in only 61 cases could a reason-able claim for cannabis-related insanity be made. To this the commission cautiously added that "it must be borne in mind that it is impossible to say that the use of hemp drugs was in all the sole cause of insanity, or indeed any part of the cause." Despite this admission, the commission still endorsed such a link: "Taking these accepted cases as a whole, we have a number of instances where the hemp drug habit has been so established in relation to the insanity that, admitting (as we must admit) that hemp drugs as intoxicants cause more or less of cerebral stimula-tion, it may be accepted as reasonably proved, in the absence of evi-dence of other causes, that hemp drugs do cause insanity."14

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Crime. In exploring the relation between cannabis and crime, the commission separated premeditated crimes such as robbery and unpre-meditated crimes such as assault arising as a consequence of intoxication.

No connection between cannabis and premeditated criminal behavior could be substantiated. The view that such a relationship existed was based on the fact that those who used cannabis drugs to excess were usually people from low social and economic status groups.

In the case of unpremeditated crimes, especially in crimes of violence, most witnesses were of the opinion that, rather than increasing the likelihood of violence, habitual users became timid and quiet. A number of witnesses did insist, however, that they knew of many cases in which cannabis usage led to "temporary homicidal frenzy." When questioned further on this point, however, these witnesses invariably stated that they could not give any examples of such behavior. The witnesses have "a more or less vague impression that hemp drugs and violent crime have been occasionally associated, but they cannot recall cases," the commission noted.¹⁵

When an inspector general of police was questioned concerning his statement that "running amok is always the result of excessive indulgence [in cannabis]," he admitted that "I have never had experience of such a case. I only state what I have heard." Such "witnesses also are typical of a considerable class," the commission added, "who refer to hearsay, to rumor, and to newspapers as the basis of their opinion."¹⁶

A third class of witness was also identified "who do not profess at all to require any basis of fact for their opinion. They speculate on probabilities." Since alcohol incited some people of a naturally violent temperament, they imagined that cannabis drugs were equally capable of a similar effect. "All this," the commission concluded, "tends greatly to lessen the weight of evidence in support of the affirmative answer to this question and to strengthen the impression that it is but rarely that excessive indulgence in hemp drugs can be credited with inciting to crime or leading to homicidal frenzy."¹⁷

Conclusions. Having examined the evidence, the commission concluded: (1) Moderate use of cannabis drugs had no appreciable physical effects on the body. As with all drugs, excessive use could weaken the body and render it more susceptible to diseases. Such circumstances were not peculiar to cannabis, however. (2) Moderate use of cannabis drugs had no adverse effects on the brain, except possibly for individuals predisposed to act abnormally. Excessive

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use, on the other hand, could lead to mental instability and ultimately to insanity in individuals predisposed by heredity to mental disorders. (3) Moderate use of can-nabis drugs had no adverse influence on morality. Excessive usage, however, could result in moral degradation. Although in certain rare cases cannabis intoxication could result in violence, such cases were few and far between.

In summarizing the evidence overall, the commission remarked that the facts showed "most clearly how little injury society has hitherto sustained from hemp drugs."¹⁸

Recommendations. Taking all the evidence into consideration, the commission felt that suppression of bhang would be "totally unjustifi-able" because its usage was so much a part of the social and religious life of India, and in moderation it was harmless. Moreover, usage of bhang would be difficult to suppress, suppression would be very unpopular, and finally, should suppression occur, it would have the effect of caus-ing the people to turn to more harmful drugs. Although charas and ganja were potentially harmful if taken in excess, the commission felt that suppression of these drugs was also unadvisable.

As to the tax issue, the commission felt that the government's policy of trying to restrict the use of cannabis through taxation was the best plan possible: "In the opinion of the Commission, the general principle may be fearlessly asserted that it is right to tax intoxicants; and the higher they are taxed the better. . . . If it is necessary to put briefly in words a description of what the policy of the Government should be in regard to the hemp drugs, it would be somewhat as follows: To control their use, and especially their harmful use, in such a manner as to avoid a worse evil, and subject to this proviso, to tax them as fully as possi-ble."¹⁹

The report of the Indian Hemp Drugs Commission has been widely praised for its thoroughness and impartiality. "The most complete and systematic study of marihuana undertaken to date," one critic has said. ²⁰ Another has described the report as "by far the most complete collection of information on marihuana in existence."²¹

Without detracting from the report's merits, the fact is that all of the evidence submitted to the commission was in the form of opinions, and these came from persons who had had very little direct contact with cannabis users. As such, it has many shortcomings. Its major contribution lies not in the information which it collected, but rests instead on its cognizance and insight into the many problems that must be addressed in gathering and evaluating such information.

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Since the data the commission had to evaluate was so biased, the only conclusion that ought to have followed was that the opinions it had heard were of dubious value. Without comparisons of cannabis users and nonusers from the same social and economic background, there was simply no way to evaluate issues such as cannabis's relationship to physical health, adverse psychological impact, criminal behavior, etc.

At the time it was issued, it was indeed the most comprehensive study of cannabis ever conducted. But it was merely a first step in collecting relevant information, no more than that.

THE HASHISH PROBLEM IN EGYPT

In addition to its territorial possessions in India, England was also entrenched in Egypt, although its hold on that country was not so tight-fisted as in the eastern subcontinent. Furthermore, in contrast to its Indian hemp policy, the English Parliament supported local attempts in Egypt to eradicate cannabis. In this regard, it is worth noting that England received no revenues from the use of cannabis drugs in Egypt.

As in India, local officials in Egypt were alarmed at the large numbers of inhabitants who used hashish directly or in confections, many of which were exported to Europe. Among the variety of confectionary treats containing hashish that were sent abroad were "Turkish Delight," square pieces of hashish containing sugar and gelatin which were a particular favorite of the students at Cambridge University in England.²² Other well-known treats were "Sesame Sweetmeat," flat pieces of hash-ish, sesame seeds, and honey; "Bird's Tongue," black gelatinous pieces of hashish coated with sugar; "Saffron," an orange-colored slab of hash-ish, saffron, and spices; "Banana," small banana-shaped pieces of hash-ish and sugar; and "Crocodile's Penis," a black paste made of hashish. (The last derived its name from the belief that the penis of the crocodile was a potent aphrodisiac and that hashish was capable of infusing the amorous spirit in its users.)

An initial attempt to suppress the sale of hashish was made in 1868 when the Egyptians passed a law making possession a capital offense. However, in 1874, importation of hashish into Egypt was permitted provided a duty was paid, but possession was still prohibited!

In 1877, the sultan of Turkey, who still ruled over Egypt, ordered a nationwide campaign to

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confiscate and destroy the drug. This fiat was followed in 1879 by another law making importation illegal. In 1884, cultivation of cannabis became a criminal offense, but instead of destroying confiscated hashish, customs officers were allowed to sell the drug abroad. The money from such sales was to be divided among informers and customs officers responsible for the seizures.

These laws had very little effect on the use of hashish in Egypt. Nevertheless, they were reissued in 1891 and 1894. In 1898, over 10,000 kilos of hashish were seized and over 500 businesses were closed because their proprietors had allowed hashish to be used on the premises. In 1908, there were almost 2000 such closings. Yet all the attempts to outlaw hashish in Egypt during the nineteenth century were as unsuccessful as the earlier attempts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had been. They were failures all.

Whatever measures officials adopted to keep hashish from being grown or imported, they were no match for the ingenuity of the hashish dealers. For example, one method used by smugglers to bring hashish into the country was to wrap the drug in waterproof bags attached to sacks of salt. If a government cruiser happened to come across some smugglers, the cargo was quickly dropped overboard. Weighed down by the bags of salt, the contraband sank to the bottom. In a few days, after the salt had dissolved, the bags rose to the surface and were picked up by the smugglers.

HASHISH IN GREECE

Despite the subjugation of Greece by the Ottoman Turks during the Middle Ages, the Greeks were almost totally unaware of hashish and its effects prior to the nineteenth century. The first mention of the drug in a Greek pharmacopoeia occurred in 1837 and this was based on a Bavarian text.²³ In an 1855 pharmacology text, cannabis is described as "a plant, indigenous in the East and especially in Persia, but cultivated in many areas of Europe and Greece. . . .",²⁴ Apparently, the author was familiar with hemp fiber but not hashish. It was not until 1875 that the plant's medicinal and narcotic properties were alluded to in Greek medical texts.²⁵

The entry of hashish into mainland Greece occurred some time between 1870 and 1880 following the development of Piraeus as a major trade depot in the Aegean. Immigrants from Egypt, Cyprus, and various Mediterranean countries streamed to the port city in search of work, and not surprisingly they brought with them their hashish habit.

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Hashish usage, however, was confined primarily to the poor. The drug, in fact, was nicknamed the "weed of the poor,"²⁶ and was a favorite among dock workers, shippers, cargo carriers, wagoners, deckhands, and barmen.²⁷ Local demand among the working classes became so great for the drug that cultivation of cannabis became a major enterprise, with enough grown for export to other countries.

Middle-class Greeks, however, quickly became concerned about the spreading use of hashish. They saw the drug as a social danger and they regarded hashish users as degenerates and criminals. "Criminal," in fact, soon became a popular term for users of hashish.²⁸

By 1890, the authorities became so alarmed at the widespread use of hashish that they officially outlawed the cultivation, importation, and usage of the drug.²⁹ But the law was not strictly enforced and hashish usage was only minimally affected.

After World War I, a dramatic rise in hashish usage occurred in Greece prompted by the return of Greek soldiers and the repatriation of about a half million Greek citizens from Asia Minor. These soldiers and citizens had been living in areas where hashish was accepted and cultivation was a normal part of life. When these people returned to the Greek mainland, they brought their acquired habits and familiarity with hashish with them.³⁰

During the 1920s, Greece became a major producer of hashish. According to one chronicler of the times, it was not uncommon for women returning from the hashish harvest to enter their villages covered with flowers and singing and dancing as if they were drunk. Their unconventional behavior at such times was generally attributed to their being overcome by the fumes from ripe cannabis blossoms.³¹

Although hashish use is still prevalent in Greece, its popularity fell after the German occupation of World War II, primarily because most of the users died of starvation.³²

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[1 Indian Hemp Drugs Commission, \(Simla, India: 1893-4\), 3: 16.](#)

2 H. C. Mookerjee, "India's Hemp Drug Policy Under British Rule," *Modern Review* 84 (1948): 447.

3 *Ibid.*

4 *Ibid.*, p. 448.

5 *Ibid.*

6 *Ibid.*

7 *Ibid.*

[8 Indian Hemp Drugs Commission, 3: 2-3.](#)

9 *Ibid.*, p. 3.

10 *Ibid.*, pp. 3-4.

11 *Ibid.*, p. 168.

12 *Ibid.*, p. 223.

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13 Ibid., p. 226.

14 Ibid., p. 250.

15 Ibid, p. 258.

16 Ibid., p. 258-9.

17 Ibid., p. 259.

18 Ibid., p. 264.

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20 T. H. Mikuriya, "Physical, Mental, and Moral Effects of Marijuana: The Indian Hemp Drugs Commission Report," *International Journal of the Addictions* 3(1963): 253.

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22 T. C. Allbutt, *A System of Medicine* (New York: Macmillan, 1900), 2: 903.

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28 Ibid.

29 Stefanis et al., "Sociocultural and Epidemiological Aspects," p. 314.

30 Stringaris, Die Haschischsiet, p. 47.

31 Ibid.

32 Ibid., p. 48.