

State of Mankind

How much do you know?

Excerpts from

How the Specter of Communism Is Ruling Our World

(73)

Drug Abuse

Drug abuse has become a global issue over the last few decades. In the early stages, the root of large-scale drug abuse in the West was the counterculture. In their campaign against bourgeois morality, the hippies sought to deconstruct and undermine all tradition and to erect their own beliefs, moral standards, and lifestyle. LSD and psilocybin mushroom trips counted as their spiritual explorations, while they used amphetamine or cocaine as uppers and heroin and barbiturates as downers, all intended to remove them from the world and take them to another state.

Many young members of the counterculture movement had a keen interest in Eastern philosophy and cultivation practices, but psychedelics became a shortcut for them to seek insight

because it presented no need for them to endure the challenges of cultivating the mind or the physical pain of meditation. Instead, they would simply take a tab of acid, which would deliver them a pseudo-spiritual experience, though not connecting them to anything real. Such drugs, in fact, simply put their bodies in the hands of low-level entities, not at all related to true, orthodox cultivation practices. The shame of it is that these experiences led many with true spiritual aspirations down a crooked path.

Many pop singers and rock stars die in their 20s and 30s, often due to overdoses. In the contemporary United States, the longest and sorriest war is probably the war on drugs. The country has dedicated itself to arresting and monitoring millions of drug traffickers for decades. Government officials have given repeated warnings against drugs, yet illegal drug use still prevails. Since 2000, over three hundred thousand Americans have died of opioid overdoses. On October 26, 2017, President Trump declared the opioid crisis a public health emergency, and outlined the ways in which he would combat the problem.

According to the 2017 report by the National Institute on Drug Abuse for Teens, marijuana use among students is rampant: 45 percent of twelfth-graders said they had once used marijuana, and 37.1 percent of them used it in the past year; 71 percent of

seniors in high school believed that frequent use of marijuana is harmless.

Using ecstasy and smoking marijuana have become standard among young people, while newer and stronger drugs continue to emerge. Fentanyl-laced heroin, for instance, is far stronger than heroin by itself. A deadly dose of heroin at 30 milligrams is equivalent to merely 3 milligrams of fentanyl. Fentanyl has even been called a chemical weapon. Yet such destructive drugs are flooding American streets at a terrifying pace, killing many more people than other opioids, simply because it's so easy to overdose on them.

According to the National Institute of Drug Abuse, in 2016, among the sixty-five thousand who died of drug overdoses in 2016, twenty thousand were due to fentanyl. The smuggling of fentanyl from China has been widely reported. In July 2018, port authorities in Philadelphia were performing a routine inspection when they discovered and seized 110 pounds of fentanyl in cargo from China, with a street value of \$1.7 million.

In China, drug abuse is also becoming a cancer on society. The production and abuse of drugs, especially synthetic drugs, is rampant. Drug sales on the internet are also out of control. According to the 2015 China National Narcotic Control Commission (CNNCC) report, the number of illegal drug users

exceeds fourteen million. The real number is probably higher since drug users increasingly include white-collar workers, freelancers, entertainers, and public servants. The 2017 China Narcotics Situation Report from the CNNCC shows that China's narcotics departments have cracked 140,000 drug cases, destroyed 5,534 drug-trafficking groups, arrested 169,000 trafficking suspects, seized 89.2 tons of drugs, and carried out 870,000 raids, which uncovered 340,000 new drug users.

Using drugs can make people lose their minds. The substances are often highly addictive, leading people to lose their lives from overdose, destroy their families, ruin their careers, and sabotage their reputations and friendships. Some become criminals. Using and trafficking drugs harms individuals, families, and the entire nation, and it has thus become yet one more of the dark phenomena plaguing modern society.

From Chapter Fourteen: Popular Culture—A Decadent Indulgence