

## The Drug War Is The Inquisition

01 November 2001 - by Dan Russell



This Article First Appeared in High Times, Nov. 2001

The shamanic state, the state of spirit-possession, often induced by sacred herbs, is often encyclopedic - super-conscious, not subconscious. That's why many shamans demonstrate uncanny memory. We know that The Odyssey and The Iliad were preserved, for hundreds of years before they were written down, by mnemonic power that very few moderns could match. Imagine the power of the intellect that could sing The Iliad from memory. Mnemosyne, the shamanic root of our word memory, is the Mother of the Nine Muses, according to Hesiod. She could look forward as well as backward, that is, she 'remembered' how the world worked, so that she could prophesy as well as recall.

Inebriation - ritual, social, alimentary and medical - is basic to all cultures, ancient and modern. Traditional cultures don't separate inebriative herbalism from any of the other 'archaic techniques of ecstasy' - dancing, musicalizing, socializing, ritualizing, fasting, curing, ordeal - which are part of the same shamanic behavior complex; nor do they separate medicine from food. Since the birth of industrialization, of course, traditional

tribal culture has been the object of industrial enslavement.

Racism, of course, was originally a form of anti-tribalism, driven by the economic value of enslavement. We are no longer overtly racist, in our public laws at least, but we are still politically driven by industrial power centers, still brutally anti-tribal, structurally violent, to millions of our children, our tribal primitives, and to our shamanic adults. Our contemporary slaver war, our Drug War, is a direct descendant, via the Inquisition, of Roman slave law, called Prohibitio by the Romans, Prohibition.

Ecstatic shamans make lousy, and dangerous, slaves. Female and male, they were able to unite the sexes, to bring back the first times, to make the world whole again. Theirs was powerful primal therapy, demonized by the Church as 'witchcraft.'

All illness may not literally be, as the shamans would say, an alienation of the soul, but alienation of the soul is always an illness. The Church's medieval demons were animals who had lost their forest, projections of people grasping for their own roots in the earth, their own tribal memory. The Church wanted to exorcise the demonized animals, but the curanderas wanted to bring back the forest. In all pre-industrial cultures, medicine and religion are a unity, inseparable, just as "medicine" is considered a specialized type of food, "the food of your soul" as Quanah put it. These attitudes are instinctive; who ever heard of prohibiting food? If painkillers are illegal, doesn't that mean that pain is illegal? Who ever heard of criminalizing pain?

In Germany and Scotland, in the sixteenth century, midwives were burned alive for easing the pain of childbirth. The ostensible reason was that the pain was God's punishment for Original Sin, and so to interfere with it was heretical, causing great pain and hurt to Our Saviour (fascism is always maudlin). The real reason was that these shamans challenged the psycho-medical monopoly of the military-industrial theocracy.

Puritan Governor John Winthrop of Massachusetts plainly asserted as much in 1648, explaining why Margaret Jones had to be hanged: "she practising physic, and her medicines being such things as (by her own confession) were harmless, as aniseed, liquors, etc., yet had extraordinarily violent effects." Other accusations included an understanding "beyond the apprehension of all physicians and surgeons" and "some things which she foretold came to pass accordingly; other things she could tell of (as secret speeches, etc.) which she had not ordinary means to come to the knowledge of." She sounds like a powerful shaman.

Even in circumstances of patriarchal conquest, women, because of their biological role as creators and primary childcare providers, tend to preserve the ancient shamanism, the ancient herbal medicine, as an aspect of their psychic wholeness, their evolutionary birthright. Women remember pre-industrial pharmacoshamanism more naturally, preserve it more easily, and so are the necessary last target of industrial cultural genocide - hence the Inquisition, which numbers women, especially midwives, as the overwhelming majority of its victims.

When the European settlers called the Indians "the ten lost tribes of Israel," they usually meant that they reminded them of practical knowledge and powers long forgotten. Dr. Stone established that most Indians practiced Credé's method of expelling the placenta at least a century before Credé published it. Dr. Engelmann, in 1883, described massage and manipulation techniques for the expulsion of the baby and the afterbirth that were just beginning to be adopted by official Euroamerican medicine: "Although constantly practiced by primitive people for thousands of years, these methods have been recently rediscovered by learned men, clothed in scientific principle, and given to the world as new."

The Alabama-Koasatis induced contractions with boiled cotton roots. The Zunis eased labor with ergot. The Meskwakis used a decoction of wild yam root for the same purpose, and trillium was widely used to ease hemorrhage and promote parturition. All these ancient techniques became official in Euroamerican medicine for the same purposes.

Indian mechanical tricks, both during and after birth, were sophisticated. Indian midwives understood infant medicine, and could herbally manipulate menstruation, lactation, conception and abortion. The Arikaras used chokecherry and mallow to stem postpartum hemorrhage. Red baneberry was used to dissolve blood clots and heal inflammation of the breast, and various herbs were used to eliminate the afterbirth. Most of today's birth control pills use diosgenin, from the Mexican wild yam, which also yields cortisone; it was a basic of the Aztec armamentarium.

"Patent medicine" was an epithet of the prohibitionists. Most physicians prescribed the same standard antiseptics, pain killers, fever reducers and herbal specifics prescribed by most druggists, midwives and herbalists. A sophisticated herbalist or midwife was a match for all but the greatest of physicians, and most of the great physicians were sophisticated herbalists. The most popular patent medicines were alcoholic infusions of the most effective herbs. These included opium, cannabis, coca, mandrake, belladonna, henbane, datura, foxglove, lobelia, trillium, sassafras, black cohosh, skullcap, bloodroot and the many herbs called snakeroot. American pharmacology became more sophisticated thanks largely to Native American herbalism, popularized over-the-counter.

The Rev. Andrew White, a former president of Cornell University, summed up the 'progressive' view of the evolution of patent medicine in the *Popular Science Monthly* of May, 1891: "Patent medicine had its origins in folk medicine. We are thus enabled to examine patent medicine as a magical practice and art of gradual development and of slow and subtle transformation. We shall argue that the blind, unthinking faith in a secret

compound known as 'patent medicine' is, for the most part, a survival. Further, we shall be able to show how magical practices, as of the Indians, develop into remedies of the folk, of the people who share least in progress; how folk practices, in turn, in the hands of the mediaeval leech and alchemist, become 'occult science'; how, finally, out of leechcraft and quackery was evolved our curious system of patent medicine. The modern doctor is the heir of the leech, apothecary, and alchemist. He too seeks the elixir of life. He now makes a lymph more wonderful than the witches' ointment, which enabled people to sail through the air."

Actually, he was making a lymph that was the witches ointment that enabled people to sail through the air. The ointment was composed of various combinations of Thornapple (*Datura stramonium*), Deadly Nightshade (*Atropa belladonna*), Henbane (*Hyoscyamus niger*), Mandrake (*Mandragora*), Ergot (*Claviceps purpurea*) and Monkshood (*Aconitum napellus*), among others.

All but the ergot and aconite are closely related, bearing similar alkaloids: scopolamine, atropine and hyoscyamine. Scopolamine was official in 1918 as a cerebral sedative, an aid for insomnia and delirium tremens, as a pain reliever, as a producer of surgical twilight sleep in combination with morphine, and as a cure for some types of insanity (!). Today scopolamine is official as a premedication for general anesthesia and as an antispasmodic for motion sickness, nausea and irritable bowel.

Atropine was official in 1918 to check secretion, stimulate circulation and respiration, overcome muscle spasm and as a local anesthetic. It is official today as a premedication for general anesthesia, to speed up an abnormally slow heart and as an antispasmodic. Hyoscyamine was official in 1918 as a substitute for many of the uses of atropine, and is official today as an antispasmodic. *Aconitum* was formerly official as a circulatory sedative.

The grain fungus ergot, the microscopic mushroom *Claviceps purpurea*, was the powerful entheogenic standby of ancient Greek, medieval European and Native American midwives. It was official in the 1918 U.S. Dispensatory for the same thing it was official for in ancient Greece, shortening labor: "The effect of a small dose of ergot upon the uterus is to increase both the vigor of its contraction, and its muscular tone.... In the third stage of labor...many obstetricians recommend the routine use of egot...as a prophylactic against post partum hemorrhage.... Osborne...says that it had a powerful sedative effect upon the central nervous system and is useful in certain types of asthma, and Graves's disease, hysteria, and especially for the nervousness in the withdrawal of morphine." That was the official medical comment, in 1918, on the entheogen of Eleusis, the central sacrament of Classical Greece.

Dr. Albert Hofmann, the Sandoz chemist who made ergonovine basic to obstetrics, synthesized LSD in the same series of experiments. These experiments, conducted over a period of years in the 1940's, also yielded hydergine, essential today in the improvement of cerebral circulation in geriatric patients, and dihydroergotamine, an important blood pressure stabilizer. Hofmann used the naturally occurring lysergic acid radical, the common nucleus of all ergot alkaloids, as the major component of LSD.

Naturally occurring lysergic acid derivatives include the human neurotransmitter serotonin and the mushroom alkaloid psilocybin, also first synthesized by this seminal chemist. The human neurotransmitter and the plant alkaloids are closely related. That is, exactly as ancient Greek midwives used to say when they administered their ergot-based "mixture," "the mother of your mother will help you to become a mother."

It was such ancient cultural hints that led the erudite Hofmann to his seminal syntheses. The "mixture" (kykeon) used by the ancient Greek midwives was the same brew that was drunk at Athens' most holy temple, Eleusis. Sacramental Mayan morning glories, beautifully depicted at the ancient Mayan temple-palace complex at Teotihuacán, 500

CE, also contain ergot-based entheogens. That is, traditional tribal midwifery, anywhere in the world, at any time in human history, was always powerfully shamanic.

Pope Innocent VIII wrote the pharmacodynamic introduction to the *Malleus Maleficarum*, the official legal handbook of torture of the Inquisition: "Our Apostleship requires...applying potent remedies to prevent the disease of heresy and other turpitudes diffusing their poison to the destruction of many innocent souls..." Does that sound like the Drug War to you? "Drug" "addiction" is a "plague," an "epidemic," a "scourge" of "poison"; all that comes straight out of the *Malleus Maleficarum*, which admits it's all really a "turpitude."

"Drug" is a medieval French word (*drogue*) meaning "commodity no longer in demand and therefore valueless," as in our phrase "a drug in the market." It was put into the language by inquisitors and is a subtle piece of implicit propaganda, replacing the ancient "medicine" words, like the Greek *pharmakon*, with a put-down the speaker assumes to be subjective.

In France, in 1635, Cardinal Richelieu, a legendary inquisitor and slaver, established the *Academie francaise*, composed exclusively of priests, nobles and generals. He chartered them "to render it [the language] pure." The Church founded the *Accademia della Crusca* in Italy in 1582 with the same object. The *Congregatio de propaganda fide*, "Congregation for propagating the faith," founded by Pope Gregory XV in 1622, gave us the word *propaganda*.

Put 'em all together and whaddya got? Drug Propaganda. Industrial fascists distort the meaning of history so as to destroy *mnemosyne*, because, as Plato said, "all learning is remembering." Slavers operate by co-opting the symbolism, and demonizing the sacraments, of the enslaved. It would have seemed very odd to Jesus, executed by Romans for resisting their military enslavement of Israel, to be told that Constantine, a Roman slaver, represented Jesus. That's sort of like naming the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs 'The Geronimo.' Constantine no more partook of the war shaman Joshua's actual sacraments than the Chairman of the Joint Chiefs partakes of Geronimo's - however many airplanes he jumps out of.

The Pope's inquisitors, Kramer and Sprenger, the authors of the *Malleus Maleficarum* (A Hammer for the Evil Ones), are also really the original authors of the first federal drug law in American history, the Comstock Law. The American authors of that law really did look to the inquisitors for inspiration - and said so. And, as Kramer and Sprenger proudly point out in their medieval classic, they got it from the ancient Roman *Prohibitio* promulgated by Cato of Utica, Caesar's aristocratic adversary, a world-class slaver: "And now let us examine the carnal desires of the body itself, whence has arisen unconscionable harm to human life. Justly may we say with Cato of Utica: If the world could be rid of women, we should not be without God in our intercourse." That would be funny, if it weren't for all that rape, torture and murder.

"All witchcraft comes from carnal lust, which in women is insatiable. See Proverbs XXX: There are three things that are never satisfied, yea, a fourth thing which says not, It is enough; that is, the mouth of the womb. Wherefore for the sake of fulfilling their lusts they consort even with devils.... it is no matter for wonder that there are more women than men found infected with the heresy of witchcraft. And in consequence of this, it is better called the heresy of witches than of wizards, since the name is taken from the more powerful party. And blessed be the Highest Who has so far preserved the male sex from so great a crime; for since He was willing to be born and to suffer for us, therefore He has granted to men this privilege..."

"Now there are...seven methods by which they infect with witchcraft the venereal act and the conception of the womb: First, by inclining the minds of men to inordinate passion; second, by obstructing their generative force; third, by removing the members

accommodated to that act; fourth, by changing men into beasts by their magic art; fifth, by destroying the generative force in women; sixth, by procuring abortion; seventh, by offering children to devils, besides other animals and fruits of the earth with which they work much harm.”

“Witches who are midwives in various ways kill the child conceived in the womb.... The Canonists treat more fully than the Theologians of the obstructions due to witchcraft.... No one does more harm to the Catholic Faith than midwives.”

Why, this almost rises to the theological heights of Augustine himself (354-430 CE), who started his career as the Emperor's Minister of Propaganda. Like the senators he socialized with, Augustine thought slavery was just dandy, as 'divinely ordained' as marriage: "The prime cause of slavery, then, is sin, so that man was put under man in a state of bondage; and this can be only by a judgement of God, in whom there is no unrighteousness, and who knows how to assign divers punishments according to the deserts of the sinners....Yet slavery as a punishment is also ordained by that law which bids us to preserve the natural order and forbids us to disturb it; for if nothing had been done contrary to that law, there would have been nothing requiring the check of punishment by slavery."

'Saint' Augustine declared, in his *Liber de Fide ad Petrum Diaconum*, that he "most firmly holds and in no way doubts that not only every pagan, but every Jew, heretic, and schismatic, will go to the eternal fire, which is prepared for the Devil and his angels, unless before the end of his life he be reconciled with and restored to the Catholic Church." Pope Gregory IX, in his *Decretals*, used this "theology" to justify the worst horrors of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries. "Finally, it benefits obstinate heretics that they be cut off from this life; for the longer they live, thinking their various errors, the more they pervert, and the greater the damnation they lay up for themselves."

German midwives, who were decimated by the Inquisition in a genuine Holocaust, called the grain fungus ergot, with which Hofmann synthesized LSD, *mutterkorn*. Possession of *mutterkorn*, according to Bishop Peter Binsfeld, who wrote his *Commentarius* in 1622, was the most incriminating of the indicia of witchcraft. Kramer and Sprenger detail how those who use "witches medicines" are to be stripped naked, carefully shaved of all bodily hair, and tied to "some engine of torture" for some good clean lascivious fun.

Kramer and Sprenger, following a text originally penned by Augustine, promulgated the original *Reefer Madness*: "and with our spells we kill them in their cradles or even when they are sleeping by their parents' side, in such a way that they afterwards are thought to have been overlain or to have died some other natural death. Then we secretly take them from their graves, and cook them in a cauldron, until the whole flesh comes away from the bones to make a soup which may be easily drunk. Of the more solid matter we make an unguent which is of virtue to help us in our arts and pleasures and our transportations; and with the liquid we fill a flask or skin, whoever drinks from which, with the addition of a few other ceremonies, immediately acquires much knowledge and becomes a leader in our sect." So much for *mutter* and her *mutterkorn*.

The broomstick on which the curanderas were said to fly was Scotch Broom, the common plant whose stalks and leaves, tied in a bundle, were used as a household sweeper from time immemorial. The word "broom" is related to "bush" and "bramble," and it is the plant that gave the sweeper its name. Smoked broom blossoms give a mild, calmative high; Canary Island Broom, the Mexican variety, is used the same way.

"Flying on a broomstick" has obvious sexual implications. The curanderas under examination also gave detailed descriptions of "anointing a stick" or "greasing a staffe" or "anointing themselves under the arms and in other hairy places." "Antecessor gives us a horn with a salve in it, wherewith we anoint ourselves, whereupon we call upon the Devil

and away we go!” These happy curanderas were brutally slaughtered, by the tens of thousands, when trapped by the Inquisition. Medieval Europe did not take kindly to powerful women.

Neither did nineteenth-century America. The first federal drug law in American history is aimed specifically at midwives, and the zeitgeist and legal language come straight out of the Inquisition. A sanctimonious Connecticut Congregationalist named Anthony Comstock joined the New York City YMCA’s campaign against obscenity in 1868. Financed by powerful Puritan merchants and supported by leading Doctors of Divinity, Comstock was appointed to head the Y-connected New York Society for the Suppression of Vice.

In 1873 Comstock engineered An Act for the Suppression of Trade in, and Circulation of, obscene Literature and Articles of immoral Use - “The Comstock Law”: “That whoever...shall sell...or in any manner exhibit...or shall have in his possession...any obscene book, pamphlet...or other representation...or any cast, instrument or other article of an immoral nature, or any drug or medicine...for the prevention of conception, or for causing unlawful abortion, or shall advertise the same for sale...shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanor...and on conviction thereof, he shall be imprisoned at hard labor in the penitentiary for not less than six months nor more than five years for each offense...” Comstock was made a special agent of the Post Office Department with the power to open the mail. His New York Society served as an army of private deputies.

In 1878 Comstock went to Madame Restell, a famous Cockney midwife established at 52nd & 5th in Manhattan for years. Although she was 67 and retired, she took pity on Comstock, who entrapped her by posing as a distraught husband whose hysterical wife was unable to sustain yet another pregnancy. On receiving medication, Comstock made his drug bust and threw the old lady in the Tombs. Facing a certain five years at hard labor, the distraught old woman cut her own throat. Comstock proudly told the papers she was the fifteenth midwife he had driven to suicide.

Comstock’s last case was his most famous. In 1915 he arrested Margaret Sanger for publishing her own magazine, *Woman Rebel*, which dealt explicitly with female medicine, sexual repression, labor organization and strike tactics. She was charged on nine counts of obscenity, a possible 45-year sentence.

“Family Limitation” was what the AMA and Comstock had been calling “self-medication” for thirty years. Wrote Comstock: “Surely, such a mighty medium, power, and agency as the enlightened press of the nineteenth century in free America, ought not to become the tool of the villain, the vampire, nor the ghoul, to rob the simpleminded, honest laborer; or oppress, curse and destroy the sick and afflicted.” “Three feminine dames attached were,/Whom Satan did infect/With Belial’s spirit, whose sorcery did/The simple so molest.” The watchword of the “progressive” inquisitors was “social control.”

Harvey Wiley, an Anti-Saloon League temperance fundamentalist, was the Chief Chemist of the Department of Agriculture. He was organized medicine’s man in the USDA and Comstock’s most powerful ally. Wiley’s crowning triumph, the Food and Drug Act of 1906, began the process that made the standard herbal remedies unavailable over the counter, legally forcing a doctor’s prescription fee for the most common medicinal herbs.

It was Wiley, in the Food and Drug Act, who invented the single greatest pharmacological lie of today’s drug laws – that there is no distinction between whole herbs and refined alkaloids. (The greatest legal lie is that they are constitutional.) The intentional confusion, combined with the artificial hysteria, enabled organized medicine to

achieve a legal monopoly not only on the potentially dangerous refined concentrates, but on the perfectly safe bestselling herbs as well. That's why today's drug law contains no objective definition of "drug," just an irrational list of "substances," which can be either whole herbs, that is, vegetables, natural isolates or artificial compounds. In no other area of law would such vagueness be tolerated. Of course, this was the era of "separate but equal," and that was no coincidence.

Sanger worried about access to medicine, birth control and free clinics for the poor. Comstock and Wiley worried about exactly the opposite: restricting access to the commercial interests they represented, criminalization of birth control, and the monopolistic domination of medical fees, enforced by law.

Sanger was just the sort of ghoul Comstock hated most, a qualified midwife who insisted that sexuality was "natural, clean and healthful...the creative instinct which dominates all living things." Given the unavailability, the illegality, of contraceptive drugs, safe abortifacients or birth control information, Sanger picked up her pen for *The Call*, the socialist weekly, and devoted herself to disseminating practical sex-related information: "What Every Mother Should Know," and "What Every Girl Should Know." "No woman can call herself free who does not own and control her body." This, of course, applies to men too, and to lungs as well as to wombs. In 1916 Sanger had the guts to open the first birth control clinic in the U.S., in a Jewish and Italian neighborhood in Brooklyn.

When Sanger got specific about gonorrhea, *The Call* was banned from the mails: "It was at this time that I began to realize that Anthony Comstock was alive and active. His stunted, neurotic nature and savage methods of attack had ruined thousands of women's lives. He had indirectly caused the death of untold thousands. He and a weak-kneed Congress, which, through a trick, in 1873 had given him the power of an autocrat, were directly responsible for the deplorable condition of a whole generation of women left physically damaged and spiritually crippled from the results of abortion. No group of women had yet locked horns with this public enemy. Women in far western states who had fought for the sacred privilege of the ballot and won it years earlier had never raised their voices against the Comstock laws. Their own shallow emotions had not yet grappled with so fundamental an issue as sex."

The shallow women to whom Sanger refers are the doughty prudes of the WCTU and the more prohibitionist-minded of the Suffragettes, whose roots were in the old Temperance movement. One of Congressman Charlie Rangel's stock lies, which he repeated for years while Chairman of the House Committee on Narcotics, was that Drug Prohibition and Alcohol Prohibition are separate issues engineered by separate forces. They were, in fact, part and parcel of the same political program engineered by exactly the same individuals. And, legally, for us today, it all started with the WCTU. By the 1880's the WCTU was easily the most powerful women's organization in the country, with 150,000 dues-paying members in nearly two thousand local clubs. They were ably coordinated with a departmentalized national headquarters by Methodist educator Frances Willard and her "Protestant nuns."

Working with Anthony Comstock, the WCTU got obscenity laws in most states which criminalized the teaching of real sexual biology and contraception, even by physicians. They helped Comstock criminalize Sanger. The church ladies even acquiesced when the AMA engineered midwifery licensing tests in most states and then refused to test qualified midwives. Below is the comment of *The Masses*, "Your honor," says Comstock, "this woman gave birth to a naked child!"

"The internal use of drugs will be discarded by all intelligent physicians," declared the ethereal Willard, herself, of course, not medically qualified. The WCTU pioneered "Scientific Temperance Instruction" (DARE) in the schools, creating a whole new class of textbook, which the WCTU wouldn't approve unless the "scientific" slant was just right. Between 1892 and 1902 every state in the Union adopted the WCTU "physiology" texts.

The church ladies were financed by the mill owners, who turned their captive audiences over to the country's most popular fundamentalist evangelist, Baseball Billy Sunday, who pitched his slider for sobriety inside the factory gate.

The mill owners' major political action committee was the First Congregational Church of Oberlin, Ohio, home of the Rev. Howard Hyde Russell, founder of the far-right, evangelical Anti-Saloon League, which, like the WCTU, had enormous strength in Protestant churches. The League convinced itself that Prohibition was popular with all but "aliens of the lowest type." "In God's name and with His help, we will enter upon a permanent good citizenship campaign which shall mean the victorious domination of Christian conscience, whose right it is to rule, in the politics of America." Sounds contemporary, don't it?

The Anti-Saloon League was rolling in money from Ford, Cadillac, Packard, Dodge, Studebaker, S. S. Kresge, Vanderbilt, Morgan, Rockefeller and countless others. By 1918 Kresge had enrolled more than 14,000 business contributors to the League.

The athletic and brilliantly glib Billy Sunday was hired to hold revivals in town after town where the League had a contest on the ballot: "Whiskey is all right in its place," insisted the droll preacher, "but its place is in hell!" Billy always managed to equate alcohol not only with inefficiency, but with unionism, that other unhealthy immigrant habit: "The saloon must be destroyed!"

The Anti-Saloon League, basically Republican, perfected the deadly art of "nonpartisan" bloc voting. If the Republican was wet, the League didn't hesitate to swing its bloc vote to a dry Democrat. It had both parties quaking in their boots. By 1915, with 40,000 cooperating congregations, it was one of the most powerful forces in the country, controlling hundreds of small towns, dozens of cities, numerous state houses and a considerable portion of Congress. This is the Congress that gave us not only the 18th Amendment, Prohibition, but The Harrison Act, this country's seminal federal drug law, an organic part of Prohibition's original political package. The Harrison Act was first enforced by the Narcotics Division of Treasury's Prohibition Unit.