

# French expert: cannabis 'destroys man'

*The following are excerpts, translated from the French, of an interview by NSIPS's Paris Bureau with Professor Gabriel Nahas, research director at the INSERM Institute of Toxicology in Paris and a member of the Anesthesiology Department of the College of Physicians*

## EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

*and Surgeons at Columbia University in New York City. Dr. Nahas has studied the effects of drug-abuse, with particular attention to marijuana and hashish, for 25 years, and his internationally renowned work is having an increased impact now.*

*Dr. Nahas was not available to reread the transcripts of this interview before it went to press, and has asked us to make clear that he cannot approve it down to its last details. Dr. Nahas suggested that readers refer to his published works\* for full elaboration of his views.*

*NSIPS: You mentioned publishing houses which promote the consumption of drugs, and mentioned Canada in particular. Are you thinking of books which are sold out of Canada?*

**Nahas:** Yes, a whole series of books. The publishing house is called L'Aurore; I don't know its distributor in France. It's in Quebec and publishes a certain number of books which promote the use of drugs. There is one on cocaine, for example, and one on marijuana, with indications on where one can procure drugs, how to grow and cultivate marijuana, and how to use it, of course. And these books are sold freely in France, even though it violates the (1971—ed.) law which prohibits the promotion of drug use, especially among minors.

The same goes for the book *Dossier vert d'une drogue douce* (Green dossier on a soft drug) by Hugo Verlomme, published by Laffont. This book reproduces illustrations that have been published by an American magazine *High Times*, entirely devoted to drugs, and which details how to use them. *High Times* sells a million copies, so you can imagine the scope of the problem in the United States. . . . This magazine is commented on in Verlomme's book, which of course says the best about it. Even though *High Times* is prohibited in France, the *Dossier vert* is not.

I can understand the embarrassment of official circles who were warned about this. They received letters in-

*\*Hashish, Cannabis, Marijuana, P.U.F., 1976; History of H, Del Duca, 1977; Marijuana: Deceptive Weed; Keep off the Grass, Readers Digest Press, 1976.*

forming them of the publication of this book, but they did nothing. Why? Because they are afraid of being attacked and treated as fascists. . . . And if ever the book were to be suppressed, well, this would really become an affair of state. You would see the headlines on the front page of *Le Matin* (a Parisian daily similar to New York's *Village Voice*—ed.): "The book-burners," etc. And let's not even mention *Liberation*. . . .

### Drugs and profits

*NSIPS: What does this Canadian publishing house, L'Aurore, really represent?*

**Nahas:** I think it's a rather marginal publishing house. These specialized, marginal companies publish books that have an audience because it's what youth are waiting for. The young want to use drugs, they want someone to tell them it's not dangerous, they want someone to tell them how to use them with the least possible risk. The publishing houses that put out these books obviously make very big profits.

There are such publishers in France. Mr. Verlomme attached a bibliography to his book, which lists only 60 books. The *Le Nouvel Observateur* called it "abundant." *Le Nouvel Observateur* was the first publication to talk about Verlomme's book, in an article which appeared in its Sept. 4-10 (1978) issue.

After the Reims Congress (July 22-23, 1978) which brought together the great scientific specialists on cannabinoids (marijuana, hashish)—biochemists, neurophysiologists, scientists specializing in cellular biology—and which was unanimous in its conclusion on the biological dangers of cannabinoids, the *Le Nouvel Observateur* reporter declared that perhaps we needed to do "more serious" studies! And the best is that reporter didn't even attend the congress. . . .

To get back to Verlomme's "abundant" bibliography, it contained 60 titles. In my book *Hashish, Cannabis and Marijuana*, there are 1,000 listed. Bibliographies, like that in the *Dossier vert d'une drogue douce*, all allude to books that are obviously favorable to drugs. Most of this bibliography is devoted not to scientific texts but to articles or books that promote the utilization of marijuana, *ignoring all scientific research.*

### Drugs and cognition

*NSIPS: Can you describe your research findings?*

**Nahas:** I now have the proof that cannabinoids have damaging effects on the physiological regulative mechanisms which permit man to develop and maintain himself until his death. It is now known that cannabinoids slow down the cellular division of all the cells of the organism, in particular the cells located in the sexual glands, in women as in men. The other damaging effect of cannabinoids, in

addition to this debilitating action on the reproductive system, is their impact on the brain, where they act by interrupting the relations between the neocortex and the paleocortex, the evolutionarily primitive portion of the brain. Cannabinoids also act to stimulate the center of pleasure which incites man to seek immediate satisfaction and to have immediate pleasure—this at the expense of perspective, at the expense of the future.

The great danger of cannabinoids is that of this stimulation of the center of pleasure in the adolescent before he has been able to develop the internal resources that would permit him to judge that, while satisfaction might be useful to him, it is also useful to society. And these are not conjectures, they are well-established physiological facts, which were established at the Reims Congress. Not to mention lung damage: the smoke from cannabinoids is much more destructive to the lungs than tobacco smoke. This was also established in the work presented in Reims.

These substances destroy what really distinguishes man from the animal. This is dangerous not only for the developing adolescent, but also for his progeny. When we see responsible people calling for the free sale of drugs, the availability of these substance for everyone, it seems to me that we really find ourselves in a very paradoxical situation. We have to fight, despite the fact that those who oppose drugs are in a minority. We still have to fight against this tendency, because it is a tendency which destroys, which destroys man.

*NSIPS: You commented earlier that rock music has the same destructive effect on the brain as drugs...*

*Nahas:* It is well known that many young rock players suffer from early deafness because of the intensity of the noise and also because of the repetitive notes. Under the combined effect of these two factors, lesions of the internal ear have already been diagnosed. I am talking about musicians, well, I don't know if you would call them musicians, those who perform these absolutely abnormal noises. And I think that these noises also stimulate some of the zones of the primitive portion of the brain, the rhinencephalon, which corresponds to the instinctive impulses and certainly not to the integration necessary to result in good music. I think that it's a return to very primitive, very animal music. It is very interesting to note that smoking marijuana and listening to this music is a conjugated experience, and from the physiological standpoint, the same receivers are in play.

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## 'High' finance finds

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*While NORML and the rest act as dope's advertising agents, the profits from the multi-billion-dollar illegal drug business are funneled through a network of organized crime fronts, to be snagged in British financial nets centered in Hong Kong and the Bahamas. Now, the drug financing networks are attempting to move openly into U.S. markets draped in the trappings of legitimate business. Two such ventures are Bahamas-based Resorts International, the transmogrification of the old Meyer Lansky-linked Mary Carter Paint co., which is the sole entry to date in the Atlantic City casino racket, and the Hongkong Shanghai Banking Corporation, the king of the British drug banks, which is bidding to acquire one of New York's major banking chains, Marine Midland.*

*The two operations had planned to set up shop with a minimum of controversy and public scrutiny. But "legalized drug banking" has run into problems. The "HongShang" is battling a demand from the U.S. Labor*

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## HongShang Bank pleads

*On Dec. 1, legal representatives of the Hongkong and Shanghai Banking Corporation finally responded to a U.S. Labor Party request for a hearing on HongShang's proposed takeover of the New York-based Marine Midland Bank and Trust Co. by flatly telling the Federal Reserve Board to keep its nose out of HongShang's business.*

*In a letter sent to the Fed by Stuart L. Pittman of the Washington law firm of Shaw, Pittman, Potts and Trowbridge, the HongShang representative makes no attempt whatsoever to refute Labor Party charges that the HongShang is one of the central controlling banks in the \$200 billion annual illegal drug traffic and that approving the Marine Midland takeover would leave the U.S. wide open to an influx of drugs and dirty drug money.*

*On the contrary, the letter, which is excerpted below, insinuates only that the Federal Reserve must stick to specific cases and does not have the authority to investigate the "global" implications of the proposed takeover in the "public interest." As to the Labor Party's documented charges of HongShang's role in the illegal drug traffic, the Pittman letter denies that HongShang "knowingly participated" in any such activities.*

*Among the charges entered by the U.S. Labor Party and repeated in the Pittman letter — but not denied — are that \$10 billion a year in illegal drug business passes through the British Crown colony of Hong Kong, the HongShang's home base, a colony with only a \$5 billion money supply; that the HongShang directly controls an*