

Hemp, The Great Green Hope

By [Rand Clifford](#)

Global Research, June 10, 2011

10 June 2011

Region: [USA](#)

Theme: [History](#), [Oil and Energy](#)

"It has something to do with something called marijuana. I believe it is a narcotic of some kind."

So said congressman Rayburn to congressman Snell's question: "What is this bill about?"

That was way back in the summer of 1937, when congress was being asked to essentially outlaw a drug they knew nothing about, marijuana. But realistically, marijuana had little to do with it. The real issue was non-drug industrial hemp.

Industrialists were like scarab beetles, rolling around this giant ball of profit protection, and they ran right over the domestic hemp industry. Hemp presented way too much competition, too much threat to entrenched and entrenching profits. Took a pretty big ball of dung, but the scarabs rolled it expertly, professionals. Except for several years of heavy production during WWII, under the feds' "Hemp for Victory" campaign—which told the truth about hemp and helped us win the war...not a single acre of hemp has been legally grown in America since 1937. Seventy-four years and counting. That was one enormous ball of dung. The entire hemp-prohibition infamy could be called a *dung* deal, especially as related to the common good.

What could have possessed grown men, *congressmen* even, into making it a crime to grow one of the oldest, and the most valuable crop in history? Essentially the same thing that keeps the common good in government crosshairs today, the hideous mechanics of humanity's ultimate modern plague: obsession with corporate profits—virtually the opposite of government Of, By and For the people.

Also in 1937, in its annual report to stockholders, the DuPont company gloated over "radical changes" regarding the federal government's conversion of taxation authority into a tool for forcing acceptance of "sudden new ideas of industrial and social reorganization". They went so far as proclaiming that, after massive farm foreclosures of the depression, farmers were inhibiting America's industrial progress. They should move to industrial cities so farmland could be consolidated into huge agribusinesses controlled by corporations—along with all other means of industrial production. Farming should be primarily for food.

DuPont's president, Lammont DuPont, even ordained: "Synthetic plastics find application in fabricating a wide variety of articles, many of which in the past were made from natural products. The chemist has aided in conserving natural resources by developing synthetic products to supplement or wholly replace natural products."

Yes, a world of synthetics...mother lode patents, petroleum alchemy, pollution, extinction, poverty and disease, deforestation, global warming; fascism, globalization, perpetual wars

for dwindling resources; corporate centralization of all means of production—even global food supply. Concentration of money, of power, of control—power to the corporations, slavery to the people. Conversion of largely rural, agricultural America into an urban, industrial nation. Landfills brimming with immortal waste leaching death into our living systems...until death do us part.

The reason scarabs were in such a frenzy over hemp in 1937 was clearly revealed by *Popular Mechanics* magazine—a full six months *after!* the American hemp industry was effectively dead and buried via trademark corporate chicanery. The February cover story for *Popular Mechanics* in 1938 was titled, “The New Billion-Dollar Crop”. Imagine how much money a billion dollars was in 1938. The article told the truth, praising the advent of new machinery that would drastically reduce hemp’s labor demands; and praising a crop so valuable that in the early days of America, for farmers with a certain threshold of acreage in production, it was illegal *not* to grow hemp.

Imagine the chagrin of people involved in our burgeoning hemp industry upon learning that hemp had been banned in America because of “The Killer Weed from Mexico”, by the illegal Marijuana Tax Act. By law, taxes are for raising revenue, not for molding behavior. But obviously—even more so today than ever before...upper echelons of power are above the *law*. Laws are for “small people”—unless they facilitate, as George Bush the elder said, speaking of certain clandestine federal operations, “The continuous consolidation of money and power into higher, tighter and righter hands.”

And remember DuPont’s “...radical changes regarding the federal government’s conversion of taxation authority into a tool for forcing acceptance of sudden new ideas of industrial and social reorganization”? What about the Constitution...or as George Bush the younger calls it, that “...goddamned piece of paper”?

As for the *news*, the New York Times reported on August 3, 1937, that “President Roosevelt signed today a bill to curb traffic in the narcotic, marihuana, through heavy taxes on transactions”. A dung deal. Industrial hemp strains of cannabis have zero drug potential, and are NOT “marijuana”, but...*never mind*. Competition slammed. Profits protected. Hemp *threat* eliminated.

The negative impact to the common good of America from seventy-four years of hemp prohibition is difficult to fathom. But in America, despite hundreds of years of florid rhetoric to the contrary, the common good is so...common. America is about winners, not commoners. And America is largely about service jobs and financialisation, not production—despite consumer spending being 70% of our Gross Domestic Product. We offshore as much production as possible to take advantage of slave labor markets, lax environmental protections, tax incentives.... And we sink ever deeper into debt as former middle-class citizens, their jobs off-shored, become street people, and millionaires become billionaires, and billionaires *shed their skins*.

Please forgive my digression, but I have found the term “common good” handy lately. Spokane’s congressional representative is a republican named Cathy McMorris Rodgers. Somehow two of my email addresses got on her mailing list. I fatigued over all the trumpeting of GOP efforts to take from the poor to give to the rich, and repeatedly tried to get off Cathy’s list without success. So I replied to one of her emails by simply asking her to define her position regarding the common good of America. Bingo, I’m off Cathy’s list.

Haven't heard from her in months.

Hemp has taught us many things about how power works in America, and our education continues. Hemp's usefulness is truly remarkable; food, fuel, fiber, paper, plastics—using modern technology, hemp offers an estimated 25,000 natural products. Hemp needs no petrochemical fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides, or fungicides, and is actually beneficial to the soil. Hemp is nature's premier powerhouse for converting sunshine and water (and carbon dioxide while breathing out oxygen) into an astonishing range of superior, eco-friendly products. Perhaps one of the worst things about hemp is that, for the bulk of our perception-managed population, it sounds too good to be true. Well, for about the last 12,000 years hemp has proved true—yet for the last seventy-four years in America, growing hemp has been a crime. *That's* the real *crime*.

The U.S. hemp industry is currently ringing up \$400 million in annual retail sales—all of it on *imported* raw materials! The number of good, non-transferable (cannot be “off-shored”) jobs hemp prohibition costs us is shameful. We need solid jobs. We need to *create value*. Other economic benefits of hemp, along with the environmental benefits, are all but incalculable.

The idea of a “jobless recovery” is ludicrous, the term itself an oxymoron. Parasitic Wall Street casino killing off the middle class is also killing off America. Globalization is shoving us back toward feudalism. Dark-ages redux. Privatization is poisonous...and the way things are going, how long do you think it will be until some corporation privatizes the atmosphere, and we have to pay to breathe? Hemp is a powerful antidote to globalization and privatization. No other plant can actually empower entire *regional economies*...the antithesis of globalization. Farmers could regain the status they deserve, growing the world's most useful crop and selling it to local markets that sell it to local processors that sell their products to locally-owned businesses that sell to local citizens that work in the hemp industry—all with the aid of *public* banking. All the wealth stays where it belongs—with the people that create it. This could all be happening across America right now, putting hundreds of thousands of people to work creating wealth. But...the same *movers and shakers* standing most in the way of America returning to hemp slither in the same den as other parasitic snakes that ripped off the whole world with complex toxic debt bombs rated as *AAA investment-grade securities* while at the same time profiting on bets that the toxins would foul the entire global economy—THEN when their toxic bombs burst, slithered to Congress dripping crocodile tears and begging for (and getting) \$23.7 trillion! (1) of taxpayer blood via threats of global financial meltdown, and threats of martial law in America. The whole sordid nightmare represents the greatest upward transfer of wealth in history. Troubled Asset Relief Program...doesn't paying federal taxes make you proud to be American?

So much for the “shining city upon the hill”. Too bad we commoners lack the spirit to fight for hemp and get back some shine....

Of course democrats and republicans are simply two sides of the same corporate-toady coin, despite apparent differences especially regarding the common good. In 2005, republican representative from Texas Ron Paul was chief sponsor of the “Industrial Hemp Farming Act of 2005”. The bill would have allowed farmers to grow industrial hemp—non-drug varieties of cannabis, differentiating between cannabis strains and setting limits on the amount of psychoactive THC allowed. Now, for the environment, the economy, the common good—for everything that deserves a future, that sounded too good to be true.

The bill died in committee.

Ron Paul tried again in 2007, 2009, and on May 12, introduced the “Industrial Hemp Farming Act of 2011”. This time Ron Paul has twenty-two co-sponsors—and that’s where differences appear in the way democrats and republicans regard the common good; twenty of the co-sponsors are democrat, two of them republican. It’s the most co-sponsors Ron Paul has attracted so far. Sounds like hope? At this rate, perhaps in a few more decades such bills might even make it out of committee.

Chances even seem good for a democratic senator to introduce for the first time a companion bill in the Senate. But odds are overwhelming that the “Industrial Hemp Farming Act of 2011” will die in the usual place: The Subcommittee on Crime, Terrorism, and Homeland Security.

You might wonder why in hell an agricultural bill is going first to a committee on crime, terrorism, and homeland security. Well...sorry folks, this is America, and the bill is actually an entrenched-profits issue, common good against the ruling elite. We should all know by now what function hope has in America, but collective amnesia is epidemic. So....

Never mind.

And the ultimate clincher that scarabs might never be able to obliterate with their mighty balls, stark revealment of *marijuana* interdiction being an attack on hemp...it’s getting closer. Hemp was prohibited by prohibiting marijuana...but it is conceivable—even almost certain that eventually, marijuana will be legalized, but not hemp. The purported reason for banning hemp will disappear, but not the ban on hemp. Such is how power works in America. And amnesia.

The environmental benefits, the economic benefits, the major surge of job creation, the luxury of superior natural products—forget them and the countless other benefits to the common good of America; the impact to entrenched profits would be too great for the elite to ever allow hemp to be grown in America again. As long as the status quo is maintained, hemp will never have a chance.

We obviously need drastic changes to the status quo, but us commoners have a profound problem called apathy. Relentless perception management of mainstream corporate media (CorpoMedia) feeds the apathy, and amnesia. How are *mainstream* Americans ever supposed to learn the truth? How is the fact that we outnumber our primary oppressors nearly a million to one ever supposed to be seen clearly, and focused on as a platform for *doing something*...anything to correct problems such as hemp prohibition, and American imperialism being so vastly more important than us common Americans?

Hope is an elusive thing, unpredictable—just like *us*...we hope?

(1) <http://www.bloomberg.com/apps/news?pid=newsarchive&sid=aY0tX8UyslaM>

Rand Clifford's novels Castling, Timing, Priest Lake Cathedral, and Voices of Vires are published by StarChief Press <http://starchiefpress.com/> , and will be available soon as e-books.

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