

Drug-Use Explosion -- State Lawmen Alarmed

Editor's note: "All hell has broken loose." "On the verge of an explosion." These are words of trained authorities in dealing with the rising use of marijuana and LSD among California's teenagers. The truth is so shocking that many parents refuse to believe it. Law enforcement and school authorities in position to know were contacted by Associated Press staff members — Doris Klein in Los Angeles, Harold Streeter in San Francisco, Bob Burnett in San Diego, Keith Hearn in Sacramento and Ray Steele in Fresno. This is their story, the first in a series of three.

By Harold V. Streeter

San Francisco (AP). — An 18-year-old high school girl disrobed and ran nude through the little town of Soquel in Santa Cruz County.

Her eyes were ablaze with a strange light. When officers grabbed her, she fought them fiercely. The girl had taken the hallucinatory acid drug, LSD.

In North Sacramento, the pastor of a Protestant church started a coffee house for teenagers. Word got around that more than coffee was being served. An informal raid turned up nothing.

The pastor did his own investigating. He confirmed that some teenagers were bringing in marijuana. The church coffee shop — in the words of Sheriff

John Misterly — "had been turning into a regular hippie joint, the beards and long hair and all." The pastor closed it.

These are symptoms of a gathering storm in California.

From all over the state—Los Angeles, San Francisco, Oakland, San Diego, Fresno, Sacramento, San Jose — the report is the same. In the past year, there has been an awesome increase in teenager arrests for using marijuana. In the past few months, there has been a startling tryout of LSD.

"There has been a dramatic increase in the rise of marijuana and LSD usage in the past six months," says Burnell H. Blanchard, head of the southern division of the

State Bureau of Narcotics Enforcement at Los Angeles.

"And in the past three months all hell has broken loose."

Figures bear out the assessment of the 24-year veteran of narcotic enforcement. In Los Angeles County, the state's most populous, juvenile drug arrests for the first three months of 1967 total 881, more than doubling the 406 for the same period last year.

San Francisco's head of police narcotics, Lt. Norbert Currie, says:

"I am concerned that the use of marijuana and drugs here by boys and girls under 18 is on the verge of an explosion."

Arrests are mushrooming in

the Golden Gate city where, as the editor of Balboa High School's newspaper wrote in his farewell editorial, "Too many find their kicks in LSD and marijuana rather than football games or an occasional beer."

"There have been 114 juvenile narcotic arrests in the first 103 days of 1967 in contrast with 167 for all of last year," Currie notes.

"For every juvenile picked up, at least 10 others are involved."

Agrees Sgt. Eugene Zappey in Los Angeles:

"The number of arrests we make compared with the number of users is just a drop in the ocean."

"Up to two years ago, there

was no problem, just a few isolated cases in the field of drugs," observes Capt. Ted Brown of the Oakland police narcotics bureau.

"During the past two years, the increase in the abuse of drugs among kids came to a head. Recently 65 to 70 kids were caught in one high school. None was for heroin. Mostly marijuana and there was some LSD."

An 18-month survey by University of California researchers, after gaining the trust of 200 users in Oakland, said use of marijuana by both poor and wealthy children "is increasing fantastically" and that drug usage by some Oakland teenagers was "as common as eating breakfast."

"We're running the full gamut — upper class, middle class and lower class kids," reports Police Capt. William H. MacKenzie, responsible for narcotics law enforcement in San Jose.

"It's like the outbreak of a disease which has to be stamped out."

"The increase has been terrific," deplores Sgt. William R. Young, special investigating officer of the Fresno County sheriff's department.

He said that half of 100 youths he questioned had used marijuana and the teenage use apparently had spread to all the socio-economic strata.

"It's the thing to do to be with the 'in' crowd," Sergeant Young says.

The overall view from Charles O'Brien, chief deputy attorney general, bears out what the community authorities report.

"Narcotic arrests of teenagers in California last year were 5035, up 86 per cent over 1965," O'Brien says.

"Juvenile arrests for using or possessing marijuana were 3869, up 140 per cent over 1965."

"If the present trend in 1967 continues, there will be an even more dramatic increase in marijuana and a very startling figure in the use of LSD. There were no LSD arrests in 1966."

"We are finding drug usage by teenagers in parts of the state which had no significant use of drugs at all up until the last 18 months or so."

Arrests only scratch the surface of official concern. What bothers is the wildfire spread onto high school campuses and

into teenage social gathering of narcotics in general and marijuana in particular.

Worse yet, the authorities just can't shake loose the parental viewpoint that "My child would never do that."

In San Diego, Robert Bacon, a teacher in Madison High School, spent months gaining the confidence of youths until he got some 35 users to talk freely about what's going on.

"My findings," Bacon says, "make me believe the average teacher and the average parent is not at all aware of the very dangerous thing arising in our midst."

Tomorrow: By the thousands, teenagers in California literally are "going to pot." A close look into the problems.

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