



DRUGS PEACE INSTITUTE

Utrecht, January 31, 2019

Norwegian Nobel Committee
Oslo, Norway.

Subject: the nomination of drugs pacifists for the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize

To the Members of the Nobel Committee
Very Honorable Ladies and Gentlemen,

As director of an institute that for twenty-five years has striven to promote respect for the users of mind-altering substances, it is my pleasure to propose for the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize two groups of people that have shown over time a responsible and sociable use of the substances of their choice. The examples set by the peyote consuming Wixárika people of Mexico – better known as Huichols – and the Cannabis Social Clubs, have met with the approval of academics, politicians and the heads of national and international governing bodies, concerned with the upheavals caused by the use of these substances and the War on Drugs supposed to exterminate it. These eminently qualified personalities have realized that an end to the War on Drugs will not come about through the elimination of all prohibited substances or the incarceration or even extermination of their users, but through a respectful and open-minded engagement. In this respect we like to point to the policies introduced by Mr. António Manuel de Oliveira Guterres, first as prime minister of Portugal and lately as Secretary General of the UN, when he told that body's [Commission on Narcotic Drugs](#) that “we can promote efforts to stop organized crime while protecting human rights, enabling development and ensuring rights-based treatment and support.”

We propose the two groups of users of mind-altering substances mentioned above for your consideration, since each in its own way has shown a unique and exemplary way for the spiritually rewarding and socially inoffensive use of peyote and cannabis respectively. The Wixárika are a people still living in mythological time, a frame of mind based on and maintained by its ritual use of the peyote cactus (*Lophophora williamsi*). Through its consumption the mind is gently pushed backwards, allowing sounds and images from the remote past to well up and express themselves in the whispering advice of forebears or visions of snakes, deer, peyote and corn, the very objects of nature that have since time immemorial given form to the Wixárika pantheon. This living experience of their divine world roots the Wixárika mind in nature while at the same time giving a feeling of cosmic belonging to each individual partaking of the ecstatic experience.

Thus, since contrary to the ecstasy experienced in our western societies, the Wixárika are able to identify with the symbols of nature presented them in their moments of cosmic-consciousness, they feel personally responsible for the wellbeing and maintenance of their natural environment. Their experience of cosmic-consciousness moreover impresses on their minds not only the equality of all the members of their community, as well as humans everywhere, but the equivalence of all living creatures, plants included. This awareness has developed a respectful and what one can but call loving care for their natural environment. Thanks to their consumption of peyote the Wixárika show us a most spiritually rewarding and

environment friendly way of life that sustains to perfection the existential needs of their people as well as those of their natural habitat.

Thanks to peyote the Wixárika have not been alienated from nature, a fact that qualifies their society as utterly sustainable. A qualification in high demand in our XXIth century where, under the aegis of the United Nations, the entire planet is invited to identify sustainable development goals as the means to help build nations that can withstand crisis and drive and sustain the kind of growth that improves the quality of life for everyone. One would expect therefore some genuine interest from the global community, ensnared in non-renewable and nature depleting development models, for the few remaining enduring human societies on our planet. Unfortunately for the Wixárika people, the opposite is true. The world's interests, it appears, do not concern its contribution to sustainability, but rather the raw materials in its territories, untapped hitherto precisely because of the ecological relationship of this indigenous people with the earth.

We are very fortunate therefore that American anthropologist Susana Valadez started doing fieldwork in the Huichol Sierra back in the 1970's and decided to stay and help the Wixárika survive in a rapidly changing world, completely unbeknownst to them. In 1991 she founded [The Huichol Center for Cultural Survival and Traditional Arts](#), a non-profit organization registered in both the US and Mexico (El Centro Indígena Huichol, A.C). Its mission is to defend and empower the Huichol people's birthright to political and economic self-determination, insuring the protection and endurance of their traditional culture, way of life, and habitat. To this day the Center works to provide lifelines to the impoverished and endangered tribe. The HC participants partake in cultural conservation projects, including a school that creates and teaches Huichol language and curriculum, an art production facility and gallery that supports the HC, programs for Huichol youth, and a permaculture demo site and farm. The HC has developed an innovative, holistic and replicable model to bolster the odds for cultural survival by promoting food & water security, education and economic self-sufficiency.

At the other end of history and far removed from mythological or monotheistic spirituality, the Cannabis Social Clubs have organized their mind-altering experience according to a model that maximizes its spiritual benefit, eliminates material interests and third-party profit making, minimizes negative social effects and addresses legal issues by engaging the responsible local authorities, in the hope to reach mutually satisfactory solutions cooperatively. Even though western cannabis consumers are distrustful of anything that reeks of institutionalized religion, their [use of this mind-altering plant certainly is spiritual](#). They may deny this assertion, but when the effect of the plant has loosened their minds and makes them see themselves and the others around them in a different way, it is because the mental opening has allowed part of the conscious self to immerge into the cosmic self. With the falling away of the self-conscious harness, one becomes aware of the ridiculousness of some of one's thoughts, while that same disappearance of the ego opens the eyes to a joyful reencounter with the others and the world around one.

Religious fundamentalists also might want to object to the fact that cannabis use has a spiritual dimension, but when looked at objectively one cannot escape the impression that the disappearance of the overpowering ego and the resulting enjoyment of a fresh encounter with the world, resemble a lot the message of the preacher from Nazareth who told his followers to forget about themselves and love their neighbours.

Except for mentally constricted people, unable to escape their ideologically erected world, the mind-altering experience described above holds true for all cannabis consumers. What is different is the way in which they have organized to obtain and distribute the plant. The pragmatic Dutch organized a system of local 'coffeeshops' where the sale and consumption of cannabis were tolerated. By not providing for a legal supply of these shops though, the erstwhile legislators created the conditions for black-market cultivation and sale

which eventually empowered less socially minded politicians to crackdown on the 'junk', as they called it. The result of these failed policies is that nowadays the Dutch local and national levels of government are quarreling over control of the use of a harmless product, ironically consumed with the intent to let control of the mind go. Under these circumstances paranoia trumps, as the former tolerance and mutual respect surrounding its consumption has given way to a nationwide bickering about the plant and a renewed repression of its users.

In Barcelona, Spain – a country renowned for its fervent spirituality – the cannabis consumer club Asociación Ramon Santos de Estudios Cannábicos ([ARSEC](#)), was the first to organize in the early nineties of the last century in defense of the right to the use of the herb. Wary of the nefarious influence of capitalist entrepreneurs on the joyful and spiritually rewarding effects of the consumption of a pure product, they opted for a model of auto-production, a system that organized the communal cultivation of the plants and their ultimate distribution among the club's members. They were granted permission by the provincial attorney to cultivate communally, but before they could harvest them, their plants were taken away by officers of the Guardia Nacional, a police force directed from the capital of Madrid. Although the Tarragona provincial court ruled in their favor, the state appealed and ARSEC lost on all subsequent levels, all the way to the European Court of Justice in Strasbourg, France.

However, ARSEC's spirited defense of cannabis had held the press electrified and made consumers eager to participate of the struggle. ARSEC's membership rose in the thousands and cannabis consumer organizations sprouted across the Iberian Isthmus. The Basque country consumers in particular helped the movement grow, impelled by the Bilbao Cannabis Social Club PANNAGH, which fought, and still fights the Madrid government tooth and nail for the recognition of the right to cultivate, consume and associate for a most healthy, enjoyable and sociable use of the plant.

Since its uncertain legal status had impeded ARSEC to continue cultivating, it had decided to turn its attention to helping people suffering from various diseases that could be treated successfully with the administration of different products extracted from the cannabis plant. When by 2008 the Catalan government legalized the use of marihuana for medical purposes, ARSEC's members decided to end the association and continue the struggle for legalization in their own boroughs and towns and villages located further away.

From Spain the Cannabis Social Clubs inspired the European Coalition for Just and Effective Drugs Policies ([ENCOD](#)), a loose organization of cannabis lovers from across the continent, which turned the model into a standard for communal cultivation and organization for the provision of the plant to its members.

Thanks to the cannabis publication *Cáñamo*, started by ARSEC members in 1997 and now published in national editions in different Latin-American countries, the Cannabis Social Club model has been introduced in Chile, Mexico, Colombia, and Uruguay, with consumers in other countries eager to follow.

Alas, these days in Barcelona the fight for legalization seems to have been in favor of astute operators able to take advantage of the legal loopholes, founding hollow Cannabis Social Clubs, used to sell their wares at profitable prices to tourists visiting Barcelona from around the world. The criminal actors that have entered the field have given the CSC's a bad image and have provided control-minded forces in society with the necessary arguments to continue and even severe the repression of innocent users.

It is in defense of the endurance of this most noble expression of contemporary cannabis culture and in support of the battle for survival of the Huichol people that the Drugs Peace Institute proposes for your consideration the shared nomination for the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize of the Cannabis Social Clubs, represented by [Felipe Borralló](#), co-founder and all-time president of ARSEC, [Jaime Prats](#), botanist of ARSEC and driving force behind the diffusion of the Spanish cannabis ideals through the global Spanish language cannabis press, and [Josep Baltierrez i Alíer](#), founding member and secretary of ARSEC, and of the Wixárika

people of Mexico, as represented by the Huichol Center for Cultural Survival and Traditional Arts (*Centro Indígena Huichol, A.C.*), in the person of its founder and director [Susana Valadez](#).

Deferential of the cannabis plant and the peyote cactus respectively, the people we are proud to nominate for the 2019 Nobel Peace Prize have given us enduring examples of a wise, socially inspiring and spiritually rewarding use of mind-altering substances. We dare hope that by awarding them this most prestigious honor, you will recognize their efforts in defense of a just and honorable use of the substances of their choice and help create worldwide awareness about the senseless War on Drugs waged against the peaceful effects these substances generate on their consumers minds.

Sincerely yours,



Frans Bronkhorst
Director