

The History of Cannabis Regulation

1890

Growing medical uses of cannabis

British physician John Russell Reynolds wrote in *The Lancet*: "When pure and administered carefully, [cannabis] is one of the most valuable medicines we possess"

1894

The Indian Hemp Drugs Commission Report

This report made key recommendations including:
"Total prohibition of the cultivation of the hemp plant for narcotics, and of the manufacture, sale, or use of the drugs derived from it is neither necessary nor expedient in consideration of their ascertained effects, of the prevalence of the habit of using them, of the social and religious feeling on the subject, and of the possibility of its driving the consumers to have recourse to other stimulants or narcotics which may be more deleterious (Chapter XIV, paragraphs 553 to 585)."
Its conclusions were ignored by the international community.

1925

Cannabis placed under limited regime of international control

At the Second International Opium Convention, at the request of Egypt, the conference formally decided 'Indian hemp' is as addictive and dangerous as opium and should be treated accordingly.

1928

Amendment to the 1920 Dangerous Drugs Act (UK)

The amendment adds cannabis (plant material, resin and oil) to the Act's list of substances and makes possession of the drug an offence. Other European countries follow, including The Netherlands and Germany.

1937

Non-medical use of cannabis prohibited in 46 out of the then 48 US states.

1937

1937 Marihuana Tax Act (US)

Under the act, cannabis remains legal at a federal level, but commercial dealers are now taxed. Even minor procedural violations could result in a fine of up to \$2000 and five years imprisonment.

1955

United Nations Commission on Narcotic Drugs declares that cannabis has no medical value

1961

United Nations Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs

Cannabis is included in the strictest Schedule IV of the 1961 Single Convention on Narcotic Drugs, listed as one of "the most dangerous and regarded as exceptionally addictive and producing severe ill effects." Cannabis is prohibited for "production, manufacture, export and import of, trade in, possession or use, except for amounts which be necessary for medical and scientific research only."