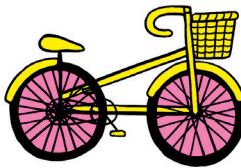


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Heads Together

The role of alternative newspapers in the cannabis culture of the 1960s and '70s

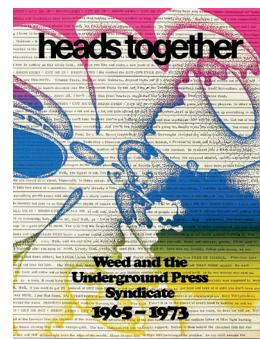
BY CASSIDY ANTHONY

Heads Together: Weed and the Underground Press Syndicate, 1965–1973, edited with text by David Jacob Kramer, delves into the counterculture movement of the 1960s and '70s and its relationship to marijuana. The book explores how a network of alternative newspapers — the Underground Press Syndicate, or UPS — played a pivotal role in shaping attitudes toward cannabis and paving the way for its legalization. What began in 1966 as a loose confederation of five independent regional papers ultimately grew to more than 500 across the world, reaching a readership in the tens of millions. This widespread exposure led to a massive shift in the narrative and public perception surrounding drugs.

Kramer's research is exhaustive. He gathers insights from an impressive variety of sources, including interviews and firsthand accounts of some of those involved in the underground press movement. These anecdotes give the book a feeling of intimacy as Kramer's sources provide a nuanced perspective that can be difficult to find in other books on this topic.

What is perhaps most fascinating about Kramer's work is his use of scans of UPS content, writings, illustrations, and "stoner art." This physical manifestation of history injects a gorgeous visual component. "Like an old roach, pot as a symbol of civil disobedience has long ceased to smolder," Kramer writes. "The imagery in this book speaks to a time when pot was smoked with optimism, as something potentially good for society, capable of activating profound transformation in the face of corrupt and powerful forces."

Overall, *Heads Together* serves as a captivating look into the pathway that was etched out for the eventual legalization of weed. Although stigmas surrounding cannabis are still pervasive to this day, Kramer's work shines a much-needed new light on the counterculture movement of the 1960s and '70s.



Heads Together: Weed and the Underground Press Syndicate, 1965–1973 by David Jacob Kramer (editor) © 2023 Edition Patrick Frey

>> Readers get tantalizing glimpses into *Different Leaf's* more home-grown ancestors.

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