

In the War on Smoking, truth has been the first casualty. Junk science has replaced honest science, and propaganda parades as fact. By vastly overrating the dangers of tobacco, and neglecting those of alcohol and drugs, the Anti-Smoking Partisans (ASPs) have gravely distorted the proper priorities for our resources.

Americans now accept as gospel in the Holy War on Smoking many statements that are not true. A few examples follow.

Some false “facts”

It is false that smoking kills 400,000 Americans annually

This Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) number is nothing but an estimate generated by a computer program called SAMMEC (Smoking Associated Mortality, Morbidity and Economic Costs), based on an erroneous model, ignoring all the rules of epidemiology, and vastly inflating the effects of smoking. For example, if Joe Smith is obese, has high cholesterol, diabetes, a family history of heart attacks, never exercises, smokes, and dies of a heart attack, the CDC attributes his death to smoking only. SAMMEC is also the basis for other scare numbers, such as that three to five million of today’s children will die from smoking.

It is false that smoking is a major danger to children

Children do not die of tobacco-related diseases. If they smoke heavily they may die of lung cancer in their old age, fifty years from now, if lung cancer is still a threat. But now and this year they are dying by the thousands in accidents, suicides, and homicides, largely associated with drugs and alcohol. It is unconscionable to keep diverting resources to the far future tobacco threat and ignore the immediate drug and alcohol threat, which can kill children long before they can get cancer.

It is false that secondhand smoke is a proven health danger

The 1992 Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) report naming environmental tobacco smoke (ETS) as a class A carcinogen is a triumph of politics over science, and a symbol of corruption of science by government. The Congressional Research Service (CRS) of the Library of Congress, in a perfectly clear but discreetly worded report, showed that objective evaluation of the evidence did not support the EPA contention that ETS is a major health hazard.

It is false that tobacco is more dangerous than drugs or alcohol

The CDC inflates the deaths from tobacco, and ignores the fact that tobacco is not an intoxicant, and alcohol and drugs are. Intoxicants destroy physical coordination, emotional restraint, and moral standards. Alcohol and drug abuse contribute to crime, violence, spouse abuse, child neglect, sexual promiscuity and sexually transmitted diseases. Nicotine does none of these things.

It is false that smokers are a financial burden on society

Economists, with rare unanimity, have shown that smokers are not a net cost to the government, but a saving. Smokers pay heavy cigarette taxes, and also, because their life expectancy is somewhat less than non-smokers (by about three to five years), they collect less in social security, pensions, Medicare, and Medicaid. A complete report on these economic matters was issued by the Congressional Research Service of the Library of Congress in March 1994.

It is false that smoking has no health benefits

Smokers are less obese than non-smokers, and since obesity is a risk factor for heart disease, diabetes, and stroke, preventing obesity should count as a benefit in health reckoning. Nicotine also has an anti-depressant, anti-anxiety effect,

and improves alertness, attention, and concentration. There is increasing evidence that smoking tends to reduce the risk of Alzheimer’s and Parkinson’s diseases, and to ameliorate the symptoms of schizophrenia. Scientists in these fields have a great deal of trouble getting funding, because Anti-Smoking Partisans, who control Federal money, cannot admit that smoking has any benefits.

Some hard truths

The ASPs have managed to convince the American people that all these falsehoods are true. They used the Big Lie Technique, a favorite of Hitler, who knew that people will believe anything if leaders repeat it often enough.

What are the true effects of this propaganda masterpiece?

Health & environmental sciences have been corrupted

ASPs dominate the Federal Health Establishment, particularly since the Clintons took over the White House. Federal money, the chief support for most health scientists, has been used to produce mountains of pseudo-statistics, which laypeople can’t understand, and “experts” can easily use. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) produce junk science faster than honest scientists can debunk it.

Worst of all, ASPs mercilessly suppress criticism by honest scientists, whom they vilify as dishonest tools of the tobacco companies. Theodor Sterling, a fellow of the American College of Epidemiology, wrote a tongue-in-cheek piece showing that the CDC method could be used to prove that **not smoking** caused 270,000 deaths a year. He wrote a serious paper showing that by use of only two honest corrections to the CDC work, the number of purported smoking

deaths could be cut in half. Sterling was blasted by the ASP guru Stanton Glantz, whose economic work has recently been demolished by the economist Michael Evans.

The Federal Health Establishment, controlling a vast portion of biomedical research money, has the power to deny grants and end the careers of scientists critical of ASP dogma. In fact, censorship has gone so far that many American journals will not publish or even review papers by authors who receive any money from tobacco interests.

Politicization of science, treated by David Tell ("Pack of Lies", *Weekly Standard*, June 16, 1997) and by me in a letter to the *Standard* (July 7, 1997) is not the only offense of the War on Smoking.

Political freedom has been curtailed

The proposed settlement of the case of the attorneys-general against the tobacco companies is simply extortion by litigation. Michael Kelly said in a scathing editorial (*New Republic*, TRB, July 14, 1997): "The proposed settlement between Big Tobacco and Big Government epitomizes the new Statism.... It turns out that the new model is as devoted to spectacular schemes of social engineering as the old one—and it has added the awful idea that these schemes may be achieved not through legislation and federal funding, but through a creative and brutal system of mandated behaviorism, in which the state uses its immense powers to force targeted citizens and entities to 'voluntarily' accept a violation of their rights and an encroachment upon their liberties—and to pay for this privilege."

Who profits from the war on smoking?

Lawyers are obvious winners. Robert J. Samuelson (*Washington Post*, July 2, 1997, Op/Ed, "Who Elected the Lawyers?") showed how a group of private attorneys planned, financed, and directed the suit, which will earn billions for them. The increased cigarette taxes are regres-

sive and unfair. Paul Gigot, in *The Wall Street Journal* (June 27, 1997, Op/Ed), revealed that Hugh Rodham, President Clinton's brother-in-law, and Richard Scruggs, Trent Lott's brother-in-law, are members of the greedy lawyers' group. Anti-smoking organizations like Action on Smoking and Health and the Center for Tobacco-Free Kids have gotten rich and powerful on taxpayers' money. All sorts of "grassroots" anti-smoking groups are funded by Federal, State and local governments. Advertising firms who design and media who display anti-smoking ads have gained. "Educational" groups who create and run anti-smoking programs in schools and communities, who write letters to newspapers, are all feeding on the anti-smoking hysteria. Politicians like President Clinton and Senator Ted Kennedy, notoriously lax in their private morality, have convinced the public that they are leading a moral crusade against Big Tobacco. And finally, tobacco has served as a lightning rod to direct attention from the alcoholic beverage industry, which is the real legal threat to young people's health and future.

The War on Smoking, which started with a germ of truth—that smoking is a high risk factor for lung cancer—has grown into a monster of deceit, tyranny, and greed, further eroding the credibility of the government, and harming our health and welfare. The true dangers to our society are crime, violence, family breakdown, and out-of-wedlock births. None of these arises from smoking, but from alcohol and drug abuse, lack of moral values, and poverty.

Editor's Note: Most articles and reports cited above are available on line at either the FORCES USA (www.forces.org) or FORCES Canada (www.forces-cdn.org) Web sites. A selected bibliography organized by subject area is available at the FORCES Illinois site (www.soltec.net/~cwatkins.biblio.htm). FORCES is a grassroots smokers' rights organization that accepts no money from tobacco interests. Call 415-824-4716 for more information.

Casualties of the War on Smoking:

Truth, Freedom, Fairness & Children

by Rosalind B. Marimont

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