

Author's Preface: Part 2

In 2010 the internationally prestigious journal, *Tobacco Control*, dedicated the editorial focus of its October issue to the concept of “new endgame ideas for tobacco control.”ⁱ

The core actors behind the mainstream of the antismoking movement now believe that they have enough power to actually “correct” the misbehavior of the world's 1.5 billion tobacco lovers. *TobakkoNacht – The Antismoking Endgame* will provide proponents of Free Choice some weaponry to battle against this Final Solution to the Smoker Problem. Unfortunately, it is not a magic bullet or a super-secret weapon, nor does it have the answers to the question of how the world's relatively unorganized mass of smokers, with intermittent, almost nonexistent, and often counterproductive help from the tobacco industry itself, can produce such a bullet or weapon.

What it does provide are some basic tools for attacking the enemy at its weakest point: its lies. Lies are basically what brought the American tobacco industry, once one of the most powerful commercial forces on the planet, to its knees. Just like Richard Nixon facing Watergate, the industry would have done far better if, right from the start, it had made all its research, memos, and commercial efforts public. Can they be badly faulted for not doing so? Not really – try getting the same sort of information out of Big Fast Food or Big Pharma today and see how far you get. While these corporate interests may not have the sheer amount of incriminating evidence in their files as the tobacco companies did, I'm sure lawyers would have a field day if all their secret vaults were suddenly thrown open.

Hopefully, *TobakkoNacht – The Antismoking Endgame* will help pry those doors apart while warning of the dangers of other doors and paths. It's designed to be a toolbox, a mini-armory for those who know the basic layout of the battlefield and the nature of the enemy, and who are looking for weaponry to fight against the Antismokers' endgame plans. Whether those weapons and the will to use them flow from the story at its start, from the jolt to sensibilities from its satires, from its analysis of the statistics

and lies that have brought about current injustices, or simply from discussions engendered by its existence as some rail against its inappropriateness and others defend its need, the goal is simple. I am hoping it will remind people of the importance of standing with and supporting any minority that is being subjected to persecution, discrimination, and hatred – even, or especially, at its earliest stages – while also showing how such a thing can be fought.

During the writing of this book, on July 21, 2009, US President Barack Obama went on American television's Today Show and stated, "The only tax change I have made in the six months I've been here has been to cut people's taxes."ⁱⁱ He said this just a few months after promoting and signing the SCHIP (State Children's Health Insurance Program) bill that hit most of America's 40 million smokers with a 150% federal tax increase; and a minority of smokers, often the poorest of the poor – those forced to roll their own from shreds of tobacco and scraps of paper because they cannot afford store-bought cigarettes – with an incredible 2,150% tax increase! You can see the short video clip and full story online on the Gasdoc website of Dr. Phil Button, a British anesthesiologist who has been quite critical of antismoking extremists.ⁱⁱⁱ

With that statement, the president effectively denied the very existence of over 40 million Americans as people. According to the president, the smokers who are now paying the SCHIP tax to cover the health care of tens of millions of nonsmokers' children simply do not exist. He effectively erased them as human beings and reduced them to being simply vermin who could be ignored without comment. And no one, not the interviewer, not the mainstream media, and most sadly, not even the general public, seemed to notice or care.

The opening section of this book is the short story, *TobakkoNacht!* The story will speak for itself just a few pages from now and I hope you find it as disturbing to read as I found it to write.

It is followed by a section of lighter fare, *Satirical Smoke*, a selection of satirical pieces I've written over the years to poke pointedly at the foibles of various Antismokers, their activities, and their dubious claims. Satire is an effective way of saying things or exploring ideas that people would not

ordinarily be willing to consider seriously; it allows the writer to open the readers' minds to possibly unpleasant concepts in a non-threatening manner so that they can at least begin thinking about the paths to such ideas. Appreciation of some of these satires will be heightened by a deeper background knowledge of the people and claims involved, but the introduction to each one should be sufficient to allow even a totally innocent reader to see the points and get at least a bit of a laugh – although sometimes a slightly sour one – because on the smoking battleground, truth is often uncomfortably close to satire.

The third section, *Statistics Unbound*, turns serious and looks closely at the deliberate distortion and misuse of numbers and statistics in pursuit of basic antismoking strategies. It's not highly technical, and it provides some much needed insights into how widely people have been deceived by fear-peddlers pushing bogus numbers and interpretations.

The fourth section, an extensive and very serious one titled *Studies On The Slab*, extends beyond the simple numbers involved and presents critical analyses of the headlined scientific studies that smoking bans, taxes, and the general discrimination against and hatred of smokers have been built upon. While the studies themselves are not reprinted here, they are fully referenced for any who care to check. Their descriptions are accurate and their criticisms are honest and sometimes harsh.

In a standard hearing before a City Council or State Legislature, the very questionable conclusions, or wild approximations thereof, of these studies are repeatedly thrown into the mix as undisputed facts by antismoking advocates. Because they have often been printed in peer-reviewed medical journals, their validity and their all-too-frequently misrepresented conclusions are taken as unassailable.

Ban opponents rarely have the opportunity to do more than give lip-service challenge to the "mountains of studies" that Antismokers claim support the need for bans. Even asking a legislative body to take the time to examine just one or two in enough detail that they will begin to doubt the rest is usually too much to hope for. *Studies On The Slab* takes that time and examines a healthy selection of the major antismoking studies and their copycats that have been repeatedly cited to legislative bodies as solid

evidence of the need for ever more stringent bans and ever higher taxes on tobacco. The fact that so many of the most prominent scientific foundations of smoking bans can be so seriously challenged should give any reasonable reader some significant doubts as to the need for such bans.

The fifth section of the book, *Slings And Arrows*, offers a selection of my shorter serious writings – letters to the editor, Op-Ed articles, and such things – along with samples of more formal presentations to three governmental bodies: Philadelphia’s City Council, Findlay, Ohio’s Department Of Health, and the British House of Lords. It’s meant to serve as a ready source of facts and arguments about topics frequently brought up by Antismokers, while serving as an example of how to fight them without funding. The final subsection of *Slings And Arrows* examines some aspects of the battle *In The Trenches* of the Internet bulletin boards and blogs and shares thoughts about effective fighting in that milieu. Overall, *Slings* covers a huge range of topics and the individual entries vary from the deadly serious to the satirical to the highly barbed and political.

The sixth major section, *The Endgame*, takes a look at what the Antismokers see as the upcoming, and in their opinion, near-final moves in their fight against tobacco and explores the best approaches to stopping that endgame in its tracks at this point in time. It doesn’t have all the answers, or even anything like a detailed map of the trail ahead, but I hope it will offer pointers, thoughts, and guidance that will help us retain our freedoms to live our own lives by our own choices and values.

The seventh and final main section is quite short but serves well as a bookend to my opening tale. The short story *Breathers* was written at about the same time as *TobakkoNacht!* and offers another chilling, but more succinct, view of an unlikely but thought-provoking future.

ⁱ Editorial. “Imagining things otherwise: new endgame ideas for tobacco control,” *Tobacco Control*, October 2010, Volume 19, Issue 5, pp. 349-350. dx.doi.org/10.1136/tc.2010.039727.

ⁱⁱ Vieira M. “Interview With President Barack Obama,” *Today Show*, July 21, 2009.

ⁱⁱⁱ McFadden MJ. “Obama In Bare-Faced Lie,” July 23, 2009.

<http://pro-choicesmokingdoctor.blogspot.com/2009/07/obama-in-bare-faced-lie.html>.