

## Why is the Smoking Ban Wrong?

It is fundamentally wrong because it is a Fascist policy. That is a word often used as an insult when the person using it runs out of logic. I am using it in a more precise way. If we read Mussolini on Fascism we find he was a kind of socialist but didn't like the methods of the communists. The communists took ownership of all businesses. His clever scheme was to leave the businesses in the hands of their private owners in name but it was for the state to control them, for the greater good. Not a whole lot of difference really. Our government sees the smoking issue in much the same light.

In 1930s Germany the government brought in very similar laws to ban smoking. They even had a doctor invent the term "passive smoking". That German government was a fascist government too. They went on to do what many believe to be the crime of the century and are now mainly known for those atrocities.

Being of the belief that we should learn lessons from history it seems entirely inappropriate to me to only think of the Nazis as the people who invented some very efficient ways of killing millions of people. If we are to be able to prevent such things from happening again we should be able to spot warnings long before gas chambers are built. The Nazi smoking ban was in place before the war started. The state propaganda machine was active long before that. We should be able to recognize propaganda for what it is if we are to be safe from governments.

We have a law that on it's face bans smoking in "public places". Because of this many smokers think they have lost something - the right to smoke. This is not true. Smokers never did have a right to smoke anywhere they pleased. If we limit the discussion to pubs then the owners of pubs had the right to make their pub smoke free or to make certain areas smoke free. They have had this right stolen from them. Pubs are private property. They are owned by private people. They are not state owned and it is wrong and deliberately misleading to call them "public". Many pubs went smoke free long before the law came in. They didn't need the law to enable them to do so.

That is one reason the law is wrong. Here is another. I believe I have the right to be fully responsible for my own life and my own health. I also believe this is not just my right but is also my obligation. If I choose to enter or work in a place that might be hazardous to me it is my right to make that choice and I do not want it taken away from me. It is my right and my obligation to do so. It is also everyone else's right and obligation.

Those are the reasons in a nutshell why the law is wrong. But this wouldn't be complete without taking a look at the justification the government used to supposedly win us all over. Second hand smoke and the dangers that have been claimed for it. If you have been even slightly convinced by these claims you owe it to yourself to make sure you haven't been conned.

I started my own investigation into the claims about the harmful effects of smoking and second hand smoke eight years ago. My first port of call was the ASH website. Why there? Well they shout the loudest about how bad it all is and they are constantly quoted by the media with their demands for the government to do something about it. I was a bit taken in by them and thought I should start with them as they said that anyone who said they were wrong was in the pay of "Big Tobacco". It amuses me how they still go on about "Big Tobacco". There is hardly anything left of the tobacco industry in this country. And what there is no longer has the right to communicate in any realistic way any more. In what way are they still "Big"?

So I went to the ASH website. I had heard all the claims about how smoking caused lung cancer and heart disease and yellow ears (I kid you not) and just about every other bad condition you can think of. I was smart enough to know that these were claims and were not research. Claims are supposed

to be based on actual real research. So I wanted to study the research the claims were based on to see if I could find out if the claims were justified. It wasn't easy finding actual research. We are constantly told by ASH and their ilk that "the evidence is overwhelming". What I found was that the *claims* were overwhelming but the actual evidence was very hard to come by. When I eventually did find some I had to learn how to make sense of it.

I am not going to tell the whole story of all my research here. Do your own. I will just point out one obvious tactic and give you a couple of links to websites that are easy to understand and explain the research in much greater detail.

If you buy a single lottery ticket then you have one chance of winning the lottery. If you buy two tickets then you are twice as likely to win as someone who only buys one. If you buy 10 tickets you are ten times more likely to win the lottery. Now the most important question, how likely are you to win? You cannot answer that question because you don't have enough information. Something has been left out and because of that you cannot judge. The missing information is how many lottery tickets have been sold. If there are 20 million tickets and you have one ticket then your chances of winning are 1 in 20 million. If you have 10 tickets the odds are 10 in 20 million. Now you have the full information you can make a sensible choice as to how many lottery tickets to buy, if any.

Where "research" is done to influence governments this same technique of not revealing all the data is standard practice. Because of that we cannot judge how risky smoking might be. We are told that a smoker has 10 or 20 or 30 times more risk of getting something bad than non smokers. So as a smoker you may be 20 times more likely but how likely is that? With the lottery tickets you had 20 chances out of 20 million. That extra information allows you to decide what to do. With a risk of something nasty that is 3 times more likely than a non smoker but still only amounts to 3 out of 100,000 you may decide that the risk is worth taking. If ASH and their ilk were as honest and above reproach as they claim to be why don't they give you all the information whenever they make a claim?

And since we are on the subject of ASH I will pose just one more question. You can look this up on the internet on an official government site called Hansard. ASH have been funded with taxpayer money for years. Why would the government do that? ASH claims to be a charity and also claim to have widespread support. All they do is campaign for tougher laws on smokers. So why does the government fund them?

Here is a theory. The government wants to ban smoking. They fund ASH to create a lot of noise in the media and to bring other supposedly respectable organisations on board to make it look like there are terrible dangers from SHS and that there is widespread support for a total ban. The government announces it is to debate what to do about smoking. ASH campaigns harder and are thought to have nothing to do with the government. MPs are interviewed on the BBC and the tough reporter says "ASH and the British Heart Foundation and all these other completely trustworthy people say you aren't going far enough. What are you going to do about it?" And then the government "caves in" to popular demand and creates a ban on smoking. It couldn't happen here. Could it?

For information about tobacco research see [www.forces.org/](http://www.forces.org/) and [www.davehitt.com/facts/index.html](http://www.davehitt.com/facts/index.html)