

DRAFT #2

Not used

Dear Mr. Lewis:

I received your January 19 letter on January 25, and of course had no opportunity to reply to it before you distributed it to news media. It seems to us the purpose of your letter was to serve as a vehicle for publicity, rather than to really seek answers to the questions it contained.

The newsworthiness of the document lay not in its attack on cancer, which should be the business of the American Cancer Society, but in its attack on the cigarette industry. Persons like myself who are associated with the industry wholeheartedly accept the goal of conquering cancer. But we differ very sharply with your evident conclusion that the pathway to that goal lies in public efforts to induce a scientifically unsupportable confession by the industry.

A year ago the American Cancer Society was demanding a reappraisal of the industry's policies in light of some startling "new evidence" about smoking and health. During the ensuing months it became apparent that that "evidence" would not survive scientific scrutiny. Now it appears from your letter that an alternative reason for such a reappraisal lies in some "moral" problem created for the industry by the views on smoking and health held by certain bodies which have "examined the problem and expressed an opinion."

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The history of the past 350 years shows that if "opinion" were to have been controlling, the use of tobacco would never have survived its introduction to western civilization. Its critics have always been vigorous, but more heard than heeded.

One can understand the needs of the very large voluntary health associations, such as your own, to demonstrate achievement to those who are expected to supply continued donations. We know from the annual report of the American Cancer Society, for example, that it spends many millions of dollars each year as the cost of raising funds--in fact the sum is several times the expense of the cigarette industry in supporting all of the activities of The Tobacco Institute. It is a fact that each of the large voluntary health associations has labeled cigarette smoking as a scapegoat in the major health area with which each is concerned. And the historical record shows that these associations initiated, rather than responded to, the expressions of opinion on smoking and health on the part of most of the organizations to which your letter refers.

To state ^{as you did} that your anti-cigarette smoking campaign costs "less than a million dollars" per year hardly minimizes its incredible cost. You state that this is done in the interest of smokers' health. Yet I must ask what the incalculable costs might be if the American Cancer Society continues to minimize the growing indications of genetics, viruses and environmental pollution in the etiology of lung cancer.

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Both oversimplification and direct misstatement of fact continue to be characteristics of the public declarations by the Society and its collaborators in the field of smoking and health. Dr. Oscar Auerbach, for example, a recipient of very substantial grants from your organization each year, addressed a chest disease symposium in Arizona two months ago and declared that air pollution has no effect on the lungs! He went on to say that "The only proved cancer-causing factor in inhaled air is cigarette smoke." No citizen needs more than good logic to see the folly in this--in the absurd contention that lung cancer victims who smoke are made ill by inhalation, and those who do not smoke are not made ill by inhalation.

A more recent example is the February 2 television interview in New York of Dr. Auerbach and the Society's vice president, Dr. E. Cuyler Hammond. The latter stated that the purpose of the recent "smoking dog" experiment was "to see whether cigarettes with ~~were~~ any less harmful than cigarettes with high tar and nicotine." ~~low~~ high tar and nicotine. He neglected to mention the purpose stated at the Society's Waldorf-Astoria Hotel news conference a year ago--to learn whether lung cancer could be induced by cigarette smoke inhalation--which also was not mentioned in the medical journal version of the work published two months ago.

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Yet on the same television program Dr. Auerbach mistakenly declared that "we never changed one word of the original report which we gave...on February 5, 1970."

In sum, Mr. Lewis, I believe the cigarette industry will continue to reject irresponsible attacks so long as the tenacity of the cancer mystery remains such a challenge to the world. It is humbling to realize how little real progress has been made in solving the fundamental problem of causation. It is understandable that an organization which is morally convinced that the elimination of cigarette smoking is the simple solution to a very complex question would feel frustrated by anyone's unwillingness to accept its judgment.

On this point, I would like to call your attention to some observations of a former Counsellor to the President of the United States, which apply directly and cogently to this issue. On his departure from the White House, Daniel Patrick Moynihan warned that "our great weakness is the habit of reducing the most complex issues to the most simplistic moralisms." And he added: "Moralism drives out thought."

"A century ago," he went on to say, "the Swiss historian Jacob Burckhardt foresaw that ours would be the age of 'great simplifiers,' and that the essence of tyranny was the denial of complexity. He was right. This is the single great temptation of

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the time. It is the great corruptor, and must be resisted with purpose and with energy." This, Mr. Lewis, we shall continue to do.

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