

# NEWS ANALYSIS

## Long live Nelson!

"Viva Nelson Pour les Hommes Fiers" (The Cigarettes for Brave People). This was the message of a large advertisement seen in Senegal a few months ago. Two attractive young white women and two smart young men, one offering Nelson cigarettes around, were thoroughly enjoying life in a speed boat. There could surely be only one Nelson who would attract Africans in Senegal. The french Cor-alma International tobacco company, which has a monopoly in Senegal, would hardly be celebrating Admiral Nelson who defeated the French in the Battle of Trafalgar in 1805! Nor would this event be likely to be part of history teaching of black African children for whom french is a main language. Clearly it referred to Nelson Mandela, a great hero of all black Africans who had spent many years in a South African jail because of his struggle for the freedom of his people.

I therefore wrote to Nelson Mandela, President of the African National Congress, to ask if he had given permission for his name to be used on a cigarette advertisement, although I thought this would have been most unlikely in view of his message to mark World No - Tobacco Day last year, in which he stated "I am pleased to add my voice to the cause of health through non-smoking. It is a day on which to remember that a human life is lost every eleven seconds to tobacco-related disease."

He replied:

"Dear Dr Ball, May I say, at the outset that I am astounded that a brand of cigarettes has been called Nelson, presumably, as you indicate, after me. Had I been approached by the manufacturers of this cigarette I would have certainly withheld my permission. I fully endorse the sentiments in your letter that smoking should be discouraged, most particularly amongst the young. I have asked our Legal and Health Departments



to investigate this matter... In the meantime thank you for bringing this matter to my attention."

(Signed) Nelson Mandela

This is another blatant example of the way tobacco companies attempt to increase consumption in developing countries, especially by targeting younger people.

Viva Nelson Mandela and other African leaders who struggle to oppose the devastating effects on their people of the activities of the multinational tobacco companies.

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*Editor's note:* The sale of Nelson cigarettes in Senegal is not the only example of cigarette companies trying to capitalise on the popularity of Nelson Mandela and his image as a freedom-fighter. According to the advertising trade magazine *Adweek* (19 February 1990), Philip Morris (PM) broke the second phase of its advertising campaign celebrating the bicentennial of the US Bill of Rights a day early to coincide with the release of Mandela. PM's ad agency, Ogilvy & Mather, contacted CBS and other television stations, asking to have the

PM spots aired during news coverage of Mandela's release. *Adweek* reported that one station, CNBC, was successful in linking the PM commercial with the Mandela story at least 13 times during the week surrounding Mandela's release. According to *Adweek*, PM's director of special projects denied that the company's actions were "exploitative or even unique since the ads had run during other major news coverage".

PM's Bill of Rights campaign was interpreted by many as a crass attempt to buy a good corporate image, to achieve "innocence by association". The campaign may also have been intended to reinforce the industry's efforts to establish "smokers' rights". The campaign glorified the notion of "freedom of speech"; PM may have hoped for that point to reverberate through discussions of proposals to ban tobacco advertising. As a countermeasure, health advocates produced a brochure entitled "Philip Morris Bill of Wrongs", which cited examples of how PM has "deliberately undermined... [freedom of speech and free expression] repeatedly to serve their corporate interests".

## Message from Mr Nelson Mandela to mark the 5th World No-Tobacco Day (1992)

### AFRICAN NATIONAL CONGRESS OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

Sunday May 31, is World No-Tobacco Day. It is a Day with a single aim – to build a world in which no one smokes, chews or sniffs tobacco.

It is a Day on which to remember that a human life is lost every eleven seconds to tobacco-related disease. The World Health Organisation's experts estimate that tobacco kills at least 3 million people each year worldwide.

It is a Day on which to stop smoking. For if we do not then the annual global death rate is forecast to increase to ten million in the next few decades. Most of these deaths will be in Africa and Asia.

It is a day on which to recall that tobacco ranks alongside AIDS, famine and pestilence as a threat to the health of the world's people.

For these reasons I gladly accepted the National Council Against Smoking's invitation to help them celebrate World No-Tobacco Day.

I am pleased to add my voice to the cause of health through non-smoking. Smoking is a problem both for the individual and for society.

Smokers can no longer ignore the frightening facts about tobacco. But many are caught in a trap. They worry about their health, yet they also worry about how to live without cigarettes! They think they "should" stop, but feel they "can't". So it is easier to continue smoking than to try to stop.

Stopping smoking is difficult. It requires energy, time and effort. Yet millions have quit and so regained control of their lives and their health.

On May 31, I appeal to smokers to quit for one day, as a first step to conquering their habit. They say the hardest part about stopping smoking, is making the decision to do it. Make that decision for one day on May 31.

I also appeal to the rest of our society to take up the challenge of building a healthier world through non-smoking:

- \* Women – because of cultural traditions few of you smoke. Remain non-smokers. Prize your growing independence and do not chain yourself to cigarettes.
- \* Children – do not start, smoking is a dirty habit, not a fashionable or grown-up one. The best sportsmen and sportswomen do not smoke.
- \* Advertising agencies: devote your communication skills to sell health, not ill health.
- \* Agriculturists – use your green fingers to finding economic alternatives to tobacco growing.
- \* Athletes, and public figures – you are role models for young people. Set an example of non-tobacco use and publicise the fact.
- \* Health workers – you have the duty to inform yourselves and others of the risks. Help people quit the habit, and do so yourself if you smoke.
- \* Journalists and the media – spread the news so that no one can claim not to know of the dangers. Find new and exciting ways to educate people.
- \* Politicians – my own calling. Let us as soon as we are able pass legislation aimed at ensuring the right of people to live free from tobacco hazards.
- \* Teachers – encourage self-confidence in the child and help young people formulate values which lead to healthy decisions. Are you setting the right example?
- \* Tobacco farmers – start to reduce your dependence on tobacco crops.
- \* Unions – work will be safer and healthier in an environment free from tobacco. Protect workers from air polluted with tobacco smoke.

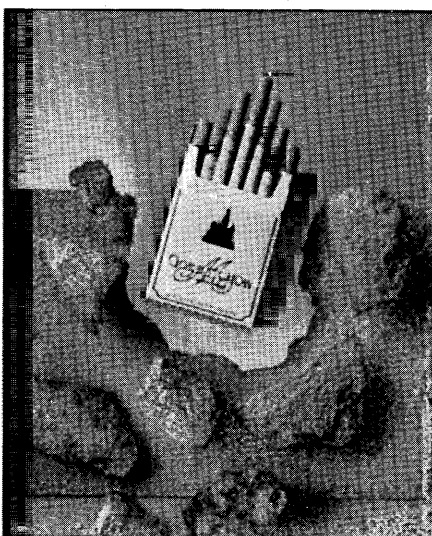
Health is a basic human right. Let us all work, to help everyone, everywhere, attain health. Let us build a tobacco-free world.

(Signed) NELSON MANDELA

## Celebrity cigarettes

Nelson cigarettes bring to mind other occasions on which the name or likeness of a world figure has been used on a cigarette pack. "Gorbatchow" cigarettes were launched in 1990, named after Mikhail Gorbachev, then president of the former Soviet Union (using what was said to be the preferred European spelling of his name). The cigarettes were manufactured in The Netherlands and marketed by the Alexander Field Cigarette Company, based in Zub, Switzerland. According to an article in the May 1990 issue of *World Tobacco*, plans were in place to market the brand in various European countries, as well as in Japan, South Korea, and the US.

Advertisements for Gorbatchow cigarettes show them breaking through a wall or floating through a rupture in the wall (see figure). According to *World Tobacco*, this advertising "is not meant to imply that they [Gorbachow cigarettes] are helping to break through the Berlin wall; they are, apparently, breaking down the wall blocking new tastes".



Peter Studer, the creator of Gorbachow cigarettes and formerly Rothmans' marketing manager for Switzerland, was asked by *World Tobacco* whether the former Soviet leader objected to the use of his name on these cigarettes. Studer said he hadn't heard anything to indicate that Gorbachev objected. "But, in any case", he added, "I suspect he has more important things on his mind than worrying about cigarette packages".



The GA Andron Company (Deerpark, New York) obtained the rights to market Gorbachow cigarettes in the US. In a prophetic statement, Steve Hersch, then president of the importer, said that "Time is of the essence. We don't know if this will be a fad cigarette or not" (*Advertising Age*, 2 April 1990). Surprisingly, the cigarette lasted longer than did Gorbachev himself. A spokesperson for GA Andron told us that they received their final order from Gorbachow last August, and were selling them until October. When asked if there were any plans to market Yeltsin cigarettes, she said she hadn't heard of any.

During past US presidential campaigns, a small tobacco company in New York (GA Georgopulo & Company, Inc - purchased in 1990 by GA Andron) produced cigarettes with a picture of either the Democratic or Republican presidential candidate on each pack. Shown here is the "Republican" pack sold during the 1988 campaign, bearing the likeness of George Bush.

Cigarettes evoking the image of successful politicians and periods of history have regularly appeared and have not been limited to novelty brands. The initial wave of filter cigarettes in the 1950s in the US consisted almost entirely of brands which evoked images of Great Britain and her empire. Viceroy, Parliament, and Kent were among the top early filter brands. Winston cigarettes have been seen by some as a subtle allusion to Winston Churchill, although the brand name may derive from the city where R J Reynolds Tobacco Company has its headquarters (Winston-Salem, North Carolina). Churchill

also has a connection to Marlboro: he wrote a six-volume biography of his ancestor, John Churchill, a distinguished English general and statesman and the First Duke of Marlborough.

Celebrity cigarettes trade on established images and associations. In this, they are but one example of image-based advertising. The product - flavoured, dried leaves wrapped in paper - is the same with or without advertising. The imagery, the stirring of sentimental, patriotic, or courageous feelings, cynically transforms the roll of tobacco to an object that carries substantial symbolic importance. Quite a neat trick for an addictive poison! How much longer will celebrities and societies allow this to continue?

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## Re-start your engines

The Fédération Internationale du Sport Auto (FISA), the world-wide sanctioning organisation for Formula One racing, cancelled the 1993 French Grand Prix after a French court ruled that the televised images of cigarette advertisements at Formula One Grand Prix auto races are illegal. The court further stated that the 1993 French Grand Prix would not be permitted to appear on French television, even if the race is not on French soil. The court's decisions came after a legal challenge organised by the Comité Nationale Contre le Tabagisme (CNCT), which included a lawsuit against TF1, the French television channel which broadcasts Formula One races (see *Tobacco Control* 1993; 2: 10-1).

An Associated Press article appeared in the *New York Times* which reported that the president of the French Federation of Automobile Sports said there no longer was a reason to block the French Grand Prix because he had assured FISA that there would be no problem with cigarette advertising.

According to Philippe Boucher and Philippe Harant of the CNCT, prior to the completion of the Parliamentary session which ended in December 1992, the French Senate passed an amendment that will allow the French Grand Prix to be televised, provided that the ban on cigarette advertising,

which became effective 1 January 1993, was not violated. The amendment came after intense lobbying by the tobacco industry, automobile manufacturers, and racing associations. Jean-Marie Ballestre, chairman of the French Federation of Automobile Sports and former chairman of FISA, claimed that the new French law banning all cigarette advertising would bring an end to auto racing in France, arguing that this would result in a loss of 500 million francs (US \$100 million) to the French economy each year.

In order to compensate for the possible financial loss of tobacco sponsorship, the Parliamentary amendment included a tax increase of 1 centime per cigarette (approximately US 4 cents per pack of 20 cigarettes) to be dedicated to sports. The tax increase is estimated to bring in an annual credit of approximately 450 million francs to the Ministry of Sports.

Boucher and the CNCT had lobbied for a portion of the tax increase to be earmarked for paid counter-advertising, but the government has given the entire amount to the Ministry of Sports. In an out-of-court settlement in a separate CNCT law suit against Williams-Renault (the Formula One team which is sponsored by RJ Reynolds' Camel cigarettes), one million francs was awarded to a French committee for health education to be used for anti-tobacco education.

Boucher fears that tobacco logos will appear on the race cars in new forms, and thus will still be broadcast on television. His fears are well founded. Even as the tobacco companies were protesting against the new cigarette advertising ban, they had already established ways to circumvent it, such as through advertisements for Winston shirts and travel tours (see *Tobacco Control* 1993; 2: 44), Camel boots, and a dozen new Marlboro Classics clothing stores in France.

Motor sports continue to throw a wrench into efforts to counteract the influence of cigarette advertising and similar efforts to remove such promotions from television. The tobacco industry continues to rely on its allies in auto racing associations to help perpetuate cigarette brand names on television, despite laws in many countries prohibiting cigarette advertising on television.

At the 8th World Conference on Tobacco or Health in Buenos Aires, we presented a poster that listed the numerous televised sporting events

sponsored by tobacco companies, in order to provide a better understanding of the extent of such violations. A portion of that list is reproduced here (see table).

The various forms of auto racing have arguably become the primary mechanism whereby tobacco companies maintain cigarette and spitting

Table Televised motor sport events sponsored by tobacco brand names

Brand name	Motor sport
Marlboro	Formula One Indy-Car Motorcycle Racing (road) Road Rally Racing (off-road truck) Speedboat Racing
Camel	Formula One Drag Racing Indy-Car (Indy Lights) GT and GTO Series Motorcycle Racing (road and motorcross) Monster Truck Racing Road Rally Racing (off-road truck)
Gitanes Rothmans	Formula One Motorcycle Racing (road)
Silk Cut Player's Ltd.	GTP Series Indy-Car (Indy Lights)
Winston	Drag Racing Stock Car Racing Hydroplane Motorcycle Racing Motorcycle Racing (road and motorcross)
Lucky Strike	Drag Racing
Skoal/ Copenhagen*	Indy-Car Sprint Car (dirt track) Stock Car Racing Monster Truck Racing
Kodiak*	Stock Car Racing Tractor Pulling Tractor Pulling
Red Man* Levi Garrett*	Drag Racing Stock Car Racing

\* spitting tobacco

tobacco brand names on world-wide television. The problems being experienced in France, no different from most developed countries, at the very least illustrate the importance of and need for effective counter-advertising, with or without a tobacco advertising ban. — AB, ES

## Tobacco advertising in central and eastern Europe

As readers of this journal will know, tobacco advertising is appearing all over the countries of central and eastern Europe (see *Tobacco Control* 1992; 1: 299). In the main, the culprits are multinational tobacco companies. In a recent World Health Organisation (WHO) mission to Latvia, Dr Antero Heloma of Finland and I were confronted with huge advertisements covering the entire sides of buildings such as the one in central Riga shown in the figure.

According to local health officials these ads were illegal as in other countries of the former Communist block. So why is nothing being done about these ads in such countries? There appear to be four reasons:

- 1) Existing laws appear to be technically inadequate — they do not always cover all the possible ways of advertising tobacco — and in some cases the constitutional standing of such laws in States which were part of the former Soviet Union is unclear;



- 2) penalties are so small as to be meaningless;
- 3) the court system is so clogged that the day of reckoning is very far off; and
- 4) some governments seem unwilling to take action to enforce existing laws.

The resulting confusion allows the tobacco industry to advertise with impunity.

Our host in Latvia, the Ministry of Welfare, had arranged for us to visit the country's only tobacco factory. We were somewhat surprised by our warm welcome – in other countries a WHO team would be treated somewhat suspiciously to say the least! The local director of the firm showed us the agreement whereby a Danish tobacco company, House of Prince, had purchased 45% of the Latvian factory and the Danish State investment bank had bought 6% – a total

investment of US \$10.2 million – effectively handing control to Denmark.

We also met with Danish executives of the firm. Our conversations led us to believe that a massive advertising campaign was planned for later in 1993. They did not appear to fear that there would be any obstacles in their way. When we met with the Latvian Minister for Health, we told him that it would be much more difficult to act against such advertising once a major campaign had started. It remains to be seen what will happen.

Dr John Roberts, who was in Latvia around the same time working for an EC aid programme for central and eastern Europe, gives a wider perspective when he says, "Latvia recognises the importance of the tobacco issue, but the enormous challenges they face in reconstructing their basic health care systems mean that lifestyle

issues are frequently given a lower priority than they deserve". My experience in central and eastern Europe bears this out but, even among the lifestyle issues, tobacco is sometimes seen to be less important than alcohol and narcotics. The latter are seen to pose more of a threat. Smoking is viewed as "normal", and some senior officials argue that the public would resent controls on tobacco. They say that their populations have just escaped oppression and there is a danger that action against tobacco could be seen as Big Brother State returning.

On a more positive note, I was working for WHO in Budapest recently and I saw that someone had improved a tobacco advertisement by adding the words (in Hungarian) "A slow acting poison"!

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