

Role Of Tobacco Companies Distorted

To the Editor:

Dr. Ole R. Holsti's latest use of the press was not the first occasion on which he has attacked the tobacco industry in general or specific tobacco companies. Since reading his letter which equates the United States tobacco industry with Nazi propaganda and which was published in the Nov. 21, 1978, edition of the Durham Morning Herald, I believe that since emotions with respect to the California matter have tended to subside, it is now possible to discuss the real issue with objectivity.

In my view, the voters in California last year were not primarily faced with possibly conflicting entitlements about where and when one person might smoke tobacco and another person might be free of ambient tobacco smoke. Instead, they were confronted with a possible decision in these matters by the state, in which social behavior, distasteful to some persons, would be transformed into criminal behavior. The facts raised the question of whether the remedy needed to be so drastic, particularly when one contemplates largely untried alternatives.

While I am personally pleased that the citizens of California did not adopt the proposed state control of personal behavior, the initiative process, a democratic process, itself raised more prevalent consciousness of such alternatives.

One of these is the element of personal courtesy which each of us observes in countless ways in social encounters. If more smokers have become aware of their opportunities to observe such courtesies, so much the better for all concerned.

Another alternative is more specific. It is for the managers of the many kinds of places in which smoking behavior might have been controlled and policed by the state, to consider the comfort of all their patrons, and to provide for them accordingly. As an example, we are not surprised at some premises which require that shoes be worn or that gentlemen wear coats. Thus we should not be surprised by similar requirements that patrons refrain from smoking. It is also customary for many employers to provide coffee breaks and to discourage snacking of food on the job. There is nothing to prevent such employers from invoking policies with respect to smoking.

Those individuals in California who saw the need for state controlled action were perhaps unconsciously motivated by their disappointment over the apparent lack of private accommodation rather than in their annoyances over ambient tobacco smoke per se.

To return to Dr. Holsti's published letter, I wonder whether his judgment of the character of the campaign in opposition to Proposition 5 may be influenced by the principal sources of its funding or from his observation of the actual quality of the material put forth to the voters.

Let me cite some facts — all of which are matters of public record that can be verified by Dr. Holsti or any other person sufficiently interested in obtaining the truth:

Dr. Holsti claimed that the cigarette companies were "lurking" behind the label of "Californians for Common Sense."

Major financial contributions were made to Californians for Common Sense by five cigarette manufacturing companies. They did not "lurk" behind the campaign organization. Their financial participation was highly publicized — not only in required public reports, but by news releases issued by Californians for Common Sense to all news media in the state listing their names and the amounts of their contributions from time to time.

Thousands of Californians enrolled in the Californians for Common Sense campaign against Proposition 5 — both as endorsers and financial contributors. The vast majority of these had no connection with the tobacco industry.

Californians for Common Sense is a California corporation formed for the purpose of campaigning against Proposition 5. The co-chairmen of the group were distinguished Californians with no present or past connection whatever with the production, manufacture, or sale of tobacco products. They were:

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—Mr. John F. Henning, executive secretary-treasurer of the California Labor Federation (AFL-CIO), a former United States undersecretary of labor, a former United States ambassador to New Zealand, a current regent of the University of California, an active Democrat, and a non-smoker.

—Dr. Houston I. Flournoy, vice president of the University of Southern California, the 1974 Republican nominee for governor of California, for two terms state controller of California, and a former member of the state legislature.

—Mrs. Katherine B. Dunlap, chairman of the Californians for Environmental and Economic Balance, a director of the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, a former Los Angeles area president of the League of Women Voters, a noted conservationist and civic leader, and a non-smoker.

Dr. Holsti claimed that the cigarette companies, through Californians for Common Sense, "gulled" California voters into rejecting what he describes as "an initiative to provide non-smoking areas in some public places."

This is clearly wrong and an affront to California voters who had the opportunity to review all issues affecting Proposition 5.

Californians rejected the proposed new state law because it would have done much more than merely "provide non-smoking areas in some public places." For example:

—It would have prohibited nearly all on-the-job smoking unless employers spent significant sums of money to construct smoke-proof walls to segregate smoking and non-smoking employees and customers.

—It would have imposed mandatory \$50 fines for every violation.

—It would have substituted government regulations for individual choice, and would have destroyed many property rights. (An owner of a one-man barber shop, for instance, could have been fined \$50 for smoking in his own shop, even though no customers were present.)

—It would have placed an undue burden on law enforcement agencies — and for taxpayer supporters — to carry out enforcement of the act, particularly in responding to complaints of smoking law violations.

After careful scrutiny of the proposition and its provisions, a host of respected California organizations of divergent views and goals officially took action in opposition to its passage.

A few examples:

The Democratic State Central Committee, The California Republican Assembly, California Labor Federation (AFL-CIO), International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, International Brotherhood of Teamsters, United Auto Workers, National Federation of Independent Business, California State Chamber of Commerce, Califor-

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nia Manufacturers Association, California Association of Realtors, California Hotel and Motel Association, and California Restaurant Association.

In addition, nearly 100 newspapers — including every major California daily — editorialized against Proposition 5, as did most television and radio stations that make editorial endorsements.

Holsti clearly identified himself as the chairman of the Duke University Political Science Department, a highly respected academic position of responsibility. In such a position, I would think he would be committed to an educational system which searches for the truth. It would have been more constructive to both the community and to those in the tobacco industry if he had identified the specific "blatant lies" that he accuses the tobacco industry of being guilty of in reference to the California issue.

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