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Smoking aloft: an illustrated history

A Blum, MD

1920s and 1930s

The emergence of civil aviation was associated with glamour, daring and sophistication. At the same time, smoking was being promoted and popularised. The two industries were often depicted together in cigarette advertisements with an aviation theme. Advertisers often linked women to smoking and flight. Images of aviators and aviatrixes such as Amelia Earhart were invoked to sell cigarettes.





1940s

Cigarettes were very popular during the second world war. Advertisements and posters from this time often depicted flying and smoking together. Although smoking was not initially permitted on airplanes, cigarette companies provided sample packs to customers.



1950s to 1970s

After the war, images of airlines and smoking were seen together worldwide. By the 1950s, virtually all of the world's airlines permitted smoking and distributed complimentary cigarettes (see Philip Morris-Ozark Airlines sample at right). In spite of the growing recognition of the harmful effects of smoking in the 1960s and 1970s, airlines made little effort to protect non-smoking travellers.



See why LUCKIES TASTE BETTER!

How to prove to yourself Luckies are made better—to taste cleaner, fresher, smoother

Take the paper from a Lucky to see why it's better. Look at the inside. You'll find it's made of a special paper that's been treated with a special process. That's why it's so clean, so fresh, so smooth.

Here's why Luckies taste cleaner: The inside of the Lucky paper is treated with a special process. That's why it's so clean, so fresh, so smooth.

Here's why Luckies taste smoother: The inside of the Lucky paper is treated with a special process. That's why it's so clean, so fresh, so smooth.

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"I switched to **FATIMA** because they are **Extra-Mild** with a really different, better flavor and aroma. They're easily best of all King-Size cigarettes."

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Best of All KING-SIZE Cigarettes

Viceroy's got the taste that's right!

Smoke all 7 filter brands... you'll agree: some taste too strong... some taste too light...

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PLAYERS is the greatest gift to have.

Que si, hay PLAYERS en Argentina

Players—always—gets Extra

Ja, PLAYER'S git's au i de Schwyz

Players—always—gets Extra

1980s to present

By the 1980s, the failure of adjustable non-smoking sections to diminish cabin air pollution motivated a handful of flight attendants in the USA to lobby Congress for eradication of smoking aloft. The tobacco industry attempted to subvert these efforts by creating such terms as "environmental tobacco smoke", conducting bogus research, and dismissing allegations of harm from secondhand smoke as hysteria. In the late 1980s and 1990s the quest by flight attendants for legal redress for harm suffered from occupational exposure to tobacco smoke resulted in the largest class action settlement in the history of tobacco litigation and the creation of the Flight Attendant Medical Research Institute.

The second-hand smokescreen.

For decades, public and private organizations have waged a massive campaign to discourage cigarette smoking. For most of that time, the target of this effort has been the smoker.

Recently, however, the emphasis has undergone a major shift. Today there are scientists who claim that cigarette smoke in the air can actually cause disease in non-smokers. We hear a great deal about "second-hand smoke" and "passive smokers."

But is this new approach wholly motivated by concern for the non-smoker, or is it the same old war on smoking in a new guise?

These doubts are raised when we recall statements like the following by a spokesman for the American Lung Association:

Probably the only way we can win a national reduction in the death toll from lung cancer is to make a very strong case for the fact that the smoke of a single cigarette can cause a person to develop lung cancer. (Source: Associated Press)

Obviously, one way to make smoking "unacceptable socially" would be to suggest that second-hand smoke could cause disease. So it is not surprising that we are now seeing a flurry of research seeking scientific support for these suggestions.

Many independent experts believe the scientific evidence on passive smoking is questionable. But a weak group of anti-smokers are using this issue in their campaign against tobacco as if the claims were established scientific fact.

We ignore the actions of those who try to manipulate public opinion through scare tactics. As the late, respected pathologist, Dr. H. Russell Fisher, stated in testimony submitted to a Congressional hearing on passive smoking:

...[I]n the absence of any scientific proof of harm from passive smoking, the only way to get the truth out of people is to make it a political issue. In other words, to make it a political issue, one must create a political issue out of it. This is a classic case of a political issue being created out of a scientific issue. This is a classic case of a political issue being created out of a scientific issue.

We are not ignoring the fact that cigarette smoke can be irritating to many people's eyes. But we believe this problem is best solved not by governments but by individuals, and not with scare tactics but with common sense and courtesy.

Of course, if anti-smoking advocates want to work for the abolition of smoking, that is their right. We only wish they would come out from behind their second-hand smokescreen.

R.J. Reynolds Tobacco Company

