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The nanny state or the nazi state

by Klaus Rohrich

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The sound of jackboots reverberating through the night is back. This time, however, the jackboots are birkenstocks and tasseled loafers. It's the health Nazis who are marching to save us from ourselves. Like the Nazis of the 1930s, this new wave of fascists began insidiously under the guise of improving our longevity and the quality of our lives. They have since evolved into a repressive regimen that threatens to regulate even the smallest and least significant of our habits.

It all began some 25 years ago when some kind soul thought it might be a good idea for everyone who rides a motorcycle to wear a helmet. Many voluntarily chose to do so. But, since the idea was not universally or voluntarily accepted, the New Fascists lobbied to have legislation enacted to force people to do so. The rationale was that it would reduce fatalities and insurance rates. Notice anything different about highway fatalities or insurance rates?

They segued from motorcycle helmets to smoking with the subtlety of a sidewinder. First it was 'no smoking' sections in restaurants. Then came no smoking in the workplace. Then, separately vented smoking rooms in restaurants, then no smoking in any public building. Now they are pursuing no smoking policies in any public place. Is there a pattern here?

In the U.S., legislation is being drafted that makes smoking in a home or area that contains children, child abuse with penalties similar to those imposed on people who violently harm their children. As I pass by building entrances around which smokers are huddled indulging in their addiction, I am reminded of the gradual marginalization of the Jews at the hands of fascists and wonder if smokers will some day be rounded up in the middle of the night and packed into boxcars.

Once the anti-smoking initiatives became successful, the New Fascists have realized they've struck paydirt. Following their stunning courtroom victories against big tobacco companies, they have forged an unholy alliance with trial lawyers and are starting to go after anything that moves.

Recently some trial balloons were floated to see if the time was ripe to go after fast food outlets. Some poor unfortunate moron in the U.S. launched a suit against KFC, Burger King and others, hoping to collect damages for the heart disease and high blood pressure that he claimed was brought on through his decades of eating at these places. While the suits were summarily dismissed, don't believe for a minute that this is the end of it. The suit was a bellwether that will ultimately lead to the rape and pillage of the fast food business in similar fashion to the tobacco industry.

Equally there are initiatives afoot to hold gun manufacturers legally accountable for street crimes. Several suits have been launched in the U.S. with less than successful results. But, as people's attitudes change the idea of suing gun manufacturers will be revisited. You can count on it.

And speaking of guns, gun control is the next battle in the war to save us from ourselves. In Canada, we've spent a billion dollars on a gun registry that basically criminalized law-abiding citizens and did nothing to save even one life, despite the government's propaganda to the contrary. This year in Toronto gun violence is at an all-time high. Yet still the New Fascists are claiming victory by citing the fact that police forces across the country are consulting with the gun registry in an effort to solve crimes. It's a sure

bet that the majority of the guns police are inquiring about are not registered, meaning the billion they've blown on registering guns have made absolutely no difference to street crime.

Do you see a pattern here? We are gradually being deprived of basic rights all in the name of keeping us safe. The key assumption is that we are incapable of looking after ourselves, so we need the Nanny State to do it for us.

We are not allowed to be responsible for our bad habits or behaviour, because personal responsibility is a key ingredient of democracy.

We smoke not because we chose to. but because we are addicted and tobacco executives engineered that addiction. It's not because we choose to smoke. We're obese. That's because there are so many fast food restaurants and not because we are too lazy or ignorant to prepare a well-balanced, nutritious meal. People are shooting each other to death in the streets of our cities. It's the fault of gun companies and not the fault of the perpetrators, who happen to have anger issues or got a raw deal from society.

If you're wondering what the future holds, my guess is more of the same. Just look at all the juicy targets that are still untouched. No one has really taken a good run at SUVs yet. What about beer companies or distilleries? Nightclubs are a good next target as are professional sports organizations (I have high blood pressure because watching the game stressed me out) There's a lot of fertile ground.

Safety, security and freedom from responsibility come at a pretty high price as the Nanny State gradually turns into the Nazi State.

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