



Group: 8



Team:

- Hemendra Suthar-22B1530
- Harshil Solanki-23B1016
- Harsh Tripathi-22B1275
- Hardik Khariwal-22B3954

Doubt is our Product

Introduction

Doubt is Our Product by Naomi Oreskes examines how industries manipulate scientific uncertainty to delay regulations.

We'll talk about doubt strategy which originated from tobacco industry to challenge evidence linking smoking to cancer.

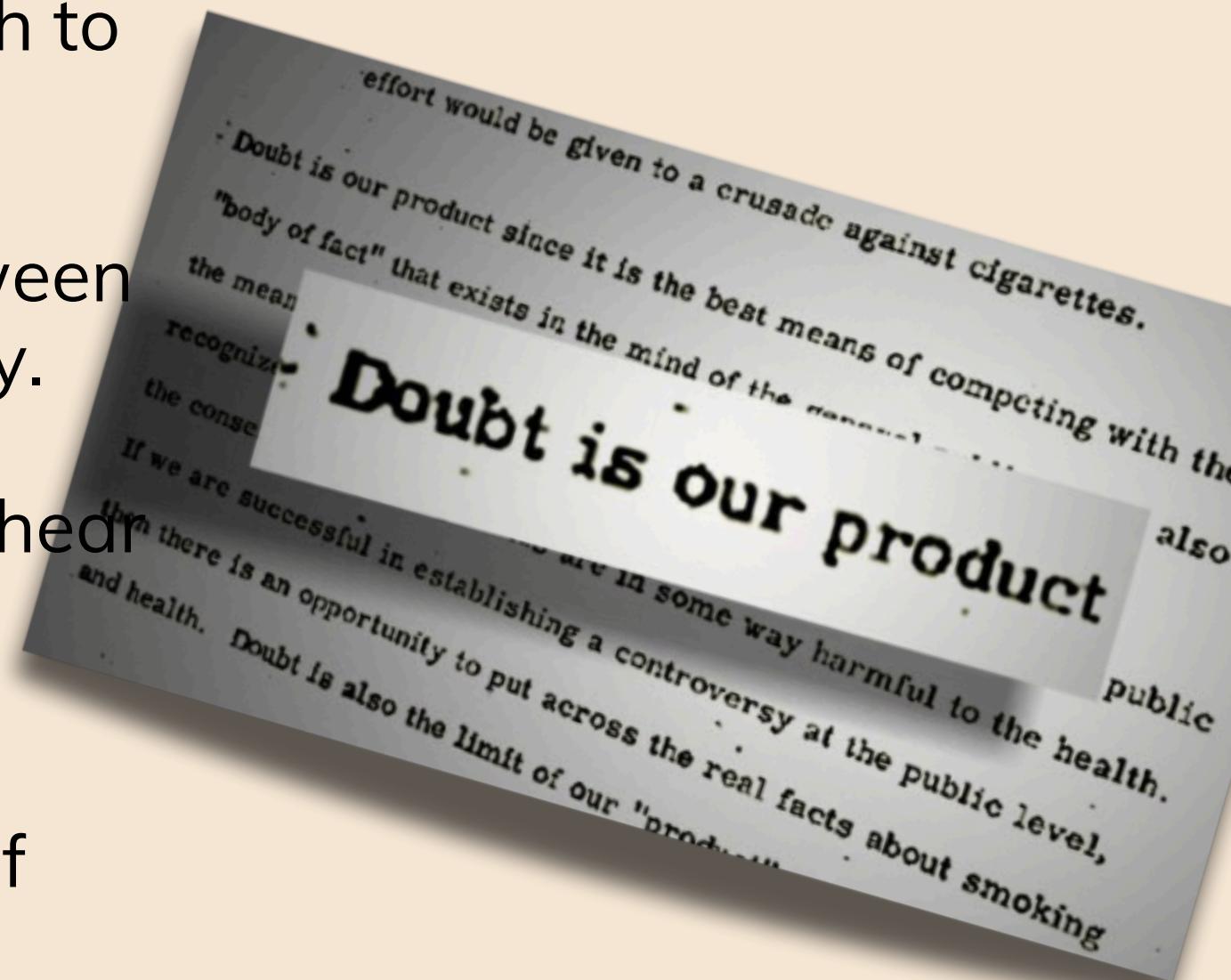


This literature starts from 1950s when the tobacco industry had started using science to fight science and modern era of fight began.

The literature highlights how corporations—particularly in tobacco and fossil fuel industries—used **doubt** to manipulate public opinion.

Historical Context

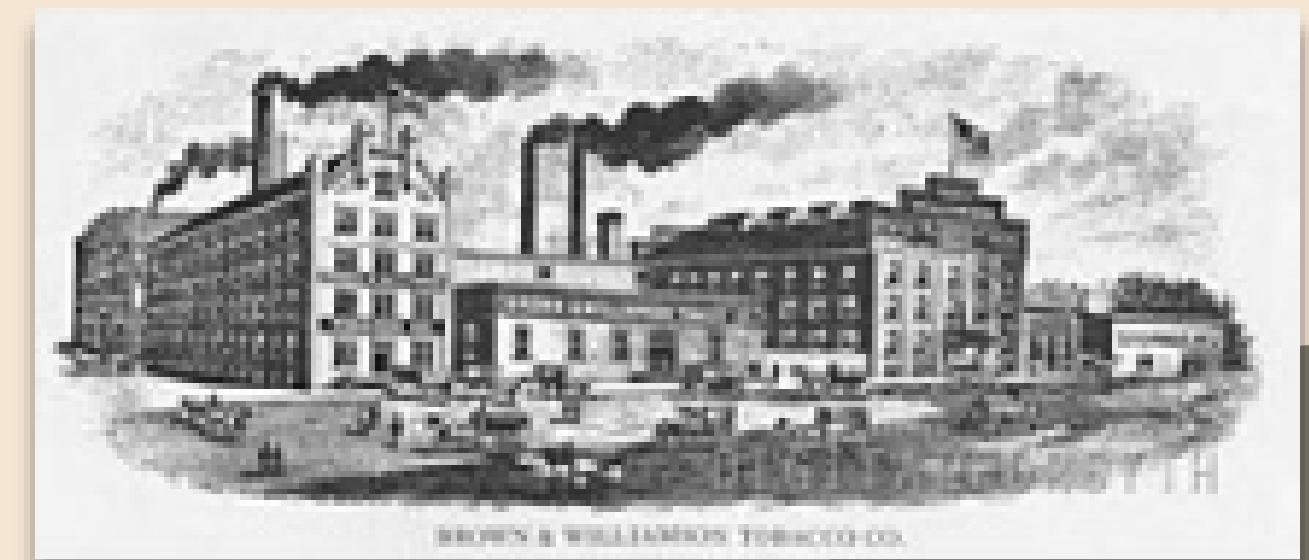
- In the mid-20th century, tobacco companies funded research to cast doubt on the health risks of smoking.
- They created a narrative of uncertainty around the link between smoking and cancer, influencing public perception and policy.
- In **1979** a group of tobacco industry executives gathered to hear about a new program.
- There were various reasons stating the purpose of Seitz's program, the major one was to develop an extensive body of scientifically well grounded data which would be useful in defending the industry against attacks.
- The health consequences of lead exposure have been recognized for > 2,000 years.



The Concept of Doubt as a Product

The famous memo from Brown & Williamson (a tobacco company) stated:
"Doubt is our product"

- They emphasize that doubt was intentionally manufactured by corporations to protect their financial interests.
- This was not a natural response to scientific uncertainty but a deliberate tactic to prevent regulations that could harm profits.
- Corporations hired public relations firms and scientists not to conduct original research but to discredit existing studies.
- Scientific uncertainty is a normal part of research, but industries manipulated this concept to suggest that the entire field of study was unreliable.

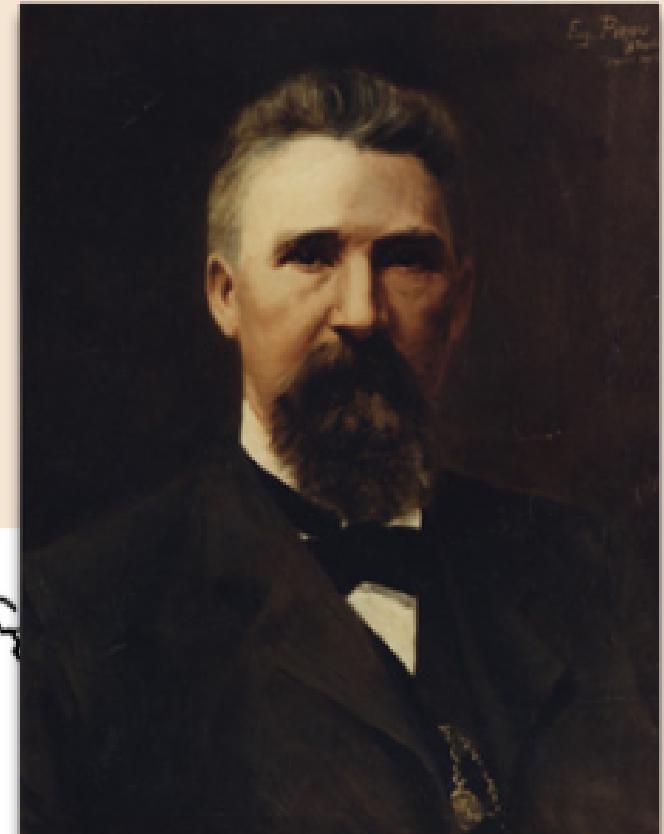


The 'Fateful Day'

Tobacco caused cancer: this was a fact and the industry knew it.

- On Dec. 15, 1953, the researchers at Sloan-Kettering Institute demonstrated that the cigarette tar painted on the skin of mice causes fatal cancer.
- This caused panic in the tobacco industry, and they were “frantically alarmed”.
- Four major tobacco brands of that time decided to hire PR firm to convince that there were “no sound scientific basis of these charges”

- They created “Tobacco Industry Research Committee” to challenge the mounting scientific evidence of the harms of tobacco.





HALF OF THE PANELISTS QUIT SMOKING

1957: US Public Health Sector concluded that smoking was "the principal ethiological factor in the increased incidence of lung cancer"

1959: American Cancer Society had issued a formal statement declaring that "cigarette smoking is a major causative factor in lung cancer"

END OF RISE

By the end of 1950s tobacco industry successfully developed ties with doctors, medical school faculty and public health authorities across America.

Despite these concessions, the 1964 report was not favourable to the tobacco industry.

1962: US Surgeon General L. Terry established an Advisory Committee on Smoking and Health and ensured that the panel was "democratically" constituted.

1962: Royal College of Physicians of London declared that "cigarette smoking is a cause of cancer and bronchitis and probably contributes to... coronary heart diseases"

RELUCTANT CONCLUSIONS

By the early 1960s, the industry's own scientists concluded that nicotine was addictive.

1963: Vice President of Brown and Williamson concluded, presumably with reluctance:

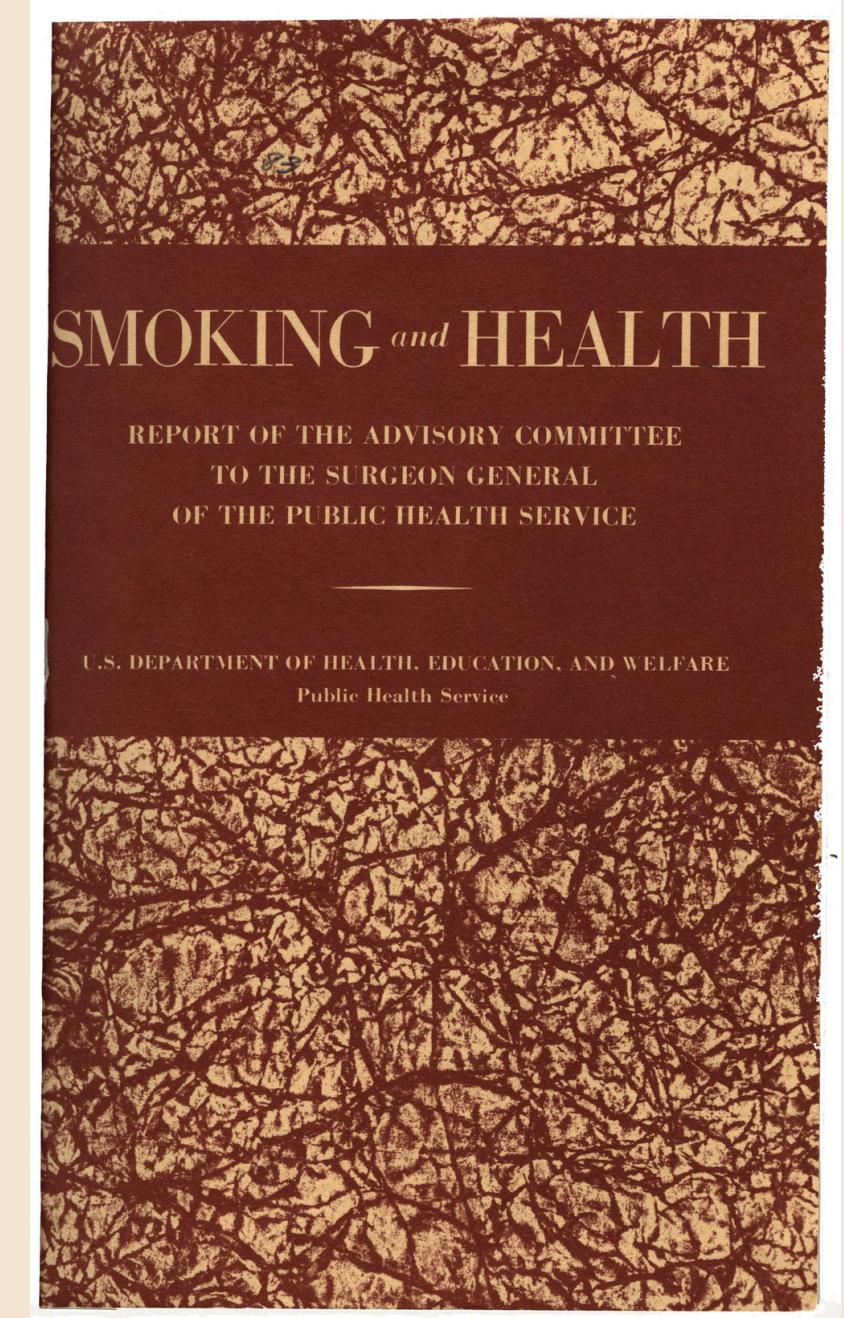
"WE ARE, THEN, IN THE BUSINESS OF SELLING NICOTINE, AN ADDICTIVE DRUG"

BIGGEST NEWS OF THE ERA

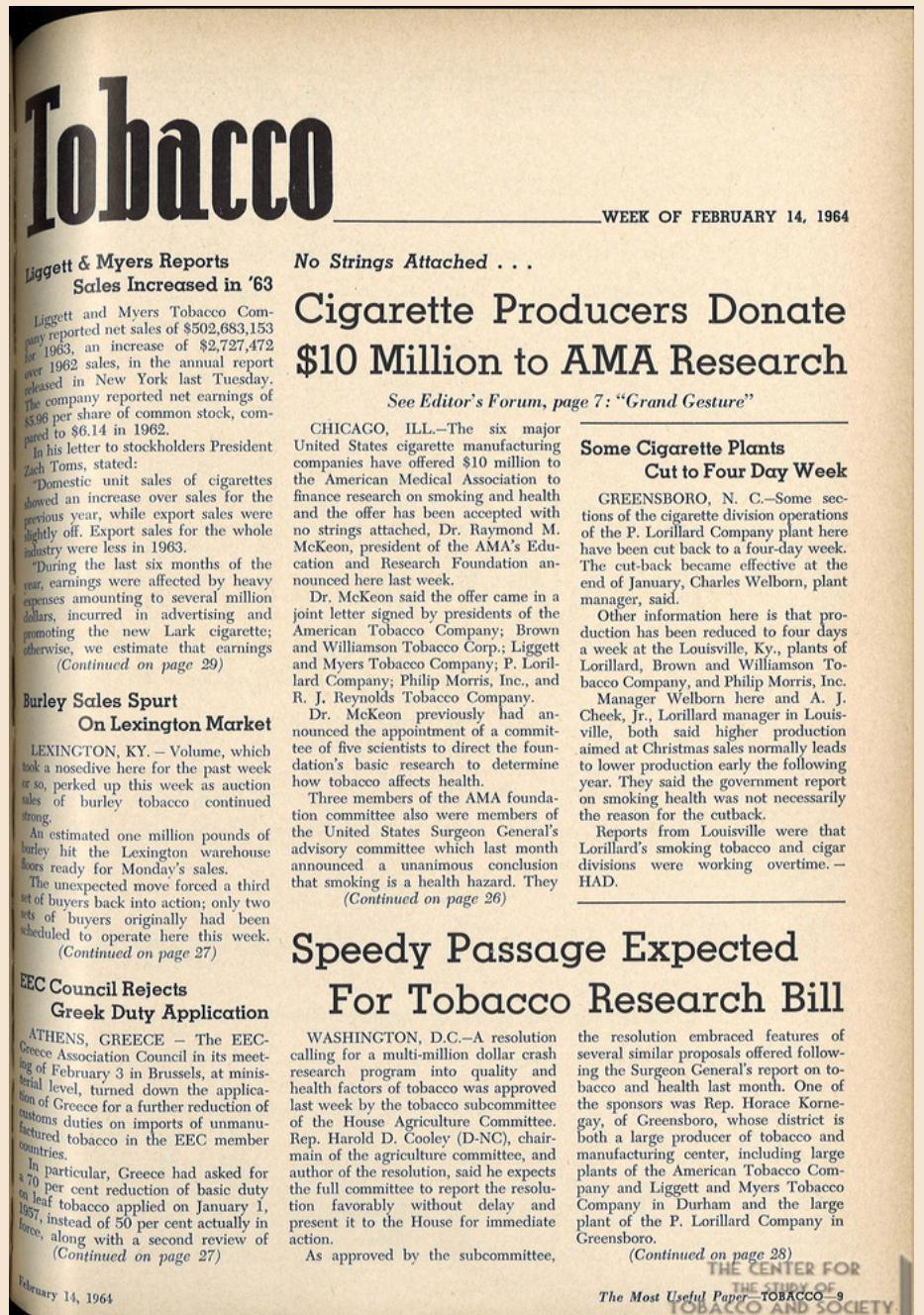
1964: Country's Doctor in chief, surgeon general's landmark report, **Smoking and Health**, concluded that Lung cancer has reached epidemic proportions, and the principal cause was tobacco smoking. Smokers were ten to twenty times more likely to get lung cancer than nonsmokers. They are more likely to suffer from emphysema, bronchitis, and heart disease.

The report was based on 7,000+ scientific studies and testimony of over 150+ consultants.

"THE REPORT WAS RELEASED ON SATURDAY TO MINIMISE IMPACT ON STOCK MARKET, BUT IT WAS STILL A BOMBSHELL"



INDUSTRY'S RESPONSE



Tobacco Industry Research Council
was renamed to
the Council of Tobacco Research

Dropping the word "Industry"

They decided that the new organization would focus exclusively on health research, avoiding "industry technical and commercial studies."

The PR Director of Brown and Williamson proposed that it might be time to back off "assurances, denial of harms, and similar claims."

The cigarette manufacturers did not give up, rather they resolved to fight harder.

1967: A new general surgeon reviewed the evidence, and report pointed to three results:

- 1) Smokers lived sicker and died sooner than non-smokers.
- 2) A substantial portion of these early deaths would not have occurred if these people had never smoked.
- 3) Were it not for smoking "practically none" of the early deaths from lung cancer would have occurred.

Response?

MORE DENIAL

No demonstrated causal relationship between smoking or [sic] any disease.

SOME NUMBERS

Collectively, the industry has spent 50+ million dollars on biomedical research by 1970s

Individual tobacco companies invested millions to bring the total to 70+ million dollars

By mid 1980s that figure has exceeded 100 million dollars

By 1969, the number of adult Americans who smoked was down to 37%

By 1979 it fell to 33%
Among Doctors it fell to 21%

The American Cancer Society and American Lung Association in 1981 devoted just under 300,000 dollars in research while that same year, the tobacco industry gave 6.3 million dollars

In 1969, R.J. Reynolds reported net revenues of 2.25 billion dollars

The New York Times

**PROFITS A RECORD AT
R.J.REYNOLDS; Net \$5.21 a Share
for 1960, Against \$4.45 in 1959 --
Sales Also Set Peak**

Share full article

Feb. 17, 1961

Altough 125 lawsuits related to health impairment were filed against the toobacco industry between 1954 to 1979, only 9 went to trial, and none were in favour of the plaintiffs

1978: Smokers paid 1.5+ billion dollars in cigarette excise taxes in US and abroad

The government not only allowed the killling, but promoted and profited from it: the federal government subsidized tobacco farming, and tobacco sales were an enormous source of both federal and state tax revenues

Who was Frederick Seitz?



FREDERICK SEITZ

"Can you imagine how World War II must have reshaped a scientist's career and purpose?

American physicist, a pioneer of solid state physics, and climate change denier.

A secret U.S. government research initiative to build the atomic bomb

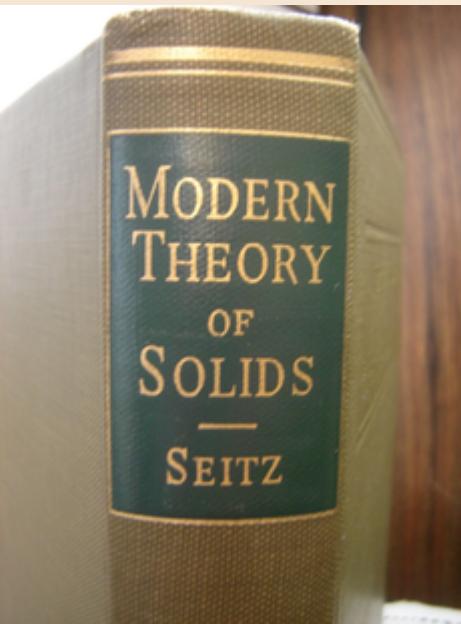
Seitz worked on a variety of important tasks during the war, from ballistics to armor penetration, but his most notable involvement was in the development of the atomic bomb



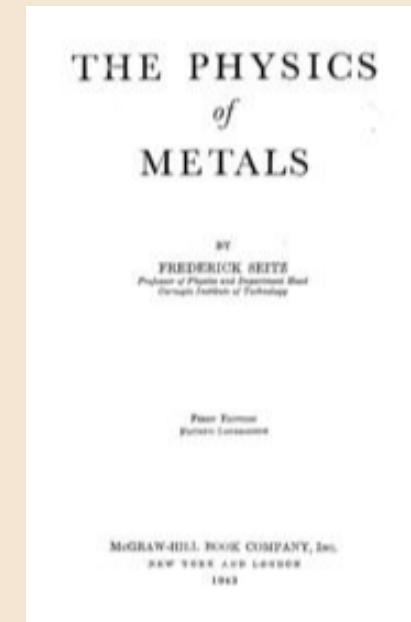
EUGENE WIGNER



Achievements & Contributions



1940



1943



1959



1968



1969



1973

Frederick Seitz & Anti-Communism



He increasingly felt that the scientific community had become rigid and dogmatic, with his political views pushing him to the fringes.

Now its obvious why RJR want a man like of seitz

He support aggressive weapon programs

Isolation from Scientific Community

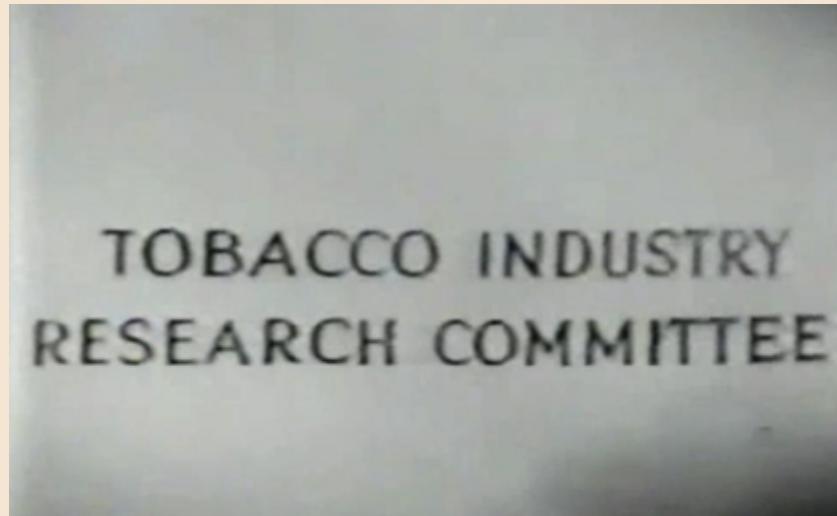
nuclear disarmament



Exchange Programs

The Tobacco Industry's Strategy

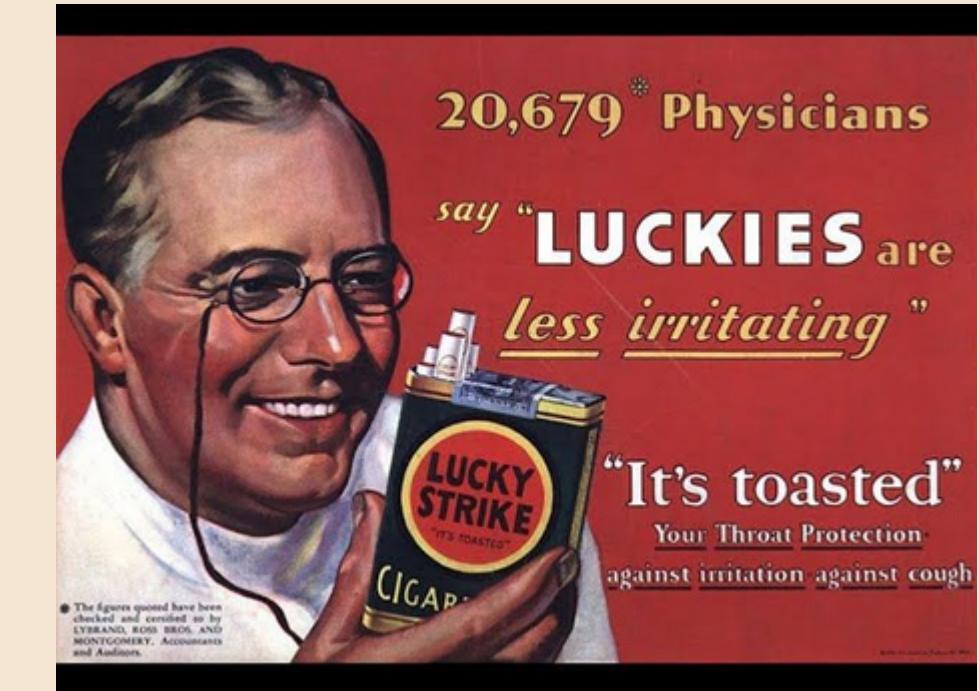
The tobacco industry sought Seitz's scientific credibility in the 1970s, hoping his reputation in the scientific community would lend legitimacy to their products.



Tobacco Industry Role:
Defended the industry against rising health concerns.
Cast doubt on scientific consensus linking smoking to health risks.

Key Ideologies:
Strong anti-Communism stance.
Skepticism toward government regulations.

TRICK WORKED!!



Prioritized science and technology over public opinion.
This made him a strong advocate for industries facing public criticism

Funding Research to Improve Public Image:
The tobacco industry strategically granted millions to Rockefeller University, where Seitz was based, to improve their reputation.

Seitz

- Why did he associate with R.J. Reynolds?



- Saw the attacks on the use of tobacco as "irrational".

Friendly Witnesses

- Frederick Seitz consulted RJR's legal counsel on each and every grant.
- Press releases had to be cleared by the legal team.

What does this mean?

“The industry was creating friendly witnesses that could be called on in the future”



Ex : Martin J. Cline

- Famous biomedical researcher
- Evaded answering in court



“Reynolds supported scientists, and when the need arose they were available to support Reynolds”

RICO Act

- The tobacco industry was finally found guilty under the RICO Act (Racketeer Influenced and Corrupt Organizations Act) in 2006.
- One reason it took a long time was because funds were channeled through law firms so that scientists appeared as independent

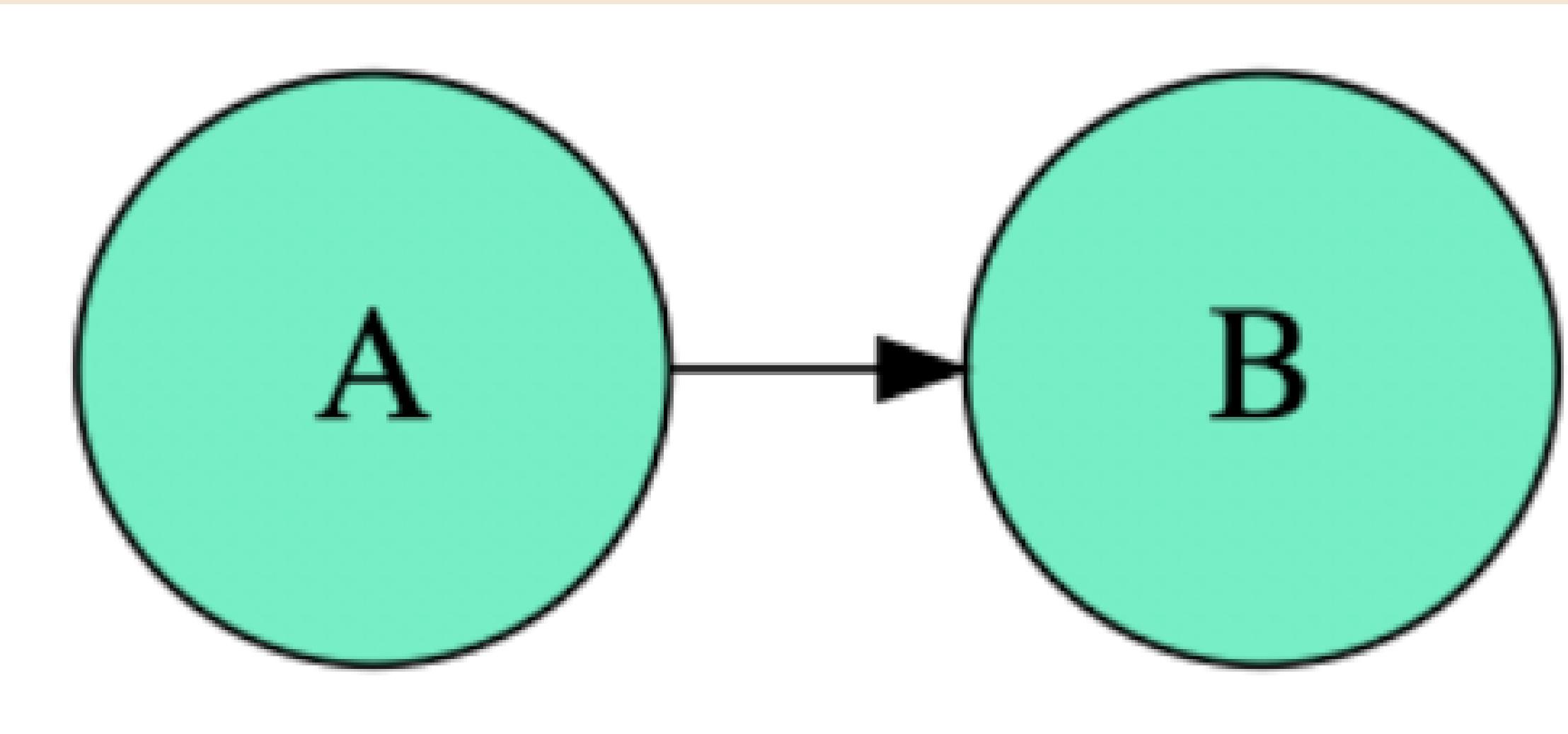
Do both sides have a right to be heard?

“Opinion vs science”



Causality

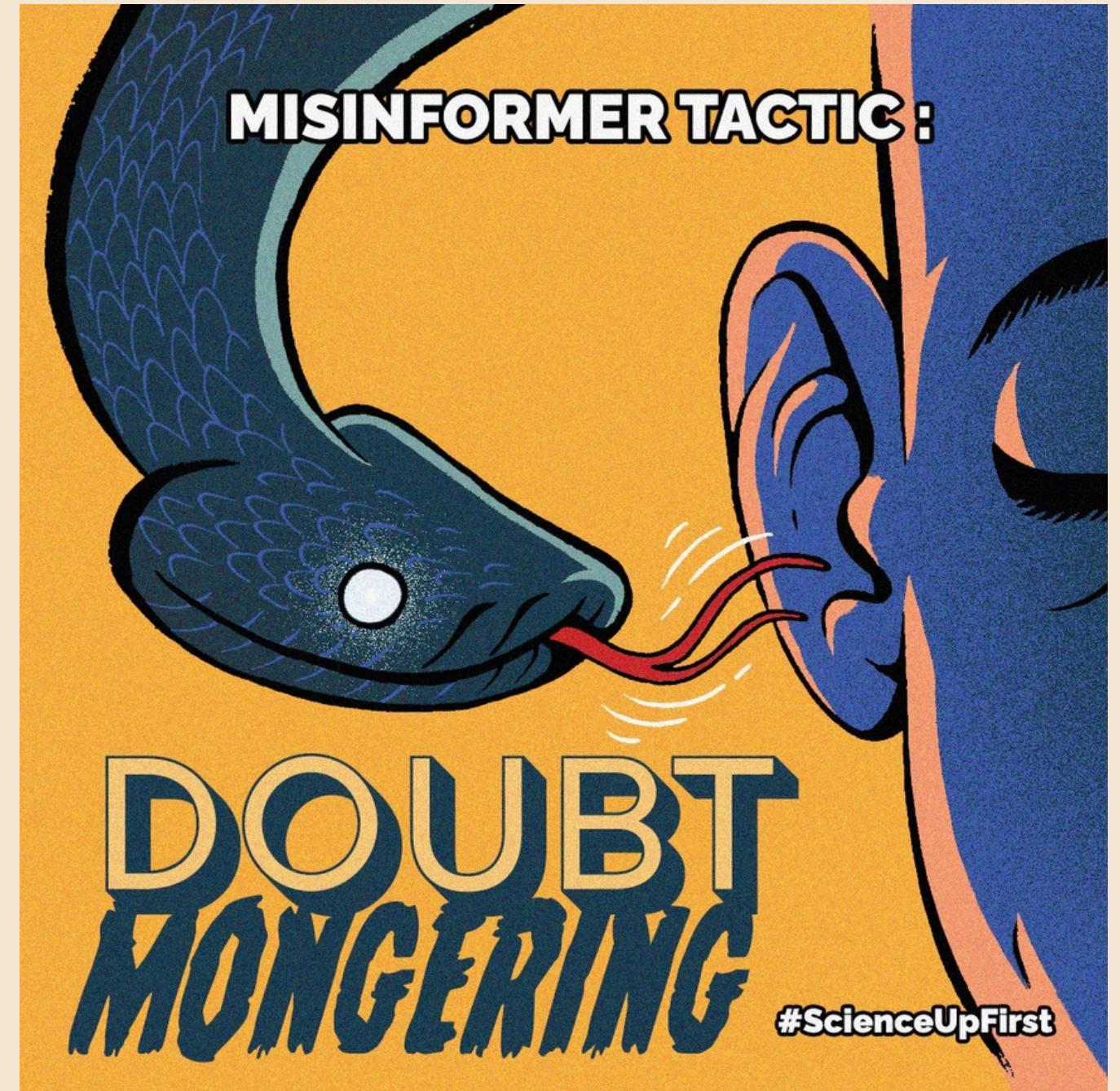
- One reason the industry's campaigns were successful is that not everyone who smokes gets cancer.
- If A causes B then if we do A then B will happen.



Doubt Mongering

- Science is not just about cold, hard facts.
- Remaining doubts/questions can be misinterpreted.
- They have you thinking more clarity/information is needed to put regulations in place

“Doubt is our product”



- Same ideology applies to different context. Many of these campaigns involved the strategies developed by the tobacco industry, and some involved the same people. One of them was Frederick Seitz.