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Editorial

Dear Members and Friends,

With this fifth issue, the International Pipe Smoking Day is in its second year, and we are proud to have been a major player in the creation of this truly international day. Indeed, a Google search for the event will display thousands of hits, and most of the pipe clubs in the world are honouring the day with special meetings, celebrations, and get-togethers.

Yet, for all this, the world's governments are still marching forward in their blind hatred of smokers of all kinds. On March 4, 2009, the BBC revealed that six pubs were closing every day in the UK, adding to 42 every week (the British Beer and Pub Association, quoted by the BBC on July 27, 2009, put this number higher, at 52 pubs a week). And make no mistake: a pub is not only a place to have a drink; as one regular put it: "What's a village without a

village pub?" To many in the UK, a pub is a traditional meeting place where the bonds between villagers, townspeople, and city dwellers are reaffirmed and strengthened. It is the place where old friends meet after a long week's work, where jokes are told, news exchanged, plans etched, and projects brought to fruition.

With the smoking ban slowly extending to other European and international countries, we pipsmokers will increasingly find ourselves threatened by pervasive violations of privacy (more and more insurance companies in the U.S. are refusing to cover people who smoke or, more profitably for them, will charge sometimes up to twice the insurance premium given to non-smokers), discrimination in the job market (some U.S. states, like Florida, have the right not to hire smokers), and ostracization and demonization. What was considered, more a couple of centuries ago up until the third quarter of the twentieth century,

a gentleman's pastime, a companion to thoughtful pursuits, and a tool for socialization, has become, to say it bluntly, a crime. Have we become criminals and will we be hunted down like outlaws? But all is not lost, for action and reaction always follow one another in cyclical fashion, and it may not be in the too-distant future when the psychological and social benefits of pipsmoking will be recognized again. The tradition of pipsmoking does not have to stand on the opposite side of technology; in fact, as some of the articles in this issue attempt to show, both do not only peacefully coexist, but thrive and give birth to ever-expanding ideas and pleasures.

Speaking of which, enjoy this issue!

Paul Jahshan



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The Second International Pipe Smoking Day

On February 20, 2009, at 20:00, the Pipe Club of Lebanon met, for the second year, to celebrate the virtual coming together of all pipesmokers, (almost) at the same time all over the world, in order to sit down and think about the noble craft, its meaning and importance.

As it was also the time of our monthly meeting, the IPSD was held at Fares' place and, after the obligatory (and much appreciated) crackers, sandwiches, and beverages, a "live," hands-on presentation about Peterson pipes was given by Paul. What better moment than to light our pipes and reflect on the simple joys of life as they are punctuated by the discovery of a new tobacco, the prospects of a new pipe, and the exchange of "gentlemanly,"—though to some, antiquated—gestures like the sharing of tobacco pinches and the raising of pipes, albeit from thousands of kilometers away, to like-minded persons?



From left to right: Harout, Tarek, Elie, Oliver, Paul, Marc, Salim, Fares, and Jihad

It goes without saying that we do not advocate a nostalgic, out-moded and unrealistic return to the times of yore. Thanks to technology and science, we live longer, healthier, and better lives, and without the Internet neither the International Pipe Smoking Day, nor this journal, would have seen the light of day or would have spread across the continents the way they have.

On the occasion, and in keeping with the principles enunciated last year in the International Pipe Smoking Day manifesto, quality time was spent thinking about major goals, some of which have, since February 20, been achieved, like the Pipe Club of Lebanon's Pipesmoker Ranking System (more on this below).

We also wish to thank all those who have joined us in spirit from all the corners of the world, and relay to them our warmest greetings for a long and happy life filled with the excitement and pleasures of good tobaccos and pipes!

Paul Jahshan

Pipe Craft and Tradition

As I said once before, smoking a pipe is when you decide to stop time and everything else around you; with pipesmoking you can travel wherever you want and where no one dares to stop you.

And in this time, our time, the time of technology and speed where every second has the price of a day, where most people have no time even for their most cherished hobbies and pastimes, and barely have some moments to spend with their families and friends, it is important to reflect on gestures and rituals that stop this madness and bring us back to ourselves and to our immediate surroundings.

But a person who knows how to deal with time, appreciate it and use it, finds time on his/her side. From traditions, from the needs for surviving and the hobbies of mankind, has come the age of technology.

Those who deny or forget their roots will live in the labyrinths of oblivion. But I am not against this age, I support it 100% but I always find some time to share with my silent friend, my pipe.

And as long as the briar remains in the world, pipe crafting will continue and will never stop, because no pipe smoker will stop; he or she can and will always find the right moment to smoke a pipe in harmony and love.

Fares Irani



Britain's Smoking Ban and Other Tobacco-Control Methods



The author, John Walker (foreground), thoughtfully pondering the future of pipesmoking in Britain during the Pipe Club of Norfolk's last indoor smoking meeting before the ban

A smoking ban in enclosed public places in England came into force on 1 July 2007. [1] Smoking bans also exist in other parts of Britain.

The politics and hidden agenda behind the smoking ban

The key to understanding what is behind the smoking ban and what is going wrong in Britain nowadays is to realise that New Labour is Fabian. The Fabian Society is a British intellectual socialist movement. [2] George Orwell was associated with the Fabians and spoke at some of their meetings. He knew what they were up to - and wrote his novel *1984* as a warning. The present government has adopted *1984* as a manual.

The ultimate objective of the Fabians is to create a One World Communitarian ('Third Way') government. This ties in with the New World Order project. [3] Communitarians want to create a post-modern, post-democratic feudal society run by a small number of rich and powerful people with everyone else working as peasants. [4][5] In order to achieve their objectives they need to set up effective social control networks.

In Britain, the management mechanism and social control network being used to carry out the true and hidden agenda of Fabian New Labour is a fraudulent 'educational charity' called Common Purpose.[6][7] Common Purpose has been active in the National Health Service and in other British Government departments and public bodies like the BBC since 1997 and is well-entrenched. One of the objectives of Common Purpose is to try to ensure a smooth transition when Britain is finally taken over by the European Union.

The smoking ban is part of Fabian New Labour's plan to exert more and more social control over people's lives in Britain. The smoking ban has more to do with Fabian New Labour's hidden agenda of social control - getting people used to doing as they are told with all manner of petty restrictions - and destroying traditional leisure activities such as pubbing, bingo, etcetera than people's health.

As with the Carbon Allowance (Tax), which is based on the fraudulent theory of man-made global warming, this smoking ban is based upon fraudulent science relating to the alleged deleterious effects of second-hand smoke - effects that are in some cases unproven and in other cases, greatly exaggerated.

The smoking ban also went against the Fabian New Labour 2005 election manifesto commitment which said, "We recognise that many people want smoke-free environments and need regulation to help them get this. We therefore intend to shift the balance significantly in their favour. We will legislate to ensure that all enclosed public places and workplaces other than licensed premises will be smoke-free. The legislation will ensure that all restaurants will be smoke-free; all pubs and bars preparing and serving food will be smoke-free; and other pubs and bars will be free to choose whether to allow smoking or to be smoke-free. In membership clubs the members will be free to choose whether to allow smoking or to be smoke-free. However, whatever the general status, to protect employees, smoking in the bar area will be prohibited everywhere." [8] But what we got was a total ban.

The Government has made a lot of small and subtle changes to Britain since 1997. Most of these changes have gone unnoticed but their effects have accumulated. For example, changes to the police have meant that the police now behave strangely at times. The BBC, now under the control of Common Purpose, is a propaganda arm of the European Union. [9] Some of these changes, such as the smoking ban, have been introduced suddenly and got people such as myself asking questions about what is really going on.

Like the total smoking ban, there was no mention of the New World Order project in Fabian New Labour's 2005 election manifesto.

Now there is a second attack by the Government - this time on the display of tobacco products in shops which is designed to deter young people from starting smoking. [10] "What is really driving these proposals is the government's declared policy of 'de-normalization', an Orwellian-style process in which a significant minority of the population is bullied and shamed into giving up a legal consumer product that, lest we forget, contributes billions of pounds to the Treasury every year." [11]

And now there is this: "The Government has been accused of fixing the outcome of public consultations on health policy after it emerged that reviews were flooded with block votes from groups funded entirely by the taxpayer." which is discussed here: [offensive language warning]: <http://devilskitchen.me.uk/2009/01/chinese-democracy.html>

So the British Government has been fiddling the votes regarding a ban on all tobacco products from view in every shop in Britain.

There are literally no depths to which this institutionally-corrupt Fabian New Labour government will not descend: multi-billion Eurofraud, relentless and ruthless abuses of citizens, lying, cheating, secrecy, going to war on the basis of lies, oppressive social control, abrogating sovereign rule to Brussels, corruption, deceit, fraud, treachery, bankrupting the country and so on.

This is what we are up against in Britain.

I realise that there are political difficulties in the Lebanon but at least you have a more stable banking system and less oppressive government than in the UK.

The next target for Fabian New Labour social control freaks is the obese.

The smoking ban itself

For the benefit of those readers who are fortunate enough not to live in a society run by social control freaks and dictators, here are answers to some questions you might have about the smoking ban in Britain.

Who has been touched by the ban?

Everybody who smokes. It does not matter whether you smoke cigars, cigarettes, pipes or shisha pipes, smokers who want to smoke in public places are affected. There are no restrictions on the use of smokeless tobaccos such as snuff.

Even some people who do not smoke dislike the ban: "Why I'm uncomfortable about the smoking ban is that I simply don't believe that the dangers of passive smoking actually outweigh the denial of the smoker's liberty - particularly given that as a non-smoker I always did have at least a degree of choice to avoid smoky pubs, etc." [12]

How many pubs have had to close down?

It is difficult to say exactly how many pubs have closed as a direct result of the ban. Many pubs have gone out of their way to provide outdoor heaters and shelters where smokers can indulge the habit but in spite of that a lot of pubs have fallen victim. The current economic recession and increases in beer tax have not helped.

What happened to the pipe clubs in the UK?

At Wurselen in south western Germany near the Belgian border, there is the local pipe club, the Rauchclub Haal, which is the oldest known pipe club in the world, having been formed in 1876 and operating continuously ever since (except for the period 1933-45 when the initial anti-smoking Nazi was in power!). While no British pipe clubs have been forced to close down totally, the Nazi-style ban has made life difficult and led to activities being curtailed.

The first casualty was the British Pipe Smoking Championship held at Knowle in the West Midlands. The last championship was held in 2007 and currently efforts are being made to resurrect it.

Here is an interesting slide show about the last proper meeting of the club at the Rosary Tavern in June 2007:
<http://www.eveningnews24.co.uk/content/slideshows/07/No%20Pipe%20Dreams/>

You can see how the Pipe Club of Norfolk managed during 2007 when the ban was introduced here:

<http://www.pipeclubofnorfolk.co.uk/miscellaneous2007.php>

Until recently the club held most of its meetings at the Rosary Tavern where we were well looked-after and were able to smoke outside but unfortunately, the Rosary has recently shut down so we have resorted to Plan B which is to have meetings in a member's garage (where we hold the smoking competitions in any case).

Are smokers being hounded by police and how?

Many councils employ officials to check up on pubs and make sure that nobody is smoking. Sometimes, even the police get involved which to my mind is a total waste of police time when they should be pursuing real criminals.

Resistance to the ban

One of the most famous opponents of the ban in Britain is Hamish Howitt, a pub landlord in Blackpool, Lancashire. Hamish has had several run-ins with the law and has paid out thousands of pounds in fines. Unfortunately, he appears to have given in: <http://www.blackpoolgazette.co.uk/blackpoolnews/Smoking-ban-rebel-reopens-smokefree.4848725.jp>

There are other resistance groups and not only in Britain. You can see some here: http://www.antiprohibition.org/ticap_pages.php?q=3

The great tradition of pipe smoking in the UK and how it is now being endangered on a national scale?

The few pipe clubs that there are in Britain will continue to soldier on in spite of all the difficulties. Pipe smokers are still allowed to smoke in their own homes - at least for the time being.

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John Walker (Pipe Club of Norfolk, UK)

Dunhill's Demise



Dunhill's shop on Bourdon street, London

In April of this year, on the occasion of a conference presentation at Nottingham University, UK, I spent a few days with my family in London and, of course, put Dunhill's on the list of "to-visit" items. The last time I was at Dunhill's was in 2000, nine years ago, and I recalled with fondness the walls of the Jermyn street shop filled with big displays containing the best Dunhill pipes.

I also remembered the person in charge of pipes who had also officiated, on the occasion of one of the Pipe Club of London's competitions at Dunhill's, as time-taker, museum cicerone, and main salesperson. In 2000, the man in question had also used velvet gloves to handle some of the pipes for my inspection, and was kind enough to give me as gift, upon my purchase of a pipe, Dunhill's *The Pipe Book* when I told him that I was a life-member of the Pipe Club of London.

Well, that was then, and now is now, as I sadly discovered this April.

After walking for about one hour, and panting with expectation, we reached the Jermyn street shop and, lo, the man in charge, after almost a decade, was still there, ready for customers, shining in a sparkling new suit, harbouring whitened teeth, a piercing gaze, and the smile of a person who knows what to do in all situations. Unfortunately, I was not *the* kind of customer he

was expecting, something abruptly shown on his face when I asked about “the pipes.”

Indeed, his plastic smile disappeared immediately and he said, with a vacant tone (for, after all, he HAS to deal with customers) "Oh... Strange, you are the second person this week to ask about pipes." Had I asked a bookshop keeper about fruits and vegetables, he wouldn't have been more surprised. And then he said, with a mixture of surprise but also of personal offense, "We're sorry, sir, we don't have pipes anymore, you will have to go to our other shop, on Bourdon street," and absent-mindedly handed me a card with the address when I pressed for directions.

Daring a gaze of recognition, I said "and aren't you the person who used to be in charge of the pipes and of competitions? I remember you, I'm from the Pipe Club of London!" The man had, by then, not only lost his smile but also his composure and, alas, a little bit of his courtesy and politeness. With a curt "No, sir, you must be mistaken," he instantly turned away and headed towards another customer, planting me there.

What a shame... Had Dunhill, after almost a century of British and international reputation in pipes and tobaccos, reached such a level, and felt obliged to betray such embarrassment about their prestigious briary past?

But then I had decided to buy myself a Dunhill pipe and, notwithstanding, wouldn't let a turncoat shame me into hiding. With my spouse and children, we continued our Quest for the Dunhill Grail and reached their "smoking" shop where we indeed found a small enclosed garden (see photo above) with mostly men seated in front of a beer and smoking big cigars. The place was swarming with bodyguards in black suits with headsets, and I fancied myself in a James Bond movie with a mission to steal Dunhill's Crown Pipes!

Not very surprisingly after the encounter above, pipes were nowhere to be seen (only over-priced leather goods), and upon inquiring I was taken by a Dunhill "agent" downstairs, next to the drink counter (for Dunhill was not only a smoking place but also sort of a mini-pub), and placed in front of a small glass wall display. In it were about twenty pipes. "That's it?" I asked the agent. "Yes sir." The display consisted of some Ruby Barks, some shells, and a few smooth blacks, if I remember correctly. I started to handle and examine them but the agent, probably unaware of—or untrained in—the pipesmokers' notoriously long time needed to make a purchasing decision, was getting impatient with me. When I finally decided on a straight Ruby Bark panel, the agent clumsily tried to put it in its pouch, actually the wrong way. I helped him do it correctly and we went up to the cashier where I learned—surprise?—that there were no discounts to members of the Pipe Club of London; in fact, he had never heard of it anyway.

Hastily leaving Dunhill's premises lest some covert operation were to imminently take place there, I reflected upon the demise of the once great Dunhill legacy. The old Mecca of pipe smokers, it had now not only steered away from its tobacco-and-pipe fame, but wiped it out almost completely, slowly relegating it to oblivion; its new staff hardly know how to handle a pipe and, probably, what shapes and parts make up a pipe, while its old staff are hurriedly learning to undo years of hard-earned experience by abruptly engaging in forced amnesia.

The question is, however, what will Dunhill do to bring back its disillusioned customers when the inevitable reaction to the anti-smoking Inquisition will set in? Will these customers forgive Dunhill's infantile turncoat tactics?

I, for one, will think more than twice before setting foot again in their stores.

Paul Jahshan

Tradition and the Pipesmoker

It is easy to see the pipe as a remnant of times past, a tradition of pipe makers now on the verge of extinction, a fossilized activity which bears little relevance to our over-technologized and soon-to-become fully digitalized cultures.

Yet, if one looks closer, pipesmoking and pipe making are as much a technology as anything else. Look at tobacco. The idea of taking a leaf, curing it, adding different flavours/casings to it and smoking it in a pipe is, already, a technology in itself. Now look at a pipe. From finding the best briar burl, to cutting it, following its lines, turning it, perforating it with precision tools, and striving to strike the perfect balance between shape, lines, and functionality, the process is as challenging, if not more, as designing and engineering a mobile phone.

Since pipes are not found in nature, obviously, the pipe maker is as much an artist of the beautiful as a skilled engineer who transforms raw materials into a very useable and practical tool that brings pleasure to its users. In this respect, pipe making is a technology, and an advanced one at that; it makes use of sophisticated tools and follows precise mathematical formulas.

The misconception arises, of course, from the age-old illusory divide between nurture and nature, for the "wooden" nature of the pipe brings to mind, quite understandably, images of country life and rustic settings. The discrepancy, however, rests in a subtler division: that between consumerism and Hedonism (I am using the term in its philosophical meaning, also known as "ethical hedonism"). Technology has been associated with time management for, in consumer societies, "time is money," and every waste of "productive" time is seen as stepping out and away from the mad race towards increasingly disposable goods.

Take the mobile phone, for example: companies produce millions of units of a specific model vaunting the "latest technology," only to supersede this short-lived item with a "newer" and "better" one even as the old model is being produced and shipped out. As soon as the customer takes hold of the current unit, the "better" features of the newer model are advertised everywhere.

This has two clear consequences:

1. Mobile phone companies are kept in indefinite business, just changing and permuting colours and shapes and adding extra features which are quickly made to appear necessary;
2. Users are "tamed" into accepting that as soon as they buy the new model, this same model quickly becomes outdated. The enjoyment factor and hence, the enjoyment time, become shorter and shorter, and the race to get hold of the "newest" phone with the "latest" features sets in effortlessly.

"Old" phones are measured not by decades or even by years, but by months and even by weeks, and are quickly discarded and lose almost all their value immediately after they are purchased.

This con game is not limited to mobile phones, of course, as it can apply to almost any "technological" instrument, the value of which resides, actually, not in its function (after all, a phone is a phone) but in its image-enhancing qualities.

Not so with the pipe: value-wise, a pipe bought twenty years ago and kept in good shape will fetch almost the same price as when initially bought, and in the case of collectibles, even more. Function-wise, even if you own a hundred pipes, each pipe has a special place and a special occasion in which to be used. No good pipe is discarded forever or is unusable (if kept in good condition, that is); rotating between pipes according to the fancy of the moment, and also according to the tobacco used, is one of the pleasures of the pipesmoker's life. This, also, has two consequences:

1. Pipe makers don't produce, necessarily, "better" pipes with "newer" features; they concentrate instead on the intrinsic value of the materials used and on the aesthetic results produced;
2. Pipesmokers are not caught in the "use quickly and discard" race, and their understanding of time is altered accordingly.

I will buy a pipe if I need one, or if the prospective pipe promises—in itself, in a one-to-one relationship between me and the

pipe, without intermediary—moments of joy.

Therefore, pipe making and pipesmoking embody an advanced technology the aim of which is the granting of traditional values associated with aesthetic pleasure, sensory satisfaction, and a more relaxed—and thus healthier—management of time, energy, and resources.

Paul Jahshan

Pipesmoking and the Internet

In the 1980s I began pipesmoking; my parents allowed me to smoke when I started to earn my own money.

But how to begin? There was no Web! I started with a pipe I bought at a “Trafik” (a tobacconist in Austria) very cheaply. The bowl became extremely hot and there was an awful tongue-bite. So I bought a book: “Helmut Hochrain’s neues Pfeifenbuch” (*Helmut Hochrain’s New Pipe-Book*). It taught me how to smoke, and what kinds of tobaccos were available. I remember that Mr. Hochrain was a harsh teacher: it was not allowed to keep unburnt tobacco remains in the bowl, only grey ashes. So I bought another pipe book and so on; now I have a collection of about 40 titles.

Then I went to the famous pipe-shop which now does not exist any more: “Pfeifendoktor (Pipe-Doctor) Starzengruber” in Vienna at Südtirolerplatz close to a railway-station. I bought some pipes there and I remember how the late Mr. Starzengruber gave me a list of all tobaccos sold in Austria then (in the 80s!). They were a handful and some were of dubious quality. I tasted most of them; I especially liked Amphora red. The list was written by an enthusiastic pipesmoker, Mr. Kraus-Kautzky, and it circulated, machine-written and photocopied, among the pipe-shops.

Once, I was in Egypt, Cairo, and there I burnt a pipe I had bought at Mr. Starzengruber. When I was back in Austria I showed it to the pipe-doctor and he became very angry that I didn’t smoke it properly, but he repaired it. Mr. Starzengruber and his shop was the only contact-person and teacher for me in this time. And my pipe-books, of course.

Understandably, I felt no need to get in touch with other pipesmokers.

And so I was happy with my pipes, tobaccos and books. I had a very stressful job and I must confess that at this time I smoked rarely a pipe but lots of cigarettes. When I bought a computer and got Internet access in August 1998, I absolutely didn’t understand what the Internet and pipesmoking had to do with each other. I searched the web for interesting topics, discussed in newsgroups and found some mail-friends. Then calmer times came for me: I retired. At the beginning I was a little confused and didn’t know what to do all day long, so I focused on one of my hobbies, the Romanian language. I found some friends there and read Romanian online-magazines.

Then I re-discovered my pipes and, step by step, I quitted smoking cigarettes and turned to pipes once again. So I got the idea of viewing the web-resources for pipesmoking. I found some online-stores where I ordered (Mr. Starzengruber was not alive any more), and some interesting newsgroups and forums. I don’t mention the links here because they are easy to find with search engines. Then I found on the web a pipe-circle in Vienna, the Pfeifenrunde Vindobona and I went to a meeting. Slowly, the Internet and pipesmoking came together. I searched the web for more pipe links and found that even in Romania there were pipe clubs. And I got in contact with the Pipe Club of Lebanon too. I met Paul with his family in Vienna. And I met members of Romanian pipe-clubs...

On the Internet you will never be alone, this I learned. There are so many resources for pipesmoking! Now I was in the midst of the game and I posted several articles, tobacco-reviews and articles in German, Romanian and English. I was able to help other pipesmokers and they were able to help me. I didn’t feel isolated any more; I found a good tobacconist and pipe-dealer in Vienna and a tobacconist at Leobersdorf where I buy; I am member of the Vienna Pipe-Club. All thanks to the Internet!

We have seen that the Internet helps us pipesmokers to get informed and to come together. Now – what can pipesmoking do for the Internet?

The answer is simple. You cannot work on the computer all time, you need a break. Before you collapse – relax with a pipe! It lasts enough time to recover and you can think what you would like to search on the web next or which articles you want to post at a forum. You can smoke and concentrate on your next steps; you can make a draft of an article in your mind when you smoke for 45 minutes with a cup of coffee next to you; you can use the web more effectively when you are prepared, you don't get lost when you meditate with a pipe for some time until what you have seen has been ordered in your head. You cannot smoke at the computer because ash may fall on it and spoil the keyboard, so turn it off to hibernation-mode. Then you may surf the web or write mails in a shorter period of time until it is possible to clean your pipe. You are a little occupied with your pipe and then return to the screen and work on. This way of life is very easy and pleasant.

Smoking a pipe you can plan which information you will want to search on the web. But it is not recommended to turn on your computer immediately so you have time to meditate and find the most important aspects and plan your activities for the time after the pipe will be finished. This procedure prevents you from hectic surfing or writing unfinished thoughts in your mails. After the pipe you can work more effectively as if you had stayed on the computer all time. When you have got a difficult e-mail to answer, then smoke at least one small pipe for a quarter of an hour and then reply! The sender doesn't mind the delay because he/she doesn't know when you got the mail.

So – what to choose: pipesmoking or Internet? You can have both but not at the same time. To alternate is the answer!

Pipesmoking prevents you from hectic activities on the Internet like chatting. Pipesmoking gives you new ideas and calms you down so that you consider your web-activities in another, better way.

Pipesmoking and the Internet are the best!

Christian Schneider



The Politics of Smoking Regulation

The readers of this magazine, and certainly those living in the so-called West, will be aware of the (increasing) desire of public institutions and governments to regulate the lives of citizens. Fundamentally, this phenomenon is by no means new. Indeed, one might argue that it has been a part of the social structures we are familiar with today ever since they began to emerge. But what has changed is the speed in which our lives become more regulated as well as transparent. Having been the subject of academic discussion for a considerable time, let me nonetheless mention two more recent drivers of this development: the events unfolding on September 11, 2001, and the ongoing penetration of everyday life by computers and the Internet.

Contrary to what one might assume, we should note that this is not purely driven by the seemingly endless capacity of politicians to exert their will unto the constituents. There are very good reasons indeed for implementing guidelines and changes for the benefit of societies at large. Here, we may think of the pressing environmental issues or the continued deepening of the divide between “haves” and “have-nots.” These are problems ultimately affecting every last one of us on the planet—and if not us, then certainly our children. However, politicians are seemingly unable to resist the temptations that come with legislative power, and attempt to shape the world “to their liking.” No doubt, they only have in mind what is best for us—as they do not tire to remind us.

In the last couple of years, several European and non-European countries have implemented new regulations that widely restrict smoking in public places. The term “public” is here not limited to official government buildings but also includes bars, restaurants, and cafés, and thus refers to places open to the general public. The motivation is twofold: protecting non-smokers from the harmful effects of passive smoking, and deterring smokers from pursuing their unhealthy habit. Now, no one in their right mind would seriously doubt that smoking is potentially harmful both to smokers and passive smokers. And it is a fact that every year thousands of people around the world die a premature death at least partially induced by the effects of smoking. However, unlike other intoxicating substances (e.g. marijuana, alcohol), tobacco very much remains legal: it is legal to use, legal to possess, legal to sell, and it still is a multi-billion Euro industry. Governments very much participate in that industry through a heavy taxation of “junkies” (i.e. us) and “dealers” (i.e. producers and vendors). Ironically enough, in Germany, for example, tobacco tax revenues have for years been used to subsidise the critically underfunded public pension scheme—hence smokers have actually supported German pensions by a) paying more tax and b) on average living a shorter life.

What emerges is that governments are in a rather contradictory position when it comes to anti-smoking regulations. On the one hand, largely restricting smoking falls in line with their desire to turn us into well-behaved citizens living clean, wholesome, and controllable lives. On the other, they very much appreciate the tax revenues generated by smoking. After all, protecting our freedom in the mountains of Afghanistan and the boroughs of Baghdad is a costly business. Or, to speak in broader terms, they need us to be ascetics and consumers at the same time, saints as well as sinners. The contradiction is that we need to consume more, but must be ever more considerate of the effects this has on other people. Here we have the inherent dilemma facing the West and its “brothers in arms”: we promote endless growth, and are prepared to enforce our requirements around the world at almost all costs. Yet the social codex of political correctness that has emerged as a remnant of the 1960s and 1970s dictates that this very same growth be restricted, more considerate, and most certainly gender-neutral.

What, you may ask, does this have to do with smoking a pipe? Well, a lot, I dare say. It has frequently been observed in this publication that smoking a pipe (or indeed a good cigar) is very much a conscious act. An act that withstands the urges of an accelerating lifestyle, offering a safe-haven for contemplation. Nowadays, pipe smoking even transcends this meaning: as a conscious act it is also an act of defiance against those wishing to control and regulate our lives, turning us into consumers rather than human beings. And let me be precise: I am referring to the pipe (or cigar), not cheap, mass produced cigarettes. In fact, the latter are very much a representation of the consumerist societies we live in, forever seeking the “quick fix,” pleasure awaiting you 24x7, use and dispose. I say this not to discriminate against cigarette smokers but because I see a fundamental difference between the two approaches to smoking. Cigarettes represent what smoking becomes when subjected to mass production, mass culture, and the forces of unlimited growth.

The above suggests that pipe smoking has become (and perhaps always has been?) very much a political act. By stemming themselves against the tide of triviality, conformity, and consumerism that threatens to engulf all of us, pipe smokers send out a loud and clear message to peers and others alike: we refuse to bow to governments telling us how to live our lives. And what

is more, beyond the logic of the market, pleasure does not necessarily equal mindless entertainment. It is thus that pipe smoking is “a truly intellectual exercise.”

Oliver Franiel



The Pipe Club of Lebanon's Pipesmoker Ranking System

As mentioned above, one of the resolutions adopted during the second IPSD was the creation of a ranking system which would enable pipesmokers of all levels to gauge their experience, skills, and knowledge of pipe lore.

Pooling their resources, the members of the PCoLeb published, early in March, the *Pipe Club of Lebanon's Pipesmoker Ranking System*, consisting of a preamble, a run-down of the nine ranks (Novice, Apprentice, Able, Adept, Skilled, Advanced, Superior, Master, and Grandmaster) along with beautiful drawings made by Fares Irani, and descriptions of duties accruing to each rank.

Clearly, the system was primarily designed as a guideline and as a starting point from which discussion would be generated and ideas exchanged, and this is what happened indeed. As the announcement was sent to pipe clubs and forums around the world, responses were received, most of them enthusiastic (a few clubs are actually in the process of devising their own variations of the PCoLeb's system) and, expectedly, some of them expressing some reservations, although overwhelming numbers of respondents were eager to rank themselves on the spot just for fun.

It is very true that pipesmokers are, in their vast majority, independent and free-minded creatures, and we are proud to belong to a group which values freedom above everything else. Indeed, who else would, in the age of the criminalization of smoking, stand up, fearlessly brandishing their pipe and puffing like a dragon?

For these reasons, it is not an easy task to try and aim for common systems and guidelines. To take an example, when the International Pipe Smoking Day was announced, the instinctive reaction of some was to refuse what was seen as an imposition.

Yet a year later, pipesmokers are contentedly puffing in unison and sending each other greetings on the occasion.

Of course, this is not to say that the ranking system—or any ranking system for that matter—will fare as well as the IPSD. But as I wrote on one of the forums, our best defence against those who want to suppress smoking is structuration. *Structuration* is not the same as *regulation*, which none of us pipesmokers would willingly accept. I think we may be, at this point in history,

in need of a structuration which would strengthen our bases; so let each club come up, as they already have with their logos and slogans, with their own systems, their own rankings, their own bylaws. Let our inherent and inalienable freedoms be structured in order to present a stronger front to the opposition and show that pipesmoking is not a mindless, dangerous activity bent on destroying humanity.

But, above all, let our structures always be, in the final analysis, for the sake of conviviality, fun, and tolerance!

Paul Jahshan



The emblems used for the nine ranks

The Pipe Club of Lebanon's Annual New Year Dinner 2009

As is known, members of the Pipe Club of Lebanon are entitled to a free gala dinner to celebrate the arrival of the new year.

The beginning of 2009 was held at the El-Halabi restaurant in Antelias, and members with their spouses/partners and friends were treated to a sumptuous Lebanese dinner consisting of the obligatory *mezza* (the innumerable small dishes which precede the main course) and the almost-obligatory selection of grilled meat and chicken. Starting at around 21:00, the dinner, accompanied by music, lasted until 1:00 after fruits and Oriental sweets were served. By then, most members were in a state of acute over-eating and barely made it to their cars!

Pipes were, of course, activated, but with the prevalence of cigarettes and cigars all around, were hardly noticed. Luckily, indoors smoking regulations are non-existent, especially in restaurants, pubs, and bars. Let's hope it remains that way!



From left to right, Nathalie, Wassim, Fares, Lina, Raymonda, Inaya, Tarek, Paul, Gihad, Salim, Marc, Jihad, Oliver, and Carl
(this and photos below taken by Elie)

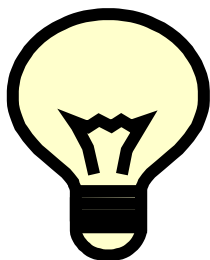


Dessert time. Also the chance to light or re-light our pipes!

With only a few strawberries and some grapes left, the members are on the verge of exploding...



Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)



Email us your questions and we will do our best to answer them!

Q: Should I keep my pipe clenched between my teeth all throughout the smoking session?

A: I've just found Random's pipesmoking tips page at http://www.ren-prod-inc.com/random_pipes/store.php?action=1L55A40N4. The section is devoted to tips on the correct draw of a pipe (to check before buying a pipe!), the fill, the pack, the light, the smoke, the tamp, advice on how to deal with gurgling, and how to clean your pipe.

"Random" is the pseudonym of a unique pipe maker who has been experimenting, quite successfully, with original shapes and materials. The tips section also offers original and probably controversial advice, the most interesting of which is the injunction to clench your pipe between your teeth all throughout the smoking session. This is what Random writes:

Smoking a tobacco pipe is not about puffing on it occasionally and relighting it when it goes out. Once you have lit the pipe, clamp your teeth down on the bit, keep your lips tight, and breathe only through your nose. Practice your deep breathing, empty your lungs completely with every breath. Don't take the pipe out, don't puff like a maniac, relax and enjoy your smoke.

Well, that's interesting! I've personally almost never kept my pipe between my teeth for the full smoking session and immediately lighted my heavy Karl Erik freehand and filled it with a generous portion of Mac Baren Solent Mixture. While Solent tasted great, the sheer weight of the pipe was too much of a burden on my teeth and jaws. Plus, teeth marks appeared on the mouthpiece.

Lesson #1: If you want to clench your pipe all throughout your smoking session, choose a LIGHT pipe!

Lesson #2: A straight pipe or a full-bent one will be easier

to clench than a half-bent. Why? The straight will be, well, straight, and the full-bent will probably balance itself better as its weight takes it down (vertically). Half-bents will exert their weight in two directions (horizontally and vertically) and will be more difficult to handle.

Lesson #3: If you don't mind clenching, go for a lucite/acrylic mouthpiece as teeth marks will be less visible than on a vulcanite one. The drawback, however, is that lucite/acrylic is not very pleasant when it makes contact with the teeth (it feels like glass), whereas vulcanite is great...

Lesson #4: Ask other pipesmokers! A quick posting at Smokers Forums (<http://www.smokersforums.co.uk/index.php?>) about pipe clenching generated plenty of useful suggestions and advice from our brothers/sisters in the briar. As the PCoLeb's shield shows, pipesmoking can be a solitary activity, but it is also a sociable meeting between like-minded individuals!

Q: Where can I know more about tobaccos?

A: In keeping with the above spirit, the best way to develop a practical knowledge of tobaccos, alongside trying for yourself, is to visit a wonderful site called "Tobacco Reviews" at <http://www.tobaccoreviews.com>. The amount of tobaccos reviewed is simply bewildering. Not only will you learn about new tobaccos, but you will also make up your mind on which tobacco(s) to try next. While it is true that smoking is a highly subjective experience and, as said above, pipesmokers are a wild, free-minded bunch, there can be no harm in listening to what other seasoned smokers say about this or that brand/blend. A bonus advantage will be the acquisition of a specialized, tobacco-related vocabulary. You will be using wonderfully-useful words like "casing," "flavouring," "tin aroma," "room note," and others.

Q: How should I deal with tobacco?

A: The overwhelming consensus on the matter is that many out-of-the-tin tobaccos need to be dried out first, especially the Mac Barens. Another good example is Dunhill's Royal Yacht which can change from being a brutal, nicotine-heavy punch-thrower, to a nice, gently aromatic, pleasant fellow just by drying it out about one hour before use. The keyword is experimentation: take a smoking portion of tobacco from its tin/jar, and expose it to room temperature for an hour or more and try it. Re-try with different drying times and compare results.

Paul Jahshan

Announcements and Schedule

Announcements:

- The PCoLeb welcomes our new members in the “Friends of the Pipe Club of Lebanon” section. Greetings to **Fred Hanna** from the U.S.A. and to **Ali Güler** from Turkey!
- **Harout Bastajian** is our fourth local member; a decorative painter, Harout is happily experiencing the newly-discovered joys of pipesmoking, and is making it a point to know everyday a little bit more about the lore!
- As usual, photos and short bios of all Friends and Members are to be found online.

Welcome to all!

On the PCoLeb’s Schedule:

The PCoLeb’s schedule for the coming three months (Aug.-Oct.) is as follows:

- Second week of August: Club meeting and presentation: “A Short History of Pipes and Tobaccos, Part 2.”
- Second week of September: Club meeting and preparations for the PCoLeb’s annual pipesmoking competition
- Second week of October: Club meeting and presentation: “Danish Pipe Makers and Danish Tobaccos.”

Coming soon from The Pipe Club of Lebanon:

Keep checking our page for the following brochures:

- **The Absolute No-Nos of Pipesmoking**
- **The “Arghile,” Lebanon’s National Water-Pipe System**

**Become a
member!**



About the Pipe Club of Lebanon: We are the premier pipe club in Lebanon and, probably, the first club of its kind in the Middle East. Our aim is threefold:

We want to become the rallying point for serious pipesmokers in Lebanon and in the Middle East.

We aspire to provide knowledgeable information about pipesmoking, about pipes, and about tobaccos to amateurs and professionals alike.

We are dedicated, as is clear in our motto, to eagerly investigate ways in which pipesmoking is “properly an intellectual exercise.”

Serious pipesmokers, be they beginners or veterans, are welcome to join us and share in our quest for the perfect pipe and the perfect smoke.

Visit us at www.pipecluboflebanon.org !

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