



New Internationalist

The people, the ideas, the action in the fight for global justice

Smoking and power

**NEW INTERNATIONALIST EASIER ENGLISH
ELEMENTARY READY LESSON**

Discuss:



- 1) Is smoking good or bad? Why?
- 2) Why do people smoke?
- 3) Are more people smoking now, or less? Why?
- 4) Is cigarette advertising legal in your country?

Match the vocabulary:

**1/ tobacco
company**

**a) a rule that you must
not break**

2/ campaigner

**b) a business that
makes cigarettes**

3/ strict law

**c) someone who fights
to change the law**

Where is Senegal?

Before you read, what do you think?:

- 1) Do a lot of people smoke in Senegal?**
- 2) Does the government in Senegal want people to stop smoking? Why?**
- 3) Do the cigarette companies want people to stop smoking? Why?**

1) Will the new laws in Senegal make people smoke more or less?

Health campaigners in Senegal are very happy about the new laws against smoking. Senegal is the sixth African country to make smoking illegal in almost all public places. Also all cigarette advertising is now illegal. And there are very serious health warnings on 70 per cent of cigarette packets.

Philip Morris is the company that makes Marlboro and L&M cigarettes. They have a factory in Senegal. And they tried to fight against the new law.

‘This is an example of people fighting against the power of the tobacco industry,’ says Tih Ntiabang (Africa Co-ordinator of the civil-society Framework Convention Alliance).

2) Do the tobacco companies like all the new smoking laws?

Anti-smoking laws are getting stricter in the West, so the tobacco companies are trying very hard to sell more cigarettes in Africa, where the advertising laws are freer.

Ntiabang says that Big Tobacco (the big tobacco companies) fights against many laws in Africa. And when they do not manage to persuade the government, they start fighting in the law courts.

Philip Morris is fighting legal battles against Australia and Uruguay because of trade agreements. Also, in South Africa, British American Tobacco is fighting to make cigarette advertising legal again: they say they need to advertise cigarettes for 'freedom of expression'.

3) Is it easy for Senegal to fight against tobacco companies?

For Senegal, the next big step is to increase the price of its cigarettes. They now cost 80 US cents a packet, which could be the cheapest in the world. But there could be legal problems with this. Senegal is a member of UEMOA (an organisation that controls French-speaking West Africa's currency), so it cannot increase tax on cigarettes. If it wants to raise prices it must either choose to follow the more relaxed rules of the economic group ECOWAS or try to change the rules of UEMOA.

There will be many effects of this in Africa. So the big tobacco companies will probably have their lawyers ready.

In groups, make a poster:

Don't smoke because

Don't buy cigarettes because

