

Great Denial of Vaccine Risks & Freedom

Written by Barbara Loe Fisher

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The Great Denial of vaccine risks for the past three decades by vaccine makers, pediatricians, and government officials operating the mass vaccination system is the reason why more and more parents today question and mistrust vaccine science, policy, and law. When Harris Coulter and I co-authored *DPT: A Shot in the Dark* in 1985 exposing flaws in the mass vaccination system that allowed the highly reactive DPT vaccine to stay on the market unimproved for more than 40 years, we never imagined then that those tragic flaws in the system would remain largely intact in 2009.

I knew then that the alliance between industry, organized medicine, and government was powerful. But it is only after a quarter century of witnessing the Great Denial of vaccine risks, which has produced millions of vaccine-damaged children flooding special education classrooms and doctors offices, that the magnitude of that unchecked power has been fully revealed.

Thomas Jefferson, co-author of the U.S. Constitution, said in 1820: "We are not afraid to follow truth wherever it may lead, nor to tolerate any error so long as reason is left free to combat it." When those in power are so afraid of the truth that they abandon reason and are willing to tolerate all kinds of errors in order to hide the truth, people suffer.

Fear of the truth was clearly in play at a Jan. 14 meeting of the Federal Interagency Autism Advisory Committee (IACC) when the Committee took a convenient "revote" to nullify a previous vote to use a portion of congressionally appropriated funds in the Combating Autism Act of 2006 to investigate the long-reported association between vaccination and autism. Whether the "revote" can be blamed on a turf war between federal agencies, a Committee member who defied direction given to her by her employer, Autism Speaks, or a desperate, last minute end-run by health officials to again delay the day when the truth about vaccine risks is known, it is the people who always lose in this high stakes game of denials and delays.

Thomas Jefferson had a lot to say about power, coercion, and freedom. He said "Subject opinion to coercion: whom will you make your inquisitors? Fallible men; men governed by bad passions, by private as well as public reasons." Ask Rita Palma of New York what it means to be subjected to an inquisition about her religious beliefs by an arrogant and fallible man governed by passions and driven to harass and coerce her for private as well as public reasons. An attorney, acting on behalf of the state of New York, put Rita on the rack and browbeats her for her religious beliefs and faith in God when it comes to vaccinating her children.

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Rita has been working with other parents in New York to support the addition of philosophical exemption to vaccination to New York vaccine laws to protect parents, who exercise religious exemptions, and doctors, who issue medical exemptions from harassment by state officials. A public Vaccine Education Roundtable was sponsored by New York Assemblymen Marc Alessi and Richard Gottfried on Dec. 15, 2008 at Stony Brook University to examine vaccine safety and informed consent issues.

Reason and faith, conscience and science, truth and freedom. Those who participate in the Great Denial of vaccine risks cannot tolerate an unbiased, methodologically sound scientific investigation into those risks. And they cannot tolerate the free exercise of religious belief and conscience by those, whose minds and bodies they must control in order to perpetuate the Great Denial.

In 1997, I was asked to present an argument for the moral right to conscientious belief exemption to vaccination to the National Vaccine Advisory Committee in Washington, D.C. After my 20-minute presentation, there was a several hour "discussion" where I was grilled by public health officials who alternately acknowledged the importance of the informed consent principle and called me "selfish," a "threat to the public health," and "uninformed."

The defining moment of that encounter, for me at least, came when I looked the physician architect of the CDC-led "No shots, No school" campaign in the eye and said "Whether or not I put my child's life on the line for you and your vaccines is between me and my God and not between me and you, Doctor." The way he gritted his teeth and glared at me while his face flushed bright red, spoke volumes about what the Great Denial is all about. It is about whether we, the citizens, are going to have the power to freely choose which pharmaceutical products or other medical interventions we are going to use or whether that power is going to be taken from us by doctors and public health officials.

Jacobsen v. Massachusetts is the U.S. Supreme Court decision which affirmed the constitutional right of the states to enact mandatory vaccination laws. Concerned about controlling smallpox, little did the justices at the turn of the 20th century imagine that federal officials would someday recommend 69 doses of 16 vaccines for children from 12 hours of age through age 18 years or that New Jersey would mandate more than three dozen doses of 13 vaccines for children to attend school. In an insightful review of that historic 1905 Supreme

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Court decision, the Harvard Law Review recently examined the application of *Jacobsen v. Massachusetts* to vaccine laws in the 21st century.

If one citizen or group of citizens in America is allowed to force fellow citizens to risk injury or death without their voluntary, informed consent, then are Americans free in any sense of the word? When forced risk-taking involves mandated use of pharmaceutical products protected from liability in the judicial system, which the authors of the Constitution created as a check and balance on the Executive and Legislative branches of government, then people can be easily exploited for power and profit. Unless vaccines and other pharmaceutical products are subject to the law of supply and demand so citizens can freely choose those which are necessary, safe, and effective and reject those which are not, the people become nothing more than enslaved consumers of potentially dangerous products marketed by companies with no economic or legal incentive to improve those products.

And if the state can tag, track down, and force individuals against their will to be injected with biologicals of unknown toxicity today, then there will be no limit on which individual freedoms the state can take away in the name of the greater good tomorrow.

As the 44th President of the United States was sworn in this year in our nation's Capitol, we can only pray that he will have the intelligence, compassion, and conscience to make sure that his Administration is not afraid to find out the truth about vaccine risks. With 1 child in 6 now developmentally delayed in America and no answers from government health officials as to how they got that way, our nation's future may depend on it.

The National Vaccine Information Center is prepared to stand with other parent groups representing families with vaccine injured children to call for an end to the Great Denial by those responsible for ensuring our children's health and safety.

Let freedom ring: no forced vaccination. Not in America.

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