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Deregulate the Drinking Culture [1]

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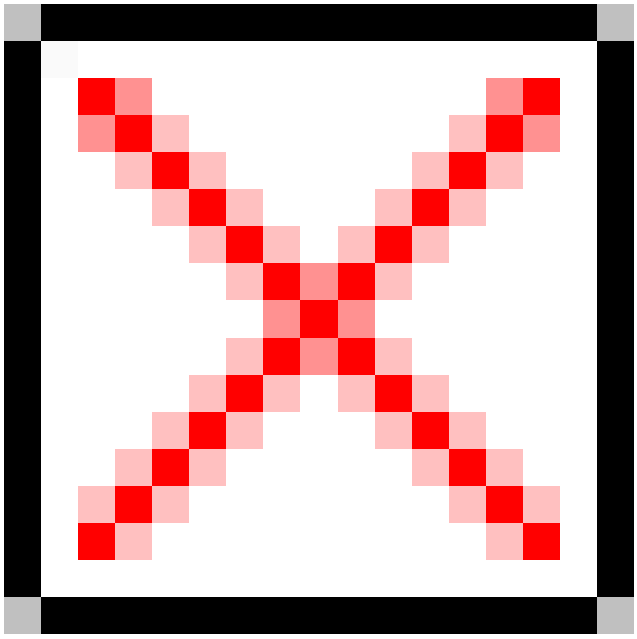

In the past decade, the UK has seen an increase in alcohol related deaths. This has been accompanied by an increase in government regulation to try and combat the problem. The Health Alcohol Alliance recently called for even more regulation specific to fighting alcohol abuse and disease among youths. As well as regulation on advertisements, they want taxes on alcohol increased. Britain already has the second highest alcohol tax in Europe and many government programmes and regulations, and yet the Alliance thinks more of the same will do the trick.

Increased control isn?t the way to solve the problem. Countries with a less restrictive attitude toward alcohol don?t have the same problems of youth abuse. In many European countries, children grow up with alcohol as an accepted part of daily life, rather than a forbidden novelty, so when they reach adulthood the desire to overindulge is much less. In more temperate cultures like Britain and America, when young people begin to drink they often do so to excess because alcohol is a new and exciting novelty. This problem is even worse in America, where the drinking age is 21, and high school and college students drink heavily as soon as they gain access to alcohol. In terms of safety this is even worse. The young are more likely to try and drive themselves home if they are drunk and their drinking is forbidden, rather than calling a parent or taking public transport.

Obviously, the regulation hasn?t been working and the Alliance must find new ways of combating the problem, not just increasing the old, ineffective ones. The answer to our alcohol problem is less regulation, not more, to create a climate and a culture that doesn?t need to abuse alcohol to the same degree.

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