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April 28, 1993

Mr. A. Baron
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London SE26 5HU
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Dear Mr. Baron:

Further to your letter and transcript of the Doll interview, let me first respond on a scientific level. To this end, I enclose the following documents (on which I have marked in red the most relevant sections), in comment and rebuttal:

1. International Journal of Health Services 1990 (SSE)

This fully referenced article was based on a request by Cong. Waxman, the leading Congressional authority on public health and cancer, for a position paper, published in the Congressional Record in 1987.

I should add that this Journal is peer reviewed, highly prestigious and the leading international journal of public health policy.

2. A February 4 statement on "Losing the War Against Cancer" (SSE).

This was released at a widely covered press conference in Washington, D. C. As you will see, my statement was endorsed by some 70 leading national authorities in public health, cancer statistics, epidemiology, and prevention, including past directors of federal agencies (OSHA, NIEHS, and NIOSH).

3. International Journal of Health Services 1993 (SSE).

This was based on an invited presentation to the entire staff (of some 500) of the National Cancer Institute (on May 5, 1992), as a follow-up to the February 4 press conference.

Much of this deals with criticism of NCI's misleading reliance on Doll's claims. I should point out that in the subsequent question and answer period, there was no effective rebuttal to any of my criticisms which are fully documented and referenced in this article.

4. American Journal of Public Health 1992 (Landrigan).

This article by a leading occupational cancer epidemiologist in the U.S. (Chairman of Environmental Science at Mt. Sinai Hospital and Medical School in New York) also sharply criticizes Doll's views of occupational cancer.

5. The Lancet 1990 (Davis et al).

Contrary to Doll, this article confirms that there have been major increases in cancer incidence over the last few decades and that these cannot be explained away, as Doll still attempts to do, by smoking alone.

6. Annals New York Academy of Sciences 1990 (eds. Davis et al).

This is the first page of an article in a monograph which unequivocally concludes that, over recent decades, there have been major increases in cancer incidence in industrialized countries which cannot be explained away or trivialized by near exclusive emphasis on smoking.

Doll's reference to the harmlessness of low level radiation is treated as nonsense by leading authorities in the field. These include: Alice Stewart (Department of Public Health at the Medical School, Birmingham); Dr. Bross (President Biomedical Metatechnology Inc., 109 Maynard Drive, Eggertsville, New York 14226); Dr. Sternglass, (Professor Emeritus of Radiology at the University of Pittsburgh, 170 West End Ave., Apt. 27H, New York, New York 10023).

Further, Doll's reference to the lack of evidence of carcinogenic effects of DDT in humans is rebutted by the International Agency for Research on Cancer (IARC), Monograph 53, 1991, documenting decade old evidence relating DDT to a wide range of human/occupational cancers including lymphatic, soft tissues sarcomas, liver, and colon, etc. More recent evidence includes an article by Gabrabant in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute 84:764, 1992, in relation to pancreatic cancer, and an article in the current issue of the Journal of the National Cancer Institute by Mary Wolfe relating to breast cancer.

In commenting on the above, there is a common perception among a wide range of my colleagues in the U.S. that, while Doll was a distinguished epidemiologist in the '50s with particular reference to smoking, he gradually lost track of a burgeoning literature on occupational cancer epidemiology and on the carcinogenic hazards and effects of progressive permeation of the environment and workplace with petrochemical and other industrial carcinogens. In these areas, Doll was successfully supplanted by a highly skilled younger group of U.S. experts in experimental carcinogenesis and epidemiology. In his growing intellectual isolation and ignorance, Doll became more and more fixated on the simplistic and anachronistic "blame-the-victim" hypothesis of cancer causation. Not unnaturally, these made him increasingly attractive to industry for whom he has consciously and sub-consciously acted as a leading mouthpiece. In this connection, there is also a very common perception that Doll has enjoyed, and still does, extensive industry consultantships. You may want to question him directly on this.

The upshot of all this is that Doll has assumed the heavy burden of discouraging or even blocking a wide range of initiatives on cancer prevention in the U.S. and elsewhere. This "blood on the hands" indictment presents a most unfortunate end to what could have been otherwise a distinguished career, apart from the very substantial avoidable toll of human life which Doll's laissez faire views must take full responsibility.

With regard to my own interests, the overwhelming lectures I give are to the general public, and public interest groups (apart from scientific presentations) for whom I do not, or have ever, charged fees (often in fact, even paying my own travel expenses). Over the last decade, I have acted as an expert witness in toxic tort litigation, and in such forums emphasize those same viewpoints and positions which I have developed and published over three preceding decades. Funds from such activities help support my public interest work, besides paying for part time secretarial assistance.

Finally, I suggest you contact Anne-Lise Gotzsche (13 Glover House, Harben Road, Swiss Cottage, London NW6 4RJ, Tel. 071-586-0305), who has been investigating Doll's activities for some time.

The best of luck with your project! I look forward to receiving a copy at your convenience.

Sincerely yours,



Samuel S. Epstein, M. D.
Professor of Occupational
and Environmental Medicine

cc: Teddy Goldsmith
