18th September, 1958.

Dear Dr. Gordon,

Your letter of September 13th has been forwarded to me, and perhaps the matter can be settled by private correspondence as I really did not commit the fallacy which in your first paragraph you ascribe to me.

I hope you will search my letter of August 30th, to which you refer, for the statement that the demonstration of genotypic differences excludes possible and environmental factors. I believe you will not find either said or implied.

In view of this demonstrable genotypic differentiation it is not so certain that Hill and Doll have found evidence for an environmental factor. They have found that two genetically different groups differ in their cancer incidence. If a genotypic differentiation had been recognized by, for example, differences in the colour of the skin, I believe no one would have been tempted to infer that the disease was due to skin colour. In fact the “danger” by which so many people have been alarmed may be quite imaginary. It gives me no anxiety that my daughter, who is medically qualified, should be a cigarette smoker.

Finally I think you propagandists should come into the open about inhaling. The data given by Hill and Doll in 1950, may be of great importance, but the break down of their observations has never been published and I do not understand that there can
be any good reason for this. If your findings are that cigarettes cause lung cancer and inhaling cigarette smoke in bulk afford a protection from this disease, have you the right in conscience to withhold this information from the public, many of whom will die, perhaps for lack of this timely advice.

Sincerely yours,