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## Response to "Prime Time Live"

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# Scare-mongers on ABC program claim DDT is causing breast cancer

by J. Gordon Edwards, PhD

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On Dec. 9, 1993, the ABC News program "Prime Time Live" presented a voodoo snake oil circus directed against DDT (and its breakdown product, DDE). The robust ring-leader of the show was a living reminder that adipose tissue, itself, generates cancer-causing estrogens.

In addition to the carcinogenic effects of human fat tissue, many other causes of breast cancer have been implicated, including high caloric intake, alcohol ingestion, birth control pills, supplemental hormones, early onset of menstruation (before age 14), delayed child-bearing (after age 30), and menopause. DDT (DDE) has not been blamed earlier, perhaps because it may even be *anti-estrogenic*, rather than estrogenic. Congress allotted hundreds of millions of dollars last year for research into the possible causes of breast cancer, so some groups of "researchers" were desperately seeking to cash in—and DDT is so famous that it seemed to offer a possible way to attract attention. Widespread newspaper coverage blaming DDT (and DDE) as a cause of breast cancer last April evidently failed to convince anyone, so the same people are now trying to attract attention, and funding, via ABC television. More than 80 scientific, peer-reviewed, articles state that DDT is *not* carcinogenic!

The Prime Time propagandist even invoked the name of Rachel Carson, evidently unaware of her lack of credibility. It was stated that "Rachel Carson warned about DDT and cancer in her book the *Silent Spring*, stating specifically that synthetic estrogens have a combined effect that *is a matter that warrants the most serious concern*" (emphasis added). That statement evidently was taken from page 236 of the book, where she wrote: "The argument for the indirect role of pesticides in cancer is based on their proven ability to damage the liver and to reduce the supply of B vitamins, thus leading to an increase in the 'endogenous' estrogens, or those produced by the body itself. Added to these are the wide variety of synthetic estrogens to which we are increasingly exposed—those in cosmetics, drugs, foods, and occupation-

al exposures. The combined effect is *a matter that warrants the most serious concern*" (emphasis added). It should be pointed out that she was speaking of numerous possible effects, but certainly *not DDT* and *not* breast cancer!

On page 238 Miss Carson wrote, "The individual exposed to DDT is almost certain to also be exposed to solvents, paint removers, degreasing agents, dry-cleaning fluids, and anesthetics." (Add: alcohol, creosote, ammonia, arsenic, fluorine, vinyl chloride, PCBs, PBBs, methyl bromide, chlordane, malathion, pyrethrum, rotenone, and numerous common medications?) She then asked, "What then can be a 'safe dose' of DDT?" A much better question would have been "What then can be a 'dangerous dose' of just DDT?"

### What we know about breast cancer

It is unfortunate that television permitted the showing of such an untruthful, scare-mongering attempt by a small group of propagandists to gain support for unnecessary "research." Research funds should not be wasted on such capricious activities, when there are numerous truthful researchers endeavoring to arrive at rational solutions to the breast cancer problem.

There has been a gradual increase of breast cancer detections in the United States beginning 10 years before DDT was in existence. The National Cancer Institute attributes three-fourths of the rise to the use of better detection methods, and agrees with the American Cancer Society that "there is not now and never has been an epidemic of breast cancer here." Although there were increasingly high numbers of cases detected, due to the new mammography techniques, the mortality rates for breast cancer have held steady over the past 20 years, and the NCI reported that the incidence of new cases actually declined in 1988 and 1989 (the latest years for which records were available).

Prime Time Live stated that Long Island women have "startlingly high rates of breast cancer." Those same women appealed to the Centers for Disease Control with their allegations, in 1991, and the CDC investigated the situation there in 1992. Their data on the incidence rates in the counties where Prime Time produced this TV show were revealing. The CDC reported that: "The women have a higher preva-

## Schiller Institute to hold February conference

The Schiller Institute, a think-tank for republican policy, and the International Caucus of Labor Committees (ICLC), the philosophical association founded and led by Lyndon H. LaRouche, Jr., will hold their next semi-annual joint conference on Presidents' Day weekend, Feb. 18-21, 1994.

The conference will discuss a new theoretical writing of Mr. LaRouche's, explaining his original contribution to the Leibniz science of physical economy in the 1948-52 period. Titled simply, "LaRouche's Discovery," it will appear in the Spring 1994 issue of *Fidelio* magazine.

The gathering will be the first international conference marking the tenth anniversary of the Schiller Institute. It was founded in early 1984 at the urging of Mrs. Helga Zepp-LaRouche, as a new institution working to mend the dangerous rift then dividing the United States from Germany, her native land, and indeed from western Eu-

rope in general.

Although the most obvious aspects of the crisis were strategic, political, and economic, from its inception the Institute also plumbed the cultural and scientific failings which lay behind the collapse, and pointed the way back to the greatest moments in the two continents' respective histories, namely: the American Revolution, the Classic period of Germany (Beethoven, Schiller), the Golden Renaissance of the 15th century which made possible the discovery and evangelization of the Americas; and, echoing those, our century's steps toward conquering outer space.

This will be the first ICLC/Schiller conference in five years in which Lyndon LaRouche will be free. Incarcerated on Jan. 27, 1989 after being railroaded to a conviction on false, politically motivated federal fraud and conspiracy charges, he will be released on parole on Jan. 26. He is now 71.

For information about registering to attend the conference, contact your *EIR* representative or the Schiller Institute national office at (202) 544-7018 before Feb. 11, 1994.

lence of known risk factors, including a history of benign breast disease, certain reproductive history traits, and ethnic origin." When the researcher controlled for these variables, the women did not appear to have an extraordinarily high rate for the disease.

Prime Time stated that "two months ago, Congress finally funded a broad study of DDT and other pesticides with possible connections to breast cancer." In truth, Congress took that action more than a year earlier than that, and did not specify pesticide connections! The National Breast Cancer Coalition got millions of dollars, the NCI received \$197 million, and the Department of Defense got \$210 million. Early in 1992, Massachusetts had a \$3 million budget for breast cancer testing, education, and research programs, and NCI agreed to match that amount. (The rate of breast cancer in Massachusetts is 18% higher than the national average, and reasons for that are still unknown.) The American Cancer Society has been theorizing publicly that the odds of U.S. women developing breast cancer are 1 in 9, but many authorities say the odds are between 1 in 500 and 1 in 1,000 (depending on the woman's age). The "1 in 9 figure," the ACS recently stated, was "*more of a metaphor than a hard figure*" (emphasis added).

### DDT saved millions of lives

Early in the Prime Time Live show, it was stated (with a trace of sarcasm) that DDT was given a hero's welcome after World War II, but the reasons were not mentioned. The

National Academy of Sciences wrote in 1965 that "in little more than two decades, DDT has prevented 500 million human deaths that would otherwise have been inevitable," and, in 1973, the World Health Organization pointed out that "100 million humans who would have died of insect-borne diseases are alive today because of DDT." Millions more escaped starvation and severe malnutrition, thanks to the fact that DDT saved their crops and their stored food. Perhaps Prime Time did not consider such facts as relevant?

Why the great fear of DDT (DDE) more than 20 years after the innocuous pesticide was banned by the political actions of William Ruckelshaus, then head of the Environmental Protection Agency? Prime Time alleged that DDT "doesn't disappear . . . it lingers more than a century." (Perhaps they were unaware that it has only been in existence for half a century?) In 1987, *Science* magazine reported that only one-thirtieth of one year's production of DDT and its metabolites could be accounted for in all the living things on this planet, and in Gulf Breeze, Florida, the EPA proved that 92% of DDT and its metabolites disappeared from seawater in just 38 days. More than 150 scientific articles documented the removal of DDT and its metabolites from air, water, soil, and living creatures, and public health studies found DDT residues were eliminated from animal fat tissues rather rapidly (within months), much of it as DDA in the urine. Obviously only traces now survive in the U.S. environment, and there is not enough anywhere in our environments to kill even the most sensitive insects.