

EXCALIBUR

Everything secret degenerates; nothing
is safe that does not show it can bear
discussion and publicity — Lord Acton

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Research at York — it's a tricky question

The senate faces a difficult decision on research at today's meeting. It has to deal with a motion by professors Lee Lorch and Ian Sowton asking "that this university will not forward any application to, or accept funds from, the military or para-military establishments of any foreign power."

The sole exception to this rule would be if the senate's research committee allowed questionable research to be carried out after it had dealt with the problem at the instigation of the department concerned.

The main gist of this motion is to rule out any chance of York's involvement with the U.S. military industrial complex and its actions in immoral wars such as Vietnam. York conducted \$86,888 worth of research for the U.S. military last year compared to \$92,952 for the Canadian Defence Research Board. This came at a time when total research at York dipped from \$2,900,000 to \$2,300,000. Whether the increase in military research will continue along with a decrease in civilian research is difficult to ascertain. Although great amounts are spent in many areas of the university, clearly it is York's science faculty that will be hardest hit by any effort to restrict the sort of grants York's researchers accept.

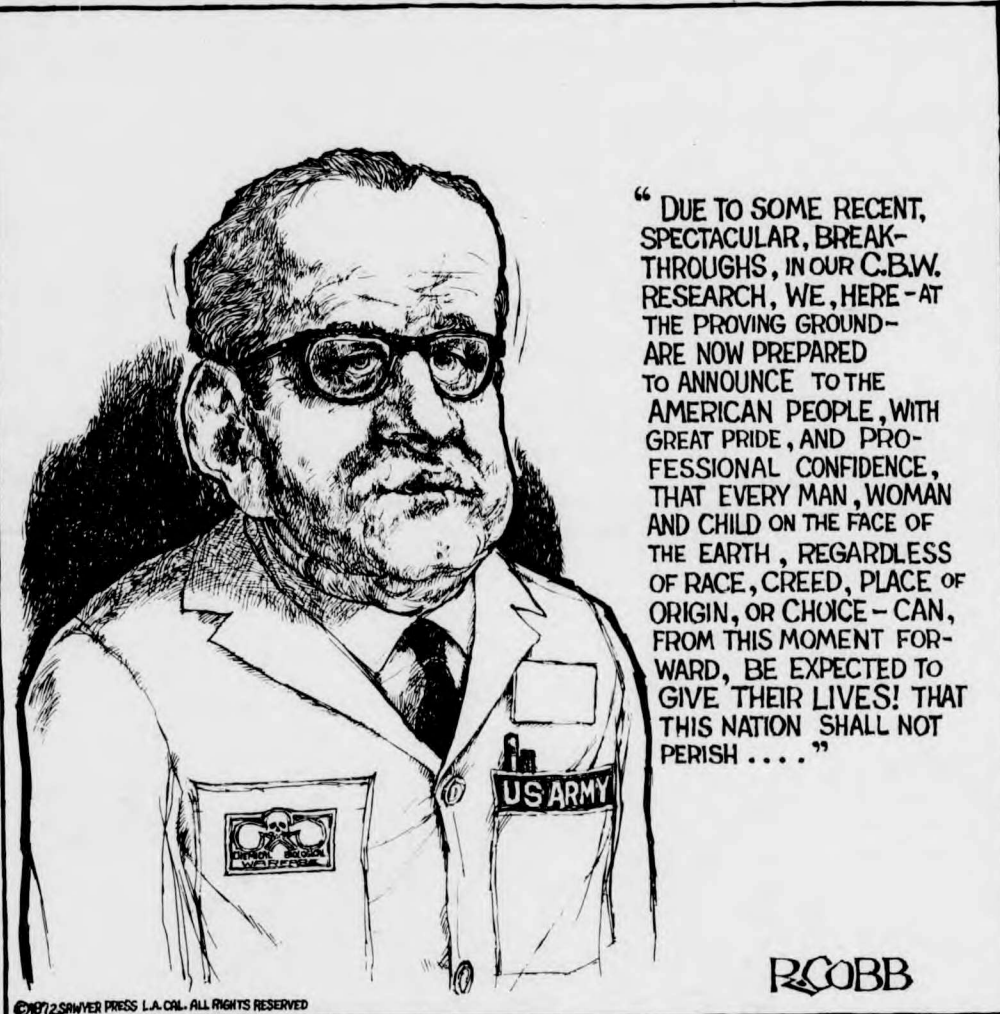
There are already limitations placed upon them. The research must be published and open to the public as a rule although at times, as shown in the case of Jack Klieb, the information is difficult to obtain when various professors and administrators refuse to co-operate in allowing any student access to documents and figures.

It would be wrong to oversimplify the problem down to a 19th-century liberal concept that academics should stick to research and allow the politicians to decide where it goes. That theory came to a tragic end for those working on the atomic bomb that exploded over Hiroshima. The one lesson that came out of it showed that scientists and the social scientists had to become more interlocking in determining how technology was to be used. Ironically, it was not social pressure that brought that about, but rather the individual conscience of the individual scientists involved.

Yet two men have rejected this notion that the individual conscience can decide what sort of grant is acceptable. Social scientist Ian Sowton and mathematician Lee Lorch feel some sort of safeguards are required to ensure that no one within York prostitute themselves to any foreign military power for the sake of research.

It is indeed a sound concept but hardly deals with the concrete facts that surround us. As Ian Wiseman in the Canadian University Press clearly pointed out Jan. 6, Canadians Spend More Per Capita than Americans on Military Research. The Defence Research Board — which is quite Canadian in operation — makes freely available all the information it gathers to the U.S. military.

If the Lorch and Sowton motion is defeated, it may herald a stronger onslaught of U.S. military research and dollar gathering than York has ever



experienced. This clearly we do not want.

If it is accepted, then York can deal with the Defence Research Board. This approach has only two advantages: it more clearly defines or attempts to define how universities feel about military research and it makes it known York will deal with only one military agency, the DRB, which is governed by Canadian law.

A Canadian agency is at least

governable. A U.S. agency is certainly not.

Because the Wright Commission on Post Secondary Education has stated that research grants should be handled by the individual universities and not by government policy, it is crucial that York take the lead in setting some sort of guidelines on what is acceptable.

We are not in favor of Canadian military research; we are even less in favor of U.S. military research.

Abortion is every woman's right

A symposium on abortion will be held at York Wednesday in conjunction with a referendum asking student support for repeal of abortion laws. The referendum will accompany Council of the York Student Federation elections Mar. 8 and 9.

Frederick Engels wrote in *Origins of the Family* that monogamous marriage originated with the institution of private property.

The wife, Engels explained, was considered her husband's private property and was simply another possession. The idea seems appalling. Yet today women are still treated as man's property. The anti-abortion legislation adopted in many countries, including Canada, denies women control over their own bodies. Preventing women from obtaining legal abortion on demand, legislators dub those women "criminals" who seek abortion outside the law. The issue of abortion is a serious one. If women are to fulfill themselves as human beings, they must make their own decisions about the kind of life they will lead. It is not only their privilege, but their responsibility to decide whether or not they want to be mothers.

Some people argue that contraception precludes the need for abortion. The United Church of Canada, for example, asserted in a recent publication that some method of birth control is the answer to the abortion problem; contraception, it stated, is a Christian duty if

a child is not wanted. We need only examine a few facts about contraception to counter this argument. No all contraceptions prevent conception. (Over 3 percent of the women who rely on the inter-uterine device become pregnant.) The most "effective" method of birth control is the pill, but many women can not take it. In cases where contraception is effective, there are often bad side effects.

The pill, for example, "causes more than 50 undesirable biochemical changes in the female body" (McGill Birth Control Handbook). Nausea, fluid retention and migraine headaches are only a few. One male researcher boasted recently that the incidence of side effects in his company's pill "was so low as to be of little consequence." Only a male, who had never taken any of these pills, could make such a statement. Each year pills which women had relied on as safe and trustworthy are taken off the market and labelled dangerous.

Worse, American pharmaceutical companies have refused to discontinue production of pills described as toxic by the British Committee on the Safety of Drugs. Thus, until contraception is perfected, it cannot be considered a viable alternative to abortion.

The Catholic Church is one of the strongest critics of abortion. Termination of pregnancy is judged immoral because the fetus is thought to be endowed with a soul from the moment of conception. This dogma, however, dates back only to 1869 and a pronouncement

of Pope Pius IX. Before that time Catholic theologians generally believed that the fetus was "animated" 40 days after conception. (This was for boys. Girls did not receive their soul until 80 days after union.) During the 40 (or 80) days abortion was moral. The change in Catholic attitudes was part of a broad Victorian change in manners. Sex for pleasure was considered bad and pregnancy became a punishment that must be suffered. English common law underwent a similar evolution in the 19th century.

Before then, English law had accepted abortion as legal until "quickening," that moment usually in the fifth month when the fetus stirs in the womb. Anyone who asserts that age-old or God-given "natural law" forbids abortion has not examined the record and seen that these "laws" change with trends in public morality.

These arguments about the sinfulness of abortion, when examined, prove to be myths. The truth is that there appears to be nothing sinful nor harmful about abortions, when properly performed. Yet present Canadian abortion laws make it almost impossible for most women to obtain an abortion because the laws are highly discriminatory. Certain women in Canada find it far easier than others to obtain an abortion. The hassle of paperwork and the fees demanded by American hospitals are less forbidding to those women who are educated, middle class and living in cities near the U.S. border.

From July 1, 1970 to June 30, 1971 over 4,000 Canadian women obtained abortions in New York state. The same groups are able to find the loopholes in the present Canadian laws. A psychiatric examination to determine mental duress is less forbidding to those who have read about psychiatry.

Further, the present Canadian law allows each hospital to decide whether it will establish facilities to perform even the limited number of abortions allowed. In November 1970 only 33 of the 146 accredited hospitals in Ontario had established committees to deal with these operations. Thus, despite talk of liberalization, Canada has one of the most restrictive laws in North America. Those women who cannot obtain legal abortions are forced to bear children they do not want or risk an illegal and dangerous abortion.

These archaic and discriminatory laws which reflect old, patriarchal attitudes must be changed. York does do its share to a certain extent: it operates an abortion clinic in Room 214 of Vanier Residence; the abortion coalition is sponsoring an abortion education day Wednesday. On March 8 and 9 York will sponsor an abortion poll along with the Council of the York Student Federation elections. Ones just like it will be held across the country on Canadian campuses. Action is needed.

JUDY and MARC ENGLA