

Peter Archard answering a member of the Maths. Dept. who made a speech about him. "It is very common knowledge that I in fact threw that mustard at Dr. Inch and I would try now as briefly as possible to justify my actions by a letter which I wrote to the Vice-Chancellor before the demonstration took place, although clearly for obvious reasons I sent it to him after the event took place. I read this letter and make it public:-

"I write this letter before the event takes place. It is a humble attempt to justify my beliefs and actions in the light of the knowledge I have consciously sought to obtain on chemical and biological warfare, C.B.W., I cannot express adequately the horror, fear and disgust which has arisen in me as a result of the limited but highly serious and therefore reliable information I have obtained by my own reading. The topic is a highly emotional one. We are prevented from knowing the realities of C.B.W. by the top-level secrecy which surrounds it. Should the topic be met by a highly emotional response from those who oppose the barbarity of C.B.W., then I will feel fully responsible for the actions of others and myself. I fail to understand how any individual involved in C.B.W. research can arrive at such a position and remain in it in view of the implications of C.B.W. and the disastrous affect the purposive or accidental propagation of disease may have. My sentiments lie fully with the content and conclusions both implicit and explicit outlined in the paper written by students entitled "Oppose Biological and Chemical Warfare". The responsibility that falls upon the shoulders of those scientists who are involved in C.B.W. research work strikes me as enormous. Undoubtedly some scientists have considered but chosen to dismiss the horrendous consequences that C.B.W. could have on vast populations. Undoubtedly the reasoning and implications of the paper oppose chemical and biological warfare, are one-sided, they are meant to be, although the attempt is to be as objective as possible. Nevertheless, it remains that the ethics and humanity of such research is open to severe criticism. Should my beliefs and actions merely serve to draw some attention, even if negligably, to the existence and nature of C.B.W. research, then I will have considered my actions morally justified. The point is worth re-emphasising. As someone said "in some forms of warfare, chemical and biological warfare and weapons could clearly provide a unique and effective force. To the world at large the consequences could be disastrous". Leonard Beaton has said that "there is a great difference between those weapons which countries feel they should possess and those which they might be prepared to use in routine operations. To take weapons across the line is to accept a heavy responsibility. If one nation uses chemical weapons the way may be open for others to do so. They are accessible to the smaller nations: they are weapons of mass destruction, and today all force exists under the shadow of nuclear warfare".

On the issue of C.B.W. public, political and military opinion has not yet petrified. It has been said that one reason why the work surrounding C.B.W. research remains so secret is that it might provoke enormous emotional distress and moral turbulence. The existence of C.B.W. agents on an unknown scale is and remains a non-issue just because it remains "an unknown quantity and entity". What are we afraid of? If the truth about C.B.W. served to make people aware of the horrific effects that such warfare might unleash, then the students who opposed Dr. Inch did the right thing. Once again all the issues of student violence may be raised to the mass media and in private. This time the issue of academic freedom will probably be raised. Does not the scientist have the right to choose whatever paths and knowledge he wishes to uncover. Should he not be free to talk about the work he is doing, whatever may be its implications. These are difficult questions to answer; they are philosophical and ethical questions which demand philosophical and ethical answers. The query still arises, especially with regard to C.B.W. research: knowledge for what? The horrors of C.B.W. and the candor with which someone like Dr. Inch can talk about his subject provoke in me a deep concern and disgust which lead me to oppose as strongly as possible such work. People must be made aware of the consequences of their action. If just one seed of doubt is sown in the mind of one person who is involved in C.B.W. work as the result of the demonstrations, then a demonstration is well worth holding. If an awareness of the existence of C.B.W. is made amongst people previously not aware of the implications of such work, then a position, again, will have served its purpose. In all humility may I end with a quotation made by John F. Kennedy, he said "for at all the levels of our national life each man is sometimes called upon to stand for what he believes to be right against the pressures and opinions of friends, fellow workers, constituents or the force of popular attitude. At such a time each



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Yours sincerely,

P. Archard "