

ORION

Early this year the government discontinued Orion, a research project to propel space ships by nuclear explosions, potentially overcoming temperature and power limits of present propulsion methods. Freeman J. Dyson described the fatal politics of the project in the magazine *Science* on July 9. Social scientists are used to such pathetic histories and when the adjectives are assembled—well-meaning but ignorant and hasty; preoccupied with other things; afraid what other nations might think; apathetic scientific community; professional and scientific jealousies, etc.—the social scientists sigh in recognition of all the old troublesome consorts of doing research under government auspices. One contemplates the deceit: "Thus Taylor paid a high price for his Air Force contract. Although the technical substance of the work was not changed, the project became in name a military enterprise directed toward real or imagined military requirements." How often a project is paraded through a budget under false pretenses! But then the ax finally fell. For one reason or another, and Dr. Dyson lists a number of reasons of political and bureaucratic nature, all forces combined against project Orion.

CAMELOT

Recently another unhappy episode in the history of relations between science and government has been enacted. A Norwegian pacifist named Johan Galtung egged on a Chilean communist paper to agitate South American anti-yanqui jingoism among a few professors to perturb the American ambassador to declaim to the State Department against unauthorized and damaging projects going on in his domain with Army support, and the State Department suffered one of its convenient leaks that let the world know the communist side of the story, which helped Senator Eugene McCarthy (no relation) denounce the research, with all the more righteous indignation since the State Department's research chief had teared all eyes with a story of research poverty in State and illegitimate research largesse in the Army, whereupon Generalissimo McNamara himself decreed that the army had no right to do research on insurgency (the situation in Viet Nam to the contrary notwithstanding) and, within a few days from the first communist yelp, project Camelot, a six-million dollar world-wide empirical-theoretical study of the roots of civil violence, staffed by such fine behavioral scientists as Rex Hopper, James Coleman, Jiri Nehnevajsa, and Robert Boguslaw, plus excellent foreign scholars and qualified young Americans, was D-E-A-D. It is all so matter-of-fact that it even makes sense when it's all stuffed into a long sentence. And some think that physicists have worrisome problems of politics!

We should like our readers to consider the following questions:

1. Is it not true that since 1940, the Army, Navy, and Air Force have contributed incomparably more to the development of the pure and applied human sciences than the Department of State?
2. Is it not true that the State Department might on dozens of occasions have sought much more extensive research and intelligence facilities than it has actually sought or employed?
3. Is it not reasonable that the Armed Forces' mission in respect to insurgency should include research on areas where revolution might occur?
4. Are Cuba and Santo Domingo, Lebanon and Vietnam, and other cases too, going to stand as historical proof that the Army can send men in to be killed but cannot help anyone go in to forestall by preventive understanding the occasions of killing?
5. Is "clearance" so vital to an Ambassador that a large, important activity should be destroyed for want of it?
6. Is it wise for any agency to seek to get a few more research funds by invidious comparisons with the worthy research efforts of another department of government?
7. Are leaks, false assertions, quotations from Anti-American sources, and other tactics to be condoned in treating with problems of scientific research?
8. Should the Social Science Research Council, the American Political Science Association, the American Psychological Association, the American Association of University Professors, the American Sociological Association, the American Historical Association and the American Anthropological Association, in conjunction with various international counterparts, have acted promptly to investigate the situation, inquiring, among other matters, whether issues of freedom of inquiry were not present? And, while they are at it, might they not investigate the ugly and distorted articles carried in the Washington Press, particularly the *Washington Star*, against Project Camelot and social science research?
9. Should Senator McCarthy and Ambassador Dungan be reproved by agencies of opinion for acting hastily, crudely, and quite possibly wrongly in the Camelot incident?

There is absolutely nothing an American can do in any country of the world to avoid all criticism from all quarters of the country. Should American companies surrender a billion dollars of French investments because General De Gaulle makes menacing noises toward them? Why then should American professors surrender? The task of the American ambassador is to defend American rights, not to surrender them, and certainly not to surrender them out of pique.

Project Camelot was an open project, conducted by the American University, with Army funds, to solve problems pressing and universal interest in the present day. It was skillfully manned, well-planned, and supported by some of the best foreign scholars in Latin America. Certain State Department officials have little to be proud of in the incident. They may have harmed the national defense effort and impeded social science.