



Divestment at York

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I am writing to express my support for the proposed policy of York divestment from military armaments, research and expenditures.

Here are my reasons.

i) Historically, Canada has been a less military country in its policies and orientations, and has benefited from a positive global reputation because of its less pugilistic stance toward world affairs, defence policy, and technological objectives. At this time in history, when the world is teetering loudly towards war, this stance is needed more than ever. War engenders a massive waste of human and natural resources, but it also produces huge profits. Only when this ceases to be the case will war cease to be advanced as the ideal solution. It is our responsibility as humanist thinkers to aid this cause and to find other uses for our innovations and investments.

ii) York University has suffered substantial blows to its academic and administrative reputation in the last decade. The university needs to show its faculty and students, its donors, and the general public that it can respect the views of the university community and will consent to enacting values other than corporate growth.

iii) Some critics of this measure have stated that it is a thinly veiled version of the BDS campaign and should be rejected as anti-Semitic. I would respectfully disagree. As a person with a Jewish heritage, I can state with a clear conscience that I am not an anti-Semitic Jew, and I do not believe that criticisms of Israeli militarism and illegal settlement policies are necessarily motivated by anti-Semitism. I also think this particular debate is irrelevant to the proposal under consideration. That particular argument relies on a bad-faith set of presuppositions including the suggestion that an antagonism to military expenditures is a cover for a racist agenda.

Thank you for your willingness to consider our views.

**Jody Berland**

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