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Society for Social Responsibility in Science

THE Society for Social Responsibility in Science, founded in 1949, an organization composed entirely of workers in the natural sciences, has issued a resolution rallying fellow scientists to action and deploing the "serious growth of fear" that inhibits free expression among scientists. The full text of the statement follows:

We the undersigned, members of the Society for Social Responsibility in Science, call on our fellow scientists to maintain and strengthen the spirit of free inquiry by clear and courageous public expression of considered opinions concerning the relations of science and society.

The spirit of free inquiry is essential to scientific research. It can only be maintained in this field if it is also applied to the many obstacles to the pursuit of truth that are now arising. Specifically we feel that scientists everywhere must concern themselves with and speak out on the problems of the maintenance of scientific integrity, the maintenance of channels of communication and travel and the proper direction of public support of research, as well as on the personal, moral problem of the end results of a scientist's professional work.

The Society for Social Responsibility in Science takes the view that each person has the individual and moral responsibility to consider the end results of his work as far as he can see them. This is a responsibility to society and implies a strong insistence on public expression of opinions. We find today a serious growth of fear of such public expression.

Free inquiry can disappear without any laws existing to suppress it. Fear of social disapproval can lead a so-

ciety to direct its thoughts only into predetermined channels. New truths will then escape us and they may be the vital truths for our time.

It is time that we learned to lose our fear of being "labeled" for saying things we profoundly believe in. This fear must be overcome if we are to preserve the trust and fellowship, the loyalty to truth, and the freedom of inquiry which we recognize as fundamental to science and to a high level of civilization.

Signed by: O. Theodor Benfey, president of the Society 1951-53, Haverford College; Anton J. Carlson, University of Chicago, past president of the AAAS; Charles A. Coulson, Oxford University, England; Leonard Dart, American Viscose Corporation; Arthur A. Frost, Northwestern University; Theodore B. Hetzel, Haverford College; Herbert Jehle, University of Nebraska; Kathleen Lonsdale, University College London, London; Franklin Miller, president of the Society, Kenyon College, Ohio; Stuart Mudd, University of Pennsylvania; Shigeru Oae, Institute for Scientific and Industrial Research, Osaka, Japan; Victor Paschkis, Heat and Mass Flow Laboratory, Columbia University; Edward G. Ramberg, Radio Corporation of America; Priyadarajan Ray, Chemical Society of India; Walter Scheider, Massachusetts Institute of Technology; William T. Scott, Smith College; Albert B. Stewart, Antioch College; and D. Robert Yarnall, Yarnall-Waring Engineering Co., Philadelphia (institutions listed for purposes of identification only).

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