



Personal Statement to the Senate, March 7, 1950: Tolman

[Statement from Edward Chace Tolman]

As one of the non-signers of the Regent's special loyalty oath I wish to make clear my position and that, I believe, of many of my fellow non-signers.

The obvious and clear purpose, as one sees it, of the resolution proposed by the Conference Committee is to retain as much as possible of the spirit and desire of the non-signers and of those who have signed but were unhappy in doing so, and have the Faculty remain united.

There are only two points upon which this unity can, at the present time, be preserved. These are: (1) a continued insistence by the members of the Faculty that the standard oath and that only be administered to them; and (2) our insistence that the evidence in the case of any Faculty member up for dismissal whether because of alleged membership in the Communist Party or for any other reason shall be presented and weighed by the Senate Committee on Faculty privilege and tenure. Both these points are embodied in the resolution of your Conference Committee.

A third feature of the Committee's statement comprises a recognition of, but neither an endorsement of nor a rejection of, the Regents' policy of not hiring members of the Communist Party. The avoidance of any such statement pro or con was, no doubt, by design. For it must be clear to all of us that this is an issue upon which we, the Senate, will divide sharply. There are those of us who most honestly and conscientiously believe that by an unqualified approval of the Regents' non-Communist policy—such an approval as was asked for yesterday by Regent John Francis Neylan—is going to further our common purpose of having only objective-minded, honest, and able teachers and research workers among us. And there are those who, like myself, believe that our present well-considered and well-tried system of a committee, or committees, to assess each individual who is up either for appointment or dismissal accomplishes this same end and with more safety.

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Don't misunderstand me. I have no love for Communists as such. I have seen them time and again wreck the particular liberal movements I was interested in. But the Communist Party is (perhaps unfortunately) still a legal political party in these United States. And for us publicly to approve the Regents' policy that membership in this legal party is a basis for non-employment is for us to approve a political test. And such political tests are, ladies and gentlemen, a first, little step toward totalitarian states. History and many of our European colleagues on this Faculty can so testify.

Again, do not misunderstand me. I am not so unaware of the concrete realities of the present world situation as not to recognize that the time may come when in the interests of national security we, in this country, shall be led to impose all sorts of political restrictions upon individual freedom of conscience and upon opportunities for employment. But when and if that time comes, we shall be abandoning many of the earlier and more basic democratic values of this country and shall have adopted many of the policies and practices of our opponents.

Those of you who feel differently, who in all conscience believe that the time has come when we must explicitly and publicly approve this first small step are as able, as honest and perhaps more intelligent

than I. But I beg of you, let us, at this juncture, remain united solely upon that, with which we have all agreed—namely, the resolution presented by the Conference Committee and already adopted.

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2) I move, therefore, that the following statement be added to the mail ballot to be voted on as an alternative to the proposal submitted in the original motion:

No person whose commitments or obligations to any organization, Communist or other, prejudice impartial scholarship and the free pursuit of truth will be employed by the University of California. Proved members of the Communist Party having such commitments are not acceptable as members of the faculty. End We regard any attempt to subject teachers to civic limitations not imposed upon other citizens as a threat against the academic profession and against the society which that profession serves.