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## **Executive Session of the Annual & Autumn General Meeting of the American Philosophical Society, April 21 & November 9, 1951**

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### **EXECUTIVE SESSION OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY April 21, 1951**

Dr. Stanley stated that the situation at the University of California has been seriously impaired by the requirement of a special loyalty oath and inquired whether the Society might take action on the general question involved because of its bearing on scholarship in our institutions of learning. After some discussion the following resolution was approved:

"Resolved, That the President with the approval of the Council appoint a Committee of three to five members to consider the problem of freedom of science and scholarship including the matter of loyalty oaths."

### **EXECUTIVE SESSION OF THE AUTUMN GENERAL MEETING OF THE AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY NOVEMBER 9, 1951**

President Conklin read the following resolution which was adopted in the Executive Session of the Annual General Meeting, April 21, 1951:

"Resolved, That the President with the approval of the Council appoint a Committee of three to five members to consider the problem of freedom of science and scholarship including the matter of loyalty oaths."

President Conklin stated that he had appointed a Committee consisting of Justice Owen J. Roberts and Messrs. George B. Pegram and Richard H. Shryock. He had asked Mr. Walter Lippmann to serve on the Committee but he declined and stated that he would aid in connection with the publication of any action.

The statement as amended by the Council was then read by President Conklin. It was voted that each section be considered by itself. When a section was presented, there were suggestions for change which were duly considered and finally in each case an amended form duly voted upon was adopted. There was one exception, namely, next to the last paragraph which the secretariat was requested to revise in the light of suggestions which had been made. With this understanding it was then voted that the following amended report be adopted:

"Resolved, That the members in attendance at this General Meeting of the American Philosophical Society, the oldest scientific body in the United States, whose president for eighteen years was that great advocate of individual freedom, Thomas Jefferson, record by this resolution their concern over the current efforts to limit the freedom of thought and expression, and approve the following statement:

"The tendency to restrict academic freedom is but a special case of a tendency to restrict our traditional American freedoms generally and, thereby, to subvert provisions that for sound reasons were incorporated in our national Constitution. There is always special danger of unwarranted restrictions of freedom in times of national emergency or crisis. One of the forms in which the attempted restriction now appears is the imposition, by the controlling authorities of an educational institution, of an oath to be taken by each member of the teaching staff in which the deponent has to declare himself innocent of specific acts or opinions. Such

efforts have had a long history and as a protection against disloyalty have been ineffective.

"If, in a State-supported educational institution, there is the requirement that each member of the staff take the normal oath of a public officer to support the Constitution of the Nation and that of the State, such a requirement is not objectionable, but in no case is there justification for any other form of loyalty oath.

"Another form of unwise restriction upon the educational institutions is the imposition by governing boards or legislatures of regulations which impose unreasonable restraints upon that freedom of discussion which is essential to the performance of their proper scholarly and educational functions. Unless our universities and colleges continue to be arenas of free discussion and exploration they will become sterile.

"The imputation to an educational institution of responsibility for views expressed by any speaker on the campus or any member of the faculty is unwarranted. No imposition of censorship should grow out of such imputation.

"Further, we insist that a teacher who has been accused of advocating or working for the overthrow of the Government by force and violence is entitled to an impartial hearing and should not be subject to dismissal on the basis of the accusation unless and until its truth is fairly established."