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The American Association for the Advancement of Science was founded in 1848 and incorporated in 1874. Its objects are to further the work of scientists, to facilitate cooperation among them, to improve the effectiveness of science in the promotion of human welfare, and to increase public understanding and appreciation of the importance and promise of the methods of science in human progress.

Ethical Problems: An Invitation

The AAAS Committee on Cooperation among Scientists invites scientists to consider some of the ethical problems they encounter in their relations with employers or supervisors, fund-granting agencies, students or assistants, fellow scientists, colleagues in other disciplines, agencies of government, or society in general. Some of the problems that arise in these relationships are primarily legal in character and others are administrative. These can be handled through appropriate legal procedures or administrative practices. But problems of ethics also arise, and they seem to be of increasing concern as the number of people and the amounts of money involved grow larger, as science and its applications come to play a more prominent role in industry, defense, government, and other human affairs, and as the old patterns and customs that used to serve as effective and generally understood guides to individual conduct seem no longer to suffice.

The Committee on Cooperation among Scientists is one of several agencies within the AAAS that has been considering these matters. Now, as a means of securing a substantial number of concrete examples or case histories, the committee invites readers of *Science* to submit descriptions of specific situations that have posed real ethical problems. The situation described may be one in which you had to decide upon the proper course of action, or may be one you observed. It may be one in which a highly ethical course of action was followed, or one in which there was a discrepancy between actual behavior and ideal behavior. The description should give sufficient detail so that the specific problem, its setting, and the course of action followed will all be clear. But it is not necessary to identify the individuals or agencies involved, for it is issues, not personalities, that are wanted. All replies will be handled confidentially. They should be addressed to the Committee on Cooperation among Scientists, AAAS, 1515 Massachusetts Avenue, N.W., Washington, D.C., 20005.

In some professions, typically those in which a professional man deals directly with individual clients or patients, formal codes of ethics have been evolved to guide relationships with clients and professional colleagues. Some scientists have suggested that science, too, needs a code of ethics. But it is not at all clear that this would be desirable. The committee does not now plan to draft a formal code. What is needed now is to separate the ethical problems from the legal and administrative ones, to isolate problems that are peculiar to scientists, to learn which ones are of greatest concern, and to appreciate the range or variety of behavior with respect to a particular issue that seems proper in such different settings as a university, an industrial laboratory, or a government agency.

What is needed now is thought, discussion, and criticism. Consideration by individual scientists of the ethical questions they encounter or observe will contribute to this process. A generous response to this invitation for specific examples will help the committee to illuminate general issues and to prepare statements or analyses that will be helpful to scientists in the further consideration of these issues.—D.W.