

The Editorial Board of *Interdisciplinary Science Reviews* held a wide-ranging discussion on 'Science and Politics' at its Annual Dinner, meeting at Brasenose College in Oxford on 15 July 1982. The discussion covered many aspects of these two topics, but returned again and again to the 'Give and Take' which should take place between scientists and politicians. The Editor was instructed to give this subject his utmost attention and in the next possible issue in December 1982, ISR 7/4, I published Comments from eminent authors in Italy, Germany, India, USSR, and the USA.

The contributions were: "The Significance of 2 December 1942" (the first modern atomic reactor, but see Title 263), by Professor S. Fubini from CERN, Geneva; "Social and Moral Responsibilities" by Helmut Schmidt, former Chancellor of the Federal Republic of Germany, Bonn; "The Challenge" by Romesh Thapar, Editor of *Seminar*, New Delhi; "Interdisciplinary Co-Operation Essential" by Sergei P. Kapitza, Moscow; "Looking across Frontiers" by Eugen Seibold, President Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft, Bonn; "The Chilling Effect of Secrecy" by Dorothy Nelkin of Cornell University, Ithaca N.Y; "Ten Highlights for Program Evaluation" by Elmer B. Staats, Former Comptroller General of the United States, Washington DC.

Schmidt was the only politician who had held high executive office among the above authors, and therefore I shall try to summarise his contribution. He started with the obligation of scientists to present themselves to the public, they must explain the results of their work so that these can be clearly understood and applied by society. He continued with the onerous responsibility of the individual scientist and quoted Otto Hahn and Lise Meitner who achieved the first artificially induced atomic fission on a kitchen table in Berlin. If they were held responsible for the atomic bomb, no scientist could undertake any fundamental research, under the threat of such a risk.

He commented on the endless flow of electronic information which might lead to the end of the 'reading culture' and the resulting consequence to society. Neither politicians nor scientists can transfer responsibility to the other. Schmidt made the point that scientists have a uniquely privileged profession, as they can choose their favourite work as their occupation, and privileges imply responsibility. The scientist has to present science, and the public to whom it is addressed must be ready to evaluate and assimilate it.

As Federal Chancellor he tried to ensure that scientific thinking influenced democratic debate, and both scientists and politicians are answerable for the consequences of their socially committed actions as an obligation to society. His contribution was an excellent example of the Scientific Temper.