

**CARNEGIE COMMISSION**  
ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY, AND GOVERNMENT

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**FXED**  
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June 18, 1991

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Andrew W. Mellon Foundation  
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Via fax: (212) 888-4172

Dear Harriet:

The Carnegie Commission on Science, Technology, and Government has now passed its midpoint, and we are beginning to contemplate what the impact may be of the entire process. Our tacit model has been that objective analysis could show how the scientific method and technical expertise could improve the general welfare in a self-evident way, if but applied to the appropriate problems. We have given much less attention to (1) the ways in which rational judgment must be coordinated with democratic political process, and (2) how the scientific community itself may be judged as a special political interest group. Indeed, some might argue that the appeal to rationality is itself a political ideology intended to further the interests of the 'technocracy.' We have also to consider how the scientific community can in fact and in perception moderate the power implicit in special knowledge so as to be equitably responsive to a public interest that may not share the idealization of rational process.

The Commission has until now given little formal consideration to these questions at any high level of abstraction, though they often inform some of our pragmatic recommendations. We are planning an informal workshop in New York City on July 11, 1991, to try to delineate the questions more clearly, and to advise the commission on whether further special studies might be recommended.

We apologize for the short notice, but are capitalizing on the fortunate presence in the U.S. of Dr. Yaron Ezrahi (visiting professor at Harvard this summer) — and we do recommend his recent book *The Descent of Icarus* as a starting point of discussion.

Thanks for your help on the invitation list, and I hope you will be able to join us. Please call Maxine Rockoff at (212) 998-2152 when your plans become clear.

Sincerely,

Josh

Joshua Lederberg  
Co-Chair

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\*Through April 1990  
\*\*Through January 1989

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