

AMERICAN PHILOSOPHICAL SOCIETY

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June 11, 1980

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Office of the President
The Rockefeller University
New York, N. Y. 10021

Dear Dr. Lederberg:

I was in London when your note arrived on June 1, hence the delay in replying. I am happy to answer your query frankly and fully and without any need for confidentiality.

When I completed the draft of my History of the Rockefeller Institute in the summer of 1960, I turned the typescript over to Detlev Bronk and left the Institute for my new position in Philadelphia. Dr. Bronk did not acknowledge receipt of the draft and kept it for two years without any word to me. When I finally saw it again in the office of the Rockefeller Institute Press, I found the manuscript to be exactly as I wrote it, except that in (I believe) Chapter 13, passages amounting to about 4 pages had been marked by Dr. Bronk for deletion. These pages would have appeared, if printed, at about pages 327-328 of the History. I regret that I did not keep the undeleted carbon copy. They described the administration of the Institute's daily affairs, including the distribution of the budget, by the Board of Scientific Directors, with the implication that these scientists had shown themselves capable of administering the work of a scientific institution. The Board of Trustees, I pointed out, had assumed the burden of caring for the endowment and major policies, but had left scientific matters entirely to the scientists.

Dr. Bronk gave me no reason for the deletion, but the explanation was obvious. In 1960 he was actively planning to change from an institute to a university. To have me imply in the History that such a research center could get along without the supervision of trustees might have contradicted Bronk's assumption that the Rockefeller University would need a board of trustees of the standard university type, empowered to direct the choice of research programs and other basic scientific objectives. Hence the deletion.

Dr. Joshua Lederberg

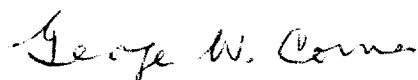
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I saw no reason to quarrel with Bronk's action. The historical facts on which I had based the expression of my personal judgment on this point were there in the text for any one to read.

No other deletion was made anywhere in the book, nor did Bronk add a word anywhere. When the book was published he wrote me the warmest letter of appreciation I have ever received about anything I have done.

Please use this letter as you wish. There is no need for silence about those rumors of dissention, which are unjust to both Det and me. Thanks for inquiring.

Cordially yours,



George W. Corner

GWC/t