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August 4, 1968

Prof. Joshua Lederberg
300 Pasteur Drive
Palo Alto, Calif.

Dear Professor Lederberg:

Whatever the semantic difference between "guilt" and "responsibility" (and I am not certain there is any) in daily usage the two terms mean the same. The theory of "collective responsibility" strikes me not only as being immoral and destructive, but in the case of the murder of M. L. King as absurd. The only burden I can feel for that assassination is that, by having favored and abetted the emancipation of Negroes in this country, I have contributed to the awakening of that "backlash" of which King fell victim. If that proposition were true, then morality would dictate placating the racists.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Richard Pipes', with a stylized flourish at the end.