

THE JOSEPH P. KENNEDY JR. FOUNDATION
SUITE 402
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DISTRICT 7-1731

January 28, 1966

Dr. Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics
Stanford University School of Medicine
Stanford Medical Center
300 Pasteur Drive, Pala Alto, California

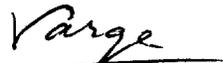
Dear Dr. Lederberg:

I appreciate your sending me a copy of your letter to the U. S. News & World Report on Shockley's latest outburst. I am glad that you are not letting his remarks go unchallenged, but I wonder if enough is being done to counter the damage he is doing. Would you consider "escalating" this debate on genetics by, for example, forming a Committee of Geneticists to champion a positive and constructive view of the genetic possibilities of Man, at the same time attacking negative and scientifically unsound views like those Schockley expresses?

As the clamor about "population explosions" increases, I am afraid that alarmists with socially destructive "solutions" like Shockley - whose scientific credentials seem to give their views an apparent legitimacy - will gain a hold on public opinion unless scientists like yourself, who know the facts, publicly arraign yourselves against them. I am not suggesting that the issue be staked out as one involving "good guys" versus "bad guys"; rather I am urging a course of action which will result in an increased public understanding of what is fact and what is fantasy in the matter of genetics, controls on the intellectual quality of populations, etc. I think such a clarification would be healthy for the nation, as well as important and significant for the field of genetics itself.

Please let me know what you think about this suggestion, and how the Kennedy Foundation might be helpful.

Sincerely,


Sargent Shriver.