

August 22, 1941

Dear Sir Henry,

I wrote the other day to Sir William Bragg, explaining the very embarrassing position in which I have been placed through the action of Scotland Yard in advising the Foreign Office to refuse me an exit permit. This, at least, is the account of the matter current in the United States, and based there on official information.

My absence from the United States this year does no particular harm, but an account of this kind current among the hundreds of Americans who know me, implying, as it does, either that I am disloyal or that those in power are such fools as to think that I am, obviously does a great deal of harm in University and Research circles where, apart from such disturbing stories, there might otherwise seem to be a clear case for supporting this country in the present war. Anyone who knows Americans will know that particular information concerning an individual of their acquaintance easily outweighs the large-hearted generalities which they regard it as the duty of politicians to put up.

I gather from Bragg's letter that it was your opinion that the refusal of the exit permit was not based on any such consideration as that suggested. The story, however, as told in Washington is explicit, down to the name of the Embassy official who conveyed the information.

Bragg rightly points out that it is not for him, but for you, now to act on behalf of the Society. I am concerned to know whether you are inclined to do anything or nothing about it. It is quite possible that nothing you are able to do ex officio will have any effect. The position is merely that a Fellow of the Society is, whether through false information or an official blunder, known to be under a very odious suspicion. It is, of course, no part of the duties of the Society to rectify such an injustice. I hope, however, I may rely on you as President to support at least a demand for an unofficial enquiry which should quickly clear the matter up.

Yours sincerely,