December 30, 1940

My dear Gross,

Thanks for your letter. Your long quotation from Mr Peake's remarks illustrates very well what I was saying. I do not suppose that you really regard six disconnected incomplete enquiries as equivalent to one thorough one. In spite of Mr Peake's remarks it is probable that, in some cases, the police had sufficient evidence to say that some one immigrant could properly be released forthwith. No other authority can, however, take decision on this information, unless their instructions are that the information in the hands of the police is to be regarded as exhaustive, and action taken from it alone. Actually this information almost certainly was never in the hands of the military authorities. I am not inviting you to admire our institutions in this particular, but to recognise that your misfortune is the inevitable consequence of lack (not of frequent or persistent questioning, but) of comprehensive central registration of a kind that would seldom need even supplementing by additional enquiry. It would, I think, have been very encouraging to the enemy if, last June, our military authorities had been foolish enough to leave a large body of foreigners at large.

Yours sincerely,