

Letters to the Editor

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International Status and Obligations of Science

In his Huxley Memorial Lecture, extracts from which were published in NATURE of December 23, Prof. A. V. Hill has made detailed statements regarding the treatment of German scientists by the National-Socialist Government. These statements are not in accordance with the truth. As a scientist, whose duty it is to discover and proclaim the truth, I venture to place on record the following facts as against the inaccurate assertions of Prof. Hill.

The National-Socialist Government has introduced no measure which is directed against the freedom of scientific teaching and research; on the contrary, they wish to restore this freedom of research wherever it has been restricted by preceding governments. Measures brought in by the National-Socialist Government, which have affected Jewish scientists and scholars, are due only to the attempt to curtail the unjustifiable great influence exercised by the Jews. In Germany there were hospitals and scientific institutes in which the Jews had created a monopoly for themselves and in which they had taken possession of almost all academic posts. There were in addition, in all spheres of public life in Germany, Jews who had come into the country after the War from the east. This immigration had been tolerated and even encouraged by the Marxist government of Germany. Only a very small part of the 600,000 Jews who earn their living in Germany has been affected by the National-Socialist measures. No Jewish civil servant was affected who had been in office before August 1, 1914, or had served at the front for Germany or her allies or whose father or son had fallen in the War.

Prof. Hill asserts that something more than a thousand scholars and scientific workers have been dismissed, among them some of the most eminent in Germany. In reality not half this number have left their posts, and among these there are many Jewish and slightly fewer non-Jewish scientists who have voluntarily given up their posts. Examples are the physicists Einstein, Franck, Born, Schrödinger and in addition Landau, Fränkel (mathematician), Fränkel (gynaecologist), Prausnitz (hygienist), and others. Prof. Hill says that there are 100,000 people in concentration camps in Germany and that they are there only because they wished to have freedom of thought and speech. The truth is that there are not even 10,000 in the concentration camps and they have been sent there, not because of their desire for freedom of thought and speech, but because they have been guilty of high treason or of actions directed against the community. It must also be said that no women and children are imprisoned in the concentration camps in order to bring pressure to bear upon their husbands and fathers.

It would be a good thing to keep political agitation and scientific research apart. This is in the interests of science as well as in the interests of international scientific co-operation. But when a scientist does

mix politics with science, he should at any rate fulfil the first duty of a scientist, which is conscientiously to ascertain the facts before coming to a conclusion.

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Feb. 2.

WITH Prof. Stark's political Anti-Semitism I need not deal: to an unrepentant Englishman (without any Hebrew ancestry or Marxist allegiance) it appears absurd.

It is a fact, in spite of what he says, that many Jews, or part-Jews, have been dismissed from their posts in universities, although they served in the line in the German armies in the late War. There are dozens of such in the lists of the Academic Assistance Council: whether they were "Beamte" or not is a quibble. Nor is there sense or justice in dismissing persons who were not "Beamte" before August 1, 1914.

Doubtless there are many grades of "dismissal", and in a technical sense certainly some of the persons in our lists were not "entlassen". They have found it impossible, nevertheless, to carry on their work in Germany. Men of high standing do not, without cause, beg their colleagues in foreign countries for help. Whether they were "dismissed", or "retired", or "given leave", or merely forbidden to take pupils or to enter libraries or laboratories is another quibble: the result is the same. It is inconsistent with that "freedom of scientific teaching and research" which the German Government apparently is seeking to restore.

As regards "high treason" and concentration camps, in England we do not call liberalism or even socialism by that name. The statement about women and children is a 'red herring'—I never said or suggested anything of the kind.

No doubt in Germany, after this reply, my works in the *Journal of Physiology* and elsewhere will be burned.

May I take this opportunity of saying that the Academic Assistance Council (Burlington House, W.1) urgently needs funds—for in spite of all the quibbles, scholars and scientists are still being dismissed.

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Feb. 10.

Cytochrome and the Supposed Direct Spectroscopic Observation of Oxidase

It has been shown previously¹ that some of the bands of the absorption spectrum, described by Warburg and his co-workers^{2,3}, in *Acetobacter* (*Bacterium pasteurianum*) and ascribed by them to the oxidase or oxygen transporting enzyme, do not belong to this enzyme but to cytochrome. It was also shown that similar absorption bands are visible not only in organisms with a very active oxidation, such as *Acetobacter* or *Azotobacter*, but also in organisms having a much lower respiratory activity, such as brewers' yeast, *Bacillus proteus*, *B. coli*, and *B. dysenteriae*.

The study of micro-organisms reveals certain variations in the structure and properties of cyto-