

Mr. Grayson Kirk.
President,
Columbia University.
New York 27, N.Y.- E.U.A.

Dear Mr. President:

After having accepted your gracious invitation of March 31, I have been corresponding with your assistants in regard to my paper, transportation and so on. Now, however, there arises a problem related to the invitation itself, and it seems to me that I ought to write to you this time.

I hold a diplomatic passport granted by my government some years ago. For this reason the visa for my trip to New York next October was applied for by the Mexican Foreign Office in a formal note addressed to the American Embassy. In spite of it, three weeks have elapsed without the visa being granted, and the American authorities in charge of these matters explain informally that it is being considered and that Washington must be consulted. Everybody knows that the American authorities seldom deny openly a visa and that the usual procedure is the dilatory one now applied in my case. This fact, and ^{my} ~~mis~~ wish to avoid the consequent embarrassment to the Mexican government in seeing its note disregarded, prompt me to give up right now the idea of traveling to compliment your invitation.

I believe that besides advising you as to my decision, I ought to give you an explanation. There is no question as to the reason for all this being that the American authorities handling these matters believe I am a Communist or a fellow-traveller. I hardly need to assure you that such an opinion is entirely unfounded. I am not, and I have never been, a communist; I am not, and I have never been a fellow traveller. My ideas and feelings in this question cannot be clearer or better known. I believe I am the only Latin American writer to have expo

exposed in a score of essays published in dailies, magazines and in book form the deceitfull nature of such "nationalist" movements as the Chinese Koren^{pa} or Guatemalan. I have never been at the Soviet embassy in spite of having been invited consistently for the last ten years. I have never^{pg} signed a collective statement of any kind, having followed an invariable and well known rule that if I have something to say in regard to some public matter, I will say it in my own words and under my own signature, so as to be personally and exclusively responsible for the statement. ----- Furthermore, I know the United States, and all my studies there and my research work here in Mexico for the last six years have been supported by funds coming from American institutions. Not only do I like the States, but I am grateful to them, and still consider ~~myself~~ myself one of the four or five friends left to them in Mexico by the American authorities.

I know, of course, that motives for suspecting people are everyday more numerous and more coarse. ~~In my own case I know the reason for refusing me the visa: in a lecture delivered seven years ago (time element is unimportant for American officials) and reproduced in a book of mine published in 1949, I said I considered unwise to outlaw communist parties in Latin America.~~ As you know, Mr. Brownell, the United States General Attorney, and, I understand, the majority of your daily press, had the same opinion on the law recently passed by the American Congress outlawing said parties in the States. I presume Mr. Brownell's motive^A are different from my own, but that is exactly why we had agreed a long, long time ago, you Americans and we Mexicans, that on earthly questions the opinion of the majority must prevail, and that on heavenly problems God's. But it ^{seems} to me that to have a petty, timorous ^{bureaucrat,} ~~bureaucrat~~, sitting in a comfortable room far above the skyscraper where the American embassy is quartered, passing on final

Being debarred from the United States is no longer an
anathema, but a mark of distinction.

judgement on the actions and thoughts of free and honest men is going a
bit too far, *for, to be frank, we are reaching a point where*

I now appreciate your wisdom in deciding that *Responsible*
Freedom was to be the food for your thoughts throughout your Bicent-
ennial. You certainly have ahead a worthy cause to fight for.

Forgive me for this long, vehement letter, and believe
me, with all my gratitude, *Your friend and obedient servant,*

~~Yours cordially~~

So, last year I went to the States
twice, first in February, then in
~~Oct~~ August; my visa ^{in both cases} was granted
within ~~twenty four~~ ^{It is refused} hours. Now
~~it is refused~~ because in 1949,
in a lecture delivered at Buenos
Aires, the text of which was reprinted
in a book of mine published in
~~1950~~⁴⁴, I said I considered —