

C. COV. 2004

former

Covington

LAW OFFICES OF
HAYDEN COVINGTON · 117 ADAMS STREET · BROOKLYN · NEW YORK

March 28, 1947

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt
Apartment Six A
29 Washington Square West
New York City

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

Thank you for sending the radiogram received from Mr. Ribnikar of Yugoslavia. I had hoped that better news would be received. This information I obtained through a dispatch in the New York Times a day or two after the decision by the Supreme Court of Croatia. The lawyers have been requested to take an appeal to the Supreme Court of Yugoslavia, in an effort to secure an acquittal.

The prosecutions and decision in these cases have almost wrecked my client's organization in Yugoslavia. I have been requested to go to Yugoslavia to interview the lawyers and officials there to see what, if anything, can be done to remove any misunderstanding that may have caused this predicament and also to check on what steps are being taken to preserve their legal rights under the law of Yugoslavia. I find it difficult to get a visa.

It would be appreciated if you would cable Mr. Ribnikar, at my expense, to have the Government of Yugoslavia instruct the Consular General in New York to visa my passport so that I might get into Yugoslavia. The reason for this urgency is that I am leaving for Europe on other business about May 1st, and desire to know if I will be permitted to enter Yugoslavia before I leave.

It is exceedingly regretted that I am forced to bother you about this matter. I deeply appreciate your interest shown and your efforts in behalf of justice and righteousness.

With kind regards, I am

Respectfully,

Hayden Covington

HCC:S

*I am sorry
I cannot
do as you ask
as I have no
such influence
with
SR R.*

*I have
no such
influence
with
SR R.*

File

February 23, 1947

Dear Dr. Ribnikar:

This gentleman came to see me and is very much perplexed over this whole situation. I am sending it to you so that you may take it up and see if there is anything that can be done as those men, as I understand it, are about to be executed.

Very sincerely yours,

Dr. Vladislav Ribnikar
Yugoslav Delegation to U.N.
Empire State Bldg.

letter from:
Hayden Covington, Esq.
117 Adams St.
Brooklyn, N.Y.

*Cable from Ribnikar sent
Covington 3-27-47*

LAW OFFICES OF
HAYDEN COVINGTON · 117 ADAMS STREET · BROOKLYN 1 · NEW YORK

February 20, 1947

Mrs. Eleanor Roosevelt, Chairman
Human Rights Committee,
United Nations
29 Washington Square
New York City

Dear Mrs. Roosevelt:

Pursuant to your suggestion in
the conversation today with you,
I enclose a self-explanatory
memorandum and copy, together
with exhibit, for your use in
bringing this matter to the at-
tention of the Yugoslavian mem-
ber of the Human Rights Committee.

Also herewith are copies for
your file.

Respectfully,

HCC:8

MEMORANDUM REGARDING RELIGIOUS PERSECUTION
OF JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES IN YUGOSLAVIA

C O M P L A I N T

In the fall of the year 1946, search and seizure was made of the records of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society in the Society's missionary headquarters in Belgrade, Yugoslavia. Upon the arrest of seventeen nationals of Yugoslavia, known as Jehovah's witnesses, missionaries in charge of the Society's work in Yugoslavia, copies of the reports were confiscated. Because of the reports written by some of these ministers in charge of the missionary work in Yugoslavia to the Brooklyn office, criminal charges were made and proceedings instituted against these seventeen persons.

These missionaries were charged with being officials of a false religious sect and refusing to cooperate with the "people's authority." They were charged with sending "false" reports to the Branch office of the Society in Berne, Switzerland, which forwarded such reports to the international headquarters in Brooklyn. Because such persons advocated God's Kingdom as the only hope of the world

and dedicated their lives thereto, they had conscientious objections to the performance of military service and claimed exemption therefrom, as do all other ministers of religion. As a result of their claim for exemption as ministers of religion in Yugoslavia, they were also charged with undermining the efforts of the government. Their advocating the establishment of God's Kingdom as the only hope of the world resulted in their being charged with sedition.

The trial of these charges began on February 3, 1947, according to a press report appearing in the New York Times of February 5, 1947, which reads as follows:

"18 SECT LEADERS ON TRIAL

**Jehovah's Witnesses Accused in
Zagreb of 'Non-Cooperation'**

Special to The New York Times

"BELGRADE, Yugoslavia, Feb. 4--Eighteen officials of Jehovah's Witnesses went on trial yesterday in Zagreb, it was announced today. According to the indictment, officials of the "false religious sect" refused to cooperate with the "people's authorities."

"The group 'maintained contact with international reaction' by sending 'false reports' to the organizations headquarters in Berne, Switzerland, and thence to the international headquarters in Brooklyn, the indictment charged.

"The alleged leader of the group, Rudolph Hale, was said to have admitted that the organization had been formed clandestinely in 1936. The officials were accused of having told their followers to avoid conscription and undermine the efforts of the regime and that they should await the coming of the 'kingdom of Jehovah.'"

On February 6, 1947 the judgment of the trial court in Zagreb, Yugoslavia, was rendered, whereby three of Jehovah's witnesses were sentenced to death and eleven others sentenced from five to fifteen years in prison. Three were acquitted. This appears in the news dispatch in the New York Times, February 7, 1947, reading as follows:

"3 SECT CHIEFS DOOMED

**Other Jehovah's Witnesses' Aides Sentenced
in Yugoslavia**

"BELGRADE, Yugoslavia, Feb. 6--The trial in Za-

grob of seventeen members of the 'international sect, Jehovah's Witnesses,' ended with death sentences for three, it was announced today. Eleven others received sentences ranging from five to fifteen years and three were acquitted.

"According to the indictment, leaders of the group supplied false information to their European headquarters in Berne, Switzerland, which was transmitted to the international headquarters in Brooklyn. It was charged further that the group had worked against the interest of the State and had told its followers to avoid conscription, as well as work, since a new regime, 'the kingdom of Jehovah,' was coming."

Desperate efforts have been made by the Society's Brooklyn office and its Branch office at Berne to communicate with friends, relatives and attorneys of the condemned men. This has been without success.

It is feared that the judgments of the court will be executed at once unless some immediate steps are taken to force the Yugoslavian Government to dismiss the charges. It is realized that it is impossible to have the charges dismissed immediately.

It is suggested that the member of the Human Rights Committee from Yugoslavia immediately request the Federated National Republic of Yugoslavia to stay the execution of the death sentences until a more complete investigation can be made. The Yugoslavian Government also ought to be requested that the charges should be dismissed upon appeal, that the convicted persons be granted amnesty, or that the death sentences should be commuted and the prison terms of the other persons reduced.

F A C T S

Rudolph Kalle and seventeen other ministers of the gospel, all of whom are nationals of Yugoslavia, have supervised the missionary evangelistic work of Jehovah's witnesses in Yugoslavia, under the direction of the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, for many years. This primitive missionary evangelistic work is done by Jehovah's witnesses in practically every nation under the sun. It has been recognized as lawful and permissible in all English-speaking governments and other governments dedicated to the preservation of the human rights of their citizens.

Formerly, in all nations dominated by the Axis

powers, the work of Jehovah's witnesses was banned. It was first made unlawful by the decree of Adolph Hitler, immediately following his rise to power in Nazi Germany in 1933. He summarily banned Jehovah's witnesses and confiscated all their property. He ordered all of Jehovah's witnesses who could be found and who could be apprehended taken into custody and confined in concentration camps. This procedure was followed in every country that came under the domination of the Axis powers. When the Allies invaded Europe and defeated the Axis powers, Jehovah's witnesses were liberated from concentration camps and restored to their former legal status in Germany and the other countries formerly dominated by Nazi Germany. At present the work of Jehovah's witnesses in Germany has been restored and is being carried on with approval of the authorities in Germany.

All such governments have found it not to be seditious. Two sample copies of the literature distributed by Jehovah's witnesses illustrating the fundamental doctrines preached by them in Yugoslavia are submitted herewith. They are book-

lets entitled "Be Glad Ye Nations," and "Prince of Peace."

The work has been described by the Supreme Court of the United States. The Court said that Jehovah's witnesses "spread their interpretations of the Bible and their religious beliefs largely through the hand distribution of literature by full or part time workers. They claim to follow the example of Paul, teaching 'Publicly, and from house to house.' Acts 20:20. They take literally the mandate of the Scriptures, 'Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature.' Mark 16:15. In doing so they believe that they are obeying a commandment of God."

"The hand distribution of religious tracts is an age-old form of missionary evangelism--as old as the history of printing presses . . . It is more than preaching; it is more than distribution of religious literature. It is a combination of both. Its purpose is as evangelical as the revival meeting. This form of religious activity occupies the same high estate under the First Amendment as do worship in the churches and preaching from the pul-

pits. It has the same claim to protection as the more orthodox and conventional exercises of religion. It also has the same claim as the others to the guarantess of freedom of speech and freedom of the press." (Murdock v. Pennsylvania, 319 U. S. 103)

In Yugoslavia, as in all other countries of the world, the work of Jehovah's witnesses is done by nationals residing within their respective homelands and countries. Although the work is carried on by such nationals, it is done in each country under the supervision of the central international governing body of Jehovah's witnesses, which is this Society. The Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society is a non-profit corporation organized under the laws of Pennsylvania, with main offices in Brooklyn, New York, for the purpose of preaching the gospel of God's Kingdom throughout the world and acting as the legal supervising agency and governing body of the international group of missionary evangelists known as Jehovah's witnesses. The property located in the Branch office in Belgrade, Yugoslavia, belongs to the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, the American corporation. However, the management of such property and the Society's supervision of the

of the work of Jehovah's witnesses in Yugoslavia is done by nationals of Yugoslavia.

When the Yugoslavian Government capitulated to Hitler and submitted to domination by the Nazi Government, in 1941, Jehovah's witnesses were banned and shortly after, hunted like criminals; many were executed during the domination of the government. All during the war the work was carried on at great expense to the life, liberty and welfare of Jehovah's witnesses in Yugoslavia. Since the rise of Marshal Tito's government to power, the treatment of Jehovah's witnesses in the Federated National Republic of Yugoslavia has not changed. They have continued to be persecuted for their way of worship of Almighty God.

From time to time, pleas for help and intervention have been made by the Jehovah's witnesses in Yugoslavia to the international headquarters at Brooklyn, through the European Branch office of the Society, located in Bern, Switzerland. Certain letters and reports describing in detail the persecution and experiences of Jehovah's witnesses in Yugoslavia have been sent to the Brooklyn headquar-

ters. These have been accompanied with requests for help to establish freedom of worship for Jehovah's witnesses in Yugoslavia.

It was the above-described report requesting help to relieve Jehovah's witnesses of their plight of persecution in Yugoslavia that, among other things, resulted in the above described arrests, trials and convictions of 17 persons. It is respectfully submitted that these convictions are contrary to the "due process of law" recognized by all enlightened nations that purport to guarantee freedom of worship, as does Yugoslavia.

It would be in the interest of justice and the maintenance of dignity of Yugoslavia as a civilized nation if it would take prompt steps, therefore, to relieve the injustices suffered by these men, and that a stay of execution of the death sentences be granted pending further investigation.

Respectfully submitted,

Walter Livingston
Council
for Jehovah's witnesses

1

~~pls~~ Cowles

ER. Did you see
item? Yes

inter
was
begin
was
to
was
the
es
pl
e
t

36 Cedar Lane Way
Boston 8, Massachusetts

Dear Cousin Elvaus,

We are very much looking forward to your talk here on the twenty-first, quite apart from your interest in the evening's subject.

I imagine that such a visit must be planned, how by how, from beginning to end, but we hope very much that you could find time to see us. Finney (who has never met you) and I have produced the first lady in these male Cooked situations, and the family is very pleased with her.

I am at M.I.T., where I am studying Architecture, all day Friday, but we would love to have you come to tea on that day, or at any time on Saturday

on Sunday. I always think of how kind you were to me when I was stationed in Washington.

We listened to the broadcast which might have been called "Elliot versus the newspapers" and thought he acquitted himself admirably under difficult circumstances.

Hoping that we shall see you

love,

Bill Cowles

February 10th 1947.

How kind

Bill can get Bill in the

explain I did perhaps go to the law firm next up to at H at the last mass Rep Bay St. Lebanon. Mr. John Patton is called at this address & I have done with a grander for day 1947

Dear Bill, COWLES

Thank you for
your kind letter. I
would love to stay
with you + meet
your family. I plan
to drive up if the
weather is good on
April 16th + leave
the afternoon of the
18th or morning of
the 19th affc

1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
22
23
24
25
26
27
28
29
30
31

S. COWLES, JR.
ALBURN, VERMONT

Dear Cousin Eleanor,

Thank Tuesday
you. I planned Nov 16-17
I am on up, of course
of the 16-17

Ginny and I have learned that you are coming to Burlington in the middle of April for the Vermont Conference.

Since Vermonters themselves continue to spend as little of the April weather here as possible, there is no reason to believe that you will spend any more time than necessary.

However we did want you to know that if the air or rail schedules required you to spend a night, or left you with an early morning arrival so that you would find a place to have an unhurried breakfast agreeable, we should be most happy to have you.

In addition, of course, we would really like to show off not only the very pleasant and satisfying life we have found for ourselves up here but especially our family. After two generations of single sons in the Cowles

family, we have managed to produce four,
with two girls for good measure.

Needless to say, we have no plans at all
for the April weekend of the 17th and shall
have none, so that our cars, house, and
persons will be at your service.

Love,
Bill.

Hurdland Missouri

April - 12 - 47

My Dear Mrs E. Roosevelt -

Pardon me if I have taken too much privilege by writing you - I am an ex-farm woman, 74 years - now living in a small village - a childless widow. Time hangs heavy & I have resorted to a "Hobby" - writing verses.

I was an ardent admirer of your late husband & our President.

When the word came, on that fateful day two years ago - that he was gone - What a shock. - I tried to express my feelings & thoughts in verse - some friends liked the tribute sent it to our local newspaper & it was printed - I am enclosing a copy - which I hope you can find time to read. It expresses my thoughts on that momentous day. - May you live in pleasant dreams of the yesterdays & the realities of a "Happy Tomorrow"

Respectfully

Mrs. T.A. Cox

Hurdland

Missouri

Tribute to Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

Our President has fallen
With his face toward the foe;
He gave his life as surely
And the same as G. I. Joe.
He was a modern Moses,
And like the one of old,
He saw the future freedom
But did not reach the goal.

He gave the torch to other hands,
God help him hold it high,
A heavy torch but burning bright,
And even you and I
Can furnish fuel for the light
To guide us through this sorrow;
The sun is shining just beyond,
There'll be a bright tomorrow.

But just right now I wonder how
The world can do without him;
He chose the one to carry on

And we shall never doubt him.
We always have a leader
Whenever we're in need,
And we will follow after him
In action, word and deed.

The burden was so heavy
And he carried it so long;
He knew his strength was ebbing,
But his courage was so strong,
He fought the fight for common man,
Tho' never one was he;
He did not live beside the road,
But walked with you and me.

Some criticisms were untrue,
Some honored not his name,
But when the world acclaimed him
great,

They hung their head in shame;
We hope they've learned a lesson
That will last them for all time,
And when a great man's at the helm
They'll recognize his kind.

The Great Command is given
And we bow unto His will;
No more we hear that pleasing voice,
It is forever still,
No fireside chat, no friendly voice
Addressing us, "My Friend;"
Oh! God receive him to Thyself
And let him rest.—Amen.

—By Mrs. T. A. Cox, Hurdland.

Cox