

Jehovah's WITNESSES

Their Position

To many the following evidence appears as Christian persecution and victimisation. For your information we first present facts concerning the position of Jehovah's witnesses and then evidence of their harsh treatment in Britain.

THE FACTS

Jehovah's witnesses as an organized body of Christians have been worshipping God in Britain since the year 1880. Today there are 575 congregations in England, Scotland, Wales and Ireland with approximately 15,000 active associates. Of this number 1,500 are full-time appointed ministers and full-time field missionaries.

Jehovah's witnesses are NOT pacifists. They are neutral as to wars and organizations of this world. As footstep followers of Jesus Christ "they are not of the world, even as I am not of the world." (John 17:16) They do not hinder the war effort of the nations. Jehovah's witnesses in Germany follow the same course of neutrality. Their withstanding Hitler and his demonized gangsters is world renown. Hundreds have paid with their blood and thousands still lie in Hitler's filthy concentration camps. (See H.M. Government's White Paper Cmd 6120 by Sir Neville Henderson). Since 1933 Jehovah's witnesses in Germany have bitterly opposed the Nazi regime where their numbers are greater than in Britain. It is never said by the accusers of Jehovah's witnesses that these thousands in Germany are helping Britain, even although they know they oppose Hitler!

All Jehovah's witnesses make a covenant to do God's will even as Christ did. They prove their faith by their works in preaching the Gospel. Thousands of home Bible studies are conducted throughout the land and people

are visited from house to house to assist those of good-will to come to a better knowledge of Jehovah's glorious THEOCRATIC Kingdom, man's only hope. This God-given service is shared by all whether part-time workers or full-time servants. The majority of Jehovah's witnesses engage in ordinary secular activities to provide things needful for their families to meet such responsibilities.

The 1,500 full-time servants are free from such responsibilities and thus are able to devote their whole lives to God's service. For them there is no alternative service. The Ministry of Labour now endeavours to divert the services of these missionaries to other channels. These servants being absolute in their devotion and service to the Lord refuse to be so directed, as their covenant obligations to the Lord come first. They have no objection to hospital work and land work as such, there being many Jehovah's witnesses not full-time engaging in such services. Full-time servants have special respect to Jesus' counsel at Luke 9:62 where he says: "No man, having put his hand to the plough, and looking back, is fit for the kingdom of God." Like the Apostles these Christians say "we ought to obey God rather than men."—Acts 5:29.

The United States Government recognizes as regular ministers Jehovah's witnesses who are serving full-time, granting them exemption from war duties similar

to the clergy, nuns and religious workers of the churches. In Britain the Minister of Labour has chosen to make an exception of Jehovah's witnesses by refusing to recognize them as "regular ministers of any religious denomination." [See Section 11 (e) National Service (Armed Forces) Act 1939] The issue of Jehovah's witnesses in Britain centres chiefly around the full-time servants who are singled out by the Ministry of Labour for prosecution and their "cat and mouse" treatment.

EVIDENCE

1. For the ten months' period ending July 18, 1942, 440 Jehovah's witnesses in Britain have been imprisoned, serving sentences ranging from one month to two years. 377 of these are men and 63 are women full-time missionaries.

2. Severe treatment has been meted out to William Nisbet of Edinburgh, Arthur Russell of Middlesbrough, Gilbert Lane of London, Gerald Henderson of Newcastle-on-Tyne and Thomas Goulden of Liverpool; all Jehovah's witnesses. They were kept naked for hours, severely beaten, knocked unconscious and suffered bestial assaults even, in the case of Arthur Russell being manacled to a table leg.

3. On July 16, 1942, at Marylebone Court three officers of the London headquarters of the Society of Jehovah's witnesses were sentenced to two months under the all-sweeping dictatorial power of section 58A of the Defence Regulations 1939. These officers were Alfred Pryce Hughes (47), Frank Gordon Platt (44), and Ewart Charles Chitty (44). They refused to forsake their Christian duties as fully ordained ministers of the gospel in which they have been fully engaged for more than the past

twenty years. Hughes served a two-years sentence in the last war and Platt three years imprisonment (1916-1919) for their Christian stand as Jehovah's witnesses. Platt as a prisoner in the last war was forced to the front line in France and No.1 Field Punishment was administered to him where he was strapped to a gun for eight hours at a time. Thereafter for seven months in France he was given solitary confinement. Now he is being called upon to suffer again for his Christian principles.

4. On May 6th, 1942, the Home Office intimated a deportation order to the resident American Director of the Society, Mr. A. D. Schroeder. Mr. Schroeder made an appeal which was declined by Mr. Herbert Morrison on May 30th. No reason has been given for this expulsion order. Not having left the country, the Ministry of Labour on July 17th issued him a direction under 58A and he is now threatened with imprisonment in Britain for failing to give up his God-given ministry which is recognized by the United States Government and for which he is given exemption. Defence Regulation 58A is so drastic that it is impossible to make a defence even for an American subject. Mr. Schroeder has been an ordained minister for more than ten years. His forefathers for two generations have been American subjects.

5. Recently officials of the Ministry of Labour have admitted their purpose to close down the London Headquarters of Jehovah's witnesses using the instrument of 58A to clear out all its regular ministers. Eight further regular ministers received directions under 58A on July 17th and face ultimate imprisonment notwithstanding that an appeal is pending in the High Court of England with reference to these regular ministers. Their names

are J. B. Robb, James E. Barr, John E. Barr, H. G. King, S. E. Teasdale, A. S. Coville, F. A. Willett and W. V. Emery.

6. Five Jehovah's witnesses are now victims of "cat and mouse" action, serving their second terms of imprisonment. Their names are P. A. Relf, James Armstrong, G. A. Robertson, N. Gaydon, and R. W. Hindmoor.

7. Eleven refugee aliens have been interned by the Home Office simply because they are Jehovah's witnesses.

8. Miss Klara Bosshard, a Swiss National, was repatriated in June 1942, the only reason given being that she was a Jehovah's witness. The British government paid for her air passage to Lisbon and thence to Switzerland.

9. Many of the lower Courts are prejudicial in their dealing with Jehovah's witnesses. The heaviest sentences for offenses of conscientious objectors have been passed only on Jehovah's witnesses, men and women. In the case of Louisa Hercock at Tottenham, March 6, 1942, Magistrates Bennett and Smith said: "People are virtually using this organization as a cloak for fifth column work and it is a national menace." "Evening Standard," 7.3.42. "Sometimes one must do the work of the country before the work of God." "Hornsey Journal," 13.3.42.

In the case of E. Beavor at the Middlesex Quarter Sessions, April 9, 1942, Mr. J. H. Thorpe, K.C. in giving a vindictive sentence of two years hard labour to a Jehovah's witness minister said: "Parliament provided for a person in your position to be sentenced to a sentence not exceeding two years. Yours seems to be such a case. We do not know of a worse one, at a time when the country needs every able bodied man to protect it." "Court Shorthand Record."

10. Prosecutors for the Ministry of Labour abuse their privilege in Court by heaping much slander for public consumption through the press. Mr. Trevor James, in the case of Louisa

Hercock (22) at the Tottenham Police Court said:

"I am led to the conclusion that many young people are being sheltered by this organization, which is not recognized by the Ministry. I am inclined to the view that these young people are its dupes."

"Evening Standard," 7.3.42.

In the case of J. W. Felix before the Middleton Police Court June 8, 1942, Mr. Haywood, prosecutor for the Ministry of Labour said:

"This man calls himself a Jehovah's witness and is a member of a sect which can only be described as a small band of canting, hypocritical humbugs who have commercialized religion in the most sordid manner, and obtain an easy livelihood by playing on the gullibility of decent religious-minded people."

"Evening Standard," 8.6.42.

In the case of Mrs. Fairweather, April 20, 1942, Mr. W. F. Watts, prosecuting at Ilfracombe said:

"I am very much tempted to suggest whether there may not be something sinister behind this movement. This woman and those who associate with her are willing to avail themselves of all the advantages of this still free country without doing a single thing in the national effort."

"Western Morning News," 21.4.42.

11. Conscientious Objectors' tribunals are biased in their consideration of Jehovah's witnesses who appear before them. Judge Thomas Richardson, Chairman of the Newcastle-on-Tyne tribunal said in the case of T. L. Hillary on December 6, 1939:

"You are a lot of cranks."

"Manchester Guardian," 7.12.39.

His decisions still bear out this prejudice.

The late Judge Frankland of Leeds amongst his many tirades against Jehovah's witnesses made these remarks in his tribunal:

"You have fallen for this very obvious money-making concern, Jehovah's witnesses. You, a schoolmaster. I want you and your friend to leave the room. I don't want other people to be contaminated by your presence."

"News Chronicle," 10.8.40.

"I want to say publicly that there is a grave doubt in my mind about the bona fides of this organization and the people it employs."

"Empire News," 11.8.40.

"I have been trying for a fortnight to draw your headquarters and to get

them to send a balance sheet or a solicitor. They prefer to shelter; they prefer to lurk behind the privacy of Craven Terrace, London. It is another dodge for making money, most of which goes to America."

"Daily Despatch," 16.8.40.

"America has the biggest gold reserve in the world. I should think quite a lot of that belongs to Jehovah's witnesses and to poor English dupes they have got hold of like you."

"Manchester Guardian," 10.8.40.

Judge Finmore at Birmingham May 5, 1942, said:

"Apparently your only objection to military service is that it would mean interfering with your work as a member of Jehovah's witnesses and in my opinion this does not constitute a real conscientious objection."

"Staffordshire Advertiser," 9.5.42.

Judge Wethered (Bristol Tribunal) described Jehovah's witnesses as:

"A mischievous society, persuading people that they should refuse to take part in the defence of their country."

"Western Morning News," 21.4.42.

The Scottish tribunals at Glasgow and Edinburgh continually reject applications and appeals of Jehovah's witnesses; their decisions are not made public.

12. The numerous attacks in the press on Jehovah's witnesses continue to be vicious and malicious. The press only publish the attacks made on Jehovah's witnesses in the courts and tribunals. They have yet to publish clearly the definite and scriptural stand made by Jehovah's witnesses in defence of their principles. Consequently the public at large are ignorant of the principles actuating Jehovah's witnesses. Evidence of press bias is multitudinous.

CONCLUSION

Honest and sincere persons in Britain are confronted with these questions. Can Britain truly champion freedom of worship and at the same time in practice deny consecrated servants of the

Most High God freedom to perform their covenant vows unto God?

"Verily I say unto you, inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me."—Matt. 25:40.

Does not this victimisation lead to fighting against God?

"Refrain from these men and let them alone: for if this counsel or this work be of men, it will come to nought: but if it be of God, ye cannot overthrow it: lest haply ye be found even to FIGHT AGAINST GOD."—Acts 5:38, 39.

Can Britain expect to have Almighty God's favour and yet maltreat His faithful servants?

JEHOVAH GOD says of his covenant people that they are "the apple of his eye" (Deut. 32:10) and that "I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee."—Gen. 12:3.

Can dictatorial legal measures such as Defence Regulation 58A justly be used to silence Jehovah's witnesses?

"Shall the throne of iniquity have fellowship with thee, which frameth mischief by a law? They gather themselves together against the soul of the righteous and condemn the innocent blood."—Ps. 94:20, 21.

In spite of all the difficulties Jehovah's witnesses will courageously go right forward with their work of preaching the Gospel and comforting people of good-will. Their trials and persecution are a testimony unto them that they are the Lord's servants and must keep their covenant. They are mindful of Jesus' words:

"If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own: but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Remember the word that I said unto you, The servant is not greater than his lord. If they have persecuted me, they will also persecute you; if they have kept my saying, they will keep yours also. But all these things will they do unto you for my name's sake, because they know not him that sent me."—John 15:18-21.

Submitted on behalf of Jehovah's witnesses in Britain,

INTERNATIONAL BIBLE STUDENTS ASSOCIATION

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