

Letter to Hitler

Translation of the letter sent by Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, German Branch, Wachturmstrasse 1-19, Magdeburg/Germany to Hitler.

Dear Reichskanzler,

on June 25, 1933, at the Sporthalle Wilmersdorf in Berlin there was a conference of approx. 5,000 Bible Researchers (Jehovah's Witnesses), representing several millions of Germans who are friends and followers of this movement for many years. Purpose of this conference, which was attended by representatives of all bible students communities of Germany, was to find ways and means to inform the Reichskanzler, as well as other high officials of the German Reich and the governments of its individual countries of the following:

In several parts of the country, actions were taken against a corporation of serious Christian men and women who are standing on the foundation of positive Christianity. Such actions can only be described as the persecution of Christians by other Christians, since the accusations - which have led to these actions against us - primarily are of clerical, especially catholic origin and untrue.

We are absolutely convinced of the impartiality of the government officials dealing with this situation. Yet we conclude that the contents of our literature and the purpose of our movement are largely misinterpreted due to the accusations which are brought up against us by our religious opposers and which might result in a prejudiced viewpoint. This might also be due to the amount of our literature and the high demand put upon the respective officials.

For this reason the things discussed at the conference were put down as a declaration of the Watchtower Bible and Tract Society, in order to provide you, Mr. Reichskanzler, as well as the high officials of the German Reich and its countries, with a document of the fact that the Bible Researchers of Germany only have one goal in their work, namely to lead people back to God and to be witnesses of the Name of Jehovah, the most high, the father of our Lord and redeemer Jesus Christ.

We are convinced that you, Mr. Reichskanzler, will not have such activities disturbed. The communities of the Bible Researchers of Germany and their members are generally known as defenders of respect of the Most High and zealous students of the bible. Local police officials will need to testify to the fact that Bible Researchers have to be counted among elements of the country and its people who are known for their love and support of order. Their sole mission is to draw the hearts of humans to God.

The Watchtower Bible and Tract Society (located in Magdeburg/Germany) is the organizing center of the mission of the Bible Researchers.

The Brooklyn headquarter of the Watchtower Society is pro German in an exemplary way and has been so for many years. For that reason, in 1918, the president of the Society and seven members of the board of directors were sentenced to 80 years in prison, because the president refused to use two of the magazines published in America under his direction for war propaganda against Germany. These two magazines, "The Watchtower" and "Bible Student" were the only magazines in America which refused to engage in anti-German

propaganda and for that reason were prohibited and suppressed in America during the war.

In the very same manner, in course of the recent months the board of directors of our Society not only refused to engage in propaganda against Germany, but has even taken a position against it. The enclosed declaration underlines this fact and emphasizes that the people leading in such propaganda (Jewish businessmen and Catholics) also are the most rigorous persecutors of the work of our Society and its board of directors. This and other statements of the declaration are meant to repudiate the slanderous accusation, that Bible Researchers are supported by the Jews.

The conference of five thousand delegates received the statement of the governor in Magdeburg with great satisfaction, who declared that it can not be proven that there is any relationship between the Bible Researchers and Communists or Marxists, as it was stated by our religious opposers (which means that such a statement is also nothing but slander). A press report in the Magdeburger Tageszeitung, issue 104, dated May 5, 1933, reads as follows:

A declaration of the government concerning the occupation of the Bible Researcher building: The press department of the government issued the following information: "Occupation of the property of the Society of Serious Bible Researchers" in Magdeburg was lifted on April 29, since no material to support the claim of communist activities could be found."

Another report in the Magdeburger Tageszeitung, issue 102, dated May 3, 1933, reads:

The office of the Bible Researchers Society informed us that the actions taken against the Watchtower Society and the Bible Researchers Society, were abolished. All property was returned, since a comprehensive search led to the result that nothing can be held against this Society neither as far as political nor as criminal activities are concerned. It was also concluded that both Societies are of an absolutely un-political and strictly religious nature. On request, the government confirmed the correctness of these statements.

The conference of five thousand delegates emphasized that according to this state of affairs it considered it beneath its dignity to even defend itself against any disparaging accusations of Marxist or even Communist activities. Such disproved slander of our religious opposers undoubtedly carry the sign of religious competition. Their goal is to stifle an honest warning with the ugly means of slander instead of using the word of God.

The conference of five thousand delegates also noted - as is expressed in the declaration - that the Bible Researchers of Germany are fighting for the very same high ethical goals and ideals which also the national government of the German Reich proclaimed respecting the relationship of humans to God, namely: honesty of the created being towards its creator.

The conference came to the conclusion that there are no contradictions when it comes to the relationship between the Bible Researchers of Germany to the national government of the German Reich. To the contrary, referring to the purely religious and unpolitical goals and efforts of the Bible Researchers, it can be said that these are in full agreement with the identical goals of the national government of the German Reich.

Based upon the supposedly strong language of our literature, some of our books were banned. The conference of the five thousand delegates pointed to the fact that the contents of the books which were criticized, only refers to the situation and actions within the Anglo-American world power - especially England - which is responsible for the League of Nations

and its contracts and burdens imposed upon Germany. What is written in our literature - no matter whether from a financial or political point of view - is only directed towards the suppressors of the German people and their country, but by no means refers to Germany itself, which is trying hard to fight against the imposed burdens. Therefore the ban imposed upon these books is completely unjustified.

In some parts of the country Bible Researchers are even prohibited to meet for prayer and church service and for many weeks are hoping for a solution of this situation which is stifling their religious lives. The following was expressed about this situation:

We want to continue to live up to the prohibition imposed upon us, for we are confident that Mr. Reichskanzler and the high government officials will lift this ban - which forces tens of thousands of Christian men and women to a martyrdom which can only be compared to that of the first Christians - after they have gained an understanding of the real situation.

Finally, the conference of the five thousand delegates expressed that both Bible Researchers and Watchtower Organization stand for keeping up order and security within the state, as well as furthering the primary high ideals of the national government in the field of religion. The afore mentioned, as well as the enclosed declaration are meant as a brief information directed to both Mr. Reichskanzler as leader of the people and all the other high government officials of the German Reich.

The enclosed declaration was read by the secretary to the five thousand delegates of the conference of the Bible Researchers. It was approved unanimously and it was decided to present one copy each together with this report of the conference to Mr. Reichskanzler and all the other high government officials of the Reich and its countries.

This we want to do herewith and ask that the following request, which is also stated in the declaration, will be received with favour:

Namely that a commission from our midst is given the chance to personally explain the true situation either to Mr. Reichskanzler himself or to the minister of internal affairs. Alternatively, we ask Mr. Reichskanzler to appoint a commission of men who do not have any religious prejudice against us - men who do not have professional religious interests but are solely interested to comply to the just principles as they were set up by the Reichskanzler himself - to investigate our situation impartially. The principles mentioned, refer to paragraph 24 of the program of the National Socialistic German Party of Workers, which reads:

"We demand the freedom of all religious denominations within the state, as far as they do not endanger the state itself or violate the moral values of the German race.

The party as such represents the viewpoint of positive Christianity without being attached to any particular denomination. It fights against the Jewish-materialistic spirit inside and outside of us and is convinced that any recovery of the German people can only take place from the inside out."

We are fully convinced that, once we have been judged impartially, based firstly upon God's word and secondly upon the above mentioned paragraphs, the national government of Germany will find no reason to prevent us from our church services and missionary activities.

We are looking forward to your kind approval, which we hope to receive soon, and want to

assure our highest respect to you, honorable Mr. Reichskanzler.

Yours faithfully

Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society Magdeburg