

BOSTON COLLEGE  
CHESTNUT HILL  
MASSACHUSETTS



DEPARTMENT OF PHYSICS

Sunday Morning 5/29/38

Dear Mr. Kenline:

2796  
Belrend  
3/25/32

2821  
Nikola Tesla

Recently I had occasion to visit the widow of B. A. Belrend (A.I.E.E. Fellow) who resides in the Cliff Estates section of Wellesley, Mass. While looking over her late husband's laboratory, I was attracted by the several pictures of great men including: Kelvin, Heaviside, Hertz, Lodge, Tesla etc. While viewing a picture of one, N. Tesla, and his high voltage apparatus, taken in 1899, Mrs. Belrend came forth with the information that Tesla—now a resident of New York—was practically starving in poverty and further indicated that her recent letters from Tesla were the source of the information.

Poverty, in a relative sense, depends upon the economic conditions of the user of this word; but starving, significant in that it conveys the want for food and implies the lack of the bare necessities of life, is another thing.

If the above situation be true, it seems to me that the A.I.E.E. might do something of a worthy nature. I know not Tesla's

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position in life or his temperment. However, I am  
sure Mrs. Behrend would be glad to elaborate  
on her statements to such an authority as the  
A.T.E.E.

Very truly yours,  
J. Malcolm Lager

A 26  
Asst Prof Phys

393 Broadway,  
Cambridge, Mass.

File in  
folder of  
Nikola Tesla  
2821

May 31, 1938

Professor F. Malcolm Gager  
393 Broddway  
Cambridge, Mass.

Dear Sir:

We have your letter of the 29th regarding the  
circumstances of Mr. Nikola Tesla, and I am wondering  
whether you have received the correct impressions.

During recent years, Mr. Tesla has been living  
in the Hotel New Yorker, but at his specific request we  
omit his address from the published list of Institute  
members.

We know nothing of a specific nature regarding  
his financial situation, but one seldom thinks of an  
individual living in poverty at one of the heading New  
York City hotels.

Very truly yours,

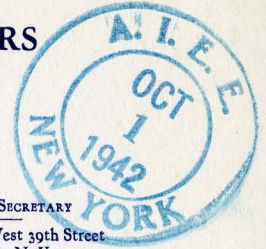
National Secretary

HHH:LMW



# AMERICAN INSTITUTE of ELECTRICAL ENGINEERS

33 WEST THIRTY-NINTH STREET, NEW YORK, N. Y.



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*Board*

Schenectady, September 30, 1942

Mr. H. H. Henline  
A. I. E. E.  
33 West 39th Street  
New York City

Dear Mr. Henline:

From time to time we hear of such cases as that indicated by the following clipping, where renowned engineers are in very straitened circumstances:-

### September 28 NEWSWEEK

#### Help for Tesla

Your statement in the September 7 NEWSWEEK that Nikola Tesla the famous electrical engineer has been reduced to living in a small hotel room on a pension from the Yugoslav Government leads me back to a line old Isaiah wrote more than 5,000 years before the Christian era: Neither riches to men of understanding nor favor to men of skill but time and chance happen to them all.

What a pity that a man who contributed so much to America as we know it today should come to such an inglorious end.

In all this broad land isn't there one socially conscious person of means who will help this constructive worker end his last days in comfortable and pleasant surroundings? It would be small pay for what Nikola Tesla has done for this, his adopted country.

B. B. Bingham

Athol, Mass.

*ask memos. Bd.  
what think about  
many dues memos.  
for life.  
H-50  
10-7-42*

Many of us have thought that the Institute should have a fund, from which the Board of Directors could from time to time allot sums of money or pensions to distinguished members who are in straitened circumstances. I know this is a very difficult problem to handle wisely, but I believe it would be a sound thing for the Institute to do.

Even though the Institute does not itself allocate funds to this objective, it might well receive contributions to a fund for such purposes, to which many engineers will be willing to contribute. I have not infrequently heard the expression that it is a "reflection on the electrical industry" if any one of its truly distinguished men is not provided for in his old age; and I am sure there is a widespread feeling that the Institute is the logical agent to undertake this responsibility.

I shall appreciate it if you will put this subject before the Board of Directors, at its next meeting, and also let me know if Mr. Tesla is, in need.

*actually*

Very truly yours,

*P. L. Alger*

P. L. Alger, Chairman  
Technical Program Committee

PLA:RS

*File in folder for  
Nikola Tesla*

October 7, 1942

Mr. P. L. Alger, Chairman  
Technical Program Committee, AIEE  
General Electric Co.,  
Schenectady, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Alger:

We have your letter of September 30th regarding  
the situation of Mr. Nikola Tesla.

So far as we know he is still living at the Hotel  
New Yorker. We are not permitted to publish his address  
and have not had anything from him for a long time. I am  
under the impression that the stories regarding his financial  
situation have been somewhat exaggerated, but of course have  
no definite facts.

This matter will be brought to the attention of  
the Board of Directors on October 23rd.

Very truly yours,

National Secretary

HHH:IMW

*114*

*No action  
Prof. Shickler offered  
to obtain further info  
for Bd.*

COPY

LOUIS ADAMIC . MILFORD . NEW JERSEY

January 4, 1943

Dear Mr. Hoover:

Nikola Tesla, as you know, is a Serbian immigrant who came to America from Croatia some 60 years ago and became one of the world's greatest inventors. He became also an American. In the early 1920s Lenin urged him to move to the Soviet Union, promising him every scientific facility, and personal security for life, but Tesla declined -- he was an American and had got used to living in the United States, whose civilization he had helped to create.

His contribution to the sum-total of American civilization is almost beyond calculation. Hundreds of billions of dollars of American wealth are ascribable to his inventions. They are at the very center of our current war effort. No man living has added more substantially to the potentialities of human life than Tesla.

Yet today, when he is past 90, he is worse than penniless. He is extremely frail, weighing less than 90 pounds. His health is poor, and he has grown somewhat bitter against the U.S.A. No doubt his current poverty is his own fault. However, I think that ordinary standards do not apply to Tesla. He was always the pure scientist, never interested in money, always impractical about material existence.

But the fact is that now he is up against it. He receives a small "pension" from the Yugoslav government-in-exile. I know that Tesla suffers greatly at having to accept this pension from the government of his native country, to which he had never contributed anything directly. He suffers especially because the money comes to him through the Yugoslav Ambassador in Washington, whom he dislikes personally. Tesla suffers, too, in fact to the point of bitterness, because he feels -- with some justice -- that everyone in America, including the beneficiaries of fortunes created by his inventions, has forgotten him. No one writes to him; no one comes to see him.

He lives in a meager room in the New Yorker Hotel, in New York. He owes about a year's rent -- the Yugoslav pension is not enough to keep him in scientific apparatus, etc., for he continues to work on his projects.

This letter is not an appeal for your personal financial help. Some way will be found of looking out for him -- he will probably not outlive 1943. But he needs someone to take care of him personally without seeming to; someone who could also follow his current notes and experiments and preserve what may be of value in them. Perhaps one of the large electrical corporations which have benefitted so greatly through his inventions would be glad to pension him for the short balance of his life. And I am wondering if you know someone who might be approached.

A pension coming from such a source would relieve Tesla of the necessity of accepting more money from the Yugoslav government. It would do much to remove his bitter feeling of neglect. And it would be a fitting, though small, recognition of the debt America owes this man who has done so much for his country.

If you would like more details, I can come to see you in New York at any time.

Sincerely, (x) Louis Adamic

HERBERT HOOVER



The Waldorf Astoria  
New York, New York  
January 8, 1943

My dear Mr. Henline:

I am sending you herewith a copy of a letter from Mr. Adamic which is self-explanatory. I don't know that the Society has any way of being of help to the gentleman, but the case did seem to me to have genuine appeal.

Yours faithfully,

*Herbert Hoover*

Mr. H. H. Henline  
American Institute of Electrical Engineers  
33 West 39th Street  
New York, New York

*Just. Adamic had  
taken some steps  
to counter facts*



*File in folder  
of Nikola Tesla*

*2821*

January 12, 1943

Mr. Herbert Hoover  
The Waldorf Astoria  
New York, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Hoover:

We were glad to note in your letter of the 8th your interest in the situation of Mr. Nikola Tesla.

The Board of Directors of the Institute had started some steps to ascertain the facts, but I think no substantial progress had been made. We had been informed, however, that Mr. Tesla was receiving a modest pension from one of the American manufacturing companies.

Very truly yours,

National Secretary

HHH:LMW

HERBERT HOOVER



The Waldorf Astoria  
New York, New York  
January 9, 1943

My dear Mr. Henline:

Since I posted my letter to  
you of January 8th I see by the papers  
that Mr. Tesla has passed away.

Yours faithfully,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, reading "Herbert Hoover".

Mr. H. H. Henline  
American Institute of Electrical Engineers  
33 West 39th Street  
New York, New York