

# INSIDE REPORT: Kafka on Capitol Hill

By Rowland Evans and Robert Novak

WASHINGTON.

A grotesque story of Washington in this summer of 1965 concerns a victim of Communist persecution who has spent four years in Kafka-like struggles with the U. S. octopus of government.

Nora Samuelli, a Rumanian national employed by the U. S. Legation in Bucharest, spent 12 years in a Red prison on trumped-up treason charges—a pawn of the cold war. Not once during those bleak years did she take the easy way out and denounce the U. S.

And yet today, four years after her release, the U. S. bureaucracy in its infinite befuddlement has still not given what is her due: salary covering her years in prison. She also wants to become a U. S. citizen.

It is particularly ironic that Miss Samuelli is being harassed by conservative Congressmen most vocal in their public denunciations of communism.

None of this has shaken her faith in her adopted country, the U. S. A. Rather, she has specifically asked that her story not be written for fear it would give the Communists fresh propaganda to blackjack Eastern European nationals out of working in U. S. embassies.

Her story goes back to World War II when Miss Samuelli was an impoverished, Jewish intellectual in Nazi-controlled Rumania. After the war she fared even worse under the Communists.

Employed by the U. S. Legation in 1945, she was arrested by the Rumanian government on July 24, 1949, on transparently spurious charges of spying for the U. S. At that time the cold war was at its hottest. Rumania was trying to close the U. S. Legation. Had she not worked there, she would not have been arrested.

After nine months of solitary confinement waiting for "trial," she went to jail for 12 years as an American "turncoat." In 1961, she was ransomed by relatives.

Then began her incredible—and degrading—Kafkaesque adventures with the U. S. government. Her sister, also imprisoned by the Reds and then ransomed, was quickly compensated by her employers—the British government. But Nora Samuelli collided with State Department bureaucrats who could find no regulation covering her case. Miss Samuelli was frozen in the indifference of the Federal government—until last year when Sen. Thomas J. Dodd, of Connecticut, took an interest.

Since then, Deputy Under Secretary of State William Crockett has determined that Miss Samuelli is entitled to \$45,000 in back pay plus \$10,000 in compensation for a prison injury. The bill for this easily cleared the Senate and the House Judiciary Committee.

But when the bill reached the House floor last month under a procedure requiring unanimous consent, the fatal objection was voiced—by Iowa's Rep. H. R. Gross, a Right-wing Republican and self-appointed guardian of the Federal treasury.

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Conservative Senators paid visits to Gross. Top State Department officials pleaded with him. Finally Gross agreed to withhold his objection on the second go-around. But when the bill came up last week, it was stopped by another conservative Republican—a second-termer from California named Burt Talcott.

Why? Under archaic procedures, Rep. Talcott is one of the "official objectors" appointed to serve as watchdog on minor bills.

He hadn't bothered to talk with State Department officials or Miss Samuelli herself. But he decided the bill sets a "dangerous precedent" for some 60 ex-inmates of Communist prisons. Meanwhile, Miss Samuelli waits.

Even if the Grosses and the Talcotts eventually let the bill through, there still remains a bill enabling her to become a U. S. citizen. Twice the citizenship bill passed the Senate. Twice it wound up in the deep-freeze of Ohio Rep. Michael Feighan's immigration subcommittee.

Right-wing Democrat Feighan, a fanatic denouncer of communism, somehow can't find it in his heart to compensate Miss Samuelli for her years of loyalty.

The State Department admits that it needs a law automatically providing compensation for all the Miss Samuellis in Communist countries. But that doesn't help her today with the large men of affairs on Capitol Hill such as Talcott and Feighan. In matters such as this does Congress embellish its bad reputation.

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