

Where the state had left off the German churches now became more involved in combating Mormonism's growth. Void of their political weapons of the past, the churches began to warn their congregants of the evils of Mormonism. For the first time we see literary works from the German clergy resembling the earlier American and British evangelical works. In spite of the efforts by the German churches and their clergy, the Mormons seemed to have become a semi recognized, and tolerated part of the German religious landscape during the Weimar period. With the rise of National Socialism one would expect the anti-religious fervour of the regime would place the Mormons under state sanction once again. This however was not to be the case.

#### D. SUPPORTING THE NATIONAL SOCIALIST REGIME

The Weimar Republic was to be short lived. So too was the quasi separation between church and state. The rise of the National Socialists in the early 1930s would see the relationship between church and state change once again. The majority of the Protestant *Landeskirchen* had retained their autonomous regional authority based upon the old geographic boundaries. With a shift from earlier Weimar policy, the National Socialist Government had taken steps to create a consolidated national Protestant church, the *Deutsche Evangelische Kirche*, (*DEK*) by May of 1933. National Socialist religious policy sought to create a homogenous variant of Protestantism under the control of the state. Tolerance towards religious organizations outside of the *DEK* was dependent upon that organization's acceptance of the National Socialist goals. The active pursuit to enforce an official policy towards the Protestant and Catholic churches subsided with the advent of the war.

For Germany's Catholics this meant the dawn of a new era. A concordat was entered into between the Vatican and Berlin that saw the curbing of Catholic political power within Germany. The agreement oversaw the dissolution of Catholic trade unions, and their political organizations. It did allow for the Catholic Church to cultivate Catholicism among its parishioners, to maintain their parochial schools, and to appoint clergy. The agreement however was not honoured.

National Socialist policy towards the sects varied from group to group. Groups that held to an adventist ideology or millennial aspirations were seen as subversive. The Mormons, Seventh-day Adventists, and the Jehovah's Witnesses all held similar millenarian beliefs. Yet only the Jehovah's Witnesses were banned, first in Bavaria, then in Prussia, and by mid 1933 in the remainder of the country.<sup>132</sup> The Seventh-day Adventists, the New Apostolic Church, and the

132 Christine Elizabeth King, *The Nazi State and the New Religions: Five Case Studies in Non-Conformity*, Studies in Religion and Society, vol. 4, The Edwin Mellen Press, New York and Toronto, 1982, pp. 149–150.

Christian Scientists all faced harassment or were declared illegal religious entities under the National Socialists. Only the Mormons fared differently.<sup>133</sup> They were either ignored completely or favoured relative to the other American and German sects of the period.<sup>134</sup>

No official state action was undertaken against the Mormons in the 1930s and 1940s. A reassessment of this time by Mormons and their apologists has proved to be an embarrassment. While representatives from several religious groups can lay claim that the organization and its members suffered official persecution from state authorities during the National Socialist period, the Mormons cannot. The Seventh-day Adventists, the Watch Tower Bible and Tract Society, the Salvation Army, as well as the Free Masons were all subject to state sanction, banning, and camp internment under the National Socialist regime.<sup>135</sup>

133 *Der Stern*, Bd. 68, Nr. 13, July 1, 1936, p. 206, lists 62 Mormon congregations in Germany. Congregations are listed for Bavaria, Baden, Schleswig-Holstein, and Alsace.

134 See *The Nazi Master Plan, Annex 4: The Persecution of the Christian Churches*, Office of Strategic Services Research and Analysis Branch R & A no. 3114.4, Draft for the War Crimes Staff, July 6, 1945. Original in Donovan Nuremberg Trials Collection, Cornell University Law Library, Ithaca, New York. Photocopy in possession of author. John S. Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches, 1933–1945*, Basic Books, New York, 1968, pp. 371–374, 378–382. King, *The Nazi State and the New Religions*, pp. 181–182. Ernst Christian Helmrich, *The German Churches Under Hitler: Background, Struggle and Epilogue*, Wayne State University Press, Detroit 1979.

135 The Masons were one of the first organizations to be banned. In light of the relationship between Mormonism and Free Masonry it seems relatively strange that the Masons would be banned when their rituals are virtually identical to the Mormon temple rituals. Mormons also banned Masons from their ranks between the 1840s and 1980s. For Free Masonry during the National Socialist period see Helmrich, *The German Churches Under Hitler*, pp. 397–400. On religion in the National Socialist period see Gerhard Besier und Elisabeth Müller Luckner (Hrsgg.), *Zwischen "nationaler Revolution" und militärischer Aggression Transformationen in Kirche und Gesellschaft während der konsolidierten NS Gewaltherrschaft (1934–1939)*, Schriften des Historischen Kollegs, Kolloquien Bd. 48, Oldenbourg Wissenschaftsverlag, München, 2001. Gerhard Besier und Clemens Vollnhals (Hrsgg.), *Repression und Selbstbehauptung: Die Zeugen Jehovas unter der NS und der SED Diktatur, Zeitgeschichtliche Forschungen*, Bd. 21, Duncker & Humblot, Berlin, 2003. King, *The Nazi State and the New Religions*; Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches*; Helmrich, *The German Churches Under Hitler*; M. James Penton, *Jehovah's Witnesses and the Third Reich: Sectarian Politics Under Persecution*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2004; M. James Penton, "A Story of Compromise: Jehovah's Witnesses, Anti-semitism, and the Third Reich," *The Christian Quest*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1990, pp. 33–46; M. James Penton, "The Watchtower Society's Response to Nazism in 1933: Introduction to Documents," *The Christian Quest*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1990, pp. 47–48. M. James Penton (ed.), "Konrad Franke's Testimony," *The Christian Quest*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1990, pp. 49–50. M. James Penton (ed.), "The Declaration of Facts," *The Christian Quest*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1990, pp. 51–70; M. James Penton, "The Hitler Letter," *The Christian Quest*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1990, pp. 71–82, Karla Poewe and Irving Hexham, "Verfassungsfeindlich: Church, State and New Religions in Germany," *Nova Religio: The Journal of Alternative and Emergent Religions*, vol. 2, no. 2, 1999, pp. 208–227; Karla

The sanctions imposed against the groups were not based on religious grounds, as the religion clauses of the Weimar constitution were never abrogated. Rather, the sanctions against the sects were enacted on political grounds. Charges of Marxism, international conspiracy, and subversion were usually levelled against the sects, even though there was no substantial evidence to support the charges. Religious persecution appears to have been legitimized by making charges of political subversion, or conspiracy.

Although they had in common American origins, as well as similar beliefs to both the Adventists, and the Jehovah's Witnesses, the Mormons were not subject to official state sanctions as were the Adventists and Jehovah's Witnesses.<sup>136</sup> There was little difference between Mormon millenarian beliefs and those of the Jehovah's Witnesses. Both the Mormons and the Witnesses were structurally undemocratic, anti-liberal, and uncompromising religious bodies. Members of both groups were expected to give themselves completely, body and soul, to the movement and to obey without question their leaders. They both made claims to exclusive possession of the "truth." As well, both groups tread on the ground that the National Socialists had carved for themselves as a political philosophy bent on creating a new man, a new society, and a new world. Then why was there such a difference in official attitudes towards the Mormons and the Witnesses?<sup>137</sup>

The role of minority religions under the National Socialist regime has been addressed in several articles and books over the last several decades. The body of literature concerning Mormonism during the National Socialist period is small and often repetitive in the themes it seeks to address.<sup>138</sup> Perhaps this is due to an almost complete lack of primary resource material that exists on the Mormons

Poewe, "Scientific Neo-Paganism and the Extreme Right, Then and Today: From Ludendorff's Gotterkenntnis to Sigrid Hunke's Europas Eigene Religion," *Journal of Contemporary Religion*, vol. 14, no. 3, 1999, pp. 387–400. Karla Poewe, "The Spell of National Socialism: The Berlin Mission's Opposition to, and Compromise with the Völkisch Movement and National Socialism: Knak, Braun, Weichert," Ulrich van der Heyden und Jürgen Becher (Hrsgg.), *Mission und Gewalt: Der Umgang christlicher Missionen mit Gewalt und die Ausbreitung des Christentums in Afrika und Asien*, Missionsgeschichtliches Archiv, Bd. 6, Franz Steiner Verlag, Stuttgart, 2000, pp. 268–290.

136 German Mission president, Oliver Budge, was questioned by the Nazis on September 8, 1932, regarding the Mormons' position towards the National Socialists. Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany*, p. 85; King, *The Nazi State and the New Religions*, p. 150.

137 The Mormons that did incur the wrath of the Nazi state were incarcerated for political action and not for religious belief or practice. Helmrich, *The German Churches Under Hitler*, pp. 404–406. Joseph M. Dixon, "Mormons in the Third Reich: 1933–1945," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, vol. 7, no. 1, 1972, p. 76.

138 Alan F. Keele and Douglas F. Tobler, "The Führer's New Clothes: Helmuth Hübener and the Mormons in the Third Reich," *Sunstone* vol. 24, November–December, 1980, pp. 20–29; Dixon, "Mormons in the Third Reich," pp. 70–78.

during the National Socialist period.<sup>139</sup> I do not wish to convey the idea that no information exists, rather that very little material from government archives dealing with the Mormons during this period is to be found.<sup>140</sup>

The Mormon membership appears to have been generally supportive of the National Socialist regime.<sup>141</sup> Alfred C Rees, a Mormon mission president in Germany, published *Im lande der Mormonen* in the Nazi party newspaper the *Völkischerbeobachter* in April 1939. In the article he favourably compared the Mormon Church, its ambitions, goals, and practices to those of the Nazis.<sup>142</sup> The Mormons' own *Church News* carried an article titled "Mormonism in the New Germany," lauding the closeness between National Socialism and the Mormons.<sup>143</sup> The structure between the two groups was also compared favourably. The two Mormon priesthoods, the Aaronic and Melchizedek, were compared to the *Schutzstaffel*, the SS, and the *Sturmabteilung*, the SA, while *Gauleiters* became Stake Presidents. Among the West German mission's leadership many felt that Hitler had been divinely sent to establish the United Order prior to the return of Jesus and the establishment of the Millennial Kingdom.<sup>144</sup> With the party being held in such esteem there does not appear to have been any sanctions against

139 Presently very few official files exist on the Mormons during this period. See "Beobachtung von Mormonen berichtet," *BArch.*, *Reichsicherheitshauptamt*, R58/5686, 1937; *BArch.*, *Reichministerium für Kirchliche Angelegenheiten*, R5101, 1927–1940.

140 Relative to other groups during the time very little official information exists. For files on other groups see *BArch.*, *Auswärtiges Amt*, *Abt. III*, R901/69662, *Bd. 2*, February–July 1941; *BArch.*, *Auswärtiges Amt*, *Abt. III*, R901/69680, *Bd. 3*, April–August 1941; *BArch.*, *Auswärtiges Amt*, *Abt. III*, R901/69666, *Bd. 4*, August–October 1941; *BArch.*, *Auswärtiges Amt*, *Abt. III*, R901/69667, *Bd. 5*, January 1941–January 1942; *BArch.*, *Auswärtiges Amt*, *Abt. III*, R901/69664, *Bd. 6*, December 1941–January 1942; *BArch.*, *Auswärtiges Amt*, *Abt. III*, R901/69678, *Bd. 7*, January–April 1942; *BArch.*, *Auswärtiges Amt*, *Abt. III*, R901/69663, *Bd. 8*, March–June 1942.

141 Conviction documents from the *Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes*, *Urteilsammlung* show that Mormon youth were allowed into the NS party organizations for youth. Helmuth Hübener, Karl Heinz Schnibbe, and Rudolf Wobbe, were members of the *Deutsches Jungvolk*, the NS party organization for youths aged 10–14, and then progressed to the *Hitler Jugend*. Schnibbe was *ausgeschlossen*, (banned) from the *Hitler Jugend*. See *Bundesarchiv Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR*, (SAPMO), *Teil Dokumentationszentrum der Staatlichen Archivverwaltung: Dokumentation 1933-1945, Konzentrationslager und Haftanstalten (KL/Hafta)(1933-1990)*, *Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes*, *Urteilsammlung*, DY/55. Dixon, "Mormons in the Third Reich," p. 76.

142 Alfred C. Rees, "Im lande der Mormonen," *Völkischer Beobachter*, April 1, 1939. King, *The Nazi State and the New Religions*, p. 73. See also the comparison of the fasting system employed by the NS regime and the Mormons in, *Latter Day Saints Millennial Star*, vol. 95, no. 38, September 28, 1933, p. 638. Dixon, "Mormons in the Third Reich," p. 71.

143 "Mormonism in the New Germany," *Deseret News*, *Church News Section*, December 9, 1933, pp. 3, 7.

144 "Reports Tell of Saints in Europe," *Deseret News*, *Church News Section*, November 24, 1945, p. 5.

Mormons who held *Nationalsozialistische Deutsche Arbeiterpartei (NSDAP)* memberships, or *NSDAP* members who were Mormons. While Mormon leadership was sympathetic to the Nazis, the Nazis were also sympathetic to the Mormons.

Christine King makes the following analysis on the management of the sects under the National Socialists:

“All the sects were observed and all, except the Mormons, appear regularly in police and S.D. reports. Some were more suspect than others, and it has been seen that the government’s attitude to each sect was determined only partly by the sect’s response to National Socialism, and largely by the political influence its members were able to exert on their own behalf. That the Mormons had convinced the government from the start of the regime of the political and economic importance of their membership to the German state and of their influence outside Germany, may help to explain the ease with which this sect came through the years of Nazi rule.”<sup>145</sup>

King cites additional reasons that may account for the Mormons favourable treatment under the Nazis. In her summation King intimates that the Mormons had few compromises to make in maintaining a working relationship with the National Socialist Government. Their members willingly accepted military service.<sup>146</sup> They were already racially discriminative, using genealogical research to prove their Aryan ancestry and refusing to admit members with Jewish backgrounds.<sup>147</sup> As well the Mormons had a long history in support of eugenics, both in theory and in practice.<sup>148</sup>

The National Socialist racial laws of the early 1930s were based on existing laws in the United States and Canada.<sup>149</sup> Four miscegenation laws were passed in the heavily Mormon populated state of Utah between 1888 and 1953, prohibiting intermarriage between whites and those of African or Asian descent. The state’s

145 King, *The Nazi State and the New Religions*, p. 183.

146 King, *The Nazi State and the New Religions*, p. 184.

147 A Jewish convert was initially refused baptism but upon intervention from the mission president was allowed to be baptized in 1944. There were some members of Jewish ancestry among the German Mormons but these were not harmed during the war years. See King, *The Nazi State and the New Religions*, p. 188; Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany*, p. 101.

148 See Christine Rosen, *Preaching Eugenics: Religious Leaders and the American Eugenics Movement*, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 2004, pp. 134–135; George Q. Cannon, “The Improvement of Our Species,” *Western Standard*, August 7, 1857; Steven Faux, “Genetic Self Interest and Mormon Polygyny: A Sociobiological Perspective of the Doctrinal Development of Polygyny,” *Sunstone*, vol. 40, July August 1983, pp. 37–40; Carmon B. Hardy, “That Same Old Question of Polygamy and Polygamous Living: Some Recent Findings Regarding Nineteenth and Early Twentieth-Century Mormon Polygamy,” *Utah Historical Quarterly*, 73, no. 3, 2005, pp. 212–224; Carmon B. Hardy and Dan Erickson, “Regeneration Now and Evermore!: Mormon Polygamy and the Physical Rehabilitation of Humankind,” *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 10, no. 1, January 2001, pp. 40–61.

149 See Robert Proctor, *Racial Hygiene: Medicine Under the Nazis*, Harvard University Press, Cambridge, 1988, pp. 96–103.

miscegenation law was repealed in 1963. The Mormons own sanctions, full admittance to the priesthood, against its own members with dark skin were not repealed until 1978. Like many American states Utah had also passed a sterilization law in 1925.

The Mormons also stressed their commonalities with National Socialist behavioural morality. The addition to the daily Salt Lake City newspaper *Deseret News* known as *The Church News* for December 9, 1933 mentions that Hitler is an abstainer, a trait shared by the Mormons as they too abstained from coffee, tea, alcohol and tobacco.<sup>150</sup> There was also an attempt to make the National Socialist regime aware of the Mormon message as Mormon literature was sent to all party officials and a personal telegram was sent to Hitler upon his ascent to power.<sup>151</sup>

King quite clearly outlines the reasons for the extreme differences in treatment between the Mormons and the Witnesses.

King offers this analysis:

“The Mormons religion, whilst all-embracing and in theory a self-contained world-view, allows a participation by its members in public life and thereby disguises the individual, millennial and totalitarian nature of its teaching and organisation. Thus the Nazis persecuted those who appeared most obviously to be their enemies and who had no alleviating factors to offer in return for a reprieve.”<sup>152</sup>

Archival sources may be missing to counter King’s argument but that appears to be unlikely.<sup>153</sup> In the years since the fall of Nazi Germany no Mormons have come forward to relay their story of internment or subjection to government interference based solely on their adherence to Mormonism. It is only reasonable to infer then, that given the absence of sources on the topic that the LDS church and its membership were not targets under the National Socialists.

The relationship between the Mormons and the German state during the National Socialist period is similar to the situation that developed under the dictatorial regime of the German Democratic Republic.<sup>154</sup> From the outside it appears

150 “Mormonism in the New Germany,” *Deseret News, Church News Section*, December 9, 1933, pp. 3, 7. Commonalities between the Mormons and the National Socialists on alternative medicine, dietary restrictions, and midwifery also existed. Proctor, *Racial Hygiene*, pp. 225–227, 235–237, 241; Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany*, p. 87.

151 Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany*, p. 87.

152 King, *The Nazi State and the New Religions*, p. 188.

153 There are several files located in the *Bundesarchiv* in Berlin concerning the Mormons. The first from the *Reichskanzlei* file R4311/179 over the Mormon Missionary deportations in 1926. File R5101 dated 1927–1940 from the *Reichsministerium für Kirchenangelegenheit*, and finally R58/5686 from the *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* dated 1937 that details observations of the Mormons.

154 “Information über aktuelle Meinungsäußerungen von Mitgliedern der Kirche Jesu Christi der Heiligen der Letzten Tage (Mormonen) in der DDR,” Ministerium für Staatssicherheit, Nr. 491/88, November 9, 1988, Berlin,” *BStU ZAIG 3699*, pp. 12–14, p. 13. The abbreviated *BStU* designates the federal agency, *Bundesbeauftragten für die Unterlagen des*

that there was almost an expressed favouritism displayed towards the Mormons under both regimes. The relationship under the German dictatorships is often interpreted as a good thing by many current authors.<sup>155</sup> It does however cause one to question the motivation behind the relationship between the Mormons and the German governments. While other religious groups were facing state sanction why were the Mormons virtually exempt from any state action?

The answer may lie in the Mormons' own history. The Mormons perhaps more than any other religious body in Germany knew the dangers in confronting state power. They had felt the strong arm of the Federal Government in the latter part of the nineteenth century and emerged from that battle with the knowledge that any confrontation with political power would be fruitless, and extremely damaging. More importantly they learned how to survive. With the end of the Mormon dream of a political kingdom they became apolitical. The millenarian vision of a kingdom of the here and now was translated to a future state. The church took an official stance of self-preservation at all costs often sacrificing long held and important religious principles, such as the decision to abrogate plural marriage. The movement towards self-preservation resulted in a quieting of active demonstration against official state policy and generally they became docile towards political power.

This shift from open agitation towards political power, to accommodation was only accomplished due to the Mormons' church structure. The authoritarian and hierarchical nature of the organization does not allow for dissent from the church's members towards official church policy. The Mormon relationship towards the state was a prime example of a theological principle that stresses the role of obedience and harmony. It is the principle of the Zion of Enoch carried out in the material world. Living the principle in the earthly realm would prepare the saints for life during the coming millennium and the eternal hereafter. In this ideal community, where communalism, plural marriage, would be practised, members were to live in harmony and to voice opinion with one accord.<sup>156</sup> Dissent causes chaos and is counter productive to the perfect will of Heaven. With a leadership who act as God's agents, whose very words, it is believed, originate in the heavens, dissent expressed towards them carries both immediate and eternal consequences.

*Staatssicherheitsdienstes der ehemaligen Deutschen Demokratischen Republik. Ministerium für Staatssicherheit der DDR is shortened to MfS.*

155 For an example of this see Bruce W. Hall, "And the Last Shall be First: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the Former East Germany," *Journal of Church and State*, vol. 42, no. 3, 2000, pp. 485–505. Raymond Kuehn, "The Freiberg Temple: An Unexpected Legacy of a Communist State and a Faithful People," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, vol. 37, no. 2, 2004, pp. 95–131.

156 The example of this from LDS works is found in the *Book of Moses*, 7:18. It states: "And the Lord called his people Zion, because they were of one heart and one mind, and dwelt in righteousness; and there was no poor among them."

Generally the Mormons did not encounter many difficulties with the National Socialist regime. The LDS Church was the only foreign church allowed to continue meeting regularly and publicly during the National Socialist period.<sup>157</sup> In April of 1933, shortly after the rise of National Socialism, reports from Germany indicated that all 240 missionaries in the 100 cities in which they were working had no problems to report.<sup>158</sup> Mormon missionary presidents appear to have been able to carry out their work unencumbered. Werdau, Saxony native Herbert Klopper had a private room and a telephone in the Mormons' Berlin headquarters by which he could continue to conduct church affairs throughout eastern Germany.<sup>159</sup> This continued once the war began in 1939. New congregations were established, and conferences were held in Berlin, Leipzig, Dresden, Hamburg, Königsberg, and Frankfurt am Main. The Stuttgart congregation celebrated its 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary in 1940.<sup>160</sup>

Yet, there were isolated cases of sanctions by the Nazis against the Mormons. Street meetings and door-to-door tracting were prohibited.<sup>161</sup> In 1934 the Mormons' scouting program was stopped, and there was a distribution ban of a tract by John Widstoe dealing with authority titled "Göttliche vollmacht."<sup>162</sup> It is claimed that their building in Bremen was confiscated and of course there were the criminal proceedings against the Helmut Hübener group.<sup>163</sup> The Mormons were also asked to move from their meetinghouse in Nürnberg, as the inner city, where it was located, was about to undergo a restoration.<sup>164</sup> Yet, on a more positive note the Mormon missionaries were invited to referee the basketball games at the 1936 Berlin Olympics.<sup>165</sup>

Although some state prohibitions existed, converts were still being made, and new congregations were being established in Germany during the National Socialist period. In the first year of the Nazi dictatorship the Mormons baptized 418

157 An example of this comes from *Der Stern*, Bd. 72, Nr. 1, January 1, 1940, p. 15. The notice reports that a joint conference of the Karlsruhe and Stuttgart congregations was held in Stuttgart on November 26, 1939. The notice mentions that 1,000 members attended the conference.

158 *Der Stern*, Bd. 65, Nr. 8, April 1, 1933, p. 109.

159 Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany*, pp. 105, 108.

160 A new congregation was established in Berlin-Neu Kölln in 1937. *Der Stern*, Bd. 69, Nr. 4, February 15, 1937, p. 60. For conferences see *Der Stern*, Bd. 67, Nr. 21, November 1, 1935; Bd. 68, Nr. 14, July 15, 1936, pp. 217–218; Bd. 69, Nr. 3, February 1, 1937, p. 43; Bd. 71, Nr. 24, Weihnachten, 1939, p. 385; Bd. 72, Nr. 2, January 15, 1940, p. 31; Bd. 72, Nr. 3–4, 1940, p. 63.

161 Dixon, "Mormons in the Third Reich," p. 73.

162 *Der Stern*, Bd. 66, Nr. 3, February 1, 1934, pp. 47; Bd. 66, Nr. 9, May 1, 1934, pp. 142–143. John Widstoe, *Göttliche vollmacht*, Kirche Jesu Christi der Heiligen der Letzten Tage, Deutsch Österreichische Mission, Berlin, 1930.

163 Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany*, pp. 103–105.

164 *Der Stern*, Bd. 71, Nr. 24, Weihnachten, 1939, p. 385.

165 Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany*, pp. 84, 86.



individuals. On the eve of the war in 1939, the number of Mormons in Germany had grown to 15,000.<sup>166</sup> This represented the largest resident Mormon population outside of North America. With the removal of the American missionaries in the late 1930s, native German missionaries were now undertaking the missionary work.<sup>167</sup> This localized missionary effort continued throughout the war realizing at least 100 baptisms per year.<sup>168</sup>

A re-evaluation of the roles played by the membership and leadership of many religious groups during the National Socialist period took place in the latter part of the twentieth century. For groups, such as the Adventists, this period proved to be divisive. Certain factions within the greater Adventist body promoted claims that the German membership and leadership collaborated with the National Socialist regime.<sup>169</sup> The Jehovah's Witnesses, one of the groups that faced extreme measures from the National Socialist state, have used this period as a rallying point to solidify their belief that the world is in fact ruled by evil, and that they truly are God's chosen agents on the Earth.

For the Mormons, a group that faced little to no state opposition, the National Socialist period presented a difficult challenge. As they were the only Anglo-American sect allowed to operate publicly during the National Socialist period, this period is quickly becoming an embarrassment for many LDS who sought, and seek a more active social role for their organization.

In answer to the challenge presented by the history of Mormonism under the Nazis a half hearted attempt has been made to present the Mormons of the period as voices of liberty challenging the National Socialist regime. Sadly, however, the overwhelming voices from the Mormons were silent. The only Mormon voices heard were those of a group of teenagers, who happened to belong to the Mormon church. The teenage voices were transferred to the greater membership as representative of the general body of Mormons during the National Socialist period rather than the lone voices they were. It may have been different if the voices were representative of the beliefs of the church or its membership, but they were not. Official Mormon policy was to not oppose the government.

Several articles and books have been devoted to the story of the Mormon youth who withstood the National Socialist regime. The group is popularly known

166 Dixon, "Mormons in the Third Reich," p. 71.

167 Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany*, pp. 91–92.

168 Dixon, "Mormons in the Third Reich," p. 74.

169 See Roland Blaich, "Religion under National Socialism: The Case of the German Adventist Church," *Central European History*, vol. 26, no. 3, pp. 255–280; Roland Blaich, "Selling Nazi Germany Abroad: The Case of Hulda Jost," *Journal of Church and State*, vol. 35, no. 4, 1993, pp. 807–830; Roland Blaich, "Health Reform and Race Hygiene: Adventists and the Biomedical Vision of the Third Reich," *Church History*, vol. 65, September 1996, pp. 425–440; Blaich, Roland, "Nazi Race Hygiene and the Adventists," *Spectrum* vol. 25, September 1996, pp. 11–23; Jack M. Patt, "Living in a Time of Trouble: German Adventists Under Nazi Rule," *Spectrum* vol. 8, March 1977, pp. 2–10.

as the Hübener group.<sup>170</sup> Helmut Hübener, an obscure 17 year-old Latter-day Saint in Hamburg, along with teenage friends Karl Heinz Schnibbe, Rudolf Wobbe, and Gerhard Duwer are the only known Mormon *widerstands kämpfer*.<sup>171</sup> Hübener and Wobbe had been members of the National Socialist party youth organizations, the *Deutsches Jungvolk*, and the *Hitler Jugend*. A third member, Schnibbe had also been a member of the *Hitler Jugend*, but was banned from the organization.<sup>172</sup> According to the court documents, Hübener was employed as a civil servant and his step-father was a member of the *Sicherheitsdienst des Reichsführers SS*, shortened to the *Sicherheitsdienst*, or *SD*.<sup>173</sup> Unlike Hübener's mother and grandparents, his step-father was not a Mormon.

As surviving members of the group retell the story, Hübener and several of his companions listened to wartime BBC broadcasts via shortwave radio. Hübener would translate the broadcasts and then use church duplication equipment to make copies of the translations. He would then leave the translated leaflets in public access areas in Hamburg. After his arrest by the German authorities, Hübener was excommunicated for his unauthorized use of church equipment. Following Hübener's arrest he was tried, convicted, and executed. Hübener was the youngest person executed under the National Socialist regime. The fate that befell Hübener was not because he was a Mormon rather it was for his engagement in political insurgency.<sup>174</sup>

The Hübener story is a human-interest story of great courage. The tragedy in this story is the way in which Hübener's personal courage has been used to create a myth in order to cover the Utah church, and its membership's inaction in Germany during the National Socialist period. Hübener has become the representative martyr for the LDS during the National Socialist period. There are great lengths taken to portray Hübener as the perfect Mormon who took conscious action against the injustices of an evil regime. Yet, Hübener's action is not the norm for Mormon activity during the National Socialist period. No official statement by any Utah church authority critical of the regime was issued during this period. While other religious leaders, and many groups issued official statements or circu-

170 Karl Heinz Schnibbe, Alan F. Keele, and Douglas F. Tobler, *The Price: The True Story of a Mormon Who Defied Hitler*, Bookcraft, Salt Lake City, 1984; Karl Heinz Schnibbe, Alan F. Keele, and Douglas F. Tobler, *When Truth Was Treason: German Youth Against Hitler*, University of Illinois Press, Urbana, 2003; Richard Lloyd Dewey, *Hübener Vs. Hitler: A Biography of Helmuth Hübener*, Academic Research Foundation/Stratford Books, Provo, 2004.

171 Annedore Leber, *Conscience in Revolt: Sixty-Four Stories of Resistance in Germany, 1933-45*, Westview Press, Boulder, 1994.

172 *Bundesarchive Stiftung Archiv der Parteien und Massenorganisationen der DDR, (SAPMO), Teil Dokumentationszentrum der Staatlichen Archivverwaltung: Dokumentation 1933-1945, Konzentrationslager und Haftanstalten (KL/Hafta)(1933-1990), Vereinigung der Verfolgten des Naziregimes, Urteilsammlung, DY/55.*

173 Leber, *Conscience in Revolt*, p. 8.

174 For a brief discussion see Dixon, "Mormons in the Third Reich."

lars in opposition, the LDS authorities were silent. Only in recent history when the lack of activity by the Utah church leadership during the National Socialist period became apparent was a *widerstands kämpfer* sought.

#### E. THE MORMONS AFTER THE WAR 1945–1990

During the war Mormons found themselves as both Allied and Axis combatants, and prisoners of war. American Mormons were allowed to hold religious services while interned in German POW camps.<sup>175</sup> With the end of the war in 1945, many Mormons found themselves as members of the occupation troops in post-war Germany.<sup>176</sup> In Frankfurt, Berlin and other German cities under American occupation the Mormon members of the occupation forces continued to proselyte using army materials, and often favoured their German membership.<sup>177</sup> There were several complaints from German citizens to the commanders of the occupation forces that American Mormon troops were favouring the German Mormons. The war had left branches in the western occupation zones in disarray. Several leaders in the branches had supported the National Socialist regime and this had created a great degree of confusion and apostasy among the general membership.<sup>178</sup> The German Mormons in diaspora had also initiated minor changes within their churches. It was claimed that the lack of direct oversight from Salt Lake City had allowed for deviation from the proscribed rules.<sup>179</sup>

Following the war, the Mormons' German missions would become divided between the four occupation zones of the victors. The Mormons' East German Mission encompassed most of the *Sowjetische Besatzungszone (SBZ)*. Parts of the East German Mission also extended into the British, French, and American occupied zones. We are uncertain how many Mormons actually lived in the *SBZ* immediately following the war.<sup>180</sup> We do have some indication from a conference held in Berlin in the fall of 1947. The Karlshorst based SMAD, the *Sowjetische*

175 Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany*, pp. 118–119.

176 There were German Mormons in the Pittsburg, California POW camp. There also appears to have been a few conversions of other Germans while there. See Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany*, pp. 138–139.

177 The government of the GDR claimed that *RIAS*, (Radio in the American Sector) Berlin, was founded by the Mormons. See "Bericht Legale Möglichkeiten der Informationsbeschaffung, Berlin, June 1, 1965, *BStU, MfS HA XX4/1051*, pp. 183–189, pp. 187–189. Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany*, pp. 120–122.

178 Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany*, p. 151.

179 Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany*, p. 152. See also "Reports Tell of Saints in Europe," *Deseret News, Church News Section*, November 24, 1945, pp. 5, 9.

180 Douglas Tobler states that in 1949 around 4,000 Mormons were in the *SBZ*. Douglas Tobler, "Before the Wall Fell: Mormons in the German Democratic Republic, 1945–89," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought*, vol. 25, no. 4, 1992, p. 18.