

BX
8670.1
.Sc59s
1984
copy 2

the 
price
the true story of a Mormon
who defied Hitler

Karl-Heinz Schnibbe

With
Alan F. Keele
Douglas F. Tobler

Bookcraft
Salt Lake City, Utah
1984

were German citizens, after all, and some were veterans of World War I, and they were important people with friends in high places, and so forth.

But one day, on the way home from work, I saw some SS and SA officers loading a group of Jewish people onto a truck. They must have been some of the relatively few Orthodox Jews in Germany, for the men wore dark hats and coats and looked like rabbis. This was not long before the infamous "Crystal Night" in November, 1938, when synagogues were burned and Jewish places of business were vandalized (the broken glass on the streets gave the night its name). Here, too, a rather large crowd of curious citizens—perhaps a hundred or so—had gathered, some laughing and applauding the SS and SA.

I couldn't believe what I saw. I had heard that Jews were being mistreated, but this was the first time I actually realized what was happening. Even the old men and women and the little children were being pushed and kicked and spat upon and mocked by the troopers.

I watched for just a moment, and then, sickened, I ran weeping from the scene and went home and told my mother what I had witnessed. "Where were they taking them?" I asked.

"I don't know, either," Mom said.

"That's impossible! How can they do that?"

And Mother replied, "They can. If you're smart, just forget what you saw and leave it alone."

Not long afterwards, we began to notice that our family doctor, Dr. Caro, who also happened to be Jewish, was being boycotted by the government medical insurance office. Whenever we went there to get our medical insurance voucher and we told them our doctor was Dr. Caro, they began to give us funny looks and to say, "Don't you have any other doctor?"

Helmuth Huebener

Despite my bad experiences in the Hitler Youth and my father's fine antifascist example, I doubt that I would have become an active member of a resistance movement if I had not known Helmuth Huebener. Not that I would have despised the Nazis less—but I may not have hit upon a particular plan of action like the one Helmuth had in mind. On the other hand, it may have been partially due to my intense dislike of the Nazis that Helmuth was himself moved further toward antifascism; I don't know. I think we influenced each other. I know that I told Helmuth about an experience I had in 1938 which left me totally shocked and horrified.

I was an apprentice by that time, painting and decorating homes in the rich sections of Hamburg, where many Jewish people lived. They were very kind to me, and I occasionally got into political discussions with them. I remember one Jewish lady in particular, Frau Doktor Frank, who told me that she thought the Jews were in no real danger. They

And then Dr. Caro simply disappeared. One day he was in his office as usual—and the next day there was a sign on the door reading “Closed.” That was all. He was the doctor who had delivered me into the world. He was a gentle, fine man, who didn’t hesitate for a minute to come when people in the neighborhood needed him. He had been a dear friend to our family—and now he was gone. Frau Doktor Frank also disappeared shortly thereafter. I think she may have been able to get out of Germany in time and emigrate to the United States, but if so, she would have been among the last to escape.

I was by this time, as I said, an apprentice decorator and painter. At age fourteen, near the end of March, 1938, a few weeks before leaving school, I went down to the government career advisement bureau. “What do you want to be?” the counsellor asked me.

“Well, I wanted to be a sailor, but my dad thinks that’s an immoral life and he wants me to learn a trade. Since I still like the sea and ships, I’d like to be a ship’s plumber or a marine steamfitter or something like that.”

The counsellor said, “Hmm. I don’t think we have any openings in those areas right now. What else can you do? What’s your favorite subject in school?”

“Art,” I told him, and he sent me home to get some pictures that I’d drawn with colored pencils. When he saw them he said, “You don’t want to be a plumber; you want to be an interior painter—a decorator.”

When he said that, I was immediately excited by the idea. He gave me the name of a firm—“F. Georg Suse, Painting Contractors”—where I could apply to become an apprentice under the master painter, Johannes Ehlers.

Because it was evening by then, I went to see Mr. Ehlers at home. Mr. Ehlers was very brusque with me. That’s the

way masters treated their apprentices in those days, I found out. They even boxed their ears occasionally. He barked at me for a while, and then he looked at my drawings. When he saw them, he said, “April first, 7:30 A.M., at the shop.”

“Don’t you want to see my school grades?” I asked, holding them out to him.

“Not interested. That’s fine. You be there.” I had the job; I was a *Dekorationsmalerlehrling*.

Once a week, on Tuesdays, I went to the vocational school in the House of Youth in the Museumsstrasse in Altona, where I learned theories, such as how to make bids and calculate materials, how to figure perspective for lettering, and how paint is manufactured. On Thursdays I went to the Nagelsweg, where the painting and decorating guild had a big six-floor apartment house that was kept empty just for us to practice on. The instructor, Herr Baehre, would come in with a large chisel, make big gouges and scratches on the door with it, and say, “I want this door perfect, beautiful.”

I didn’t start working on doors right away, of course. Being an apprentice in Germany in those days meant learning a trade literally from the ground up. For the first four or five months my job was to clean out the shop and to make deliveries to the eight or so journeymen working on jobs all over the city. After quitting time I chopped firewood for the boss’s wife and I ran errands for her, too, such as grocery shopping.

As an apprentice I worked fifty to fifty-five hours a week, and I remember very clearly that during the first year I was paid exactly four marks eighty pfennig a week. I gave my mom 4.20 for groceries and for my white painter’s clothes and I kept sixty pfennig for pocket money. The second year my pay was increased to 7.20 a week, and the

third year to 9.60. The journeymen, by comparison, made just a little over one mark per hour, or about fifty marks for a forty-eight-hour week.

I was an apprentice for three years, after which I took the very difficult practical and theoretical journeyman's examination. Less than a year later, in February of 1942, my friends Helmuth and Rudi and I were arrested by the Gestapo.

We were, as I've said, friends from the St. Georg Branch. Because the Church kept us involved, almost all of my friends were other Latter-day Saints. My really close friends, however, were Helmuth Huebener and then Rudi Wobbe. They're the ones who often came to my house; and they're the ones with whom I went swimming or to the movies.

Helmuth was, simply stated, the smartest one in the group. He had tremendous talent. He could grab a pencil and whip out caricatures of Churchill and Hitler that were absolutely brilliant. And he was a natural leader—he got along well with people and everyone liked him.

He lived with his grandmother Sudrow and her husband, both good Latter-day Saints, and he was their favorite, I believe. They were too poor to spoil him, but they doted on him. Helmuth had two half-brothers, Hans and Gerhard Kunkel, who were about seven and five years older, respectively. He lived at the Sudrows', first because his mother worked a lot and later because she was remarried to a zealous Nazi named Hugo Huebener, whom none of the boys could stand. Before Hugo legally adopted him, Helmuth's name had been Helmuth Guddat, his mother's maiden name, or Helmuth Kunkel, her first husband's name.

Because Helmuth was a year younger than I, and because he went to the "*Oberbau*" or advanced track at school,

he began his vocational training about two years later than I did. Helmuth went into the Hamburg city social welfare department, into what was called the "*obere Verwaltungslaufbahn*," the upper administrative track. He was more of a white-collar apprentice, so to speak. If he'd been from a family with status and money he'd have certainly gone to the university, for he had the intellectual capability. He was very widely read and he loved to discuss things with me and Rudi and with adult members of the Church, as well as with people at his place of employment.

A few of the adult members at church remember him as being a bit arrogant, but I think it was because they resented—as any adult German at the time would have—the idea of a young person asking them difficult questions and pointing out flaws in their logic. Especially in political matters, where our Church members tended to be a bit naive, Helmuth enjoyed engaging adults in discussions, and picking their arguments apart if they were wrong. He enjoyed showing off his intellectual and debating abilities. But his intention was never to embarrass people. He only wanted to make them more careful about what they said—to make them back up their opinions more rigorously with logic and evidence. In our Sunday School, priesthood and MIA classes, Helmuth was the one who knew the answers. He had studied the gospel and he knew it very well for a person of his age.

We talked about the Nazi party and about Communism and the revolution. We had noticed the great emphasis on things military, and Helmuth said very early on, "Where can all this militarism be taking us—this Army Day, Navy Day, Air Force Day business? It can only mean one thing: war is inevitable. And these Hitler Youth uniforms look just like the military ones. Obviously they're preparing us to be

soldiers, too." Helmuth used to say, "These Nazis are not *Parteigenossen* (party participants); they are *Parteigeniesser* (party partakers)."

Rudi was younger than both of us. His mother was a widow. Theirs was a good LDS family, and I spent a lot of time at their home on Sundays between our meetings. Rudi became an apprentice *Schlosser*, a mechanic or machinist, someone who works with metals. He, too, was not particularly fond of the Hitler Youth. He was riding his bicycle one day when a Hitler Youth patrol tried to stop him because he didn't salute their flag. He just rammed into one of them, knocked him over, and pedaled away. Since they didn't know who he was, they never caught him.

I hated those stupid flag patrols, too. Whenever they came along, everyone had to stand at attention and raise his arm in salute. I always turned a corner or stood in an alley or an apartment entrance if I could, and a lot of other people did, too, for Hamburg never did go completely over to the Nazis. There were too many Communists and Social Democrats there; besides, the place was just too cosmopolitan and independent, since it was an ancient Hanseatic free city, with close ties to England. Being aware of these things, the Nazis made Karl Kaufmann the *Gauleiter* or district administrator there, since he was a sophisticated cosmopolitan himself, not a typical Nazi thug like some of the other *Gauleiters* around the *Reich*.

Naturally our increasingly sour attitude toward the Nazis and Helmuth's outspoken political discussions with Church members did not find favor with everyone. Some of the branch members came through as Nazi sympathizers. It was even suggested that we start our meetings with the Hitler salute and sing the national anthem. Also that someone bring a radio so that the branch members could listen to Hitler's Sunday radio broadcasts together, with the

door locked so that no one could leave during the speech. All these things were opposed, however, by people like my dad and Otto Berndt, who was a counsellor in the branch presidency at the time and who would eventually be the district president. "Don't you start that," Berndt said in response to such suggestions. "This is a church of God, not a political meeting." For the most part his view prevailed, but some time before the war a sign went up on the meeting-house reading Jews Not Allowed to Enter.

Of course we all knew that the meetings were being monitored, and we felt that some displays of patriotism were good insurance, such as the posting on the bulletin board of letters to and from LDS soldiers serving in the military. Once I saw at the branch some Hitler Youth members whom I recognized from my own days with the Hitler Youth. I said to them, "Hey, what are you guys doing here? You're not interested in our Church!" They had come to make a disturbance, but they left quietly a little later. Perhaps they lost their courage, or perhaps they saw one of our leaders in his uniform. I don't know.

Even after the war started in 1939, and as late as 1941, I observed that many members of our branch supported the regime, albeit somewhat nervously. "Well, we are fighting against Communism," they would say, "and we have to support the powers that be, as the twelfth article of faith says. And besides, our boys are out there on the battlefield." But at the end of 1941, when the United States came into the war after Pearl Harbor, many of the German Saints began to predict the defeat of Germany because of the Book of Mormon prophecies concerning the fate of those "gentile nations" which fight against "Zion." And after Stalingrad and other major defeats, this pessimistic attitude among the Latter-day Saints became even more prevalent.

I do not wish to leave the impression that any of the

Saints were evil people. They were not. Caught up in the dilemmas of the day, they perhaps became confused on the issues, but basically they were good people. And we had a fine branch. Brother Soellner was a dedicated branch president, a natural leader of old and young alike, who made things happen. Under his leadership we enlarged the branch meetinghouse and installed a baptismal font, and he made sure there were always cake and hot chocolate for the volunteer workers. An executive in a laundry detergent factory, he had workers under him there, so he knew how to organize people and get things done.

We had an active choir, which met on Fridays, and some of us younger people sang in it. I enjoyed it very much. In addition, my father and I were assigned five or six member families to visit, and we did it every month without fail. Our families lived in widely scattered parts of town; since no one had a phone, we simply had to walk to their homes, hoping they'd be there. If they weren't, we'd come back later. If they were, my father would give them a long lesson, forty-five minutes to an hour each, and then, invariably, the family would ask me to close the meeting with a prayer. Frankly, I didn't exactly enjoy that last aspect of our Church activity!

Relief Society and priesthood meetings were on Mondays, Mutual Improvement Association was on Wednesdays. On Sunday morning from ten until twelve we had Sunday School; at seven in the evening, we held sacrament meeting.

It was during one of these sacrament meetings in the summer of 1941 that Helmuth leaned over and whispered to me, "Come to my house tonight; I want you to hear something. But wait until after nine, when my grandparents are in bed."

Recruits for the Cause

When I arrived at Helmuth's grandparents' apartment in the Louisenweg, I found Helmuth hunched over a small radio, a beautiful little Rola which his brother Gerhard had brought back from occupied France. Helmuth had pried open the cabinet in which the radio had been locked away when his brother left for the front, and had rigged up an antenna for the radio and had plugged it in. Now we sat together in the darkened room with the dim light of the dial illuminating our faces, the volume turned way down and our ears next to the speaker. Through the wall in the next room his old grandfolks were snoring away. Then, at exactly 10:00 P.M., we heard the first four notes of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, the famous V-for-Victory code that had become the trademark of the British Broadcasting Corporation. "Die BBC London sendet Nachrichten in deutscher Sprache," the voice said. It was the daily German-language news report beamed

at the Continent in shortwave. The Nazis often tried to jam such broadcasts, but on this night it was crystal clear.

Just a few weeks before, on June 22, 1941, the German armed forces had launched their invasion of the Soviet Union, an operation which Hitler had code-named "Barbarossa." The official German military press releases about Barbarossa printed in the papers and broadcast on German radio stations boasted of great successes in Russia. According to the *Reichssender Hamburg*, the number of enemy soldiers killed and captured was phenomenal, but little or no mention was ever made of German losses. However, the BBC shortwave newscast gave Allied and Axis casualty figures, and there were enormous discrepancies between the British and the German accounts. "That can't be," Helmuth whispered to me, "somebody's lying!" And then I remembered other recent discussions with Helmuth at the church. He had said, on several occasions, that the *Wehrmachtsbericht*, the military press releases, were lies.

"Do you believe them?" he asked us.

"Why not?" we replied. "Why shouldn't we believe them?"

"Because they're lying, that's why," Helmuth retorted.

I had also heard that his friends at work called him "the man with connections," and now I suddenly realized what his source of information was. He must have been listening to the BBC for several weeks. "Do you realize that the Germans have reported the sinking of the aircraft carrier *Ark Royal* three separate times?" Helmuth hissed. "I've been keeping track.

"Look," he continued, "it just doesn't make sense. We march into Russia and kill so-and-so many of their soldiers. But they have guns. They're shooting back! I mean, put two and two together and you'll see that we're going to have some casualties on our side, too! And these British reports

have a lot more details than ours, and they give their own casualties, not just the enemy's. Our news reports sound like a lot of boasting—a lot of propaganda—and theirs sound more realistic. I'm convinced they're telling the truth and we're lying!"

The broadcast ended at 10:30; I slipped out of the house and went home. But when I saw Helmuth next, I said, "Hey, if you're listening again, can I come and listen some more?" He said, "Sure."

That's how it started.

But there were some problems. Although I was already seventeen, my parents were still quite strict with me and they wanted me home by nine-thirty. Yet they liked Helmuth and trusted him, and they probably trusted me more when they knew I was with him. Still, there were times when they wouldn't let me stay out that late—we often had air raid warnings and had to go into the shelters—or they were afraid I'd "wear out my welcome" with the Sudrows. Knowing that Helmuth had learned shorthand at the office and that he had already made some notes on the casualty figures, I ventured a suggestion: "Look, if there's something very interesting . . . why don't you take some notes on it so that I don't miss anything when I can't come?"

"Okay," he said.

This must have been near the end of July, 1941. Soon after this Helmuth surprised me with a small stack of handwritten leaflets. "Don't you think everybody in Hamburg is entitled to know the truth?" he said. "They don't all have a radio like this one."

"Well," I replied, not quite realizing what they were for, "what about them?"

"Telephone booths!" Helmuth said. "Mailboxes! Apartment houses! I've written on the leaflets, 'This is a chain letter, so please pass it on!'"

The leaflets were very simple at first. There was some information from the BBC and a provocative statement such as "Do you know they are lying to you?" or "Hitler is a murderer," or "Don't believe the Nazi party." Later on they were to become more creative, containing original poems and imaginative essays. They were eventually disguised as official Nazi announcements with a swastika on the letterhead—and they grew in length and in the number of copies per leaflet.

Helmuth gave me six or seven of these first handwritten leaflets to distribute. I placed them in mailboxes and phone booths, and I even remember putting some into the pockets of coats hanging in the opera house. But I made sure that I never took any home, particularly after I foolishly showed one to Otto Schulz, our Nazi neighbor, and he said, "You stupid jerk, where did you get that? You burn that immediately, and don't ever bring one of those around here again! Do you want to get us all killed?" Thereafter, when I had any leaflets left over, I was always careful to burn them before I went home. This habit may have saved my family from even more problems, for when I was arrested the Gestapo searched our apartment very carefully.

At church on Sundays, Helmuth would sometimes say, "Hey, we haven't seen each other for a long time. Why don't you come over and visit me? Let's do something together!" That was our signal. Then I knew that Helmuth had written a new set of leaflets and wanted me to help distribute them.

At first, Helmuth had something for me about every two weeks. Then, as we got more and more caught up in the project, as Helmuth became more and more obsessed with the idea of disseminating the truth, and as our activity took on something like missionary zeal, he made a new pamphlet every week, and then twice a week. Altogether, in the eight or nine months that we distributed them, he must have writ-

ten about sixty different leaflets. He began using a typewriter, at first with carbon paper, and then in conjunction with the branch duplicating machine.

Some of the titles were: Hitler Bears the Entire Guilt; Hitler the Murderer; Down with Hitler; Who is Lying?; They Are Not Telling You Everything; Where is Rudolf Hess?; The Voice of Conscience; The Struggle Against the Racially Inferior Bolsheviks; The Nazi *Reichsmarschall*; I Have Calculated For Everything; Victorious Advances in Glorious Battles of Extermination; 1942—The Decisive Year; The Fuehrer's Speech.

Because of his stenographic and typing skills, Helmuth was a clerk to President Soellner, who needed someone to type letters to the soldiers in the field and to do other secretarial work. Soellner gave Helmuth a key to the branch meetinghouse in the Besenbinderhof and Helmuth received permission to take a typewriter—Soellner's own personal portable at first, and later the branch Remington—and work at home. Helmuth often said, "Our only real crime is taking this paper from the branch."

One day in September or October of 1941, when I went to Helmuth's, I was surprised to find Rudi Wobbe there. Apparently he had been involved all along, but because Helmuth had been so careful, for several months neither of us had known about the involvement of the other. Rudi was fifteen at the time, one year younger than Helmuth and two years younger than I. Helmuth had recruited him partly because he lived in Rothenburgsort, a Communist neighborhood known for its anti-Nazi sentiment, where Helmuth wanted many leaflets distributed. "As long as you're both here," Helmuth said, "I think we ought to agree on what we'll do if we get caught. I'm sure they're head-hunting for us by now. Anybody who gets caught takes the blame for everybody. Okay?"



From left, Rudi Wobbe, Helmuth Huebener, Karl-Heinz Schnibbe. Taken about 1941.

"Okay!"

"Don't talk to anybody," Helmuth said. "It's too dangerous. Not to your parents, not to anybody! At church we'll just shake hands and say, 'How's it going? Everything okay?' 'Fine.' And that's all." I wish Helmuth had taken his own advice better.

Though he was certainly not reckless, Helmuth was actually the most confident, perhaps even the cockiest of the group, and I was the most cautious. But none of us had any illusions, really. We all knew about Buchenwald and the other KZs, concentration camps. People commonly said, "Watch out! You'd better shut up or you'll get sent to a KZ!" And after all, I'd already seen those Jewish people loaded onto a truck by the SS and SA, and I remembered very well the disappearance of Dr. Caro.

And then there was Heinrich Worbs. He was a Latter-day Saint from St. Georg who'd been sent to the concentration camp at Neuengamme for making a disparaging remark about a statue in honor of "another Nazi butcher." We knew he had been arrested, even when we started our campaign in the summer of 1941, but sometime in December of 1941 or January of 1942, he returned, a ruined man. He had signed an agreement not to talk about it, but since he knew he would die soon he told Otto Berndt all about it. Helmuth also talked with him about the camp. Worbs told them that he'd been kept in stocks with freezing water dripping on his hands. Then a guard would knock off the ice with a rubber hose "to keep your hands warm!" He showed his bruises to Otto, who was absolutely shocked by what he saw. Worbs died about six weeks after he was released from Neuengamme.

There was also the case of Brother Salomon Schwarz, a Latter-day Saint in Hamburg who looked Jewish and was generally held to be a Jew, even though he did not descend

from known Jewish ancestors and had been raised a Protestant. It was partially to discourage his visits to the branch at St. Georg that the sign reading Jews Not Allowed to Enter went up. Salomon was welcomed at the Barmbek Branch. However, when he tried to get a certificate proving he was not Jewish, he was arrested by the Gestapo (for not wearing the yellow Star of David with the word "Jude" written on it in black) and placed in the ghetto in the Grindel area of Hamburg. He eventually disappeared. He probably died in the Theresienstadt concentration camp.

People with gallows humor were saying, "*Koepfe muessen rollen fuer den Sieg*" (Heads must roll for victory) in a wry take-off on the railroad's propaganda slogan: "*Raeder muessen rollen fuer den Sieg*" (Wheels must roll for victory). After a law was passed in 1936 authorizing the death penalty for "enemies of the state," anything could get a person killed, and the death penalty was enforced so often in those days and for the smallest infractions that we witnessed filmed executions almost every time we saw a newsreel at the movies. Handbills all over the city announced more and more hangings and beheadings. Human life became a very cheap commodity in Nazi Germany. So it was no secret in Germany in 1941 that illegal listening, *Schwarz hoeren*, and antifascist propaganda activities were capital offenses. Even the BBC warned us about this, too, in a way. They reported about the camps and about the hangings and beheadings.

Every time I went to Helmuth's to listen I got butterflies in my stomach and then diarrhea. When I first distributed the leaflets I was very nervous and scared. I felt as though I had a package of TNT in my pocket. I moved very fast—zip, zip—and then disappeared. Later on I relaxed a bit, and then I actually began to enjoy it. Our activity was part game and part adventure, but it was mostly deadly serious. I had

never been one to engage in pranks, and this was far more than a mere prank. We wanted people to know the truth.

We were not so naive as to think we could bring down the regime, but we hoped that with the chain letter idea, a "chain reaction" of discussion would begin and then more and more people would get angry or at least nervous and do something themselves to resist Hitler. When I spoke with Helmuth I suddenly realized that Nazism was not merely a lot of minor annoyances and isolated infringements upon certain peoples' rights, but a thoroughgoing system of murderous, lying evil. Helmuth had inspired me to fight against this evil, and I saw no reason why we couldn't inspire others to do the same, even though Hitler's star was still rising; Germany was still victorious in war.

We knew that the Nazis were not totally immune to world opinion and to public pressure from within Germany. We had all experienced the euthanasia campaign when the Nazis had begun to kill handicapped people. They had shown us films in school and had taken us on field trips to the hospitals, trying to convince us how humane this was. But we remembered that the outraged opposition of one Catholic bishop, Bishop Galen of Muenster, had been sufficient to make the Nazis cease euthanasia. We felt then, and I still feel, that the pen is mightier than the sword, and that public opinion can do wonders, even in a dictatorship, if the people have courage.

Because Helmuth felt so strongly about this, I've always suspected that he may have attempted—perhaps successfully—to engage others in our activity, just as he had Rudi and me. I know he invited some of the other youth from our branch to listen to the radio, but I don't think they ever went. Perhaps I'm wrong; if there had been others, they would no doubt have stepped forward by now to receive the

recognition and financial benefits of having been a resistance fighter. But perhaps they had reasons not to step forward, or perhaps they were killed in the bombing raids or at the front. I simply don't know how many people Helmuth tried to recruit. I do know, however, that his attempts to recruit new workers to our cause was to be the fatal step that led to our undoing.

One person I do know about was Gerhard Duewer, an eighteen-year-old fellow apprentice of Helmuth's whom I first saw when we were taken to Berlin for trial in August of 1942. I have since learned that Helmuth recruited Duewer at the *Bieberhaus*, their place of employment, to take a few pamphlets and show them to friends. Duewer claimed at the trial that he had gone once to Helmuth's room to listen to the BBC, but that the broadcast had been jammed that night. Duewer was a fairly reliable ally, even if only involved with Helmuth for a short time and even though he proved not hard to break under interrogation.

However, when Helmuth approached Werner Kranz, yet another apprentice at the *Bieberhaus*, and attempted to persuade him to translate a handbill into French for distribution to French prisoners of war working in Hamburg, he was observed by Heinrich Mohns, a fellow employee who also happened to be the Nazi "Betriebsobmann," the overseer of loyalty and patriotism in the office. When Huebener and Duewer were out of the room, Mohns questioned Kranz about them. Next Mohns called in Duewer, who foolishly happened to have a leaflet in his pocket. Mohns then contacted the Gestapo.

The next day, Thursday, February 5, 1942, Gestapo Commissioner Wangemann and Officer Muessener arrived at the *Bieberhaus* to question Helmuth and Gerhard, afterward searching their homes. Duewer, of course, had been forewarned by his previous encounter with Mohns, but he had

not warned Helmuth, possibly under Mohns's instructions. At Duewer's home, therefore, the agents found nothing incriminating, but at Helmuth's they discovered the radio, a pile of assorted leaflets—among them at least twenty-nine different ones, for they listed them all carefully—some notebooks with manuscripts of handbills along with some shorthand notes, and the Remington typewriter with seven unfinished carbon copies of a leaflet still in place in the roller.

At 5:00 P.M. on that Thursday, February 5, Helmuth and Gerhard were formally arrested. On the same day, three more pamphlets were turned in to the party block leader by a Frau Bertha Floegel, a Herr Schwedlick, and a Herr Frehse. All three leaflets were found within one block of Helmuth's house in the Louisenweg. (Surprisingly, however, relatively few leaflets had found their way into Gestapo hands before this time.)

I have since read the transcripts of Helmuth's interrogations and I know that he signed the first of several confessions only after two days of torture. Even then he mentioned me and Rudi only in passing, describing us more as curious friends than as fellow conspirators. At the time, of course, I didn't even know that Helmuth had been arrested. I hadn't seen him much over the Christmas holidays, and only a few times in January. Three days after his arrest, on Sunday, February 8, 1942, I went to church as usual, not even thinking it strange that Helmuth wasn't there. Although he seldom missed church, I simply assumed he was ill. Then, at the conclusion of the evening sacrament meeting, President Soellner stood up and said, "Brothers and sisters, something very tragic has happened. Please stay for a few minutes after this meeting. I have a special announcement to make."

"Well," I thought, "somebody must have been excommunicated or something."

At the special meeting a few minutes later President Soellner announced: "A member of our branch, Helmuth Huebener, has been arrested by the Gestapo. I cannot give any details because my information is very sketchy—but I know that it is political. That's all." But that was not quite all. President Soellner was apparently angry. "How could he have done that with my typewriter!" he said. "I trusted him fully!"

I felt as though I'd been hit with a club. The blood left my head, and my heart felt like it was about to leap out of my chest. I had never been so scared. I was literally sick. I looked at Rudi and he looked at me, his face pale, but we couldn't speak.

"What?" some other members of the branch were saying around me. "Helmuth? That's impossible!" I didn't wait for Rudi to leave; I just wanted to go home. I expected to be arrested myself, but I fervently hoped that Helmuth would remember our pact—that whoever got caught would take all the blame.

In my childhood I had become very interested and involved in amateur theatricals, and what little acting ability I had developed then I fully needed now, for I didn't want my parents to think anything was wrong. I couldn't tell them anything. But fortunately, they didn't talk about it much. People had become close-mouthed during the Nazi years. If anyone talked too much about anything, someone else might think he knew something. All my parents said was, "I wonder what he did."



Karl-Heinz shortly before his arrest, age seventeen.

Guests of the Gestapo

All through Sunday night, Monday, Monday night, I was afraid they'd come for me. But it didn't happen until Tuesday, February 10, right at noon. I was working in an empty apartment with a fellow journeyman painter and paperhanger named Willi Vorbeck—and there was a knock.

"I'll get it," I said, with a certain intuitive foreboding, and there they were: Officers Wangemann and Muessener, as it turned out, in their leather overcoats and their soft-brimmed hats. One flipped open his badge: "*Geheime Staatspolizei. Bist du Karl-Heinz Schnibbe?*"

"Ja."

"*Weisst du, warum wir hier sind?*"

"*Jawohl.*"

"*Mitkommen!*"

I think I said yes to their question whether I knew why they were there because they looked so mean. I felt that I should be agreeable if I wanted to avoid a beating.

"Can I change clothes?" I asked.

"*Nein.*"

"What's going on?" Willi asked.

"Never mind!"

"Don't worry about it, Willi," I said blithely. "See you later."

We went downstairs and got into the back seat of a Mercedes waiting at the curb. Wangemann sat on one side and Muessener on the other, with me in the middle.

"Where do you live?" the driver asked.

"*Rossausweg 32.*"

"Where's that?"

"*Hohenfelde.*"

"*Oh, ja.*"

When we arrived at my house, no one was home. Mom had gone to the dentist, Dad was working, and the others were away on various errands. I let us in with my key. "Just stay put," they said. Then they began to search.

"What's this?"

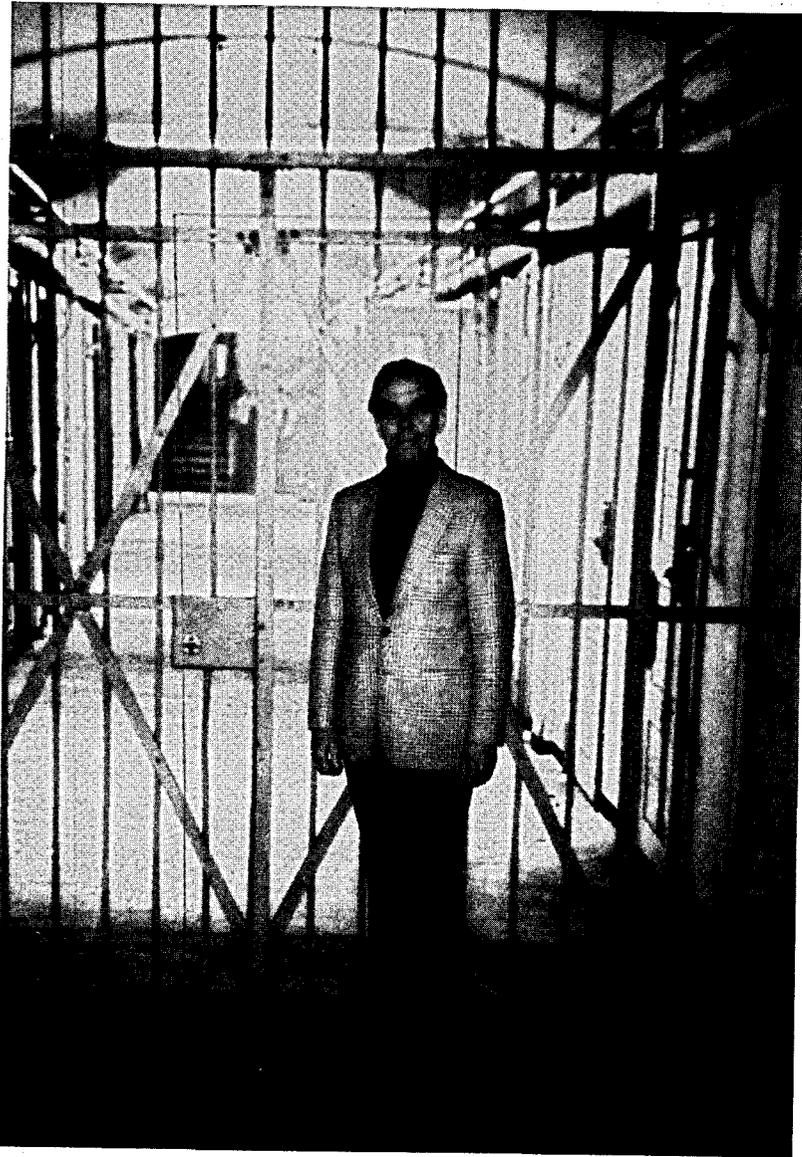
"That's our bookcase."

They grabbed the books and looked in them one by one, and then they looked behind it.

"Where's your bed?"

"Right there." And they looked under the mattress.

This lasted for about an hour. Naturally they didn't find anything, since I had never kept any leaflets at home. Eventually I was put back into the car. Now the evil spirit I had felt from the minute they showed their badges got stronger until I felt it would destroy me. The spirit I felt was unbelievable. These were evil men, on an evil mission. They drove me to Kolafu, which is an abbreviation for the words *Konzentrationslager Fuhlsbuettel*—the Fuhlsbuettel concentration camp. This was the Gestapo prison for political prisoners, but it was operated, like the other KZs, by the SS. Actually,



Karl-Heinz visiting the Gestapo prison at Fuhlsbuettel in 1984. This is now a memorial museum.

it was just one wing of a normal prison, the biggest prison in Hamburg.

A large gate opened, we drove in, and the gate closed behind us. I got out of the car and was led into a kind of administration building. There I was asked my name, and then I was told to stand against a wall. I walked over toward it when—pow!—I got a hard kick in the behind and someone screamed, "Run!" Then I reached the wall and stood facing them. Pow!—another kick. I had no idea of the procedures there, but I learned fast. Each prisoner had to run everywhere and always face the wall, with his nose almost touching it.

Within a few minutes they had taken me to a cell. One other prisoner was in there; I recall that he was Dutch. He said he'd refused to work for the Germans. He had been there for ten days or so, and they had beaten him badly. He looked very sick. After a couple of hours, one of those smartly uniformed SS men came in with his nightstick and his Lueger pistol hanging from his belt and a large key ring in his hand. The minute the door opened the Dutchman jumped up, leaped to the back of the cell, and cried "*Schutzhaftgefangener* So-and-so." I was supposed to do the same, I learned by means of a savage kick. "*Schutzhaftgefangener* Schnibbe," I cried out from then on. "Prisoner Schnibbe, in protective custody!" *Protective for whom?* I always wondered.

"Why are you here?" the SS man demanded.

"I don't know."

Pow!—the key ring hit me in the face. "Do you know now?"

"No, sir, I mean, yes, sir!"

"Why didn't you say so?"

I was sure that the cell was bugged and that they were trying to get me to confess right then and there. After two or

three beatings, I finally said, "I allegedly listened to an enemy broadcast."

Pow!—"What do you mean, 'allegedly'? Did you or didn't you? You know, we've got your friend. And he sang plenty."

Then he left me alone for a while. But about every twenty minutes or so, the door would fly open and an SS man would saunter in, lift the toilet lid with his key ring, look around, and then leave. It was a kind of psychological torture.

Now that I was finally locked up and left alone for a time with the light out, a great weariness came over me. My nerves, which had stretched until I thought they would snap, began to relax a bit and to calm down. The darkness was comforting, somehow. I thought of home and of my parents, especially my mother. *They must be terribly worried about me*, I thought. Then the entire miserable situation hit me and I cried quietly into my pillow for a long time.

I had no idea what time it was when I finally stopped crying. I was weary in both body and soul, but I couldn't sleep. A thousand thoughts and worries flashed through my mind and kept me awake. I wondered how much anxiety and suffering this little cell had seen. My eyes were burning with fatigue, but still I couldn't sleep. Suddenly the door was slammed open again, the bright lights hit us brutally in the eyes, and we had to get up and run to the wall and tell the guard our names.

"I do hope I didn't wake you," the SS officer sneered at us. Then the door slammed again and it was dark. *What sadists!* I thought. *How could anyone with a soul and a heart do these things?* Little did I know that I would have to endure such treatment for seven years.

Early in the morning, and almost every day for about

three weeks, I was taken from my cell, placed aboard a police van—*die grüne Minna* (the green lady) as we called it—and taken, chained to a group of other prisoners, into town to Gestapo headquarters on the third floor of the main police station in the Kaiser Wilhelmstrasse. The *paternoster*, a kind of slow-moving elevator without doors which you just stepped onto after saying your prayers, was boarded up at the third floor and there was an SS guard at the big barricade near the stairs on that floor. It was a world with its own rules.

It was here that I saw Helmuth again, in a large room that we prisoners referred to as "the hall of mirrors" because it was so long. Painted a brilliant, glossy white, the room was brightly illuminated. About sixty men had to stand there with their noses to the wall until they were called in for questioning. As I entered the hall of mirrors, I saw Helmuth. He just happened to be near the door, in the only place I could have seen him at all, and he gave me a kind of grin, which I caught out of the corner of my eye as I went in. So I knew that he hadn't talked, and I decided to admit to as little as possible. But I could also see that he'd been beaten. His face looked very puffy and bruised.

Standing in this white room for hours on end, we often lost our equilibrium and fell over. As soon as someone did, a sadistic SS man would kick him up again. When this happened to me, they said, "So, you wanted to bring Germany to the fall—and now you're the one who's falling, right?" I learned to close my eyes a little bit and concentrate and then I could stand up. And I prayed. I prayed every ten minutes, at least. "Heavenly Father, help me out of this mess! Help me have the strength to endure!"

About a week after my arrest, I saw Rudi in the hall of mirrors, and I assume Duerwer was there all along, but I had never seen him and didn't even know about him until later. I

couldn't really turn my head to nod at Rudi or Helmuth, lest an SS man throw one of their heavy glass ashtrays at me, which was their method of enforcing their rules.

Eventually I was taken for interrogation into a smaller room with Wangemann, Muessener, and a stenographer. "I tried to listen once," I lied, "but it wasn't clear and I couldn't hear anything." Pow! "Didn't get a clear reception." Pow! But I stuck to my story, despite the punches and the kicks.

During one of these interrogation sessions they asked me something different. "Did you steal some bicycle tires from the attic of the house where you were working when you were arrested?"

"No."

"We didn't think so, but it was blamed on you."

As I thought about it—and I had plenty of time to think about it—I decided it must have been good old Willi Vorbeck, the journeyman I was working with when I was arrested. I had provided him with a perfect cover-up and he was not slow to take advantage of it.

Surprisingly, this question came as a refreshing change, for most of their questions were designed to find out who was behind our group. The Gestapo simply could not believe that a teenager had masterminded what we had done. In their minds, there must have been an adult who had put us up to it—and they were not easily persuaded otherwise. They had all the time in the world. They could send me back to the hall of mirrors for a while, or question me again the next day. They had other fish to fry in the meantime. I was the one who had no time; I was the one who wanted it over with. Sometimes when I sat in the cell at Kolafu for two days without being taken to the hall of mirrors and interrogated, I felt worse than when I had been with Wangemann and Muessener in the Kaiser Wilhelmstrasse.

Meanwhile, my parents were frantic. They had gone to the police and had been told nothing. For several weeks they did not know I had been arrested. Finally, around the end of February, 1942, I was transferred to the *Untersuchungsgefängnis* (investigative prison) on the Glockengiesserwall at the Alsterglaciis. Here I was treated somewhat better. I was not beaten and I was not interrogated, though we were submitted to some psychological terror, for our cells were right above death row. There were between five and fifteen executions per day. Usually they picked up the first condemned man around 4:30 in the morning to take him to the guillotine. Some went calmly; some went screaming. It was awful.

After I was moved there, my parents were finally informed of my arrest and allowed to visit me. I was taken from my cell, placed in handcuffs, and led into the basement, where a tunnel connected the prison to the Justice Building. There, in an office, with a guard handcuffed to me, I saw my mother for all of five minutes. My father, she informed me, had been drafted into a job in a munitions plant out in the forest and he was not able to come. Mom couldn't say much more; she was heartbroken to see me in handcuffs, thin and pale. She just held me and sobbed. She was allowed to visit for five minutes once every four weeks.

I had no idea, as I waited there in my cell for almost six months, what was going to happen to me. I was not told anything. I had my dark blue prison uniform with the funny little round hat; I had only the toilet paper—little squares of old newspaper—for reading material; and I kept my cell spotless. That's all. I was not cold, because spring arrived, and then summer. I marched back and forth to keep my strength up: five steps one way and five steps back. Once they brought in another prisoner, a habitual criminal, but mostly I was in solitary confinement.

Every day I got a big glob of potato soup, which I ate from my *Buett*, an enameled bowl which resembled a small chamber pot. I had not been able to eat much in Kolafu, but now I ate whatever they gave me and tried to keep up my strength. In my cell there was one window, about twelve feet up, and I had a bunk, a toilet, a little chair, and a table. I was not allowed to sit on the bunk during the day, although when they turned the lights off at night I was allowed to lie down. I had nothing to write with. I was very lonely.

Around the first of August, 1942, after I had been in prison about six months, a man came in with the formal complaint—the *Anklageschrift*—and told me to read it; he'd be back for it in two hours. I opened it up. Though I had been troubled with constipation most of the time in prison, due to lack of exercise and to the poor diet, within seconds I had a bad case of diarrhea. The document had "Top Secret!" stamped all over it. "*Vorbereitung zum Hochverrat*" (conspiracy to commit high treason) and "*landesverraeterische Feindbeguenstigung*" (treasonous aiding and abetting of the enemy), the charges ran. And then I read that we were to be tried before the *Volksgesichtshof*, the feared blood-court in Berlin, Nazi Germany's highest tribunal. When I saw that I thought, *Oh man, we are all dead ducks!*

Not long thereafter we were transported to Berlin. The four of us—Helmuth, Rudi, Duerwer, and I—were handcuffed, and then each of us was chained to his own individual guard like a common murderer. We were placed in a *gruene Minna* van and driven to the Altona train station, where we boarded an express train for Berlin. We had our own compartment, the windows of which were posted over with signs reading "Police Transport—Entry Forbidden!" How the people gawked at us! We prisoners sat together on one side, and the guards sat on the other. We could have talked if we had wanted, but we were all very quiet, even after the guards locked the door and removed our handcuffs.

When someone tried to look in, the guards pulled down the blinds.

Late in the afternoon we arrived in Berlin. A *gruene Minna* took us to Alt-Moabit, the oldest and dingiest prison in Berlin. There we were to sit until Tuesday, August 11, 1942, when we would be taken to the Bellevuestrasse, to the *Volksgesichtshof*, for our trial.

As I have learned since, the *Volksgesichtshof* was not the only body sitting in judgment upon us. Ten days or so after Helmuth's arrest, by local leader action the word *Excommunicated* was written on Helmuth's membership record. There is no evidence that a Church-court was officially convened to consider the matter.

Perhaps it was felt that our arrests posed a danger to the Church that required the action taken, and maybe that was so. But I confess that that seemed unlikely to me as an exclusive motivation in view of the feelings I had seen exhibited favorable to Nazism.

For all that, I realize that by any stretch of imagination it must have been a tense time for the branch, and I certainly wish to extend to inexperienced local Church leaders working under such extreme circumstances all possible benefits of any doubt. We were the ones, after all, who had placed the other members in peril. If they can forgive us, we certainly can forgive them.

After the war, Otto Berndt (who had had no part in the negative action) made sure that Helmuth's "excommunication" was corrected. He and the new mission president, Max Zimmer, wrote "excommunication done by mistake" on Helmuth's membership record, dated it November 11, 1946, and signed it. Later, Max Zimmer's successor, Jean Wunderlich, notified the Brethren in Salt Lake of the affair, and a similar notation was placed on the Church's copy of Helmuth's record. One injustice, at least, had been corrected.

Trial and Sentence

At Alt-Moabit prison, we were again placed in solitary confinement and subjected to all kinds of verbal abuse. Prison officers called us *Schweinehunde*, *Lumpen*, *Verbrecher*, *Landesverraeter* (swine, scum, criminals, traitors), and it became clear once again that we had already been found guilty even before our trial.

During the week or so that we were at Alt-Moabit, we were each assigned a defense attorney; mine was Dr. Wilhelm Kunz. Here, too, it was evident that only the superficial formalities of what had once been a system of justice had survived Nazi rule: Dr. Kunz could not possibly really try to defend me. If he had said anything in my defense he'd have been arrested himself at once. He told me that he'd try to point out how young I was and he told me not to worry too much—that it wouldn't be so bad. I didn't trust him at all, and I didn't tell him anything of any importance. I stuck to my story. I was afraid he was really only an informer.

Finally the day came: Tuesday, August 11, 1942. Early in the morning we were handcuffed and loaded into a *gruene Minna* and taken to the Bellevuestrasse to the *Volksgerechtshof*. At about 8:00 A.M. the trial got under way. On the high bench at the front sat the judges, among them the vice president of the *Volksgerechtshof* Engert, *Oberlandesgerichtsrat* (chief justice) Fikeis, *NSKK Brigadeleiter* (motorized SA brigade leader) Heinsius, *Oberbereichsleiter* (superior district leader) Bodinus, *Oberfuehrer Gaugerichtsvorsitzender* (superior district judicial president) Hartmann, representing the Attorney-General of the Reich, *Erster Staatsanwalt* (first prosecuting district attorney) Dr. Drullmann, and *Justizsekretaer* (judicial minister) Woehlke. Next to Fikeis on the bench there were also a high army officer, a high SS officer, and a court stenographer. Fikeis and some of his associates were dressed in blood-red robes, each adorned with the bright gold eagle and swastika, an insignia cynics called the *Pleitegeier*, the "vulture of rack and ruin."

We, the accused, sat slightly elevated in the second row in front of the bench. Our attorneys sat below us and to the front; the press corps and the public sat behind. I was comforted to see my father there, the only person from any of our families who attended the trial. He'd come from Hamburg alone and was staying with friends who were members of our church.

The opening statements and all of the formalities lasted about an hour or an hour and a half. Then, for reasons of secrecy, the courtroom was cleared and the trial itself was closed to the public. Dad had to leave, as did the reporters and other observers. For about six more hours he waited outside while we endured a grueling rehearsal of every detail of our conspiracy.

Witnesses had been brought from Hamburg by the prosecution. The two Gestapo agents, Wangemann and

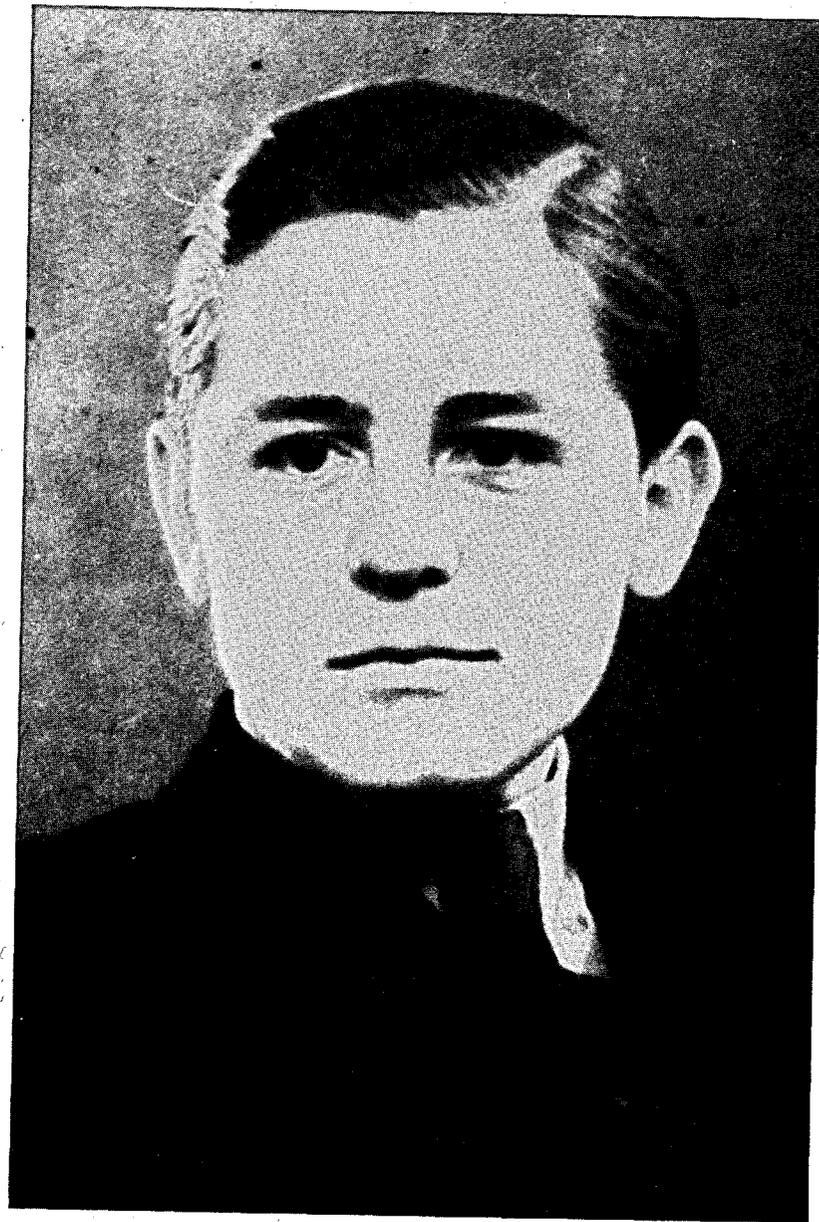
Muessener, were there, as was Werner Kranz, whom the court chided for not turning Helmuth in himself. A young soldier in uniform by the name of Horst Zumsande had been called to Berlin from his post in Thorn because Duewer had once shown him and his brother Kurt a leaflet. The main witness for the prosecution, however, was Heinrich Mohns, the office overseer of party loyalty. This man explained to the court that his job was to watch out for defeatist, "un-German" talk and to keep the office running in a most patriotic manner. (In 1949, for his role in the death of Helmuth Huebener, he would be placed on a list of war criminals and himself sentenced to prison.) The court spent only a little more time on Rudi, Gerhard, and me, then focused their full attention on Helmuth, clearly the leader.

To this day I'm amazed at how cool, how clear, and how smart Helmuth was. The court hashed over every detail in every leaflet. And he remembered everything: where and when he'd had an idea for a pamphlet, what he meant by this, why he'd written that. This had obviously not been a mere lark for Helmuth. It had been a work that he was deeply committed to.

All during the trial, Helmuth stood there like an oak and answered questions: "Why did you do what you did?" "Because I wanted people to know the truth." "Do you mean to tell us that British atrocity stories are the truth?" "Exactly!" His attorney, Dr. Hans Georg Knie, looked up at him as if to say, "Are you completely nuts?"

Occasionally Helmuth was even openly sarcastic with Fikeis. Fikeis continued to ask, "Do you mean to tell me that what the British are telling us is the truth? Do you believe that?" Finally Helmuth said, "Sure; don't you?"

It was clear to me then that Helmuth knew deep in his heart that he was doomed—that he'd been condemned to death even before he set foot in the courtroom. Therefore,



Helmuth Huebener shortly before his arrest, age sixteen.

he'd resolved to act with dignity and courage. When the court sentenced him to death, he said, "You kill me for no reason at all. I haven't committed any crime. All I've done is tell the truth. Now it's my turn—but your turn will come!"

By this time the spectators, including my father, had been allowed back into the courtroom for the sentencing. Fikeis continued to scream and yell at us, however, and call us names: vermin, scum, dirty Commies—by which he meant simply antifascists—who should all be exterminated. I was trembling all over, but Helmuth still stood there like an oak.

I was sentenced to five years at hard labor, Rudi to ten—no doubt because he had admitted too much and had talked too freely to an informant the Gestapo had put in his cell with him—and Gerhard to four because there was no proof that he had listened to the radio. And then the trial was over. It was 4:50 P.M.

We were handcuffed and led away into the basement. I'll never forget the line of people on either side of us who took off their hats and stood silently as we were dragged through the hallways and down the stairs. Everyone knew that the *Volksgerechtshof* almost always rendered the death sentence, but I'm sure it was a silent demonstration of support for us rather than mere morbid curiosity.

In the basement we were all locked in one room, still with our handcuffs on, and given a piece of bread to eat. I was still shaking like a leaf, but Helmuth quietly ate his bread. I finally recovered enough to talk.

"Helmuth," I said, "I don't think they'll do it. They'll commute your sentence or pardon you or something. They're just trying to make an example of you so that others don't do what we did. They won't kill you."

"Yes, they will," he replied calmly. "Look at the walls."

Then I noticed that the walls were completely covered

with scribbblings. There was a name and then "Sentenced to death!" Another name and "Sentenced to death" followed. Other writings were there as well: "Why?" "I don't want to die!" "Good-bye, Louise, take care of the children!" It was awful. Helmuth knew too well that the *Volksgerechtshof* executed almost everyone tried there.

My father had written the court a letter pleading for clemency for me, and he had asked for permission to see me. The court was generous; they gave Dad two minutes. He came into the room, looked at me, and started crying. I put my arms around him and tried to comfort him. He was shocked at my sentence of five years at hard labor, though to me it was a great relief. Helmuth had been condemned to die, after all, and I'd expected that we'd all be executed.

Years later Dad asked me, "Do you remember what you told me that day?"

"No."

"You really gave me quite a pep talk. You said, 'Now come on, Dad, it's not the end of the world. I'm still alive. We all could have been sentenced to death.'"

But it was to hit me later on, after I'd said good-bye to Dad, and after I'd said good-bye—for the very last time—to Helmuth. When the guards came for us, we shook hands. I put my arms around him. Helmuth had very big eyes, and now they were filled with tears.

"Good-bye, my friend."

"Good-bye."

Then he was taken one way and we went the other. We were headed back to Hamburg, and he was bound for Ploetzensee prison there in Berlin—the place where he was to be executed.

No date had been formally set for his execution. For a prisoner to know that he could be taken out and killed at any time was simply part of the punishment. I have since

learned that he was kept there in a maximum security cell, with no blankets or clothing allowed, lest he hang himself, from August 11 until October 27. Then, at twelve noon, Helmuth was informed that all appeals had been denied and that he was to be executed that evening.

During the next eight hours he wrote three letters: one to his grandparents, one to his mother, and one to the Sommerfeldt family, in whose home he had been more of a son than a friend. After he was compelled to drink some wine in order to dull his senses, something which greatly offended his LDS sensibilities, he was accompanied by a Lutheran pastor the few steps to the room containing the guillotine. His sentence was again formally read; the ancient custom of breaking the staff and pronouncing the phrase, "*Dein Leben ist verwirkt!*" "Your life is null and void!" was duly carried out; and at 8:15 P.M. the guillotine snuffed out his young life and his brilliant mind. His body was given to the anatomical institute at the University of Berlin for use as a cadaver. His grave is unknown.

Various groups, including the Hitler Youth in Hamburg, appealed Helmuth's sentence. Even the Gestapo were afraid it could cause an uprising among the workers there. But the *Reichskanzlei*, the Imperial Chancellery, the office of final appeal under Attorney-General Thierack, and Hitler himself turned them all down. After Helmuth's death, thousands of little red leaflets appeared all over Hamburg announcing the execution of this "traitor to his country." It was clear that the Nazis feared the truth more than they feared weapons, and leaflets more than guns.

Nine months later, in July of 1943, Helmuth's mother and grandparents were killed in a bombing raid on Hamburg. His farewell letters to them were destroyed. The one he'd written to the Sommerfeldts survived:



The room at Ploetzensee where Helmuth Huebener was executed. This Berlin prison is now a national memorial to the victims of Fascism.

Dear Sister Sommerfeldt and Family,

When you receive this letter I will be dead. But before my execution I have been granted one wish, to write three letters to my loved ones . . .

I am very thankful to my Heavenly Father that this agonizing life is coming to an end this evening. I could not stand it any longer anyway! My Father in Heaven knows that I have done nothing wrong. I am only sorry that in my last hour I have to break the Word of Wisdom. I know that God lives and He will be the proper judge of this matter.

Until our happy reunion in that better world I remain,

Your friend and brother in the Gospel,

Helmuth

On August 17, the Sunday after the trial, I was still in my cell at Alt-Moabit waiting to be transferred back to Hamburg. Only one hundred feet or so from the prison chapel, I suddenly heard the organ playing. Then I broke down completely and cried for hours. Much later, in 1949, after seven years of Nazi and Russian prison camps, I went with my mother into a church in Hamburg to listen to an organ concert. When the organ began to play, I again broke down completely and began to cry. People around us were concerned and rushed to my aid, but Mom just said, "Let him cry; let him wash it all out with his tears." I cried for over two hours. Even as I write this now I recognize for the first time the subconscious connection between the two events.

Back in my cell at Moabit I was smitten with guilt. *Helmuth has to die, and we get to live*, I thought. I wrote a letter to my parents apologizing for giving them so much trouble and grief.

Prisoners of the Third Reich

After a while we were taken back to Hamburg, at first briefly to the infamous police prison in the Huettenstrasse—a building that was later named for Helmuth Huebener—then to Glasmoor, a kind of labor prison out in the bog country. There we were put to work cutting peat. We spaded the peat out in little loaf-shaped bricks and put it in the sun to dry so that it could be burned for fuel.

Duewer was put into the camp office, for our warden, *Oberregierungsrat* (senior government counsellor) Dr. Krueger, had told us from the first day we arrived there that he trusted us—he knew we were not criminals. The other men in the camp gave us a wide berth, however. They knew only that we'd been at the *Volksgerichtshof* and they called us *die Berliner*, the boys from Berlin. I think Dr. Krueger was secretly sympathetic toward us. He eventually got Rudi and me jobs in the tailor shop, and not long after that I became a kind of valet to the *Hauptwachtmeister*, the main guard in