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THE RISE OF THE NAZI DICTATORSHIP
AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH THE MORMON CHURCH IN
GERMANY, 1933–1939

Steve Carter

On 30 January 1933, Adolf Hitler and the National Socialist party came to power and began to establish a dictatorship in Germany. It was the Nazis' intent to control all facets of life in the Third Reich including the institutional church. The relationship between the regime and the German religious community is complex and controversial. Although Hitler early on assured the churches that Christianity was welcomed in the Reich,¹ the Nazis soon launched a campaign against it. Through a concordat, the German dictator was able to neutralize the Catholic Church. And, aided by the pro-Nazi "German Christians," Hitler went a long way in coordinating the Evangelical Church with party aims. Nazi policy toward the smaller Christian denominations was ad hoc. The Nazis sought to control² and eventually eliminate these religious bodies, yet generally tolerated the ones deemed beneficial to party aims.³ Eventually, many small, non-traditional religions⁴ were banned, while the "Free Churches," primarily Baptists and Methodists, were allowed to function because Hitler thought they could be useful to his purposes.⁵

¹ Ernst Christian Helmreich, *The German Churches Under Hitler: Background, Struggle, and Epilogue* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1979), pp. 128–132.

² The Nazis controlled Germany through their policy of *Gleichschaltung* or coordination/regimentation to Party aims.

³ Christine Elizabeth King, "Strategies for Survival: An Examination of the History of Five Christian Sects in Germany 1933–45," *Journal of Contemporary History* 14 (1979), 211; Christine Elizabeth King, *The Nazi State and the New Religions* (Lewiston, NY: The Edwin Mellen Press, 1982), p. 20.

⁴ Usually the small, non-traditional religions in Germany are referred to as "sects," which carries a pejorative connotation in German.

⁵ King, *The Nazi State and the New Religions*, pp. 19–20; King, "Strategies for Survival," 211. King argues that such considerations were based on the denomination's use as a propaganda tool, its wealth and influence and the amount of trouble that would be caused abroad if the denomination were persecuted.

The relationship between the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and the Nazi regime was also complex. At no time during the 1930s was the Mormon Church banned in the Reich; however, it was not completely welcomed either. To be sure, Mormons were affected by Nazi anti-religious policies. This paper will review and analyze the relationship and interaction between the LDS Church and the Third Reich. I argue that Nazi harassment of the Mormons was sporadic and based primarily on the whims of local party officials rather than any formalized national policy. In the end, the Nazi course of action regarding the Latter-day Saints was similar to the regime's policy toward the Free Churches; the Party tolerated Mormons because it believed the LDS could be useful.

The Rise of Hitler and the Formulation of LDS Policy

Prior to World War I the spread of Mormonism in Germany had been slow. During the 1920s, however, the denomination enjoyed impressive growth throughout the country. In 1930 Mormonism claimed over 12,000 followers in Germany; by 1938 this number had passed 13,000.⁶ This represented the largest pocket of Latter-day Saints outside the United States. Because of such success, Mormon leaders in the USA were optimistic about the Church in Germany well into the 1930s.⁷

By the middle of 1933, the Nazi regime had busied itself consolidating power in Germany including implementing its policies toward the Catholics and Protestants. At this point, the Nazis began to investigate the smaller denominations including the Mormons.⁸

That summer, both LDS mission presidents—Francis Salzner of the Swiss-German mission and Oliver Budge of the German-Austrian mission—were confronted by Nazi authorities and asked to issue concise written statements regarding Mormon attitudes toward the Hitler re-

⁶ See Table 10 in Jeffrey L. Anderson, "Mormons and Germany, 1914-1933: A History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Germany and its Relationship with the German Governments from World War I to the Rise of Hitler" (M.A. Thesis, Brigham Young University, Provo, Utah, 1991), pp. 214-215.

⁷ Douglas F. Tobler and Alan F. Keele, "The Saints and the Reich: German Mormons under Hitler" (unpublished essay), pp. 3-4. Copy in author's possession.

⁸ Douglas F. Tobler, "The Narrow Line: The Experiences of the American Mormon Missionaries in Hitler's Germany, 1933-1939" (unpublished essay), p. 12. Copy in author's possession.

gime.⁹ Although Church leaders in Utah had advised the mission presidents to “get along” with government officials, they did not provide specifics on how to proceed.¹⁰ As a result, Salzner and Budge, in written statements, had the unenviable task of formulating Church policy with regard to the German state. Their responses to the Nazi inquiries, which became the basis of Mormon policy toward the Third Reich, were nearly identical and will be examined together.

The essence of the mission presidents’ statements was to affirm the Church’s spiritual mission. Salzner and Budge emphasized that, although Mormons considered themselves “apolitical,” the Church taught its followers to be good and law-abiding citizens and to support the “powers that be” in accordance to the Church’s Twelfth Article of Faith.¹¹ They stressed the Mormon belief in religious toleration¹² and asserted that the Church would not attack other denominations including the German Christians. Furthermore, the statements suggested that the Church’s lay ministry and self-supporting missionary program brought foreign currency into Germany.¹³ Finally, the mission presidents addressed values such as the family that were shared by both parties.¹⁴

⁹ For the text of the respective responses to the Gestapo, see Oliver Budge letter to State Secret Police office, 8 September 1933, in “German-Austrian Mission Quarterly Reports, 1930-1937,” Archives, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, entry for “Visit of Secret Service Agent, (hereafter cited as “German-Austrian Quarterly Reports),” and “Ein Aufklärender Brief,” *Der Stern*, 65 (15 July 1933), 214-218. See full text in Appendix A and Appendix B.

¹⁰ Tobler and Keele, “The Saints and the Reich,” p. 8.

¹¹ Or in other words whatever regime was in power at the time. *Pearl of Great Price*, Article of Faith 1:12. “We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates, in obeying, honoring, and sustaining the law.”

¹² *Pearl of Great Price*, Article of Faith 1:11. “We claim the privilege of worshipping Almighty God according to the dictates of our own conscience, and allow all men the same privilege, let them worship how, where, or what they may.”

¹³ John A. Dahl, “Book Review of *Building Zion*,” typed manuscript, Archive MS 15335, unpublished manuscript dated 14 October 1997, Archives, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, comment #16, pp. 10-11. Dahl states that “Rudolph Noss ... President of the Frankfurt am Main LDS district ... after clearing with Francis Salzner ..., armed with a briefcase full of all the pamphlets and the Standard Works then used in Germany met with the proper office of the Department of Culture and Education in Darmstadt, Hessen-Darmstadt. He invited them to study this material containing the principles of the gospel which our Elders were teaching

There were three goals the mission presidents sought to achieve. First, they wanted to “get along” with the Nazi regime and avoid confrontations that could place the Mormon community in peril. Second, they sought to maintain the Church and its “gains” in Germany. Finally, mission leaders hoped to continue spreading the spiritual message of Mormonism through missionary activity.¹⁵ The German mission leaders’ policy was congruent with the prevailing Church accommodation policy toward secular government and the Twelfth Article of Faith established in 1890.

Apparently, the mission presidents’ statements satisfied Nazi authorities. There are no immediate reports of harassment of any kind. Commenting on conditions in Germany, the 21 October 1933 issue of the Salt Lake City *Deseret News*, Church Section, reported, “The German–Austrian mission has been left almost untouched by the revolution in Germany.”¹⁶

Harassment of the Mormons

Although Mormons escaped the initial persecution suffered by other denominations, they did not go unnoticed by Nazi authorities. As Hitler tightened his grip, the Gestapo kept vigil on all religious groups,¹⁷ including the Mormons. On occasion, Gestapo agents monitored LDS worship services,¹⁸ interrogated branch and district presidents, or confis-

freely to those interested in their message; and also to convince them that members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints were admonished to be law-abiding citizens. He further pointed out that these *American Elders would bring in sorely needed US dollars.*” (Italics added)

¹⁴ See Appendix A and B.

¹⁵ Tobler and Keele, “The Saints and the Reich,” pp. 6–7.

¹⁶ Fay Ollorton, “A Visit to the German–Austrian Mission,” *Deseret News*, 21 October 1933, Church Section, p. 3.

¹⁷ Eric A. Johnson, *Nazi Terror: The Gestapo, Jews, and Ordinary Germans* (New York: Basic Books, 1999), p. 229; John S. Conway, *The Nazi Persecution of the Churches, 1933–1945* (New York: Basic Books, Inc., Publishers, 1968), p. 69.

¹⁸ Many German Mormons have discussed visits to church meetings by the Gestapo. See, for example, Karl-Heinz Schnibbe, Oral History, Interview by Steve Carter, 2 May 1998, Holladay, Utah, Tape Recording/Typescript, 1, Copy in author’s possession; Inge Lang, Oral History, Interview by Steve Carter, 28 June 1998, Bountiful, Utah, Tape Recording, Copy in author’s possession; Dahl, “Book Review,” comment, #14, pp. 9–10; John A. Dahl, Oral History, Interview by Steve Carter, 21 March 2000, Salt Lake City, Utah, Tape Re-

cated branch records.¹⁹ Some requested a list of names of branch members accompanied by their political party affiliation.²⁰ In their effort to “get along,” LDS leaders complied with these demands.²¹

A real concern for branch presidents, though, was that a member might say something that Gestapo agents would consider subversive. Local leaders and American missionaries cautioned their congregations about such dangers and reminded them to follow the Twelfth Article of Faith.²² Because of these measures, the secret police was unable to detect anything “subversive” about Latter-day Saint meetings.²³

cording/Typescript, p. 18, Copy in author’s possession; Walter H. Speidel, Oral History, Interview by Steve Carter, Tape recording/Typescript, Provo, Utah, 30 April 1998, p. 7, Copy in author’s possession. Gestapo monitoring of Mormon meetings varied from place to place. Usually, a plain-clothed agent slipped in and sat quietly in the back of the church. Occasionally, he might solicit information about upcoming “sermons.” In these cases, the branch president provided the agent with a list of scheduled speakers for the next couple of weeks. In some branches, Gestapo agents attended meetings on a regular basis, and a few showed some congeniality with Church members. In other areas, there were few Gestapo visits. One German branch president recalled only one encounter with the Gestapo and that the agent left satisfied with what he found.

¹⁹ Both the Swiss-German Mission Manuscript History and German-Austrian Mission Manuscript History detail incidents where Gestapo agents interrogated missionaries and branch presidents as well as confiscated branch records. Agents usually seized the documents, examined them for a space of several weeks and returned them without explanation to the local LDS leader. See “German-Austrian Mission Manuscript History,” Archives, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. Hereafter cited as “German-Austrian MSS History.” See also “Swiss-German Mission Manuscript History, 1904-1938,” Archives, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah. Hereafter cited as “Swiss-German MSS History.”

²⁰ For instance, see “German-Austrian MSS History,” entry for September 1934. German-Austrian mission records state: “The president of the Zwickau District was requested by the police in Plauen to furnish them with a list of the members of his district, and to *inform them as to the party membership of each political party.*” (Italics added)

²¹ Tobler and Keele, “The Saints and the Reich,” p. 15.

²² Speidel, Oral Interview, 30 April 1998, p. 2; Walter H. Speidel, Oral History, Interview by Steve Carter, Tape recording/Typescript, Provo, Utah, 1 May 1998, p. 7.

²³ “Swiss-German MSS History” entry for January 1934. “The Police in Germany investigated our case in many branches but apparently did not come to

Elimination of the LDS Scouting Organization

On the national level, Mormons did not experience any pressure from the regime until 1934. In 1933, Hitler had begun the process of dissolving youth organizations or incorporating them into the Hitler Youth including the Boy Scouts.²⁴ In early March 1934, Nazi authorities notified Mormon officials to incorporate the LDS Scouting program²⁵ into the Hitler Youth or to disband. For several weeks, Mormon youth leaders corresponded with government officials pleading their case for maintaining the program.²⁶ Throughout the correspondence, Mormon Scouts continued to function and carry out their activities.²⁷ Finally, under duress, and desiring to “remain in harmony with” the Nazi re-

any conclusions about us as no further steps were taken to stop out missionary activity.”

²⁴ One of Hitler’s goals was to indoctrinate German youth in Nazi values which meant control of education and youth organizations.

²⁵ In Germany, the Boy Scouts had grown rapidly after its founding in 1911, and by 1914, it numbered over 80,000 members. Scouting attracted many German Mormon youths in part because of the Church’s sponsorship of the organization in the United States. In 1911, the LDS Church endorsed Scouting in the US and shortly thereafter adopted it in Germany. Mormon authorities in Europe believed the Boy Scouts could strengthen the LDS youth and bring others into contact with their religion. By the 1930s, the Mormon Church had become a primary sponsor of the German Scout Association. By the end of 1933, the regime had eliminated all Scouting organizations except the two affiliated with the Mormon missions in Germany. At the time, according to mission records, there were 33 local Scout troops in the Swiss–German Mission alone. The German–Austrian Mission reported that over 150 teen-aged boys were registered in Scouts in that mission with another 100 youth who were involved in Scouting activities but were not registered. See Lawrence D. Walker, *Hitler Youth and Catholic Youth, 1933–1936: A Study in Totalitarian Conquest*, (Washington D.C.: The Catholic University of America Press, 1970), p. 8; “The Story of Scouting in the LDS Church,” comp. LDS Relationships Boy Scouts of America, <http://gemstate.net/scouter/story.htm> (28 September 2000); Tobler, “The Narrow Line,” p. 15; “German–Austrian Quarterly Report,” entry for 30 June 1934; “Swiss–German MSS History,” entry for May, 1934; “German–Austrian Quarterly Report,” entry for 30 June 1934.

²⁶ “German–Austrian Quarterly Report,” entry for 30 June 1934. The German–Austrian Quarterly Report contains copies of the letter exchange of March and April, 1934.

²⁷ “German–Austrian MSS History,” entry for 30 March 1934. The Scout troops from Weimar and Erfurt held a four-day outing. This is the last recorded Scouting activity in Germany before the program was dissolved.

gime, the Mormons acquiesced and dissolved its Scouting program on 30 April 1934.²⁸

The dissolution of the Scouting program sheds light on Mormon policy toward the Nazi regime. By abandoning the Scouts, the Mormons indicated their willingness to oblige the Nazis. Still, they haggled with the regime and then dissolved their troops rather than incorporate them into the Hitler Youth. The Mormons chose to accept their fate,²⁹ but in such a way as to avoid direct Party control over their youth.

There were also cases where Mormons were affected by the general prohibitions placed on all religions by the Nazi regime. In 1934, the National Socialists issued a decree that no denomination could use Hebrew words such as “Israel”, “Sabbath”, “Zion”—words common in Mormon usage.³⁰ In keeping with the spirit of accommodation, Mormons throughout Germany complied with this decree.³¹ The decree also led government officials to ban the book, *The Articles of Faith* by James

²⁸ “Swiss-German MSS History,” entry for May 1934; “German-Austrian Quarterly Report,” entry for 30 June 1934.

²⁹ Although the LDS regretted the end of the Scouting program, many Mormon youngsters joined the Hitler Youth. Some became active participants in the Nazi organization and fondly recalled the experience. Other boys either did not participate or, under pressure, merely went through the motions. Of the latter, many found it difficult to attend Sunday church meetings; still others reported renewed harassment by the Hitler Youth. Mormon girls, too, joined the BDM (*Bund Deutsche Mädel*), the female counterpart to the Hitler Youth. And, as with the boys, they had mixed reactions to it. Some were active participants, others were not. See Tobler and Keele, “The Saints and the Reich,” p. 13; Fred Gassner and Erich Bernhardt, Oral History, Interview by Justus Ernst, 8 June 1985, transcript, Archives, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, 26; Rudi Wobbe and Jerry Borrowman, *Before the Blood Tribunal* (Salt Lake City, UT: Covenant Communications, Inc., 1992), pp. 7–8.

³⁰ “Chonik der Gemeinde Karlsruhe,” comp. Karl Lutz, (Karlsruhe, Germany: Gemeinde Karlsruhe, Kirche Jesu Christi der Heiligen der Letzten Tage, 1997), p. 92. See also Doris L. Bergen, *Twisted Cross: The German Christian Movement in the Third Reich* (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 1996), pp. 165–171, on the German Christians and Jewish expressions in church hymns.

³¹ Both mission presidents instructed members to avoid such terms in talks and to omit them from church hymns. See Dahl, Oral Interview, pp. 4–5 and Speidel, Oral Interview, 30 April 1998, p. 4.

E. Talmage, because of its references to “Zion” and “Israel.”³² The Nazis also banned Church tracts, including “Göttliche Vollmacht” (“Divine Authority”) and “Signs of the Great Apostasy” which, Party activists claimed, constituted an affront to their own power in Germany.³³

Nazi officials were also concerned that foreign-based religions might drain the Reich of much-needed currency.³⁴ This concern led German authorities to monitor LDS financial activities, insist that LDS tithes remain in Germany, and confiscate donation records from branches.³⁵ In October 1934, as part of Finance Minister Hjalmar Schacht’s new economic plan to control foreign exchange,³⁶ the government withdrew from the LDS missionaries the privilege of purchasing valuable “Registered Marks.”³⁷ Although Mormons were not the primary target of this plan, German officials charged that the missionaries were not paying their own way. Schacht’s policy had a profound impact on the Church forcing the missions to curtail many of their activities.³⁸ In

³² “German–Austrian MSS History,” entry 11 July 1936; Gilbert W. Scharffs, *Mormonism in Germany: A History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in Germany* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1970), p. 85.

³³ Kriminalpolizei Blatt no. 1751/54, in “Swiss–German MSS History,” entry for January 1934. See also, “German–Austrian MSS History,” entry for 5, 25 and 29 January 1934. During the first week of January 1934 the police forbid any further distribution of “Göttliche Vollmacht” in Germany. In both missions, the mission presidents complied with the order and had all copies of the tract either sent to the respective mission offices, turned over to the government officials or destroyed.

³⁴ In the mid-1930s, for example, the regime banned the Christian Scientists from sending proceeds from the sale of their literature to the United States. Correspondence between the Christian Science Church and the United States diplomatic corps covering the period of 16 July 1936 to 28 July 1937, U. S. State Department Documents, 362.116.Christian Science Church/8-12, National Archives, College Park, Maryland.

³⁵ “Swiss–German MSS History,” entry for September 1934.

³⁶ The previous month, Finance Minister, Hjalmar Schacht, had launched a new economic policy that sought to impose “strict controls on the allocation of foreign exchange” for the purpose of building up currency reserves. See Ian Kershaw, *Hitler 1889–1936: Hubris* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1999), p. 576.

³⁷ Registered Marks were more valuable than regular Marks and used for international trade. Mormon missionaries had had the privilege of purchasing Registered Marks since the Weimar era. See also “German–Austrian Quarterly Reports,” December 1934, entry for October.

³⁸ “Swiss–German MSS History,” entry for October 1934; “German–Austrian

response, the mission presidents³⁹ in Europe and the First Presidency in Utah worked through the U.S. State Department, the American diplomatic corps, and the American Express Company to resolve this crisis. In March, 1936, the regime let up and restored to the missionaries the privilege of remitting Registered Marks.⁴⁰

The Nazi “Let Up” on the Mormons and the Illusion of “Good Relations”

Between 1934 and 1936, most religious denominations suffered increased persecution at the hands of the Nazis. Both Catholic and Protestant clergymen encountered Nazi harassment and imprisonment. The Nazis also proceeded viciously against the smaller denominations. By contrast, harassment of the Mormons suddenly subsided in mid-1934 as noted by both Mormon and American government officials. In July, Francis Salzner, was questioned about Mormon views of the regime to which he reaffirmed the LDS accommodation policy and positive attitudes toward secular government. After the meeting, a surprised Salzner reported that the Gestapo agent confided to him that the Mormons had

MSS History,” entry for 6 October 1934; Tobler, “The Narrow Line,” p. 17. The exchange rate for the Registered Mark was 3.31 per dollar, and for the regular Mark it was 2.48. According to Tobler, “the resulting loss of over 30% of the purchasing power of their \$25 monthly check was difficult, if not devastating.”

³⁹ On 1 August 1934, Roy Welker replaced Oliver Budge as president of the East German Mission.

⁴⁰ Correspondence between the LDS First Presidency and the United States diplomatic corps covering the period of 3 April to 13 April 1935, U. S. State Department Documents, 362.116.M82/35, 36, National Archives; Correspondence between William E. Dodd and Secretary of State, Cordell Hull, and correspondence between U. S. State Department and LDS First Presidency covering a period between 28 May to 21 June 1935, U. S. State Department Documents, 362.116.M82/38, National Archives; “Swiss–German MSS History,” entry for July 1935. See also Tobler, “Narrow Line,” p. 17. The Benevolent Mark was an exchange rate which allowed missionaries to exchange fifty percent of their foreign currency for Registered Marks and fifty percent for Free Marks. “Swiss–German MSS History,” entry for March 1936; “German–Austrian MSS History,” entry under “During the month of March.” According to records, missionaries would have to apply for the privilege of buying Registered Marks. They received an exchange rate of about RM 4 per \$1. They could purchase up to 200 Registered Marks per month.

nothing to fear from the Nazis.⁴¹ On 31 July, Utah Senator Elbert Thomas met with American Ambassador William Dodd in Berlin to discuss issues relating to Mormon missionaries in Germany. After the meeting, Dodd noted in his diary, "There are a number of Mormons in Germany and Hitler has not dissolved their organizations or expelled their active preachers. There are other than religious aspects to Hitler's let-up on the Mormons."⁴²

Some historians have suggested a collaborationist relationship between Mormons and the Nazis based on a conjunction of worldviews including similar beliefs, doctrines and practices. Moreover, they argue that Mormons tried to convey this view to Nazi officials in order to escape persecution.⁴³

Historian Douglas Tobler counters this thesis by arguing it was actually a disjunction of worldviews which formed the "foundation of the Nazi-Mormon relationship." According to Tobler, although there was some agreement of peripheral principles, the Nazis were concerned with gaining a "monopoly of power" and considered sectarian theology nonsense. On the other hand, Mormons were interested in their spiritual mission, not political power.⁴⁴ Mission documents further bolster this argument. In 1935, for example, mission records indicate "that the German attitude toward the [Mormon] Church, or any church, was that the churches were for the 'soul saving' part of life only, and that the state

⁴¹ "Chronik der Gemeinde Karlsruhe," pp. 92-93. President Salzner and his co-worker had a conversation with two officials of the State Police. He reported: 'The NS officials inquired about our work for the Church and requested that we should go to their office the next day for a discussion. I and my co-worker came as requested, were treated politely and thoroughly questioned. The officials had a pile of newspaper and magazine articles about the Church to which they often referred during the conversation. After we were there an hour, they requested that we write a short history of the Church and describe the organization, goals and dimensions of our work. We complied with the request and presented the document on the following day. The officials informed us they were satisfied and assured us that we had no reason to fear. (Author's translation.)

⁴² William E. Dodd, *Ambassador Dodd's Diary: 1933-1938*, ed. by William E. Dodd, Jr., and Martha Dodd (New York: Harcourt, Brace and Company, 1941), p. 136.

⁴³ King, *The Nazi State and the New Religions*, chapter 3. See also King "Strategies for Survival," pp. 225-228.

⁴⁴ Tobler, "The Narrow Line," pp. 2-3.

should develop the youth, and that the churches should not interfere in state affairs.”⁴⁵

The Nazis, in other words, found little in Mormonism they considered subversive. The regime seems to have regarded Mormons as “apolitical” and patriotic citizens. They may also have accepted some Mormon beliefs and practices as compatible with their own values. Tobler maintains that “presumably, the Nazis found no specific doctrines like rejection of military service, occultism or total reliance upon God’s power in healing the sick” that would cause them concern.⁴⁶ Hitler’s regime was thus willing to tolerate Mormons while it continued to consolidate power. In many respects, the Nazis’ attitude toward the Latter-day Saints resembled their views of the Free churches who desired to retain independence to preach the gospel.⁴⁷ The Free Churches advocated separation of church and state, supported themselves financially and had relatively insignificant membership in Germany. Furthermore, many of these denominations had some influence abroad. Therefore, the Nazis, in the interests of foreign relations refrained from blatant harassment of these denominations.⁴⁸

Official tolerance of the Mormons, however, turned out to be a mirage. Douglas Tobler and Alan Keele have described this two-year illusion of harmonious relations as a “fool’s paradise.”⁴⁹ Mormons continued their policy of accommodation with the Nazis, though the regime appears to have paid little attention to them except within the context of an overall policy on religion.⁵⁰ Each side was willing to ignore the other as long as it was left alone. As Tobler and Keele assert, “[b]eing largely oblivious to the thrust of the numerous major events and policy changes going on at the time, Mormons tended to evaluate their circumstances largely in isolation on the basis of their personal well-being and the condition of the Church.”⁵¹ Nevertheless, both sides took advantage of opportunities presented by the other to advance their goals.

⁴⁵ “German–Austrian MSS History,” entry for Thursday, 8 August 1935.

⁴⁶ Tobler, “The Narrow Line,” p. 3.

⁴⁷ Helmreich, p. 405.

⁴⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 370 and 372.

⁴⁹ Tobler and Keele, “The Saints and the Reich,” p. 14.

⁵⁰ Anderson, p. 157.

⁵¹ Tobler and Keele, “The Saints and the Reich,” p. 14.

Doctrinal Parallels and Compatibility

That said, it cannot be denied that Mormons and Nazis did by coincidence rather than design share some common doctrinal ground, and both were aware of the similarities.⁵² And it was the parallels that reinforced the illusion held by German Mormons.⁵³

Among views shared by the two parties were an emphasis on genealogical research, the family, and the importance of health. Many Mormons also viewed several Nazi programs as resembling their own such as one of Hitler's program known as Eintopf Sonntag or "stew Sundays," in which participants fixed a modest meal and donated what they saved to the Nazi welfare program; a practice similar to the traditional Mormon "Fast Sunday."

Although superficially similar, the goals and objectives of the Mormons and Nazis were quite different.⁵⁴ Mormon programs reflected the faith's spiritual mission, while those of the Nazis represented their obsession for political and racial domination. Even so, common attitudes made Nazism more palatable to Mormons and Mormonism less suspect to Hitler's minions.⁵⁵

Contacts with the Government

On 1 August 1934, Roy Welker became president of the German-Austrian mission; his tenure as mission president contributed to the illusion of "good feelings." Before leaving for Berlin, Welker met with President Heber J. Grant to discuss the German situation. Grant simply instructed Welker verbally to "meet the situation as it was," and to "exercise [his] own wisdom."⁵⁶ These vague directions left Welker on

⁵² Joseph M. Dixon, "Mormons in the Third Reich: 1933-1945," *Dialogue: A Journal of Mormon Thought* 7 (Spring 1972), 74. Dixon, argues that no "connection existed between the two ... but any parallels ... resulted from circumstance rather than plan."

⁵³ For a thorough analysis of doctrinal common ground, see William D. Underwood, "Religions are Ordained of God: The Mormon Church in Nazi Germany" (M.A. Thesis, University of Cincinnati, Cincinnati, Ohio, 1992), pp. 40-48.

⁵⁴ Anderson, pp. 154-155.

⁵⁵ Tobler, "The Narrow Line," pp. 2-3.

⁵⁶ Roy A. Welker, Oral History, interviewed by Richard Jensen, 2-3 February, 1973, Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, pp. 28-29.

his own to deal with the Nazi regime.⁵⁷ Throughout his presidency, Welker continued the accommodation policy by complying with Nazi requests and investigations⁵⁸ which he later asserted was the “best policy.”⁵⁹

Welker also sought contacts with government officials. In 1936, he sent copies of Mormon scriptures to government officials including Adolf Hitler himself.⁶⁰ Furthermore, Welker met a low-ranking official from the Ministry of Religion who assured the mission president that the Mormons were in no danger.⁶¹ Welker’s wife, Elizabeth, also cultivated ties with the regime by occasionally meeting and establishing a working friendship with Gertrude Scholtz-Klink, head of the Nazi women’s auxiliary, the NS Frauenschaft.⁶²

Although both Welkers believed that their efforts improved the status of the Mormon Church in Germany, there is little evidence to bolster their claims. As Tobler concludes, “Welker apparently was convinced that ‘...Hitler was very much impressed with the Mormons,’ a statement lacking support from other evidence.”⁶³

Harassment of LDS at the Local Level

While governmental pressure on the Latter-day Saints at the national level subsided considerably during 1934, at the local level harassment became quite intense.⁶⁴ In their 1933 year-end reports to

⁵⁷ Tobler and Keele, “The Saints and the Reich,” pp. 13–14. Grant, more than likely, gave similar instructions to others who served as mission presidents during this period.

⁵⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 15.

⁵⁹ Welker, *Oral History*, p. 31.

⁶⁰ Scharffs, pp. 86–87.

⁶¹ “German–Austrian MSS History,” entry for “During the Month of July, 1936; “German–Austrian Quarterly Reports,” 30 September 1936; Welker, *Oral History*, pp. 62–64.

⁶² Several times Elizabeth Welker, when meeting with Scholtz-Klink, found herself in the presence of Hitler. Nevertheless, she never had occasion to speak personally with the dictator, according to her account, because of the language barrier. See Welker, *Oral History*, pp. 23–25 and 29–30.

⁶³ Tobler and Keele, “The Saints and the Reich,” p. 15.

⁶⁴ Such harassment on the local level did not affect only the Latter-day Saints. In fact, many groups including other Christian denominations, Communists and Socialists, and Jews faced increased local intimidation during the second half of 1934 going into 1935. See Ian Kershaw, *Popular Opinion and Political*

Salt Lake City, both Francis Salzner and Oliver Budge wrote that the Reich government had interfered little with the activities of the Church.⁶⁵ However, Budge also indicated that zealous party members had harassed both the members and the missionaries; a point alluded to by Salzner.⁶⁶ Mission records from 1933 on indicate that local Nazi officials, aided by Catholic and Protestant clergymen, led attacks against Mormons.⁶⁷

Nazi persecution on the local level took one of two forms. The first was the harassment of missionaries. In many localities the police limited missionary proselyting activities such as prohibiting going door to door or banning "cottage meetings."⁶⁸ Occasionally, police arrested missionaries and searched their apartments for subversive items. Throughout Germany, party officials banned missionaries from their cities. In extreme cases, local brown shirts used physical violence against the missionaries. For example, in April 1933, missionaries in Hindenburg were attacked by a uniformed Nazi who beat them with his belt. Party members also nearly beat Reed Bradford to death for refusal to salute a Nazi flag.⁶⁹

The second technique used by local authorities was to attack the native branches. Agents interrogated local members, confiscated branch records, and disrupted worship services.⁷⁰ Usually, members met with

Dissent in the Third Reich: Bavaria 1933–1945 (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1983), pp. 82–83, 165–74, 195–96, 205–06, and 232–38.

⁶⁵ "Swiss–German MSS History," entry December 1933, "General Summary of the Year"; "German–Austrian Quarterly Reports," entry for 31 December 1933

⁶⁶ *Ibid.* See both of the above reports.

⁶⁷ Both mission presidents suggest that the Catholic and Evangelical clergy were responsible for much of the action against the Mormons trying to halt their proselyting activities. *Ibid.*

⁶⁸ For example, see "Swiss–German MSS History," entries for May and June 1933. In Minden, police interrupted a cottage meeting, holding all at gunpoint. After the missionaries explained the circumstances, the police left. See also "German–Austrian Quarterly Reports," entry for 31 December 1933, "October", a cottage meeting in Beuthen was disrupted and all participants taken into custody.

⁶⁹ See "German–Austrian Quarterly Reports," entry for 30 June 1933, "April," and Tobler, "The Narrow Line," p. 12.

⁷⁰ For example, see "German–Austrian MSS History," entry for Wednesday, 18 October 1933. See also "Swiss–German MSS History," entry for December 1934. "The police summoned the appearance of all members of the Göppingen Branch between the 10 and 16 December. The officers apparently wanted to

the police, explained Mormon activities and they quoted the Twelfth Article of Faith. Most of the time they convinced party officials that their “intentions were in harmony with those of the government” and not subversive.⁷¹ In extreme cases based on “political suspicion,” police closed the meeting halls⁷² used by Mormons forcing the closure of several branches.⁷³

Local harassment of Mormons varied from place to place, and from official to official. In Karlsruhe, Mormons were treated well.⁷⁴ On the other hand, branches in Breslau, Dresden and Hamburg suffered intense harassment. In 1935, missionaries were banned in Saxony.⁷⁵ This pattern of uneven treatment suggests that local Nazi leaders, not the Reich government, determined policy regarding Mormons.

The 1936 Berlin Olympics

Local harassment did have an effect on missionary proselyting activities. By mid-1935, mission documents state “tracting averages for the missionaries have reached a low point. Plans are being worked out to find a way in which this important missionary activity, in spite of police restrictions, can be increased.”⁷⁶ Missionaries in both missions turned to

learn the meaning of our meetings, since Germany is at present in an anxious state of political agitation and all meetings are looked upon with suspicion.”

⁷¹ See for example “Swiss-German MSS History,” entries for January 1934, April 1934, September 1934.

⁷² In Germany, Mormons rented meeting halls to hold their services. There were only one or two Church-owned chapels in the whole country.

⁷³ “Swiss-German MSS History,” entry for May 1933. “The Hanau branch was denied the right to hold meetings in the ‘Hohelandschule.’ The reason being political suspicion.” “Swiss-German MSS History,” entry July 1933, “Branch Closed.” “The Hanau branch was closed due to not having a meeting hall....” See also “German-Austrian Quarterly Reports,” entry for 30 June 1933, heading of “May.” On 9 May the use of public schools to hold meetings was refused in Stargard. In this case, no reason was given.

⁷⁴ In Karlsruhe, according to the branch president, John Dahl, Mormons were treated well by the Party. See Dahl, Oral Interview, p. 18. Other Mormons and missionaries were able to maintain harmonious relations with local Party leaders or encountered little trouble.

⁷⁵ Efforts by President Welker, European mission president, Joseph Merrill, and the American diplomatic corps to get the expulsion rescinded failed. See Steven E. Carter, “The Mormons and the Third Reich” (Ph.D. diss., University of Arkansas, 2003), pp. 110–112.

⁷⁶ Swiss-German MSS History, entry July 1935, “Tracting Averages.”

unorthodox methods to contact potential converts. In particular, the American missionaries turned to basketball,⁷⁷ which President Welker endorsed.⁷⁸

It is impossible to determine the impact of “basketball proselyting” although some missionaries were able to develop a good rapport with the local officials at a time of intense local harassment.⁷⁹ One unexpected outcome occurred in 1935 when the German army recruited several missionaries to teach basketball to the soldiers.⁸⁰ Later, officials asked several missionaries to train the German Olympic basketball team and help officiate during the 1936 Berlin Olympic Games.⁸¹ Mormons saw this representing recognition by national leaders and as a way to improve the religion’s status. The Nazis believed that Mormon missionaries could help them in their propaganda effort by achieving a victory for the German basketball team.⁸² In the end, however, the German Olympic basketball team exited the tournament early. And although Mormons were involved in such a high profile event, there is no evidence the Olympics improved their image or respectability.⁸³

⁷⁷ It was not uncommon for missionaries in Europe to be using basketball. Missionaries in Czechoslovakia, Great Britain and Sweden all participated in “Basketball Proselyting.” See Bruce C. Van Orden, *Building Zion: The Latter-day Saints in Europe* (Salt Lake City, UT: Deseret Book Company, 1996), p. 135.

⁷⁸ President Welker, himself, encouraged the use of basketball in proselyting activities and believed that it “did quite a bit of good.” Welker, Oral History, p. 59.

⁷⁹ Les Goates, “Mormon Missionaries Train German Basketeers,” *Deseret News*, 7 February 1936, p. 14.

⁸⁰ “German–Austrian MSS History,” entries for 8 August 1935 and 26 August 1935.

⁸¹ Goates, p. 14; Glynn Bennion, “New Ways of Proselyting and the Reason Therefore,” *Deseret News*, 25 January 1936, Church Section 1, p. 7. As German basketball officials, the official Olympic report listed Charles Perschon, Jerome Christensen, Edward Judd and Vinton Merrill. *XI Olympiade Berlin 1936, Amtlicher Bericht*, vol. II, (Berlin: Organisationskomitee Für die XI. Olypiade Berlin 1936 e.V., Wilhelm Limpert-Verlag, 1936), pp. 1078–1079.

⁸² Bennion, p. 7. “In Germany Herr Hitler has sought the services of the Elders to teach basketball to the teams he hopes will achieve a Nordic victory at the Olympic games to be held this year in Berlin.”

⁸³ Even within the LDS community there were few German Mormons who were aware that missionaries were involved in the Olympics. Dahl, Oral Interview, p. 20.

The Olympics, however, did benefit Mormons indirectly as the Hitler dictatorship put forth its best appearance and temporarily relaxed its attacks on religion.⁸⁴ Under these conditions, Mormons held their largest youth conference before World War II in Berlin, and missionaries found it easier to proselytize at this time. Mission records from October, 1936, noted “[t]racting and visiting totals continue to show increased activity on the part of the missionaries.”⁸⁵

Renewed Harassment

The Olympics represented the climax of a two-year period of seemingly cordial relations between the Mormons and the Nazi regime. Shortly after the Olympics, however, the Nazis renewed their assault on the Christian churches.⁸⁶

Mormons also experienced an intensification of harassment. In Hamburg, Nazis charged district president, Alwin Brey, with spying for the United States.⁸⁷ For months, government authorities monitored LDS congregations and missionaries, censored their correspondence, and confiscated records and publications. Moreover, officials informed Brey “[I]f the Church wished to remain in [Hamburg] they must cease all youth activities and gathering.” Brey complied with this demand and canceled a proposed “Youth Day.” The impact upon the LDS community in Hamburg was chilling. Church reports noted, “[a] decided

⁸⁴ In Berlin and throughout the country, the Nazis relaxed much of their censorship and restrictions they had imposed and did their best to hide anti-Semitic programs, including the Jew-baiting publication, *Der Stürmer*, and other racial signs from public view. They also let up on their attacks against the Christian churches. For example, they halted the show trials of Catholic priests charged with immorality and currency smuggling. See Duff Hart-Davis, *Hitler's Games: The 1936 Olympics* (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1986), p. 126 and 129, and Helmreich, p. 279.

⁸⁵ “Swiss-German MSS History,” entry for October 1936, “Missionary Activities.”

⁸⁶ Conway, p. 168.

⁸⁷ Sanford M. Bingham, Oral History, Interviewed by Douglas Tobler and Alan F. Keele. Provo, Utah, 1974, Typescript, The James Moyle Oral History Program, Archives, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, pp. 5-6. Alwin Brey had been collecting a list of Mormons in the military from the Hamburg district in order to send them copies of Church publications. Nazi officials believed he was gathering the information to turn over to American intelligence.

tension between the government's attitude in this district was everywhere apparent."⁸⁸ Similar harassment and "investigations" occurred throughout the Reich.⁸⁹

Many missionaries felt the sting of renewed Nazi persecution. In addition to the usual harassment, a number of missionaries were arrested as suspected American spies and incarcerated for several days.⁹⁰ There were incidents of anti-Mormons who denounced the missionaries as representatives of a banned sect. The missionaries would have to prove, through intense interrogations, that this was not the case.⁹¹

There was always a concern among Mormon leaders that young callow missionaries might do or say something to endanger the Church,⁹² and during the late 1930s there were two incidents in which missionaries did offend Nazi sensibilities. In 1937, Alvin Schoenhals was arrested after the Nazis intercepted a letter he wrote criticizing the regime. After a month in jail, Schoenhals was deported.⁹³ Later, a set of missionaries had to flee to Switzerland after the Gestapo obtained a photo of the two with a party flag wrapped around themselves like a breech cloth.⁹⁴

⁸⁸ "Swiss-German MSS History," entries for "March 1937: Difficulties in Hamburg District", "April 1937: Government wants Financial Report", and "April 1937: Conferences". The youth gathering was then moved to Switzerland where there was less oppression.

⁸⁹ For example, in the Breslau district, the Walthenburg Branch was closed "on account of so much difficulty in obtaining permission to hold meetings." Moreover, "[p]olice refused the Saints permission to hold 'open' meetings in November the previous year, allowing only two outsiders to one gathering." In April 1937, the Reich and Prussian Minister of Science issued a decree making it unlawful for any religious meeting to be held in public school buildings. This decree affected several branches in the Breslau and Berlin districts that met in schools. "German-Austrian MSS History," entry for "During the Month of January 1936"; "Friday 29 April 1937."

⁹⁰ Scharffs, p. 85.

⁹¹ Wallace D. Montague, "I was a 'Political Prisoner' of Hitler," *The Instructor* (March 1963), 90-91.

⁹² Scharffs, p. 90.

⁹³ "Swiss-German MSS History," entry for "Missionary Imprisoned," June 1937; Bingham, Oral History, pp. 8-11; Tobler, "The Narrow Line," pp. 19-21.

⁹⁴ Donald M. Petty, Oral History, Interviewed by Douglas Tobler, Salt Lake City, Utah, 6 and 13 August 1985, Typescript, The James Moyle Oral History Program, Archives, Historical Department of The Church of Jesus Christ of

Mormon leaders in both Germany and Utah took these incidents seriously. During the summer of 1939, the Church sent Apostle Joseph Fielding Smith to Germany in part to investigate these events.⁹⁵ Such incidents, no doubt, contributed to the Nazis' growing suspicion of the Mormons. A 1935 Gestapo report on "subversive activities" of religious organizations omitted mention of the Latter-day Saints.⁹⁶ Three years later, the Security Service (SD) labeled Mormons "enemies of the state."⁹⁷ By late 1937 and early 1938, however, as Hitler was preparing for war and needed national support, the overall church struggle in Germany subsided.⁹⁸ This, in part, prevented the Nazis from attacking the Mormons more vigorously. At the same time, not wanting to antagonize the United States unnecessarily, especially while high LDS dignitaries from Utah, including J. Reuben Clark and church president Heber J. Grant, were touring Germany, the Hitler regime "did not look at [the Mormons] as a very serious problem."⁹⁹

The Mormons and the German Media

One of the more controversial events concerning the relations between Mormons and the regime centered on the Church and the media. Ever since the founding of Mormonism, Latter-day Saints faced unflattering accounts in the media at home and abroad. During the Nazi era, however, they experienced both positive and negative media coverage.¹⁰⁰

Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, 50. According to Petty, the missionaries wrapped the flag around them like a "breech cloth;" and M. Douglas & Evelyn N. Wood, interview by Richard O. Cowan & Davis F. Boone, typescript, The James Moyle Oral History Program, Archives, Historical Department of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, pp. 3-5.

⁹⁵ Petty, Oral History, pp. 50-51.

⁹⁶ *Sonderbericht über die Lage der Protestantischen Kirchen und in den verschiedenen Sekten und deren Staatsfeindliche Auswirkung*, 1935, National Archives Microcopy No. T-175, Guide 39, Roll 409, National Archives.

⁹⁷ *Sonderbericht über die Lage der Protestantischen Kirchen und in den verschiedenen Sekten und deren Staatsfeindliche Auswirkung*, 1938, referenced in Tobler and Keele, "The Saints and the Reich," p. 22, and Tobler, "The Narrow Line," p. 9.

⁹⁸ Ian Kershaw, *Hitler: Nemesis* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 2000), p. 41 and 46.

⁹⁹ See Tobler's comments in Bingham, Oral Interview, pp. 26-27.

¹⁰⁰ A "positive" article, "A Visit with the Mormons", that explained Latter-day Saint doctrine appeared in the *Rheinische Zeitung* in February 1933. The follow-

Mormons, too, appreciated the media and utilized it in Europe to spread their message.¹⁰¹ Moreover, LDS leaders sought opportunities to rebut false accounts of Mormonism in local newspapers.¹⁰² It was this activity that led to the appearance of a controversial article in the *Völkischer Beobachter* in the spring of 1939.

In November, 1938, the Nazis unleashed their most brutal attack on the Jews up to that time. In response to American criticism in the aftermath of Kristallnacht, the *Völkischer Beobachter* published an article entitled, "The State within a State: An American Parallel to the Jewish Question in Germany."¹⁰³ The column, addressed to "fair-minded Americans" compared Nazi treatment of the Jews to the official handling of the "Mormon question" in Missouri and Illinois during the nineteenth century. Both Mormons and the Jews, the writer claimed, were enemies of mankind.¹⁰⁴

The article outraged Alfred Rees who was the president of the newly formed East German mission.¹⁰⁵ Rees, who believed that his pur-

ing July, the *Herforder Zeitung* ran an article about the Mormon pioneers in Utah and the "sea-gull miracle." In contrast, a "slanderous" article, entitled "The Mormons Seek to Rule the World" appeared in the *Wilhelmshavener Zeitung* in April 1934 and a 1938 *Bremen Nachrichten* article discussed Mormon "indulgence" in polygamy. See "Swiss-German MSS History," entries for February 1933, "Printed Article"; July 1933, "Newspaper Print Favorable Article"; April 1934, "Newspaper Article"; and October 1938, "Opposition."

¹⁰¹ At a 1932 mission presidents' conference held in Prague, then-European mission president, John Widtsoe, encouraged the European Church leaders to use "all forms of publicity" and to organize mission central publicity bureaus. "European Mission Presidents in Conference," *The Latter-day Saints' Millennial Star* 25 (August 1932), 536-537.

¹⁰² For instance, when the article, "The Mormons Seek to Rule the World" appeared in the *Wilhelmshavener Zeitung*, the missionaries got permission to write a rebuttal that appeared on 20 May 1934. See "Swiss-German MSS History," entry for April 1934, "Newspaper Article."

¹⁰³ "Germany Shifting Her Foreign Policy: Reaction Abroad Criticized," *New York Times*, 21 November 1938, p. 4. "Chancellor Hitler's own newspaper, the *Voelkisher Beobachter*, published what it called a history of the ejections of Mormons from the States of Missouri and Illinois, describing it as an 'American parallel to the Jewish problem in Germany.'" See also "West German MSS History," entry for Tuesday, 22 November 1938.

¹⁰⁴ "West German MSS History," entry for Tuesday, 22 November 1938.

¹⁰⁵ During the summer of 1937, Heber J. Grant announced that a third German-speaking mission would be created from the German-Austrian mission

pose was to work with government officials, had been making contacts with influential Nazi organizations since he arrived in Berlin. As early as November, 1937, he had established a relationship with “a certain influential agency,” most likely the Propaganda Ministry.¹⁰⁶ At the time, Rees believed that he had struck a “secret deal” with the Ministry in which the press would refrain from publishing unfavorable articles about the Latter-day Saints.¹⁰⁷ In return, Rees agreed to write “positive” articles about Germany for the American press.¹⁰⁸ Although Rees believed that he had bested the Propaganda Ministry, he did not realize that Goebbel’s Ministry had been making quid pro quo agreements with other denominations in exchange for favorable public relations abroad.¹⁰⁹ Furthermore, on 19 April 1939 Rees published an article on Mormonism in the *Völkischer Beobachter*.

Rees, in his article entitled, “In the Land of the Mormons,” favorably compared Mormonism and Nazism and emphasized doctrinal similarities. He also suggested that common experience gave Mormonism a unique understanding of the “new Germany,” especially its grievances resulting from World War I. Rees asserted “to a student of Mormonism, recent developments in Germany present a most impressive study.” He

and the Swiss-German mission. The new missions, West German, East German and Swiss-Austrian missions would be organized on 1 January 1938. A third mission president, Alfred Rees was called at that time and arrived in Germany to help with the transition in the fall of 1937.

¹⁰⁶ Ralph Mark Lindsey, Oral History, Interviewed by Matthew Heiss, Oakmont, California, 22 April 1990, Typescript, The James Moyle Oral History Program, Archives, Historical Department, The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, Salt Lake City, Utah, pp. 1-2. Lindsey confirms that Rees had connections with the Propaganda Ministry. However, Lindsey states that the scandalous article was on Mormon polygamy. In searching mission records in late 1938 and early 1939, there is no mention of such an article.

¹⁰⁷ Bingham, Oral History, pp. 25-26.

¹⁰⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 22.

¹⁰⁹ Roland Bleich, “Selling Nazi Germany Abroad: The Case of Hulda Jost,” *Journal of Church and State* 35 (Autumn 1993), 807-808. According to Bleich, “Concerned about the impact of a bad press on his foreign policy, Hitler realized that several small American-based denominations could be useful in influencing public opinion abroad. Methodists and Baptists, particularly, wielded considerable influence in America while posing little risk to Nazi totalitarian designs in Germany because of their small membership. These churches, on the other hand, had reasons of their own to collaborate; for in return they could expect toleration by the Nazi state.”

mentioned J. Reuben Clark, no doubt, reminding the Nazis of Clark's efforts to relieve the financial situation in Germany as president of the Foreign Bondholders' Association. Rees concluded that Mormons exhibited the "application of the German ideal: Community welfare before personal welfare," an allusion to Point 24 of the Nazi Party program of putting "common interests before self-interest."¹¹⁰

Rees believed that the article would help the Mormon cause in Germany and even had it published in pamphlet form for missionary use.¹¹¹ Douglas Wood of the West German mission, however, opposed the article and objected to Rees' "friendly relationship" with the Nazis.¹¹² Wood refused to distribute the tract in the West German mission arguing that it linked Mormonism too closely to National Socialism.¹¹³ Ultimately, it was Nazis who restricted distribution of the tract because the swastika on the front cover implied Party sanction of an American denomination.¹¹⁴

While Rees intended to spread the Mormon message and to provide safety for the 8,000-9,000 Mormons living in the East German mission¹¹⁵ he underestimated the ruthlessness of the Nazis and overestimated his ability to deal with them.¹¹⁶ Rees, rather than help the Mormon cause with the publication of his article in the *Völkischer Beobachter*, unwittingly tied his religion to the pagan cult of National Socialism.

Conclusions

The outbreak of war a few months after the publication of Rees' article dramatically changed church/state relations in Germany. Hitler, needing national support, let up on the church struggle. In August, 1939 the Mormon Church withdrew its missionaries from Europe leaving

¹¹⁰ Alfred C. Rees, "Im Lande der Mormonen," *Völkischer Beobachter*, 14 April 1939.

¹¹¹ After its publication Rees petitioned the Propaganda Ministry to reprint thousands of copies of the article in pamphlets for missionaries to use. The ministry obliged apparently believing that distribution of the pamphlet would also benefit the Party. See Lindsey, Oral History, p. 2.

¹¹² This led to a heated debate between Wood and Rees. Tobler, "The Narrow Line," pp. 26-27.

¹¹³ Ibid.

¹¹⁴ Dixon, p. 72.

¹¹⁵ Lindsey, Oral History, p. 2.

¹¹⁶ Tobler, "The Narrow Line," p. 28.

more than 13,000 coreligionists in the Third Reich. Both the Hitler regime and the Mormon Church sought to survive the war.

Between 1933 and 1939, Mormons, like other denominations struggled to formulate strategies to deal with the Nazi regime. LDS attitudes were shaped by the mandates of the Twelfth Article of Faith and the accommodation policies developed at the turn of the century. This meant that the Latter-day Saints would concern themselves with spiritual rather than political matters in the Reich. They pledged themselves to be loyal citizens and support the regime that was in power; it was an approach that alleviated Nazi suspicions to a considerable degree.

Relations between Hitler's government and the Mormon Church were, therefore, better than those involving most other small denominations. That does not mean that the Latter-day Saints escaped Nazi harassment. Instead a two-tiered pattern developed. On the national level, the Nazis eliminated the Church's Boy Scout organization while the Gestapo monitored LDS meetings and financial activities. During the middle of the decade, Mormons felt optimistic. This was because the Nazis, at the national level, paid very little attention to the Mormons. As long as there was something to be gained internationally, the regime tolerated Latter-day Saints in much the same way it tolerated Baptists and Methodists. After the Olympics, Nazi suspicions of the LDS had grown substantially while toleration had waned considerably.

Locally, Mormons faced continued harassment, and in some places, outright persecution. As with other denominations, grass-roots Party activists determined the degree and nature of this harassment. For example, Nazi officials nearly succeeded in banishing Mormonism in Saxony in 1935. Nevertheless, LDS leaders were willing to tolerate such abuse because of their seemingly "privileged" status nationally.

But overall, the Mormons did not endure the intense persecution suffered by other religions. The Party never banned the Mormons.

Appendix A

Der Stern
No. 65
14. Juli 1933
Ein aufklärender Brief

Der unter abgedruckte Brief wurde durch die Schwierigkeiten veranlaßt, die unsern Missionaren in Darmstadt entstanden waren. Die Behörden hatten die Ausweisung der Missionare verfügt, weil ihre Anwesenheit angeblich nicht im Interesse des deutschen Volkes liege. Unser zuständiger Bezirksleiter, Ältester Rudolf A. Noß, nahm sofort die Verhandlungen mit den Regierungsstellen auf, um eine Zurückziehung der Ausweisungsverfügung herbeizuführen. Die Verfügung wurde denn auch, wenn zunächst auch nur vorläufig, zurückgezogen und das Missionsbüro ersucht, eine offizielle Erklärung über einige die Regierung besonders interessierende Punkte in bezug auf unsre Lehren und Bestrebungen, Stellung zu Staat und andern Kirchen, Organisation, Arbeitsweise usw., belegt mit entsprechenden Unterlagen aus der Kirchenliteratur, abzugeben; auf Grund dieser Erklärung und Unterlagen werde die Angelegenheit eingehend geprüft und eine endgültige Entscheidung getroffen werden. Daraufhin hat das Missionsbüro das folgende Schreiben abgefaßt und mit zahlreichen Belegen aus unsrer Literatur durch den Bezirksleiter der hessischen Staatsregierung überreichen lassen. Wie uns Bruder Noß soeben mitteilt, hat die Regierung die Ausweisungsverfügung nunmehr endgültig aufgehoben und ihre Entscheidung dahin getroffen, daß Aufenthalt und Tätigkeit unser Missionare nicht mehr beanstandet werden.

Da der Brief über den Kreis der Betroffenen hinaus von Interesse sein dürfte, bringen wir ihn nachstehend auch unsern Lesern zur Kenntnis.

Schriftleitung.

Basel, den 22. Juni 1933.

An die Hessische Staatsregierung zu Händen des

Herrn Staatskommissars Dr. Best

Darmstadt

Betr. Ausweisungsverfügung gegen die Missionare Ryman und Niederhauser.

Sehr geehrter Herr Staatskommissar!

Sie hatten die Freundlichkeit, die angeführte Ausweisungsverfügung auf Grund einer Besprechung zwischen einem Ihrer Herren Regierungsrate und unserm zuständigen Frankfurter Bezirksleiter, Herrn Rudolf Noß, einstweilen zurückziehen zu lassen.

Wir danken Ihnen herzlich für diese Entgegenkommen und geben der Zuversicht Ausdruck, Sie möchten sich an Hand der Ihnen heute zugehenden Unterlagen davon überzeugen, daß die Bestrebungen unsrer Kirche durchaus geeignet sind, das Wohl des deutschen Volkes zu fördern und daß deshalb die Verfügung endgültig zurückgenommen werden sollte.

Es wird in diesem Scheiben weder möglich noch erwünscht sein, die Lehre unsrer Kirche in allen Punkten eingehend darzustellen, wir beschränken uns daher im folgenden auf solche, von denen wir annehmen, daß Sie ihnen besonders Wert beilegen, und verwiesen im übrigen auf die angeschlossene Literatur. Etwa weiter gewünschte Unterlagen und Erklärungen stehen Ihnen jederzeit zur Verfügung.

1.

Unsere Lehre ist das alte, ursprüngliche Evangelium Jesu Christi, rein und unverfälscht von irgendwelchen unchristlichen, fremdartigen Einflüssen, wie es Christus verkündigt hat. Grundlage ist die Bibel, insbesondere das Neue Testament. Dieses Evangelium ist nach einem jahrhundertlangen Abfall in unsrer Zeit durch Offenbarung der Menschheit von neuem gegeben worden, eine Offenbarung, durch welche die Reformation weitergeführt und vollendet wurde. Wir sehen in Martin Luther einen Mann Gottes und den Vorläufer der in der Schrift vorausgesagten „Wiederherstellung aller Dinge“.—Die Hauptpunkte unserer Lehre sind in den 13 „Glaubensartikeln“ der Kirche zusammengefaßt.

(Beilagen 1.)

Das Evangelium ist uns der große Plan des Lebens, dessen Befolgung uns zu bessern Männer und Frauen macht. Wir legen keinen Wert auf theologische Spitzfindigkeiten, gehen allem religiösen Streit aus dem Wege, betonen aber um so stärker die Notwendigkeit eines praktischen Christentums, das sich im täglichen Leben des Einzelnen auswirken muß, zu seinem Wohle und zum Wohle des Gemeinwesens, in dem er lebt. Wir erlangen von unsern Mitgliedern Enthaltensamkeit von Rauschmitteln jeder Art und Form, leben also alkohol- und tabakfrei, verpönen den Genuß von Bohnenkaffee und Schwarztee und übermäßiger Fleischkost und verpflichten die Mitglieder zu einer einfachen, natürlichen Lebensweise, wie sie bekanntlich auch der deutsche Volkskanzler Adolf Hitler führt. Dabei halten wir uns frei von Fanatismus und maßen uns nicht an, unsre Umgebung bevormunden zu wollen. Vernünftige Belehrungen und unser eigenes gutes Beispiel sollen die andern überzeugen, daß Gehorsam gegenüber den reinen, unverfälschten Lehren Jesu Christi zu einem wahrhaft befriedigenden, fortschrittlichen Leben führt.

(Beilagen 2.)

2.

Die sittlichen Lehren unsrer Kirche machen diese zu einem eisernen Bollwerk gegen alle Besetzungsbestrebungen. Geschlechtliche Reinheit wird beiden Geschlechtern als eine höchste religiöse Pflicht gelehrt, unbedingte Enthaltensamkeit vor der Ehe und lebenslängliche gegenseitige Treue in der Ehe als Oberstes Gesetz verkündigt und Ehebruch als ein Vergehen betrachtet, das an Fluchwürdigkeit gleich nach dem Mord kommt. Reinhaltung der Rasse wird als eine Verpflichtung der kommenden Generation gegenüber mit aller Strenge gefordert, auf körperliche Ertüchtigung durch Arbeit, Sport und Spiel großer Wert gelegt, und selbstverständlich alle jene Bersetzungserscheinungen, wie sie sich noch bis vor kurzem in Literatur, Theater, Presse, Film und Funk so widerwärtig breitmachten, rücksichtslos abgelehnt und bekämpft. Es gibt keine

Kirche, die den großen Volksschäden unsrer Zeit entschiedener zu Leibe rückt und ihnen den Boden mehr entzieht als unsre. Auf die Pflege des Familienlebens als der Keimzelle des Volkes, und auf die Achtung vor Frau und Mutter als der Mittlerin zwischen Himmel und Erde wird der größte Nachdruck gelegt. Kurz: es wird eine planmäßige Höherzüchtung und Veredlung des Menschen angestrebt wie sie in der bewußten Höherzüchtung von Pflanzen und Tieren ihr niedrigeres aber symbolisches Gegenstück hat. Auf die Früchte dieser Bestrebungen darf die Kirche Jesu Christi bei aller gebührenden Bescheidenheit doch mit berechtigtem Stolze hinweisen.

(Beilagen 3.)

3.

Die Stellung der Kirche Jesu Christi gegenüber dem Staat wird durch ihren folgenden Glaubensartikel gekennzeichnet:

„Wir glauben daran, Königen, Präsidenten, Herrschern und Obrigkeiten untertänig zu sein, den Gesetzen zu gehorchen, sie zu ehren und zu unterstützen.“

Die Kirche hält sich von jeder Einmischung in Politik fern. Zwar strebt sie bewußt und mit allen Mitteln darnach, ihre Mitglieder zu tüchtigen Staatsbürgern zu machen, die die Förderung des Wohles ihres Vaterlandes und Volkes als eine heilige Pflicht betrachten, aber sie mischt sich nicht in Angelegenheiten, deren Regelung dem Staat vorbehalten ist, so wenig wie sie mit Parteipolitik je etwas zu tun hatte oder zu tun haben möchte. Ihre Mitglieder sind mündig genug, um von ihren staatsbürgerlichen Rechten und Pflichten ohne jede Bevormundung den rechten Gebrauch zu machen; die einzige Bedingung ist, daß dies stets auf dem Boden der christlichen Weltanschauung geschieht, was aber als selbstverständlich gilt.

Die Mission der Kirche enthalten sich aufs strengste jeder politischen Tätigkeit. Ihre Sendung ist eine rein religiöse. Sie verkündigen das wiederhergestellte Evangelium, unterweisen die Menschen darin und arbeiten mit ihnen, daß sie seinen Gesetzen und Geboten gehorchen.

Die Kirche legt großen Wert darauf, die vaterländische Gesinnung bei ihren Mitgliedern zu pflegen. Jung und alt werden ermahnt, die guten alten Sitten und Grundsätze ihrer Väter als kostbares Gut treu zu bewahren. Die jetzt endlich wieder zu verdienten Ehren kommende alte Wahrheit „Gemeinnutz geht vor Eigennutz“ wird in unsrer Kirche seit ihrer Gründung, also seit über 100 Jahren, gelehrt und allgemein befolgt. Wir lehren unsre Mitglieder, ihr Volk als eine große erweiterte Familie zu betrachten mit all den damit verbundenen Pflichten und Verantwortlichkeiten. Als ein besonderer Beweis für die Pflege des Heimat- und Volksgefühls darf die Errichtung des deutschen Kriegerdenkmals in der Salzseestadt in den Vereinigten Staaten von Nordamerika durch deutschstämmige Mitglieder unsrer Kirche angesehen werden. Wir verweisen angelegentlich auf die hier beiliegenden Nummern des „Salt Lake City-Beobacters“, der von der Kirche für ihre deutschsprechenden Mitglieder in Amerika herausgegeben wird. Die Einweihung dieses Denkmals hat am 30. Mai d.J. im Beisein des deutschen Militärattachés, Generalmajors von Bötticher, stattgefunden. Der zweitoberste Führer des Kirche hat dabei das

Weihegebet gesprochen. „Der Beobachter“ ist die älteste deutsche Zeitung in Westen Amerikas und wurde von der Kirche ins Leben gerufen, um die deutschstämmigen Mitglieder der Kirche in ihrem Bestreben, ihre Sprache und ihr Volkstum sich auch in Amerika zu erhalten, zu unterstützen.

Aus den weiter angeschlossenen gedruckten Unterlagen werden Sie noch manche andre Beweise der gutdeutschen, völkischen Gesinnung und Einstellung unsrer Mitglieder entnehmen können.

(Beilagen 4)

4.

Für das Verhältnis unsrer Kirche zu andern Kirchen ist unser folgender Glaubensartikel maßgebend:

„Wir erheben Anspruch auf das Recht, den allmächtigen Gott zu verehren nach den Eingebungen unsres Gewissens und gestatten allen Menschen das selbe Rechte, mögen sie verehren wie, wo oder was sie wollen.“

Wie schon hervorgehoben, gehen wir allem religiösen Streit aus dem Wege, denn es ist uns durch Offenbarung ausdrücklich geboten worden: „Kämpfet gegen keine Kirche!“ Wir anerkennen das Gute, woimmer wir es finden und nehmen Wahrheit an aus jeder Quelle. Unser Führer Brigham Young hat einst den Katholiken einen Bauplatz geschenkt, damit sie in der Salzseestadt in Amerika eine Kirche bauen konnten, und dieser Seit der Duldsamkeit beseelt die Kirche noch heute. Wir glauben, daß jeder Mensch für sich selbst verantwortlich ist, und daß den Stifter des Christentums nichts so sehr betrübt wie die Unduldsamkeit und der Bruderzwist in den Reihen Seiner angeblichen Jünger. Deshalb schärfen wir allen unsern Mitgliedern und Beamten ein, andre Kirchen in Ruhe zu lassen, und diese Vorschrift wird auch allgemein befolgt.

(Beilagen 5)

5.

Zur Erreichung der kirchlichen Zwecke und Ziele dient eine Organisation, die der von Christus ins Leben gerufenen entspricht: Profeten, Apostel, Patriarchen, Hohenpriester, Siebziger, Aelteste, Bischöfe usw. Sind als Beamte und Lehrer tätig, um die Mitglieder zu unterweisen und die Verwaltungsarbeiten zu erledigen. Alle Beamten üben ihre Tätigkeit ehrenamtlich aus und erhalten keinerlei finanzielle Entschädigung. „Umsonst habt ihr's empfangen, umsonst gebet es auch!“ ist ein grundlegendes Gesetz in der Kirche. Da die Organisation sehr reichhaltig gegliedert ist und infolgedessen sehr viele Mitglieder ehrenamtlich tätig sind, kann die Arbeit so verteilt werden, daß sie in der Regel neben der Berufsarbeit getan werden kann, den einzelnen also nicht zu stark belastet. Im Außendienst sind Missionare tätig, die ebenfalls ohne Lohn oder Gehalt arbeiten, sogar die Kosten ihres Unterhaltes aus eigener Tasche oder mit Hilfe von Angehörigen und Freunden bestreiten müssen. Meist sind es jüngere Leute, die sich der Kirche zu diesem Zwecke für zwei und mehr Jahre freiwillig zur Verfügung stellen und dabei von ihren Eltern unterstützt werden, soweit ihre eigenen Ersparnisse nicht ausreichen.

Die Kirche huldigt dem Grundsatz der Selbstverwaltung. Die in über hundert Orten des deutschen Sprachgebietes bestehenden Gemeinden werden

meist von einheimischen Mitgliedern geleitet: gewöhnlich ist es ein Präsident mit zwei Ratgebern, denen noch eine Priesterschaft, bestehend aus Aeltesten, Priestern, Lehrern und Diakonen, zur Seit steht. Die Priesterschaft besteht ausschließlich aus einheimischen Männern. Die Frauen haben ihre eigene Organisation, den sogen. Frauenhilfsverein, der vornehmlich Wohltätigkeits- und Ausbildungszwecke verfolgt und dessen Leitung ganz in den Händen ortsansässiger, deutscher Frauen liegt.

(Beilagen 6)

Wir hoffen, Ihnen hiermit einen Einblick in unsre Lehren und Bestrebungen gegeben zu haben und würden uns freuen, wenn Sie sich aus der beiliegenden Literatur über die einzelnen Punkte noch weiter unterrichten würden. Im übrigen verbürgen sich die Unterzeichneten ausdrücklich dafür, daß sich unsre Körperschaft allen staatlichen Gesetzen und Einrichtungen unterwirft, und daß sich insbesondere unsre Missionare, ihrer rein religiösen Sendung gemäß, in keinerlei Weise politisch betätigen.

Wir sehen Ihrer endgültigen Entscheidung nunmehr gerne entgegen und verharren inzwischen in vollkommener Hochachtung.

Schweizerisch-Deutsche Mission

(Unterschrift)

Appendix B

September 8th, 1933
 State Secret Service Police Office
 Service Station Ad. II E, Room 218
 Prinz Albrechtstr. 28
 Berlin

Gentlemen,

In keeping with our conversation yesterday, and in compliance with your request, I make the following statement concerning

THE CHURCH OF JESUS CHRIST OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS

The name of the Church is the “Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints,” often called “Mormons.” Although the word “Mormon” is but a nickname, we recognize it when we hear it. This name is derived from a book by the same name, which book was translated from golden plates on which was engraved a history of the American people. We claim it to be the first authentic history of the American people as far back as 600 B.C. It is particularly the history of the American Indian.

The Church was organized on the sixth day of April in the year 1830 at Fayette, state of New York, United States of America. It is called the “Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints” because we claim that through Christ it was organized. The term “Latter-day Saints” is to distinguish the followers of Christ in this day from those in former days, or in the days of the Apostles.

Our articles of faith are: (quoted article of faith)

The German–Austria Mission of the Church Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints comprises the north central and southeast part of Germany, and all of Austria; therefore it is called the German–Austrian Mission.

Our teachings are that those desiring to become members of the Church must be converted of their own free will and choice to the Gospel of Jesus Christ as found in the Bible and is taught by the Church. Before their baptism, or entrance into the Church, individuals must prove themselves worthy of membership; and certainly afterward are they expected, above all else, to be trustworthy, honest, virtuous, kind, and faithful.

If a member, or members, of the Church are known to be engaged in immoral practices, and do not immediately repent and lived in keeping with the teachings of the Church in this respect, they are excommunicated. These members are also taught to be exemplary in their own homes. The man is to make peace with his wife, and a wife is to make peace with her husband, and the parents are to make peace with children. It is expected that love abide in their homes,

and that they thank the lord, morning and evening, for every blessing received, and, at the same time, ask for his protection during the day.

It is expected that every eligible member of this Church marry and live first great commandment—"multiplied to replenish the earth"—and that each of the contracting parties be true to themselves and to each other—a single standard of morality. Their children, and their children's children are taught personal cleanliness, and also to keep what we call the "Word of Wisdom," abstaining from the use of tobacco, intoxicating liquors, and other harmful beverages.

They are also taught, especially, to be able to class themselves with the best citizens of the country, and to support, in the full sense of the word, the ordinances and laws of the town, the state, and the country in which they live. The authorities of our Church have no advice to give regarding party politics, leaving the members free to identify themselves with whatever party they choose; but in any event, we teach that the present party in power, and the laws governing the country, be supported by the members of the church.

We have our own Church and own convictions concerning what it advocates, and we expect to carry our convictions through for the sake of our eternal salvation, so long as we do not come in conflict with the fixed laws of the government.

Our organizations are kept up, more or less, by free will donations. Considerable amounts of money come in and from America every year and are spent in Germany by the missionaries of this Church, which money is spent for their traveling, board and living expenses. Not a cent is received by these missionaries from the mission, but they're supported by themselves or by their parents in America.

Our work in this country is headed by an organization called the "Association of the German–Austrian Mission of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter–day Saints," consisting of German citizens. It is a registered corporate body like any other organization in Germany.

Now in conclusion, as to your question concerning my attitude as president of the mission, let me say that nearly 40 years ago I spent three years here in Germany, at which time I learned the language in Berlin and had a splendid opportunity throughout the country to become acquainted with the German people. Therefore, for nearly 40 years, I have studied this people, and not only studied them, but have actually spent six years, all told, in the various cities in Germany, and up to the present time I have been a friend and supporter of the German people in their righteous endeavors. I have, possibly, seen this country at its best and again at its worst. And through it all I can truthfully say that the Germans possess a personal pride that is seldom found in other countries. They're full of vitality and ambition and are workers of the first class. No mat-

ter whether they possess much or little, their personal appearance is kept up to the highest degree, clothes pressed, shoes polished, hair combed and all in all, those who desire to live the good life are wholesome to look upon.

Of all the many foreign countries it has been my privilege to visit, give me Germany with its activity and high notions of thrift and prosperity. I have spent many thousands of Marks for railroad fare alone, and have visited many cities time and time again in this beautiful country. I can truthfully say that every courtesy has been accorded me by railroad officials, city officials, traffic officers, and the citizens of the country generally. I most highly appreciate the privilege of spending some time among this great people, representing as I do the Church to which I belong in a most worthy cause for the good and benefit of mankind, as well as for their moral and spiritual uplift.

Any detailed information regarding our faith or general attitude will be gladly furnished.

I thank you for the privilege of making the foregoing statement.

I am
Respectfully yours,
Oliver H. Budge
President of the German–Austrian Mission
Of the Church Jesus Christ of Latter–day
Saints.

PS. I am enclosing a number of cards with the 13 Articles of Faith, and two copies of our magazine, “Der Stern,” no. 2 from the volume for the year 1931, and no. 15 from the volume for the year 1933. In the latter number permit me to refer you to the article entitled “A Friend of Justice.”

Translation of illustrated article under the title

“In The Land of the Mormons”

by President Alfred C. Rees

Völkischer Beobachter

Berlin, Germany

April 14, 1939

How would you like to live in a city that is 4,300 feet above sea level; that nestles in a broad valley, surrounded entirely by rugged, picturesque mountains, whose tops are covered with eternal snow, a veritable fortress set up by Nature, apparently intended to defy invasion either by water, land or sky?

Such a place is Salt Lake City, capital of the state of Utah, scenic centre of America, the renowned gathering place and radiating point of the Mormon church; two day's travel from New York, one day from the Pacific Coast.

As any one of us, who have visited that remarkable city, will testify, it is one of the most attractive, beautifully situated cities in all the world; clean, modern, pulsating with life and glowing with hospitality; with a history of achievement that at once challenges out admiration.

And what a tragedy lies back of this outstanding accomplishment! Less than 100 years ago, all that vast, limitless territory, encompassed by the Rocky Mountains, was the very symbol of desolation. Little was known of it. Only a few venturesome trappers entered that forbidding waste. The silence of centuries brooded over that region of violent excesses of heat and cold.

It was in this very valley of threatening starvation and death that a little band of people sought refuge in 1847, after they had been persecuted, pillaged, plundered and driven from their comfortable homes in Eastern United States by mobs of priests and politicians.

Since there were no railroad connections until the late '60s, those who joined the early Mormon forces came by ox-teams and even handcarts. There are still men and women living in Utah, who, as girls and boys, covered that entire distance on foot, sustained and strengthened in all of their trials and tribulations by the knowledge that they were escaping the cruel persecutions that had been heaped upon them on account of their religious beliefs; and by the hope that peace and security awaited them somewhere in the unknown West.

This bitter, historic experience had produced out of the Mormons a determined, practical people, as a result of which, they perhaps, better than many other, can appreciate what the German people endured as they passed through their hardships.

Thus the Mormon people know what persecution and suppression mean. And the German people, who have gone through the shadow of the valley since the World War; and who have been forced to rely upon their own strength and determination, and upon their undying belief in their own ability to restore their self-respect and their merited place among the mighty in the sisterhood

of nations, reveal that same progressive character, which does not shun obstacles. For that reason, to a student of Mormonism, recent developments in Germany present a most impressive study.

From the very beginning, the Mormon people took care of their poor. They saw to it that the administration of relief was always in local hands, in order to limit abuses. They provided for an intimate personal acquaintanceship between those who gave and those who received. The result of this system of Mormon relief has brought about the total absence of want and suffering among their people in every community where the established principles and rules of the church are observed. It is upon this deep rooted principle that the Mormon church is now carrying out its widely publicized and praised program of self help at a time when ten million Americans are jobless and idle, due to a departure from America's traditional economic, industrial system.

In order to produce a sound body, Mormons have advocated and practiced, since 1830, what they call the "Word of Wisdom", which calls for the total abstinence from the use of tobacco, alcohol, tea, coffee, and for the sparing use of meat. Statistics in the United States show that, as a result of close adherence to this formula, the Mormon people are freer from contagious and hereditary diseases, than any other people in the United States; and, in fact, the world. That is why the Mormon people, perhaps, more than any other people in all the world, pay high tribute to the German government for its bold declaration of war against the use of alcohol and tobacco by the youth of Germany.

Mormon people are proverbially practical believers, not only in the sanctity of the home, but also in large families. They are unalterably opposed to birth control, which they view as a contributing factor to the destruction of any race. The industry of men and women throughout Germany is a reminder of the proverbial attitude of the Mormon people toward work. It was Brigham Young who announced that the loafer should not eat the bread of the worker. In fact, the coat of arms of Utah is the beehive, indicative of the industry and cooperative spirit of the people.

Perhaps the outstanding financial system of the world for the maintenance of a religious organization is to be found in Mormonism: It is their Tithing System. A true, faithful Mormon pays to the church one-tenth of his total income for the upkeep of the church and its institutions. This has placed the church on a sound financial basis, and has made possible its remarkable expansion, growth and development and operation of its far flung educational and social institutions, all conducted under church supervision; also in the erection and maintenance of commodious places of worship, which dot and beautify the entire length and breadth of the land, in which the church has a following. Here is the application of the German ideal: Community welfare before personal welfare. Mormons are practical exponents of that wholesome doctrine.

Among these institutions of learning of which the Mormon church is especially proud, is the Brigham Young University, located in Provo, about a two hour's drive from Salt Lake City. That institution was established under the direction of a distinguished German, Dr. Karl G. Maeser, who was born in

Meissen, Saxony, joined the Mormon faith, came to Utah, and was charged by Brigham Young with the responsibility of establishing that institution.

The Mormon church makes the unique claim of having been established by direct revelation from God, through the instrumentality of a young man by the name of Joseph Smith, who, though unlettered and untutored, laid down principles of conduct in the realm of religion; announced truths in the field of general science; and gave to the world a philosophy of life, that challenge the thinking of every unbiased mind.

Among the Mormons who have made notable contributions to world thought is also J. Reuben Clark Jr., a member of the First Presidency of the Mormon church. He is an acknowledged diplomat, was United States Ambassador to Mexico, and today is the head of the Foreign Bondholders Association, which represents not only the United States government, but all Americans who hold securities of foreign countries. Mr. Clark is a frequent visitor to Berlin.

Perhaps the persistent driving force and the unfailing courage of the Mormon people find explanation in their belief that man is immortal; that he lives beyond the grave; that he continues in his program of eternal progression; that divinity and complete mastery over all forces is his goal and destiny. In fact, their belief is crystallized thus; "As God now is, man may become." Mormonism sees in God a personal, living Being.