

Offener Brief

An das bibelgläubige und Christus liebende Volk Deutschlands!

Der biblische Name für den allmächtigen Gott ist JEHOVAH; er hat in seinem Wort, der Bibel, welches Christus die Wahrheit nannte, sein Vorhaben mit allen Menschen guten Willens geoffenbart. Die Kenntnis von diesem Vorsatz des Höchsten ist darum für jeden Menschen von lebenswichtiger Notwendigkeit.

D. Martin Luther prophezeite einst:

„Nach unsrer Zeit wird die Strafe auch über Deutschland und andere mehr gehen um der grässlichen Undankbarkeit und Verachtung Willens des lieben seligen Worts, das ihnen rein und reichlich gepredigt wird. Und wird nach diesem heilen Licht ein gräßliche, schreckliche Finsternis kommen.“

(Aus D. Martin Luthers Werken. Kritische Gesamtausgabe. Tüschredes & Bass Weimar 1921, Nr. 6543)

Es ist nun eine erschreckende Tatsache, daß die gegenwärtigen Machthaber in Deutschland alle aufrichtigen *Bibelchristen*, die offen ihren Glauben an Jehova Gott bekennen und ihm dienen, schmähen, verleumden und mit *grausamen Mitteln verfolgen*.

Jehovas Zeugen befragt

Ägyptens Pharaon mißhandelte einst Jehovas auserwählten Volk. Die Schrift erklärt, daß Pharaon der Vertreter des Teufels war, und daß er samt seinen Helfershelfern von Gott bestraft und vernichtet wurde.

Mose war ein Hebräer, ein Gott inspirierter Prophet, der einen Teil der Bibel verfaßt und darin erklärt hat, daß Jehova einen Größeren, von dem Mose ein Schattenbild war, erwecken würde, und daß dieser Größere der Messias sei und zum rechtmäßigen Herrscher der Erde ernannt werden würde. Viele weitere Bibelstellen und Jesu eigenes Zeugnis beweisen, daß *Jesus Christus* jener Größere, das heißt der *Messias* und *Erretter* ist.

Seit vielen Jahren haben wir, Jehovas Zeugen, früher *Bibelforscher* genannt, in Deutschland unseren Volksgenossen die Bibel und ihre trostreichen Wahrheiten gelehrt und dabei in selbstloser Weise zur Linderung materieller und geistiger Not Millionen vorausgalt.

Als Dank dafür sind Tausende von Zeugen Jehovas in Deutschland aufs grausamste verfolgt, mißhandelt und in Gefängnisse und Konzentrationslager eingesperrt worden. Trotz größtem seelischem Druck und trotz sadistischer körperlicher Mißhandlung, auch an deutschen Frauen, Müttern und an Kindern im zarten Alter, hat man in vier Jahren nicht vermocht die Zeugen Jehovas auszurotten; denn sie lassen sich nicht einschüchtern, sondern fahren fort, *Gott mehr zu gehorchen als den Menschen*, wie es seinerzeit die Apostel Christi auch taten, als man ihnen verbot, das Evangelium zu verkündigen.

Die gegenwärtige unchristliche und bibelfeindliche Regierung maßt sich ferner an zu erklären, daß nur die römisch-katholische Kirche und die Staatskirche eine Art Religionsfreiheit ausüben kann, daß aber allen anderen wahrhaft bibelgläubigen Christen *keine Glaubens- und Gewissensfreiheit* gewährt wird.!

Gewaltverweigerung

In vielen Teilen Deutschlands bemühen sich die Kreisleiter vergeblich, die Zeugen Jehovas zur Unterzeichnung von Ehrenerklärungen zu zwingen, worin es wörtlich heißt:

„Ich versichere hiermit an Eidesstatt, daß ich die staatsfeindlichen Machenschaften der jüdischen internationalen Bibelvereineigung erkannt habe und ich mich als treuer Deutscher von dieser Vereinigung, so weit ich ihr angehört oder nahestand, losgesagt habe ... ich werde die Gesetze und die Anweisungen der Partei und des Staates befolgen und vor allen Dingen auch in meiner Familie den Geist des Führers, besonders im Herzen meiner Kinder, aufrichten. Ich bedauere, daß ich früher einmal mich irreführen ließ und damit mich und meine Familie in Gefahr brachte ... Ich bin mir bewußt, daß jede weitere Betätigung für die internationale Bibelvereineigung, ganz gleich in welcher Beziehung, schärfste Bestrafung nach sich zieht, da ich dann nicht mehr wert und würdig bin in der Gemeinschaft des deutschen Volkes zu leben und zu arbeiten. Falls in der kommenden Zeit staatsfeindliche Elemente an mich herantraten sollten mit Broschüren, Flugblättern, Büchern etc., werde ich die Täter sofort der zuständigen Partei- oder Polizeistelle melden und die Druckschriften ablefen.“

Heil Hitler!

(Unterschrift)

RW 58-4502

Bibelglaube — Wahnsinnstüfte?

In einem persönlichen und vertraulichen Begleitschreiben der Kreisleiter W. ..., datiert den 5. April 1937, heißt es wörtlich:

„Jede Betätigung im Sinne dieser jüdisch-verbrecherischen Machenschaften (unsere Bemerkung: nämlich an Gott zu glauben und die Lehren der Bibel zu verkündigen) wird schärfstens bestraft.“

Der Kreisleiter fährt fort:

„Da ich davon überzeugt bin, daß nur ganz wenige Verbrechernaturen an diese Wahnsinnlehre, die der Auswurf der Menschheit erachtet hat, wirklich glauben und für sie auch noch unter Einsatz der ganzen Person kämpfen können, nehme ich an, daß der größte Teil der uns nunmehr bekannten früheren Bibelforscher oder der damit Sympathisierenden entweder durch falsche Information, Gedanklosigkeit oder Gutgläubigkeit sich dieser Organisation angeschlossen. Trotz des Verbots und erfolgter harter Bestrafungen gibt es noch Unablenkbare, die immer wieder sich und ihre Familien in sinnloser Weise der Gefahr einer Bestrafung aussetzen.“

Dann werden noch weitere Drohungen ausgesprochen, um den Bibelchristen zum Heuchler zu machen und die Erklärung zu unterzeichnen, indem es heißt:

„Sollte einer der Volksgenossen später sich erneut verständigen, kann ich ihm nicht mehr helfen, es muß dann die ganze Härte des Gesetzes in Kraft treten. Falls ein ganz Verbohrter die Unterzeichnung dieser Erklärung ganz verweigern sollte, muß ich daraus entnehmen, daß er sich offensichtlich gegen Partei und Staat stellt und auch dann mit den Konsequenzen dieser Stellung zu rechnen hat.“

Die Konsequenzen dieser Stellen sind Gefängnisstrafen bis zu fünf Jahren und nach Entlassung aus dem Gefängnis Konzentrationslager, und mancherorts, besonders im Ruhrgebiet, Ostpreußen und in Bayern, Mißhandlungen, die sich von den *Folterungen der Inquisitionszeit* nicht mehr unterscheiden.!

Bibelfeindschaft

In amtlichen Blättern werden Jehovas Zeugen als Verbrecher, als Staatsfeinde, als Kommunisten, und die Führer der Bewegung als Juden hingestellt, obwohl alle Welt außerhalb Deutschlands und Millionen bibelgläubige Deutsche davon überzeugt sind, daß die Zeugen Jehovas weder Staatsverbrecher noch Kommunisten noch Juden sind, sondern einfache, anständige, gottgläubige Christen. Die christentum- und bibelfeindliche Einstellung der deutschen Parteijustiz wird ferner bewiesen durch einen Artikel der Zeitschrift: „Der Deutsche Justizbeamte“ Berlin, Ausgabe vom 21. März 1937. Unter der Überschrift: „Der Bibelforscher im Strafvolzug“, von Strafanstaltsvorsteher Liesche, heißt es wie folgt:

„Welche Greuelmärchen die Internationale Bibelforscher-Vereinigung über Deutschland und unseren Führer bewußt zu verbreiten sucht, zeigt uns eine Resolution, die der Mitteleuropäische Kongreß der Zeugen Jehovas in Luzern, während der Tagung vom 4.-7. September 1936, faßte und alle gutgesinnten Menschen aufforderte, davon Kenntnis zu nehmen, daß Jehovas Zeugen in Deutschland, Österreich und anderswo grausam verfolgt, mit Gefängnis bestraft und auf teuflische Weise mißhandelt und manche von ihnen getötet werden. Die Hitler-Regierung hat den wahren Christen jede Art von grausamen Bestrafungen auferlegt und fährt fort dies zu tun.“

„Der Paragraph 112, Ziffer 5, der Dienst- und Vollzugsordnung besagt: „Den christlichen Gefangenen sind die von den kirchlichen Behörden eingeführten Gebet- und Gesangbücher zu verabreichen; evangelische Gefangene erhalten ferner ein Neues Testament mit Psalmen, katholische Gefangene den Dömons-Katechismus und ein Neues Testament oder die Biblische Geschichte. Jüdische Gefangene erhalten ein Gebetbuch.“ Diese Bestimmungen treffen aber für die *Ernststen Bibelforscher als Strafverurteilte nicht zu.*“

„Da nach Paragraph 112 STVO, der Zweck der Untersuchungshaft auch darin besteht, den Häftling an neuen strafbaren Handlungen zu hindern, würde es offensichtlich dem Haftzweck widersprechen, den Untersuchungsabteilungen diejenigen Bücher (Bibel und Neues Testament) zu verabfolgen, aus denen sie für ihre innere Zugehörigkeit zu ihrer verbotenen Sekte und deren staatsfeindlichen Einstellung fortwährend neue Nahrung und Ermunterung entnehmen könnten. Der zuständigen Richter wird nunhin auf entsprechenden begründeten Antrag des betreffenden Strafanstaltsvorstehers in aller Regel die *Entziehung der gesamten Bibel für die Ernststen Bibelforscher anordnen.* ...“

earth. Many other Bible texts and Jesus's own testament prove that Jesus Christ is that greater man; that is, the Messiah and Savior.

For many years we Jehovah's Witnesses, formerly called the Bible Students, have taught our fellow Germans the Bible and its comforting truths, spending millions in a selfless way to alleviate material and mental suffering.

As thanks for our efforts, thousands of Jehovah's Witnesses in Germany have been most cruelly persecuted, mistreated, and locked away in prisons and concentration camps. Despite the greatest mental pressure and sadistic physical mistreatment, including of German women, mothers, and children of a young age, they have not managed to stamp out Jehovah's Witnesses over the last four years; for they will not be intimidated, but will continue to obey God more than men, as Jesus Christ's apostles did in their day, when they were forbidden from spreading the gospel.

The current un-Christian and anti-Bible government furthermore presumes to declare that only the Roman Catholic Church and the State Church may practice a kind of freedom of religion, but that no freedom of faith and conscience is granted to all other true Christians who believe in the Bible.

Coercion of Conscience

In many parts of Germany, the party district leaders have been attempting in vain to force Jehovah's Witnesses to sign declarations of honor, which state word for word:

“I hereby declare in lieu of an oath that I have recognized the subversive machinations of the Jewish International Bible Students Association and have dissociated myself, as a loyal German, from this association, in as far as I was a member or close to it ... I will follow the laws and instructions of the party and the state and above all, also in my family, raise the spirit of the Führer, particularly in the hearts of my children. I regret that I once previously let myself be misled and thereby put myself and my family in danger ... I am aware that any further activity on behalf of the International Bible Students' movement, no matter in what relation, will entail the most severe punishment, as I am then no longer worthy of living and working in the community of the German people. Should subversive elements approach me in the future with brochures, flyers, books, etc., I will report the criminals to the responsible party or police office immediately and provide the printed matter.

Heil Hitler!”
(Signature)

Open Letter to the people of Germany who believe in the Bible and love Jesus Christ!

The biblical name for Almighty God is JEHOVAH; in his word, the Bible, which Jesus Christ called the truth, he revealed his intention for all men of goodwill. The knowledge of this plan by the Most High is therefore of essential necessity for every person.

D. Martin Luther once prophesied:

“After our time, punishment will come over Germany and other countries for the sake of the heinous ingratitude and contempt toward the beloved blessed gospel, which is preached to them purely and richly. And after this bright light a dreadful, terrible darkness will come.”

(From Martin Luther: *Critical Complete Works: Table Talk*, Volume 6, Weimar 1921, No. 6543.)

It is a horrifying fact that those in power today in Germany revile, denigrate, and persecute by cruel methods all upright Biblical Christians who openly confess their faith in Jehovah God and serve him.

Jehovah's Witnesses Persecuted

Egypt's Pharaoh once maltreated Jehovah's chosen people. Scripture explains that Pharaoh was the devil's representative, and that he and his accomplices were punished and destroyed by God.

Moses was a Hebrew, a prophet inspired by God, who wrote part of the Bible and explained within it that Jehovah would awaken a greater man, of whom Moses was a shadow, and this greater man was the Messiah and would be appointed the rightful ruler of the

Belief in the Bible—Insane Doctrine?

A private and confidential accompanying letter from the party district office of W..., dated April 5, 1937, states word for word:

“Every activity for the purpose of these criminal Jewish machinations (our note: namely, believing in God and spreading the teachings of the Bible) will be most severely punished.”

The district leader continues:

“As I am convinced that only very few people of a criminal nature really believe in this insane doctrine, thought up by the scum of humankind, and are also capable of fighting for it at the risk of losing their lives, I assume that the great majority of the previous Bible Students known to us by name, or those sympathizing with them, joined this organization on account of false information, thoughtlessness, or gullibility. Despite the ban and severe punishments meted out, there are still obstinate individuals who persist in exposing themselves and their families to the risk of punishment for no good reason.”

The letter then makes further threats, in order to make Biblical Christians into hypocrites by inducing them to sign the declaration, stating the following:

“Should one of my fellow Germans later commit a sin anew, I can no longer help him; the full severity of the law must then take effect. Should a particularly stubborn individual adamantly refuse to sign this declaration, I must assume from this behavior that he clearly opposes the party and the state and thus accepts the consequences of these institutions.”

The consequences of these institutions are prison sentences of up to five years and concentration camp following release from prison, and in some places, particularly in the Ruhr region, East Prussia, and Bavaria, mistreatment that no longer can be distinguished from the tortures of the Inquisition era.

Hostility to the Bible

In official publications, Jehovah’s Witnesses are presented as criminals, as enemies of the state, as Communists, and the movement’s leaders as Jews, although the entire world, apart from Germany, and millions of Germans who believe in the Bible are convinced that Jehovah’s Witnesses are neither criminals against the state nor Communists nor Jews, but rather simple, decent, devout Christians. The German party justice system’s hostility to Christianity and the Bible is further proved by an article in the journal *The German Justice Official*, Berlin, in the issue from March 21, 1937. In a piece entitled “The Bible Student in the Penal System,” the penal institution director Liesche writes the following:

“The atrocious lies that the International Bible Students Association deliberately seeks to disseminate about Germany and our Führer are evident in a resolution passed by the Central European Congress of Jehovah’s Witnesses in Lucerne, during its conference from September 4–7, 1936, which called on all well-disposed people to acknowledge that Jehovah’s Witnesses in Germany, Austria, and elsewhere are being cruelly persecuted, punished with prison, and mistreated in a devilish manner, with some of them killed. The Hitler government has imposed every kind of cruel punishment on the true Christians and continues to do so...”

“It is important to these Jehovah’s Witnesses, on committal to prisons, to get hold of the Bible, so that they can continue to pursue their subversive attitude through methodically compiled Bible quotations and if possible transfer it to other inmates of the prisons. It should be the law enforcement authorities’ task to prevent the study of the Bible from leading to notes that could be used in a manner that endangers the state. It is thus ceded to the law enforcement authorities’ dutiful discretion, how they prevent this; the main thing is that they prevent it.”

“Paragraph 112, point 5 of the general prison regulations states, ‘Christian prisoners are to be provided with the prayer and hymn books donated by the church authorities; Lutheran prisoners shall additionally receive a New Testament with psalms, Catholic prisoners the diocesan catechism and a New Testament or the Biblical History. Jewish prisoners receive a prayer book.’ These regulations do not apply to the Earnest Bible Students as prisoners...”

“As the purpose of pretrial imprisonment, according to paragraph 112 of the code of criminal procedure, is also to prevent the prisoner from undertaking new criminal activities, it would obviously contradict the detention’s purpose to provide pretrial prisoners with those books (the Bible and the New Testament) from which they could constantly obtain new nourishment and encouragement for their commitment to their banned sect and their subversive attitude. As a rule, the presiding judge will therefore respond to an application by the relevant penal institution directors justified in this manner by ordering the denial of the entire Bible to the Earnest Bible Students. ...

It is thus clear that sufficient options are available for denying the imprisoned Earnest Bible Students the devotional books they demand (the Bible and the New Testament), if one only attempts to apply the paragraphs in question correctly, and if these books are only to be misused for the purposes of endangering the state.”

“The law enforcement authorities have been given the scope to take action, in any case, under consideration that almost all ‘Jehovah’s Witnesses’ prisoners are to be regarded as fanatics possessed by their ideas who refer to themselves as martyrs. There are only few among them who see reason through serving their punishment.”

Martyrs for Christian Faith

The above clearly shows that the struggle aims to rob the German people of the Bible and to oppress all those who invoke intellectual freedom and faith in the Bible. In Christian patience and out of shame, we have held back for long enough from calling public attention in Germany and abroad to these atrocities. We are in possession of an overwhelming amount of material proving the aforementioned cruel mistreatment of Jehovah’s Witnesses. Among others, Detective Lieutenant Theiss from Dortmund, and Tennhoff and Heimann from the Gelsenkirchen and Bochum Gestapo have particularly distinguished themselves in this mistreatment. There has been no hesitation to mistreat women with bull pizzles and rubber truncheons. As mentioned, Detective Lieutenant Theiss in Dortmund is known particularly for sadistic cruelty in the mistreatment of Christian women, and also one man from the state police in Hamm. We also possess further details and names of approx. 18 cases in which Jehovah’s Witnesses have been violently killed. In early October 1936, for example, Jehovah’s Witness Peter Heinen, previously resident in Neuhüllerstraße, Gelsenkirchen, Westphalia, was beaten to death by Gestapo officers in Gelsenkirchen town hall. This sad incident was reported to Mr. Reich Chancellor Adolf Hitler. Copies of the report were also received by Reich Minister Rudolf Heß and the chief of the Gestapo, Himmler.

The brutal mistreatment and the violent abduction of Willy Ruhnau, previously resident in Zoppot, Adolf Hitlerstraße 809, has already been presented as a petition to the Council of the League of Nations and made known in the international press. The Danzig police force refuses to provide any information on Ruhnau’s whereabouts. Ruhnau was without a doubt abducted by the Danzig police force and killed afterwards.

Fearlessness

The persecution, however, has by no means discouraged the loyal Jehovah’s Witnesses and will not keep them from their duties in the future either. It has prompted neither surprise nor shock in them. A long time ago, Jesus prophesied these circumstances when he spoke to his loyal followers: “If the world hates you, you know that it has hated me before it hated you. If you were part of the world, the world would be fond of what is its own.

Now because you are no part of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, on this account the world hates you. Bear in mind the word I said to you, A slave is not greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also" (John 15:18–20).

The hour draws nigh when Jesus Christ, on behalf of Jehovah, will destroy Satan and all his servants. The people are now being informed of this, so that they can decide whom they wish to serve. Any person can pick up the Bible and compare the known facts with its statements, and by these means establish which is the correct path to take. All those who long for the triumph of justice and wish to live in peace and happiness must make a decision and place themselves on the side of Jehovah and his kingdom.

Servants of God

There is no need to join any organization in order to become a servant of God. However, it is necessary to dedicate oneself to Jehovah, i.e. to declare oneself agreed to serve God and his kingdom. Once this step has been taken, one should pick up the Bible and the tools for studying it. By these means, we receive the necessary teaching and learn of the correct path. Thereupon, one should make an effort to do the right thing by all people.

All people are free to believe what they wish to believe; those who would like, however, to lead a life and be happy, should decide in favor of Jehovah God and his kingdom, should become his servant and serve him in loyalty and truthfulness. They should not abide by man's teachings, but follow the teachings of the word of God, as they are contained in the Bible.

Protection

The proof has been finally furnished that Satan is Jehovah's adversary and the greatest enemy of mankind, that he always used religion to fool the people and to alienate them from God and Jesus Christ. Furthermore, that all those who teach and practice religion are enemies of those who seek righteousness. All worldly rulers represent some religion, and consciously or unconsciously they occupy a position against God and his kingdom. The clergymen practicing religion form part of the ruling class and are friends of the world, and the scripture explains that they are enemies of God (Jacob 4:4). Jehovah God orders that the people should now be informed of his plan to destroy Satan and all heinous organizations, which he will do at Armageddon. Anyone who declares himself against God and his kingdom is among the lawless. Jehovah now says the following with reference to the good and the evil: "Jehovah is guarding all those loving him, but all the wicked ones he will annihilate" (Psalm 145:20).

All earthly rulers are imperfect people, from whom you can receive no protection. God warns you through his word: "Do not put your trust in nobles [rulers], nor in the son of earthling man, to whom no salvation belongs" (Psalm 146:3). Those who had the opportunity to know God's commandments and to follow them, but preferred to practice religion, will very soon befall God's judgment. To these, Jehovah says, "Where are their gods, the rock in whom they sought refuge ... Let them get up and help you. Let them become a concealment place for you. ... If I do indeed sharpen my glittering sword, and my hand takes hold on judgment, I will pay back vengeance to my adversaries and render retribution to those who intensely hate me" (Deuteronomy 32:37–41). This is how Jehovah explains that the servants of the state religion can give neither aid nor salvation.

It is now a time of great danger, because we are in the "Last Days," as it is written: "But know this, that in the last days critical [dangerous] times hard to deal with will be here. For men will be lovers of themselves, lovers of money, self-assuming, haughty, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, disloyal, ... betrayers, headstrong, puffed up with pride, lovers of pleasure rather than lovers of God, having a form of godly devotion but proving false to its power; and from these turn away" (2 Timothy 3:1–5).

How can you find protection now? Only by placing yourself entirely on the side of God and Jesus Christ. To you, who are upright and well-meaning toward your God, he now says, "Before there comes upon you people the burning anger of Jehovah ... seek Jehovah, all you meek ones of the earth ... seek righteousness, seek meekness. Probably you may be concealed in the day of Jehovah's anger" (Zeph. 2:2,3).

Your enemies may take away your good name, destroy your possessions, and even kill you; God, however, has the power to awaken you to life again, and his promise is that he will awaken all those who love and obey him. He whom Jehovah God destroys, however, will never live again; therefore Jesus says, "And do not become fearful of those who kill the body but cannot kill the soul; but rather be in fear of him that can destroy both soul and body in hell" (Matthew 10:28).

He who trusts in God and Jesus Christ and serves them, will be shielded and receive eternal life. "This means everlasting life, their taking in knowledge of you, the only true God, and of the one whom you sent forth, Jesus Christ" (John 17:3). In the interest of your own welfare, turn quickly away from any religion hostile to the Bible. Grasp Jesus Christ, instead, and hold tight to him, follow in his footsteps and take the path of true Christianity; that means following Jehovah's commandments, just as Jesus Christ always did. There is no other path of protection and salvation: "Furthermore, there is no salvation in anyone else, for there is not another name under heaven that has been given among men by which we must get saved" (Acts 4:12).

For the justification of Jehovah and in the name of Jesus Christ, according to his commandment in Matthew 24:14, this message is conveyed to you for your personal benefit despite risk to life by the

JEHOVAH'S WITNESSES IN GERMANY

Open letter from the Jehovah's Witnesses, June 1937.
Tens of thousands of copies of this leaflet were printed in secret
in Germany and distributed on a single day, June 20, 1937.

Source: LAV NRW R, RW 0058 Nr. 4502, Abb. 193, 194
Design: Braun Engels Gestaltung, Ulm
1st edition 2016

English translation: Katy Derbyshire
English editing: Ginger A. Diekmann
Editing: Ute Stiepani

**German
Resistance
Memorial Center**