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Contents

Publication Details.....	ii
Editorial	
<i>David M. Morris</i>	v
Fraud, Philandery, and Football: Negotiating the Mormon Image	
<i>Terryl L. Givens</i>	1
The Infallibility Trap: The Sacralisation of Religious Authority	
<i>Walter E. A. van Beek</i>	14
Seal, Cross and Nautilus: RLDS/Community of Christ Art and Architecture	
<i>Bryan R. Monte</i>	45
A Home for the Saints: Developments in LDS Worship Accommodation in Lancashire, England	
<i>Matthew Lyman Rasmussen</i>	66
“We Do Not Make Fun of Any Religion in My Newspapers”: The Beaverbrook Press Coverage of Mormon Stories in Britain, 1912–1964	
<i>Peter Vousden</i>	108
One-Hundred Years of Solitude: Mormonism in Italy, 1867–1964	
<i>Eric R. Dursteler</i>	119
Review – The Book of Mormon: A Very Short Introduction	
<i>Mauro Properzi</i>	149

Review – Innocent Blood: Essential Narratives of the Mountain Meadows Massacre <i>Bernadette Rigal-Cellard</i>	154
Review – In the Whirlpool <i>Carter Charles</i>	162
Review – Mormonen und Staatsbürger <i>Ingrid Sherlock-Taselaar</i>	169
Review – On Zion’s Mount: Mormons, Indians, and the American Landscape <i>Irén Annus</i>	173
Review – Southern Paiute: A Profile <i>Zachary R. Jones</i>	175
Review – Svoboda Sovesti v Rossii: Istoricheskii i Sovremennyi Aspekty, Vol. 6 <i>Jeffrey S. Hardy</i>	181
Article Contributors	185

EDITORIAL

David M. Morris

Editor

Once again, it is with great pleasure that we publish another issue of the *International Journal of Mormon Studies (IJMS)*. This issue brings together a combination of scholars from different parts of the world and academic disciplines. Drawn from Mormon and non-Mormon perspectives, the articles found herein provide interesting insights to Mormonism globally, encouraging further attention and examination. Following on from the successful *European Mormon Studies Association (EMSA)* conference in Tilburg, The Netherlands (2010), we publish a number of the papers that were presented during that conference, as well as publishing direct submissions. These include papers from Walter E. A. van Beek, Eric R. Dursteler, Terryl L. Givens, Bryan R. Monte, Matthew L. Rasmussen and Peter Vousden. Accompanying these articles is a number of reviewed books, including those of non-English publication, which supports the expanding international dimension of Mormon Studies.

We, as always, extend our appreciation to those who took time to blind peer-review articles that have been submitted for publication. We hope as an editorial board that you will enjoy the contents of this issue.

**“WE DO NOT MAKE FUN OF ANY RELIGION IN MY
NEWSPAPERS”: THE BEAVERBROOK PRESS COVERAGE OF
MORMON STORIES IN BRITAIN, 1912–1964**

Peter Vousden

The coverage of Mormon activity in the British press in the latter part of the Nineteenth Century and the first decade of the Twentieth Century were concentrated on scandal and outrage. The main focus of press interest was in stories of female abduction from Britain to the United States for forced polygamous marriages. The principal organ in an overt anti-Mormon campaign was the *Daily Express*, which pioneered the strategy of what the media scholar; Jean Chalaby termed ‘Crusaderism’. The *Daily Express* was happy to lead an overtly anti-Mormon crusade with the intention of ridding Britain of all Mormons. The term ‘anti-Mormon’ is an emotive term with Mormons applying it to any criticism. However, between 1910 and 1912, the *Daily Express* proudly positioned itself as the pre-eminent anti-Mormon organiser in Britain and often printed the term on its front page. However, in 1938, it made a staggering declaration:

The faith of the Mormons, which began in ridicule, now stands in dignity and respect. They have created a worthy and useful institution whose members do good by teaching and by the example of their upright lives.

This article examines the change of tone with particular reference to the views of Lord Beaverbrook. It is argued that Beaverbrook took a personal interest in meeting Mormon leaders and hearing their side of the story, and that he also intervened editorially to ensure the unfair ridiculing of Mormons by the *Daily Express* ceased.

The British press coverage of Mormon missionary work in Britain in the years before the World War One has been well documented.¹

¹ Malcolm R. Thorp, ‘The Mormon Peril: The Crusade Against the Saints in Britain 1910–1914’, *Journal of Mormon History*, 2 (1975); Davis S. and Roy

Fleet Street's most critical voice was the *Daily Express* which pulled no punches in attacking the "ridiculous travesty of a religion which goes by the name of Mormonism",² "The Mormon religion, a foul and bestial apotheosis of animal passion and sexual degradation, is the vilest superstition that ever masqueraded in the civilised world."³ The paper accused missionaries of "employing vicious propaganda whereby English girls are lured to Utah".⁴ The only solution the *Daily Express* could suggest was "the total expulsion of the Mormon agents of polygamy".⁵

At the height of the 1911–12 anti-Mormon campaign, the *Daily Express* did not limit itself only to journalism, but also financed an anti-Mormon rally in Holborn Hall, London. This was not an exercise in rational debate. At the time of the so called "Mormon Peril" of 1911–12, the *Daily Express* was still a burgeoning newspaper owned by its editor, R.D. Blumenfeld. Blumenfeld, a native of Wisconsin, USA, became a British subject in 1907 and was an exponent of the movement labelled New Journalism. "Modern newspapers" said Blumenfeld, "give the public what it wants, thrills, sensations, frivolities".⁶ He also said, "a certain amount of exaggeration is legitimate, even necessary."⁷ Scandal and crusades sold a lot of newspapers. "Net sales are the blood circulation of a newspaper" he wrote in 1933, "advertising revenue the air which fills its lungs."⁸

Scholars such as Chalaby and Mark Hampton have identified the New Journalism trend away from politics and hard news towards amusement and entertainment of readership, even if that meant "an artificial, even contrived news item manufactured to sell newspapers."⁹

Hoopes, *The Making of a Mormon Apostle: The Story of Rudger Clawson* (Lanham, Md.; Madison Books, 1990); Peter J. Vousden, 'The English Editor and the "Mormon Scare" of 1911', *BYU Studies*, 41 (2002), pp. 65–75.

² *Daily Express*, 29 April 1911.

³ *Daily Express*, 3 April 1911.

⁴ *Daily Express*, 24 April 1911.

⁵ *Daily Express*, 29 April 1911.

⁶ Jean K. Chalaby, *The Invention of Journalism* (London: Macmillan, 1998), p. 185.

⁷ *The Encyclopedia of the British Press 1422–1992*, ed. by Dennis Griffiths (London: Macmillan, 1992).

⁸ R. D. Blumenfeld, *My Time in the Press* (London: Rich and Cowan, 1933).

⁹ Mark Hampton, *Visions of the Press in Britain: 1850–1950* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2004), p. 41.

Edward Dicey, the radical politician lamented being informed by a producer of New Journalism in 1905, that “the newspaper reading public of today wants to be amused not instructed. They do not wish to use their minds more than they can help.”¹⁰ In such an environment Blumenfeld showed no compunction about printing lurid, unsubstantiated allegations about Mormons.

A journalist and historian of the British press has written that “The *Daily Express* was the first paper to triumph by proving it did not actually matter whether what you said was right or wrong, as long as you said it with conviction and élan.”¹¹ Blumenfeld was certainly keen to sell more newspapers as funds were low. In 1911, on the steps of the casino in Monte Carlo, he met the Canadian tycoon and British Member of Parliament, Max Aitken. Blumenfeld told Aitken of hard times keeping the *Daily Express* going. Aitken wrote a cheque for £25,000 as a personal loan with the proviso that the paper was to give him some positive coverage. Five years later and no longer a Member of Parliament Lord Beaverbrook, Aitken having accepted a peerage and title, purchased the *Daily Express* and kept Blumenfeld as the editor.

Under Beaverbrook the *Daily Express* was to achieve phenomenal growth. In 1913 the Express had a circulation of 277,048 copies a day, just a quarter of its main rival the *Daily Mail*.¹² By the mid-1930s, the *Daily Express* circulation was approaching two million copies a day. By Beaverbrook’s death in 1964 they were selling four and a half million copies every day. Moreover, he started from scratch in December 1918 with the *Sunday Express* and later purchased the London centred *Evening Standard*.

After the anti-Mormon campaign of 1911–12 had subsided, a British Home Office investigation in 1911 concluded that there was no reason for the government to curtail Mormon activity; the newspapers therefore turned their attention to other matters. The outbreak of war in Europe in August 1914 diverted everybody’s attention. Mormons remained anonymous until they resumed missionary work after World War One.

¹⁰ Alan J. Lee, ‘The Radical Press’, in *Edwardian Radicalism, 1900–1914*, ed. by A.J.A. Morris (London: Routledge, 1974), p. 47.

¹¹ Matthew Engel, *Tickle the Public. One Hundred Years of the Popular Press* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1996), p. 92.

¹² Viscount Camrose, *British Newspapers and their Controllers* (London: Cassell and Company, 1947).

In 1922 *The Daily Express* resumed where it left off a decade earlier. “Mormons must be banned!”¹³ screamed one headline, “Deport the Mormons!”¹⁴ implored another, and “Girl Victims of the Mormons”¹⁵ proclaimed yet another.

The *Daily Express* exposed the scandal of Mormon missionaries in 1911. Now these apostles of a pestilential gospel are here again. Once more the *Daily Express* has exposed and will continue to expose the vile degradation that awaits any English woman who falls into the hands of the Mormon Church.¹⁶

No woman who gets to Utah can ever escape. She is lost to decency and dead to her friends. Yet the nauseous hypocrites who lure girls in the name of a God they provoke are allowed to run free in this country. The peril is shocking. The scandal is intolerable.¹⁷

In reality the quality of journalism was shocking and the headlines intolerable. The *Daily Express*'s anti-Mormon view was almost a lone voice in 1922. The *Daily Mail* printed one Mormon story in the early part of 1922, and *The People* did not resurrect its own anti-Mormon campaign that it had abandoned in 1912.

Undeterred, Blumenfeld and the *Daily Express* ploughed a lone furrow of bigoted outrage. The accusations became hysterical and ludicrous. In January 1922 it ran a story under the banner of “The most Sinful City in the World”.¹⁸ This was not an article about Berlin, Paris, New York, London or Shanghai, but of Salt Lake City in Utah, the home of the Mormons. Up until this point Beaverbrook did not get involved with the Mormon question personally and the decisions all seemed to be Blumenfeld's. But Elder James E. Talmage, a British-born academic and ordained Latter-day Saint Apostle who also served as president of the British Mission between 1924 and 1928, took it upon himself to engage newspaper editors, both at a local and national level.

¹³ *Daily Express*, 11 January 1922.

¹⁴ *Daily Express*, 12 January 1922.

¹⁵ *Daily Express*, 19 January 1922.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁸ *Daily Express*, 18 January 1922.

On New Year's Day 1926, Dr. Talmage secured a two-hour interview with Lord Beaverbrook and Viscount Castlerose. He noted in his diary:

We met Lord Beaverbrook for tea. Shortly after our arrival Viscount Castlerose came in and for a period but a few minutes less than two hours we discussed Mormonism. Lord Beaverbrook was full of questions and they were all good ones, showing that he had given the subject of our missionary work in this country careful consideration. The outcome of the meeting was that Lord Beaverbrook gave brother Pugh and myself positive assurance that in the not very distant future he would give the subject of Mormonism fair treatment in one or more of his papers.¹⁹

On Valentine's Day 1926, writing in the *Sunday Express*, Castlerose noted that "the Mormons, whose creed debars the persecution of other religions, have not had fair play in this country owing to popular misconceptions". He also noted that having met Dr Talmage, "a member of the Philosophical Society and a man of unquestioned distinction and integrity" he felt it "absurd to stigmatise a religion to which such men belonged as one consisting of crazy or immoral fanatics."²⁰ Talmage observed in his diary, "This is the article promised by Lord Beaverbrook. It is plainly inspired by Beaverbrook."²¹

It is worthy of note that Castlerose's tone represented almost an apology, something Beaverbrook's rivals at the *Daily Mail* and *People* did not consider. From his point of view, James E. Talmage made no attempt to overestimate his own influence upon the changed perceptions of the press but when he completed his mission to Britain in 1928, he wrote in the *Millennial Star*:

I have had wide experience with the British editors, and regard them as a very honourable body of men. Some of those I met were at the head of publications of a somewhat sensational character; and misrepresentations of our Church and people

¹⁹ Harold B. Lee Library at Brigham Young University, James Edward Talmage, *Diary*.

²⁰ *Truth Will Prevail: The Rise of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the British Isles 1837–1987*, ed. by V. Ben Bloxham, James R. Moss and Larry C. Porter (Solihull: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1987), p. 349.

²¹ Talmage, *Diary*.

had been made through contributions to such papers and magazines. But when the misrepresentation was pointed out and demonstrated, in almost every instance the editor extended a courteous invitation to us to make reply, giving freely of their space.²²

The evidence seems to suggest that Talmage's intervention was crucial. Certainly Dr Talmage's interview with Beaverbrook seemed to have had an impact because the Mormon coverage in his publications became far more temperate and even supportive. For example, in 1936 Sir William Goodair, a wealthy City of London insurance executive, hosted a party in his mansion in Mayfair, an exclusive residential area of London. The occasion was reported by the society correspondent of the *Daily Express*. "Dr Richard R. Lyman, newly appointed European Mission president of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints stood in a Mayfair drawing room last night surrounded by English actors and actresses, a Mayfair host, members and missionaries of the Mormon church. Dr Lyman, guest of honour, neither smoked nor drank."²³

Mormon sportsmen also began to be noted in the pages of the British press. In 1935 the New Zealand All Blacks rugby football team toured Britain and Ireland. The press highlighted Tori Reid, the only Maori player in the team, and also a third generation Mormon. "The Maori is a shy giant" noted the *Daily Express* "22 years old, six feet two inches tall, close to 15 stone, a tremendous worker on the field."²⁴ Reid's observance of the Word of Wisdom was noted as a contributory factor to his athleticism. In 1938 the *Express* made a staggering declaration:

The faith of the Mormons, which began in ridicule, now stands in dignity and respect. They have created a worthy and useful institution whose members do good by teaching and by the example of their upright lives.²⁵

²² Bloxham, Moss and Porter, *Truth Will Prevail*, p. 350.

²³ *Daily Express*, 9 December 1936. Also quoted in *Millennial Star*, 17 December 1936.

²⁴ *Daily Express*, 7 September 1935.

²⁵ *Daily Express*, 25 August 1938.

By the mid-1930s the press articles on Mormon issues were far more rational than those of the previous decades. Upon the passing of King George V in 1935, a young missionary by the name of Gordon B. Hinckley, who was working in London, was assigned to write in the *Millennial Star* a brief salute to the late monarch. Having done that he turned his attention to the growth of the Church during the King's reign:

In few things has this progress been more notable than in cutting down the fences of ill-founded hatred that resulted in bitter persecution. The integrity of Mormonism has been proved in the House of Commons, in the public press and in the minds of thinking people generally ... our church has become established in these Isles.²⁶

A few months later the *Star* noted that "The increasing number of newspaper articles about Latter-day Saints which are submitted by Durham's news clippings service bespeaks the growing esteem held for the church in Great Britain. During the past month there have been turned in 40 articles, all fair and favourable."²⁷

Lord Beaverbrook was not only a powerful man as a newspaper tycoon, he had also been a member of the House of Commons and served in the cabinet of Lloyd George during World War One and the cabinet of Winston Churchill in the Second World War. He had influence with men of power. He also had enemies and detractors. He had his own motives for courting certain individuals and better than almost any other man in London understood the power of propaganda. He was distrusted by those outside of his sphere of influence as a manipulator of men and events. There was almost always suspicion of an ulterior motive.²⁸

²⁶ *Millennial Star*, 2 May 1935.

²⁷ *Millennial Star*, 22 August 1935.

²⁸ An example of this suspicion is the attitude of Winston Churchill's wife, Clementine. Beaverbrook proved to be a long-time friend of Churchill's beside him through thick and thin but Mrs. Churchill was always suspicious of Beaverbrook. On 12 February 1942 she wrote to her husband: "My Own Darling, I beg you to reflect whether it would be best to leave Lord B entirely out" (of the government). "My darling try ridding yourself of this microbe which some people fear is in your blood." Mary Soames, *Clementine Churchill* (London: Cassell, 1979), p. 352.

The Mormons were very small fry indeed and amounted to no influence in his world. He had nothing to gain by showing tolerance to such a small and maligned society. There were no political or business interests to improve by showing respect to Mormons. His motives in his sporadic defence of their religion, was probably founded upon his own Calvinist upbringing, upon ideals of religious toleration and fair play. He was famous for interfering in the editorial content of his newspapers, on one occasion allegedly telephoning the editor of the *Express* 149 times in one day with instructions what to print and what to leave out. The hand of Beaverbrook was evident when the *Daily Express* commented on matters of religion. In December 1935 the *Daily Express* ran a series of articles seeking an answer to declining British church attendance and in turn examined the Church of England, Scottish Presbyterians, Catholics, Christian Scientists, and Methodists.²⁹

In 1955, Mrs. Margaret King, a psychology lecturer at Aberdeen University, broadcast a programme on the BBC entitled “Morals Without Religion” in which she argued that religion should not be taught to children because they could develop their own moral framework without religious education. The *Daily Express* took up the debate with Mrs. King, registering its own disapproval and giving space to Church of England clerics to oppose her ideas.³⁰ These articles certainly bear the finger prints of Beaverbrook. In 1958 in Scotland a proposal was mooted to unite the Presbyterian Church and the Church of Scotland. Beaverbrook was against this on the grounds that one combined church would equal less overall church attendance than two independent churches. He began a personal campaign using the *Scottish Daily Express* to run articles against the idea and to organise public meetings. The last leader Beaverbrook wrote in his successful campaign concluded with the words “Glory Hallelujah!”³¹ He did not confine the exercise of his religious conscience to large scale campaigns. He once telephoned an employee in the middle of the night to admonish him for an article he had written making light of religion. He told his astonished employee, a lapsed Scottish Presbyterian, to repent and go to church. The call con-

²⁹ *Daily Express*, 19 December 1935. See the Christian Scientists for example.

³⁰ *Daily Express*, 13–14, 17, 20 January and 8 February 1955.

³¹ A.J.P. Taylor, *Beaverbrook* (London: Hamish Hamilton, 1972), p. 642.

cluded with an imperial edict. "We do not make fun of any religion in my newspapers."³²

In 1962 he published an essay on Christ he wrote in 1925, entitled "The Divine Propagandist." He sold seven thousand copies and gave three thousand away to schools and religious ministers.³³ His friends questioned the wisdom of publishing as his theology was questionable and his views unorthodox but he was determined to publish. He received a withering assessment for his views on Christ from Malcolm Muggeridge, the best known Christian commentator of the age.

A man noted for his personal financial generosity, Beaverbrook did not forget his own ministers of religion and paid \$300 a year to retired Presbyterian ministers and their widows in the Canadian provinces of his youth. "It appears to me," he explained in a letter to a friend, "that the complete failure of Christianity will come to pass because the Ministers now in the church will die off swiftly of worry and new men will refuse to enter upon a career of poverty."³⁴

His interest in religion certainly did not wane with age and he telephoned John Junor, editor of the *Sunday Express*, upbraiding him for printing disparaging remarks about Mormons and Jehovah's Witnesses. He told Mr. Junor he was sending him a letter which he might like to consider publishing in the letters page of the next edition of the *Sunday Express*. Naturally, Junor gave way and published his boss's letter.

Mormon missionaries represent an important and dignified branch of the Christian religion. Their people in Utah and elsewhere are good-living and God-fearing citizens ... "Paragraphs and interviews denouncing Mormon missionaries should not be given publicity in the *Sunday Express*." The letter was signed "Beaverbrook"³⁵

At around about the same time as the communication to Mr Junor the Church was beginning to grow fast in Great Britain and the Hyde Park chapel in London was built and nearing its dedication. T. Bowring Woodbury, the British Mission president wrote a personal

³² Logan Gourlay, *The Beaverbrook I Knew* (London: Quartet Books, 1984), p. 116.

³³ Taylor, *Beaverbrook*, p. 650.

³⁴ Taylor, *Beaverbrook*, p. 624.

³⁵ *Time Magazine*, 10 November 1961.

letter to Beaverbrook addressed to his private residence in France asking whether he might enjoy an invitation to the dedication service which was to be conducted by President David O. McKay. In a letter dated 25 April 1960 Beaverbrook replied saying he would like to receive an invitation. He also noted that he enjoyed listening to his Mormon Tabernacle Choir record collection and personally thanked President Woodbury for writing to him.³⁶

When he was only twelve weeks from death the *Scottish Daily Express* rejected an advertisement from the Free Presbyterians prompting a letter from Beaverbrook, who as proprietor stated:

The *Scottish Daily Express* will not exclude any religious institution wishing to advertise in its columns. The paper will never attack any form of religious teaching – Mormons, the Salvation Army, the Seventh Day Adventists and the Free Presbyterians.³⁷

The changing attitude of the press says something not just of the standards of journalism but of the maturing of the church itself. People in Britain began to recognise Mormon people as worthy of commendation and certainly not as posers of an immediate threat. For example, in the 1960's, local newspapers were commenting upon new Mormon buildings with something approaching civic pride. As early as 1936 the *Liverpool Evening Express* declared:

Let us hope readers will no longer look upon the Mormons as decadent ministers, luring women to a shameful life in Salt Lake City. They are a clean living band of young men, anxious to convert Gentiles into God fearing members of a pioneer church. And they do it without reward of any sort.³⁸

Once past the *Daily Express*'s sole attempt to reignite old style anti-Mormonism in 1922, the press as a body showed no appetite for news print bigotry. Journalists and their readers were no longer prepared to believe in Mormon female abduction myths. Press coverage in

³⁶ *Millennial Star*, January 1961, carries a copy of the letter.

³⁷ Taylor, *Beaverbrook*, p. 665.

³⁸ Richard L. Evans, *A Century of Mormonism in Great Britain: A Brief Summary of the Activities of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints in the United Kingdom* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Deseret News Press, 1937), p. 212.

the years ahead was often neutral and could still be ill informed but never again plumbed the depths of the early twentieth century anti-Mormon crusade.

Other papers pedalled the female abduction myth and then abandoned it for other sensational stories. For example *The People* turned its attentions to immoral happenings within the spiritualist community in London. It ran a series of shocking revelations at fortune telling parties and séances.³⁹ Similarly, the *Daily Mail* once weary of anti-Mormon abduction stories, simply stopped running them.

The Beaverbrook publications were alone in the ranks of the national press in not simply abandoning the female abduction myth but in trying to redress the balance by printing positive opinions and stories about Mormons. The shift from avowed enemy of Mormonism to the advocate of fair play was the most pronounced in Beaverbrook's publications. Beaverbrook bought his way into newspapers in order to personally influence politics and ideas and the evidence suggests in the small matter of reporting Mormon activity his interventions were crucial in changing the media climate.

³⁹*The People*, 8 September 1912.