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The Theory and Practice of the Political Kingdom of God in Mormon History, 1829-1890

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THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF THE POLITICAL KINGDOM OF GOD
IN MORMON HISTORY, 1829-1890

A Thesis
Presented to the
Department of History
Brigham Young University

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts

by
Klaus J. Hansen
July 1959
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INTRODUCTION

When Eber D. Howe used the affidavits collected by Mormon apostate Philastus Hurlbut as grist for his celebrated and notorious Mormonism Unveiled,¹ he was not likely aware of the fact that he had started a mill both prolific and viable, so much so that it would still be producing a century later. Ever since, the debunkers, freely assuming license for indiscriminate negation, have contributed voluminously in an effort to diminish the reputation of Mormonism. The apologists, understandably, felt free to use a license for indiscriminate affirmation in an equally prolific manner. Emotionalism clouded basic issues, thus barring our access to an intelligible and usable past. But invective and uncritical adulation had one formidable enemy -- time; and the coffers of Clio were filled with sufficient treasures to enable honest searchers of the truth to get the raw-materials for accounts of Mormonism that, if they did not lack bias altogether, revealed a sincere attempt to analyse critically and to weigh the evidence in a disinterested manner.

¹(Painesville, Ohio, 1834).
One of the earliest works in this tradition of sound scholarship, now a classic in its field, is Ephraim Ericksen's study, The Psychological and Ethical Aspects of Mormon Group Life. Professor Ericksen was one of the first to go beyond the obvious interpretation of Mormon history as it could be seen in its various stages of external development. Turning to a more sophisticated and also more profound analysis, Ericksen saw the growth of Mormonism in terms of conflict with its environment, a conflict which developed in three distinct stages: (1) "Maladjustment between Mormons and Gentiles;" (2) "Maladjustment between Mormons and Nature;" and (3) "Maladjustment between New Thought and Old Institutions." In each stage, conflict was resolved by a process of adjustment. This process, according to Dr. Ericksen, was the crucible in which institutions and their ideals were formed. Thomas O'Dea, in his recent analysis of the Mormons, builds essentially on the thesis of Ericksen's work, but sees Mormon development in two stages, "Withdrawal from Secular Society" and "Return to Secular Life." This idea of the development of Mormonism finds expression in somewhat similar terms by Dale Morgan, who sees a once antagonistic Mormonism accommodating itself to the

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3 Ibid., p. 13.
world. 

At least one Mormon scholar (Kent Fielding), however, disagrees with this interpretation. According to Dr. Fielding, Mormonism never intended to and never did withdraw from the world. On the contrary, almost from the beginning of its history, the Church had as its ultimate goal not only spiritual but also political control of the world. Taking this thesis as a point of departure from previous interpretations, Fielding argues that "The history of Mormonism is a succession of advances, retreats and reinterpretations." In the course of this development three distinct impulses may be recognized; these furnished Mormonism with three basic themes: (1) The restoration of primitive Christianity with an emphasis on biblical literalism and modern revelation; (2) the gathering of the Saints to Zion for the purpose of building the physical Kingdom of God; and (3) the Plan of Salvation which prepared the elect for the Kingdom of Heaven.

Recent investigations into the past of Mormonism suggest that the idea of a physical Kingdom of God had a much

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6 R. Kent Fielding, "The Concept of Stages in Mormon Historical Development" (Utah Academy of Science, Arts and Letters, November, 1958, mimeographed MS, Brigham Young University Library).

7 Ibid., 3.

8 Ibid.
more prominent place in Mormon history than had heretofore been suspected. This increased significance of the Kingdom of God idea suggests a possible expansion and mutation of Fielding's thesis. Theoretically, at least, the themes of restoration and salvation were of equal importance with the idea of the Kingdom; in a sense, the three might even be considered inseparable in Mormon theology. But the events of history reveal that in their effort to realize the idea of the Kingdom, the Saints could not pay equal attention to concepts which, if they were no less a part of Mormonism, pressed less eagerly for an immediate solution. For over fifty years, the Saints entertained the most sanguine hopes for the speedy realization of the political Kingdom. When this hope was finally relegated to a somewhat uncertain future, an era in Mormon history had passed. The physical Kingdom, to be sure, lived on in a variety of activities such as the Welfare Plan, in Relief Society Bazaars, and in M-Men basketball tournaments. But for the most part, the Saints were no longer aware of the fact that the founder of their religion had both entertained ideas of a political world government and had worked most actively towards their realization.

The enemies of the Church, on the other hand, were only too aware of such ambitions. The anti-Mormon literature, especially of the 19th century, not only shows a great awareness of Mormon political aspirations but attributes to them all kinds of sinister motives. In books, periodicals, and pamphlets, Joseph Smith and his successors were accused of
planning to overthrow the government. The exodus was transform-
ed into a latter-day hegira, with Salt Lake City serving as a
modern Mecca from which the armies of the Saints, like Mohammed's,
would descend upon the world to devour the unbelievers with fire
and sword. In an attempt to refute these and other for the most
part utterly fantastic accusations Mormon scholarship, proving
such accusations totally unfounded, went too far by showing that
the Kingdom of God was entirely a millennial projection, with
political aspirations deferred until the inauguration of the
apocalyptic Kingdom. In the light of recent discoveries such
a view will bear revision.

It is the purpose of this study to show that the Saints
not only had a theoretical framework for the establishment of
the political Kingdom of God but worked actively towards a re-
alization of this Kingdom, to be established preparatory to the
coming of the Saviour. The most significant aspect of the es-
stablishment of the political Kingdom was the organization by
Joseph Smith, probably in 1844, of a group most frequently re-
ferred to as "Council of Fifty."

When this study was begun, nothing of significance had
been published on this Council. B. H. Roberts had mentioned it
in a footnote in vol. VII of the History of the Church of Jesus
Christ of Latter-day Saints, but without going into much de-
tail. G. Homer Durham, who has done some significant work on

\[9\] (2d ed.; Salt Lake City: Deseret News, 1950), 379-
382. Hereafter cited as DHC.
political aspects of Mormon history, suggested in an article published in 1944 that "someone needs to make a study of the 'Council of Fifty' and its relation to the Mormon idea of the Kingdom of God."\textsuperscript{10} This suggestion went unheeded until publication of a portion of the John D. Lee diaries by Huntington Library in 1955.\textsuperscript{11} In July of 1957, Alfred L. Bush and the author of this thesis submitted a paper titled "Notes towards a definition of the Council of Fifty" to the \textit{Utah Historical Quarterly}. This paper was accepted for publication. In the meantime, other investigations on the Council of Fifty and its relationship to the Kingdom of God have come to light. In April 1958, James R. Clark published an article in the \textit{Utah Historical Quarterly}\textsuperscript{12} which discussed briefly the origin and the objectives of this Council, and showed some of its activities in the Utah period. Professor Clark subsequently expanded this study to show the significance of the Council of Fifty as a basis for an understanding, not only of the political, but also the cultural -- more specifically, educational -- aspects of Mormon history in his doctoral dissertation: "Church and State Relationships in Education in Utah" (unpublished

\textsuperscript{10} "A Political Interpretation of Mormon History," \textit{Pacific Historical Review} XIII (1944), 141.


\textsuperscript{12} "The Kingdom of God, the Council of Fifty and the State of Deseret," XXVI (1958), 130-148.
dissertation, Utah State University, 1958). In 1958, also, Hyrum L. Andrus published a study on Joseph Smith and World Government.\textsuperscript{13} This study is somewhat apologetic, trying to show that the political ideas of Joseph Smith and his successors were in almost complete harmony with the ideas of the Founding Fathers of the United States. Dr. Andrus, beginning his study in 1844, omits some important preliminaries leading to the establishment of the Council of Fifty. Furthermore, he can see no evidence that, in the light of the Council, the Mormons were trying to set up the political Kingdom even before the advent of the Saviour.

The present study both differs in its interpretation and goes beyond the scope of hitherto published works. In contrast to Dr. Andrus, differentiation between the apocalyptic Kingdom, and the political Kingdom of God as a preparation for the former, is a basic premise of this thesis. Origins are more carefully examined; inconsistencies -- largely ignored by previous writers -- are pointed out. The organizational structure and the function of the Council are more clearly defined; its activities and its influence are more closely examined, both in Nauvoo and in Utah. The importance of the idea of the Kingdom of God during the succession crisis, and its impact on apostate groups are pointed out for the first time.

Much of the basic information on the Council was gleaned

\footnotesize{\textsuperscript{13} (Salt Lake City: The Deseret Book Company, 1958).}
from letters and diaries. Of the latter those of John D. Lee, perhaps more than any other, have opened the door to an understanding of the Council of Fifty and its relationship to the Kingdom of God. Hosea Stout's journals, while less frank, give glimpses of the Council's activities in Nauvoo and early Utah. William Clayton also makes several veiled but highly significant allusions to the Council and the Kingdom of God in his journal. The only purportedly official source is a copy of minutes of the Council of Fifty in 1880 together with a membership list, available at the Brigham Young University Library. This MS seems to be the copy of a MS found at the L.D.S. Church Historian's Office in Salt Lake City; written in pencil, the latter is itself apparently the copy of another MS. The authenticity of this document is supported by corroborating facts in the diaries and letterbooks of L. John Nuttall, in the diaries of John D. Lee, and a number of other sources.

Having gained a basic understanding of the Council of Fifty and its relationship to the Kingdom of God, the researcher will find many published sources on Mormon history an open field to his investigation. The histories of Joseph Smith and Brigham Young, edited by B. H. Roberts in the seven volumes of the History of the Church, become one of the most important primary sources on the Council and the Kingdom. It is only unfortunate that a George D. Watt had not started his careful transcriptions of speeches by Church leaders in the days of Joseph Smith. The Journal of Discourses have stored up a most valuable wealth of information on the doctrine of the Kingdom.
Recent completion of a very thorough index by the Brigham Young University Library has greatly increased the value of these volumes to the researcher. Such an index would be welcomed by students of Mormon history for the *Millennial Star* which, like most Mormon materials, had to be scrutinized page by page. But the effort was rewarded by significant additions to the understanding of the Kingdom and its Council. Another valuable source of information is the Journal History at the L. D. S. Church Historian's Office in Salt Lake City. This history, a daily record of Church events from 1830 to the present, has grown to the impressive size of more than 500 volumes. It contains extracts from the MS history of Brigham Young and copies of letters, speeches, diaries and journals no longer available. But many clippings from available newspapers and periodicals contained in this compilation should rather be cited from the original sources. A card-index to the scrapbooks is of some help but inadequate for more specialized research. The diaries of John D. Lee, William Clayton and L. John Nuttall, and the latter's correspondence indicate the existence of records of the Kingdom of God which may possibly have been lost or destroyed. Such a possibility, however, seems rather improbable in view of the deserved reputation which stamps the Mormons as meticulous and conscientious keepers and preservers of records. The existing records of some key members of the Council of Fifty, likewise, are not available for research at the present time. In view of these limitations this study can only be tentative and suggestive rather than thorough and definitive. The dis-
covery of new material on the Kingdom of God and the Council of Fifty may necessitate a considerable revision of the present interpretation.
PART I

THE THEORY OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

A historian who hazards a guess at cause-effect relationships of a particular movement will often find himself standing on precarious ground. In the case of Mormon history he will find himself standing on thin ice. Ideas and events in Mormonism are tangled up in such a luxuriant growth of human history that it is impossible to completely unravel the intertwining branches of its growth. Therefore, a clean-cut division of the history of ideas and the history of events must almost appear an absurdity. In history, the cutting stroke of an Alexander will not do; the Gordian knot will have to be unravelled, patiently, by hand. If, therefore, this part develops the growth of the idea of the Kingdom of God, and leaves the discussion of its operation to subsequent chapters, such a plan of attack must find its excuse in expediency. A discussion of the theory will be of great help to an understanding of the Kingdom in operation if we keep in mind that in reality, theory and praxis cannot be separated.
CHAPTER I

DEFINITIONS OF THE KINGDOM OF GOD

From its beginning, Mormonism was characterized by a flexible, pragmatic spirit. Dogmatism was alien to Joseph Smith and his followers. Emerson's statement that "A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds" could well have been a household word among the Saints. The fact that Joseph Smith was, as we shall see later, an ardent nationalist who abhorred the doctrine of States' Rights, and that Brigham Young was an equally vocal proponent of political decentralization, seems to have caused little, if any, disturbance of the peace of mind of the faithful. And if James E. Talmage could prove to the satisfaction of the Smoot committee that ideas of a political Kingdom of God no longer had a place within the framework of the Church,¹ in spite of the fact that for at least fifty years the driving force behind the history of the Church had been precisely the idea of such a Kingdom,

this change in attitude cannot simply be dismissed by explaining it as an expression of Mormon opportunism. Mormon history was to a large degree dictated by necessity, and if it was this necessity that caused Talmage to disagree with some fifty years of history, we nevertheless cannot doubt his sincerity. The history of Mormonism since 1890 has shown that ideas of a political Kingdom have all but disappeared from the Mormon council house, the press and the pulpit.  

This change is vividly illustrated by the testimony of the church leaders in the Smoot hearings. Joseph Fielding Smith, President of the Church, testifying before the investigating committee, declared:

"Our people are given the largest possible latitude for their convictions, and if a man rejects a message that I may give him but is still moral and believes in the main principles of the gospel and desires to continue in his membership in the church, he is permitted to remain and he is not unchurched."

To Brigham Young, such a statement would have sounded like rank heresy. When in 1869-1870, the leaders of the New Movement -- a group of insurgent young Mormon intellectuals -- had questioned Brigham Young's authority in temporal matters, they were brought before a High Council and asked if they would acknowledge President Young's right to dictate to them "in all things

2Bruce R. McConkie, "Keys of the Kingdom," address to the Brigham Young University student-body, April 23, 1957.) (Mimeographed.) The author sees the Kingdom of God as synonymous with the Church, responsible for the spiritual life of its members.

3Smoot Proceedings, I, 97-98.
temporal and spiritual."4 When the young men inquired whether or not it was possible for them to "honestly differ from the presiding priesthood," they were told that such a thing was impossible, and that they "might as well ask whether [they] could honestly differ from the Almighty."5

In 1907, as a result of the difficulties of Reed Smoot to get seated in the Senate, the First Presidency issued a proclamation which acknowledged that the Church must be subject to the powers that be.6 Kingdom building was recognized only theoretically, in a millennial context. This proclamation serves as another example of the change in thinking which had occurred among the Church leaders. How radical this change was is illustrated by a proclamation which had been issued by the Quorum of the Twelve at a General Conference of the Church in 1845, 'To all the Kings of the World; To the Governors of the Several States, and to the Rulers and People of all Nations.'7 This proclamation, which was widely circulated by Mormon missionaries, informed its readers that the kingdom of God, as predicted by the prophets, had come, and was to "Fill the whole earth" and "stand forever." In order to accomplish this purpose, the "kings, rulers, and . . . Gentiles" were

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5Ibid.

6Durham, The Pacific Historical Review, XIII (1944), 149.

7"Proclamation of the Twelve Apostles of the Church of Christ of Latter-day Saints" (Liverpool, 1845); DHC, VII, 558.
not only "required to repent and obey the gospel in its fullness, and thus become members or citizens of the kingdom of God," but were "commanded . . . to put [their] silver and . . . gold . . . ships . . . steam-vessels . . . railroad trains . . . horses, chariots, camels, mules, and litters" into the service of the Kingdom. The development of this kingdom would not only have religious but also political significance. Ultimately, "no king, ruler, or subject - no community or individual [would] stand neutral:" All would "... take sides either for or against the kingdom of God..." In language that may indeed have sounded presumptuous to Gentile ears, the proclamation closed with the injunction that

The courts of Rome, London, Paris, Constantinople, Petersburg, and all others, will then have to yield the point and do homage, and pay tribute to one great centre, and to one mighty Sovereign, or, THRONES WILL BE CAST DOWN, AND KINGDOMS WILL CEASE TO BE.

Missionaries were sent throughout the world to circulate the proclamation and to gather in the faithful, so that the Kingdom might grow in numbers and in power. Thus, for over fifty years, Mormons were motivated by a desire to build a political Kingdom that, as the proclamation stated, eventually was to rule the world.

During the Smoot investigations, the leaders of the Church minimized such aspirations and tried to show that there was little precedent in church history and doctrine to substantiate the idea that the establishment of a political kingdom had been a significant aspect of the Mormon dream.¹⁸ State-

¹⁸Letter by B.H. Roberts to "Bro. Joseph," Talmage pa-
ments of Orson Pratt, which supported the idea of a political kingdom, were represented as simply being expressions of hyperbole and unwarranted speculation which, according to Brigham Young, were to be "no guide for the Latter-day Saints." But such testimony failed to pay attention to the fact that Brigham Young had been equally if not more vocal in his teachings about the political Kingdom. Such attempts to shroud the past and make its access difficult to future generations may be explained by the motivation of the Church leaders to win the good faith of the Gentiles. The Mormons, for the most part, realized that an era had passed away. In an effort to go into the future unhampered, it might be best, so the leaders apparently thought, to leave the past alone. This attitude is understandable if one keeps in mind the intense feelings, which were exhibited by both Gentiles and Mormons, and the almost inhuman persecutions which the Saints had to endure. Mormon history in the twentieth century has shown that the political Kingdom was buried effectively. Rumblings of Mormon political aspirations, which could be heard in the valleys of Zion after the Smoot investigation, were but the echoes of a thun-

pers, Brigham Young University Archives, n.d.). The letter is a request by Roberts, asking "Bro. Joseph" to look up information that would minimize the temporal and political overtones of the Kingdom of God. "The above references are wanted to aid Brother Talmage in forming testimony to be given before the Senate Investigating Committee." "Bro. Joseph" is not identified. There is a possibility that it might be President Joseph Fielding Smith, present Church Historian.

9Deseret News Weekly, XIV (August 23, 1865), 372.
der that had already died away. The accusations of ex-Senator Frank Cannon, son of George Q. Cannon, for the most part lack sincerity and have the false ring of the disgruntled office seeker.¹⁰

But in 1844 the idea of a political Kingdom of God was a vital reality. Such an idea did not likely come to Joseph Smith overnight. Neither is it probable that the Prophet saw his plans of world government outlined when he started his humble church organization on April 6, 1830. But that he thought in big terms from the beginning seems not improbable in the light of his character and his career. Sidney Rigdon recalled that "in the year 1830 . . . we began to talk about the kingdom of God as if we had the world at our command, we talked with great confidence, and talked big things."¹¹ But Rigdon's assertion, that he did not know of anything "in the history of this Church which we did not then [1830] believe"¹² seems to have been more a product of his nostalgia, prodded by hindsight, than historical fact.

¹⁰Frank J. Cannon and George L. Knapp, Brigham Young and his Mormon Empire (New York: Fleming H. Revel Company, 1913); Frank J. Cannon and Harvey J. O'Higgins, Under the Prophet in Utah (Boston: The C. M. Clark Publishing Co., 1911). In both works, Cannon tries to show that after 1907 the Church leaders were still trying to build the political Kingdom of God.

¹¹DHC, VI, 288-289. Rigdon, a Campbellite minister, joined the Church in the autumn of 1830. A considerable number of his congregation at Kirtland, Ohio, followed his example. Ibid., I, 120-125.

¹²Ibid., VI, 290.
Rather, the testimony of Clio reveals, the idea of the Kingdom of God, consistent with the Mormon philosophy of progress, developed gradually; and it is almost impossible to pluck a definitive description of the Kingdom of God from the mass of available testimony at any period of this process. The concept of the Kingdom, as it can be traced in the writings and the speeches of Joseph Smith, his associates and his successors, varied with the person, the place and the time. Nevertheless, a certain common denominator emerged out of the rich variety of available material and focused on Joseph Smith as the chief originator of the idea.

In its earliest, and still most prevalent definition, the Kingdom of God was synonymous with the Church. In a second definition, the Kingdom existed wherever there was a righteous individual; a third definition projected the Kingdom into the apocalypse; and in a fourth definition the Kingdom of God was to be a political state in preparation for the apocalyptic Kingdom. In this study, primary consideration will be given to this fourth definition of the Kingdom, but in order to more fully understand the differences between the various concepts, the other three will require a brief discussion.

1. The Church Synonymous with the Kingdom of God

There is no evidence that, when the Church was organized in 1830, the term **Kingdom of God** differed significantly in meaning from that of **Church**. Joseph Smith records that he asked those present at the organizational meeting of the Church
"Whether they accepted us [Smith and Oliver Cowdery] as their teachers in the things of the Kingdom of God, and whether they were satisfied that we should proceed and be organized as a Church." 13 The new church was an ecclesiastical organization made up of those who accepted the tenets of the "restored Gospel" and had submitted to the rites and ceremonies necessary to gain membership.14 Of this organization, Christ himself had referred to his kingdom as not being of this world. As a result, Christians in general did not take the terms King and Kingdom literally, but considered them, for the most part, to be hardly anything more than perhaps elevating metaphors. It is not likely that, in the early stages of its development, Mormonism differed significantly in its interpretation of the Kingdom of God from this general Christian concept.

Such a purely ecclesiastical concept of the Church of Christ, however, did not prevail for any length of time in the young and growing church. The development of one of the major philosophical ideas of Mormonism resulted in its rejection of the mind-matter dualism of Cartesian philosophy. "There is no such thing as immaterial matter," proclaimed Joseph Smith. "All spirit is matter, but it is more fine or pure, and can only be discerned by purer eyes; we cannot see it; but when

13DHC, I, 77.

14When Brigham Young referred to baptism as essential for membership in the kingdom of God, he is obviously referring to the Kingdom of God as a synonym for the term Church. Journal of Discourses, XIII (1870), 56-57. Hereafter cited as J.D.
our bodies are purified we shall see that all is matter."\textsuperscript{15}

In a somewhat more extreme expression of this same philosophy, the \textit{Millennial Star} quoted the Prophet as saying that

\begin{quote}
God the father is material. Jesus Christ is material. Angels are material. Spirits are material. Men are material. The universe is material. Space is full of materiality. Nothing exists which is not material.\textsuperscript{16}
\end{quote}

The Mormon concept of materialism, however, was more than a metaphysical construct. More concretely, it found expression in a strong emphasis on temporal welfare among the Saints. This mixing of the sublime with the mundane led to some criticism by the Gentiles. When the editor of a Pittsburgh Universalist publication visited Kirtland in 1837 he could not refrain from remarking that the Mormons had too much worldly wisdom connected with their religion - too great a desire for the perishable riches of this world - holding out the idea that the kingdom of Christ is to be composed of 'real estate, herds, flocks, silver, gold,' etc. as well as of human beings.\textsuperscript{17}

\begin{flushright}
\textsuperscript{15}Joseph Smith, \textit{The Doctrine and Covenants} (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1951 edition), 131:7-8. Hereafter cited as \textit{D \& C}. One of the first Mormon theologians who expressed himself forcefully on the subject was Orson Pratt in "Absurdities of Immaterialism" (Liverpool, 1849). His proposal of an atomistic materialism as the basis for a Mormon metaphysics, more comprehensively expressed in "Great First Cause" (Liverpool, 1851), was rejected by Brigham Young as unorthodox. More recently, Mormon Apostle John A. Widtsoe, in an analysis of this aspect of Mormon philosophy, paraphrased Smith succinctly: "spiritual matter is but a refined form of gross matter." \textit{A Rational Theology} (Salt Lake City: Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1915), p. 11. A brilliant discussion of the atomistic aspect of Mormon qualitative metaphysics can be found in Sterling McMurrin, "The Philosophical Foundations of Mormon Theology" (Salt Lake City, 1959), pp. 16-20.

\textsuperscript{16}The Latter-day Saints Millennial Star, VI (1845), 19. Hereafter cited as \textit{Millennial Star}.

\textsuperscript{17}S. A. Davis, as quoted in \textit{Messenger and Advocate}.
\end{flushright}
This concern not only for the spiritual but also the temporal welfare of man has become one of the chief characteristics of Mormonism; even to-day, Mormons are actively engaged in filling the Bishops' storehouses under the auspices of a large-scale welfare program.

If Joseph Smith did not receive his revelation concerning the materiality of both mind and matter until 1843, the development of Mormon doctrine and practice had pointed in this direction from the very beginning. On May 15, 1829, almost a year before the formal organization of the Church, the Prophet and Oliver Cowdery claimed to have received the Aaronic priesthood under the hands of a heavenly messenger who called himself John the Baptist. In the summer of that same year, Smith and Cowdery claimed that they were ordained Apostles under the hands of three other heavenly visitors who announced themselves as Peter, James and John. The Apostleship held the keys to the Melchizedek or higher priesthood. Thus, priestly duties were shared by two distinct groups, with the Melchizedek priesthood officiating primarily in spiritual matters and the Aaronic priesthood administering to the temporal needs of the Church.

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18 *D & C, 13*

19 *Ibid., 27: 12.*

20 This dichotomy between the spiritual and temporal functions of the priesthood was made official in a revelation given to the Prophet in Kirtland, March 28, 1833. See *Ibid., 107.*
Joseph Smith inferred that this priesthood organization, as combined in its spiritual and temporal branches, was called the Kingdom of God.\textsuperscript{21} Brigham Young clarified this concept in a sermon delivered at a conference in Lehi in 1874:

I will say to you with regard to the kingdom of God on the earth - Here is the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, organized with its rules regulations and degrees, with the quorums of the holy Priesthood, from the First Presidency to the teachers and deacons; here we are, an organization. God called upon Joseph, he called upon Oliver Cowdery, then others were called through Joseph, the Church was organized, he with his two counselors comprised the First Presidency. In a few years the Quorum of the Twelve was organized, the High Counsel was organized, the High Priests' quorums were organized, and the Priests' quorum, the Teachers' quorum and the Deacons'. This is what we are in the habit of calling the kingdom of God.\textsuperscript{22}

This interpretation of the Kingdom of God seems always to have been the one most generally accepted in the Church; it has found expression from the pulpit to this day.\textsuperscript{23} The term Kingdom of God, then, may be used as a synonym for Church in both its spiritual and temporal connotation.\textsuperscript{24}

\textsuperscript{21}\textit{DHC}, V, 256-259.

\textsuperscript{22}\textit{J.D.}, XVII (1875), 156. This interpretation found frequent mention in Church literature. See \textit{Times and Seasons}, IV (December 1, 1842), 24-25; John Taylor, \textit{J.D.}, X (1865), 54-58; Wilford Woodruff, \textit{J.D.}, XXI, (1881), 281-286.

\textsuperscript{23}McConkie, (pp. 2, 7.): "What is the kingdom? The kingdom, as used in this expression, is the Church of Jesus Christ. The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints ... is the kingdom of God on earth ... if there is no priesthood ... there is no Kingdom of God."

\textsuperscript{24}We shall later see that in another context the idea of a temporal Kingdom of God was not connected with the Church. The terminology can get quite confusing. Brigham Young, (\textit{J.D.}, X, [1865], 20), considered the spiritual Kingdom as set up wherever the people had accepted the Gospel. This included its temporal functions. This church organization Young distinguished from what he called the physical Kingdom.
2. The Kingdom of God Exists Wherever there is a Righteous Individual

The idea that the Kingdom of God was not necessarily a formal and complete church organization was suggested by Joseph Smith in a sermon held at Nauvoo in 1843. This discourse reveals the Prophet's power of imagination and the flexibility of his thinking. It also serves as a small illustration of the development of Mormon doctrine. In an attempt to refute Alexander Campbell, who held that the Kingdom of God was not set up until the day of Pentecost, Joseph argued that John the Baptist was a legal administrator of the Kingdom of God by the power of the priesthood which he held. In further expanding this idea, the Prophet came to the conclusion that "whenever men can find out the will of God and find an administrator legally authorized from God, there is the kingdom of God." In this sense, argued Joseph Smith, the Kingdom had been set up on the earth "from the days of Adam to the present time."25

This flexibility of the idea of the Kingdom of God is reminiscent of the concept of Zion, which has undergone an analogous metamorphosis. Originally, the Saints looked upon Zion in Jackson County, Missouri, as their gathering place. But persecution and increasing membership forced the Prophet to expand the idea of Zion. As a result, he introduced the concept of "Stakes" of Zion. These could be established in any place where Mormons might gather in sufficient numbers. Ul-

25DHC, V, 256-259.
timately, Zion was to include the entire United States; when the spirit of manifest destiny captured the imagination of the Saints, the idea of Zion was expanded to make room for the entire North and South-American continents. But, if in
Mormon theology there was nothing spiritual that had not also material substance, likewise, things material also had their spiritual overtones. Thus, Zion was not only composed of bricks, mortar and real-estate; perhaps more significantly, it had its seat in the heart of the faithful. Again, this concept seems to have gained currency through necessity, for when brick and mortar crumbled under Gentile hands there seemed but one place left where the pure in heart could keep their Zion inviolate. In a further elaboration of this idea, Orson Pratt suggested that Zion and the Kingdom of God could be regarded as synonymous terms. If we apply this correspondence to the idea of Zion as the pure in heart, the concept of the Kingdom experiences further expansion and thus encompasses not only bearers of the priesthood, but any righteous individual. This concept, no doubt an expression of the universalistic aspect of Mormon theology, never was stressed very heavily in Mormon thought. It seems to have been more of a rhetorical expression, for in actuality, membership in the Kingdom could only be gained through baptism. Most likely only those who had

26 Ibid., VI, 318-322.
27 Ibid., I, 402; D&C, 97:21.
accepted the Mormon Gospel were considered righteous enough to be included under the definition pure in heart.

3. The Apocalyptic Kingdom

In a revelation given to Joseph Smith at Hiram, Ohio, in 1831 the faithful were told to "prepare ... the way of the Lord, [to] make his paths straight."

The keys of the Kingdom of God are committed unto man on the earth, and from thence shall the gospel roll forth unto the ends of the earth, as the stone which is cut out of the mountain without hands shall roll forth, until it has filled the whole earth. Call upon the Lord, that his kingdom may go forth upon the earth, that the inhabitants thereof may receive it, and be prepared for the days to come, in which the Son of Man shall come down in heaven, clothed in the brightness of his glory, to meet the kingdom of God which is set up on the earth.29

This revelation suggests that the spiritual and physical Kingdom were to be preliminaries for the second coming of Christ. The Mormon philosophy of history is strongly eschatological in character. As a result the proleptic Kingdom - as Professor Swensen has shown30-- loomed large in Mormon expectations. Mormon eschatology was divided into two stages. The beginning of the first stage was to be marked by the parousia. At that time, in a preliminary judgment, the wicked would be burned and assigned to a temporary hell; Satan would be bound and the righteous would enjoy a thousand years of peace and happiness under the reign of Christ. At the end


of the thousand years, Satan would be loosed again; men would again turn to wickedness and everything would be burned in a general holocaust from which the righteous would be saved by being caught up into heaven. After the conflagration all men would appear before the bar of God for a forensic judgment. After this judgment, the earth would be renewed and the righteous would inherit it as a permanent dwelling place. This would be the "celestial glory" or Kingdom of heaven, to which all Latter-day Saints aspired. Thus seen, the millennial Kingdom, like the political and spiritual Kingdom preparing for it, was itself but the preparation for the ultimate establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven.31

But if the Kingdom of Heaven was of ultimate concern to the Saints, the millennial Kingdom, of a more immediate character, excited the imagination of the Saints to a far greater extent. This was to be the time when the Saints, delivered from their enemies, would reign supreme. According to an editorial in the Millennial Star, during the Millennium all the political, and all the religious organizations that may previously exist, will be swallowed up into one entire union - one universal empire - having no laws but God's law, and Saints to administer them;32

In another article taken from the Nauvoo Neighbour, the Star gave an account of what form the millennial expectations took

31D & C, 65:6: "Wherefore, may the kingdom of God go forth, that the kingdom of heaven may come that thou, O God, mayest be glorified in heaven so on earth, . . . ."

32Millennial Star, I, (1840), 5.
in the imagination of at least one Saint. In a dream, the
writer had been transported one hundred years ahead to the
year 1945. The millennium had arrived, as attested to by
some relics which had been dug up, in a place where the city
of New York had once stood, during the excavations for the
temple in the 124th city of Joseph.

Our guide, for such we shall call the angel of being
that conveyed us, soon brought us in sight of a beautiful
city. As we were nearing the place, a "pillar of fire,"
seemingly over the most splendid building, lit the city
and country for a great distance, and as we came by, THE
TEMPLE OF THE LORD IN ZION, in letters of a pure language,
and sparkling like diamonds, disclosed where we were.
Our guide went round the city in order to give us a chance
to "count the towers;" and, as it was nearly sunrise, he
conducted us into one, that we might have a fair chance
to view the glory of Zion by daylight. We seemed to be
swallowed up in sublimity! The "pillar of fire" as the
sun rose majestically mellowed into a "white cloud," as
a shade for the city from heat. The dwellings, so brilli-
ant by night, had the appearance of "precious stones,"
and the streets glittered like gold, and we marvelled.
"Marvel not," said our guide, "this is the fulfilment of
the words of Isaiah: -- 'For Brass I will bring gold,
and for iron I will bring silver, and for wood brass, and
for stones iron; I will also make thine officers peace,
and thine exactors righteousness.'" Now the eyes of our
understanding began to be quickened, and we learned that
we were one hundred years ahead of "common life," (1945)
and were glorified. The "veil that hides our view from
the glory of the upper deep had been taken away, and all
things appeared to us as to the Lord. The great earth-
quake mentioned by John, and other prophets before him,
had levelled the mountains over the whole earth: -- the
"sea" had rolled back as it was in the beginning, the
crooked was made straight, and the rough places plain.
The earth yielded her increase, and the knowledge of God
exalted man to the society of resurrected beings. The
melody and prayers of the morning Zion, showed that the
"Lord was there," and truly so; for, after breakfast the
chariot of Jesus Christ was made ready for a pleasure ride;
and the chariots of his "hundred and forty-four thousand"
glittered in the retinue of "earth's greatest and best,"
so gloriously, that the show exhibited the splendour of
Gods, whose Father's name they bore on the front of their
crowns. . . . At about two, after five hours' ride among
the cities and stakes of Zion, we returned to the capital, to partake of the feast of the martyrs. The preparation was perfect. A table through the grove of Zion, for more than three hundred thousand saints, where Jesus Christ sat at the head of the fathers and mothers, sons and daughters of Israel, was a sight which the world, even Babylon in its best days, never witnessed. . . .

After the feast (the sentiments, words of wisdom and other touching matters were to be published in Zo-ma-rah, or Pure News. . . . We stepped into the News Room, and the first article in the Pure News, which attracted our attention, was, the Minutes of the General Conference, held in Zion, on the 14th day of the first month, A.D., 1945, when it was motioned by Joseph Smith, and seconded by John the Revelator, 'That forty, eight new cities be laid out and built, this year, in accordance with the prophets which have said, "who can number Israel? who can count the dust of Jacob? Let him fill the earth with cities." Carried unanimously.' . . . The paper contained a notice for the half yearly conference, as follows: 'The general half yearly conference will be held at Jerusalem, on the 14th day of the seventh month, alternately with the yearly conference in Zion. It is proposed that the highway cast up between the two cities of our God, be decorated with fruit and shade trees between the cities and villages, which are only eighty furlongs apart, for the accommodation of wayfaring men of Israel. Gabriel has brought from paradise some seeds of fruit and grain which were originally in the Garden of Eden, and will greatly add to the comfort and convenience of man.' . . .

Contemplating the greatness of the earth in its glory, with Jesus Christ for her king, president, and lawgiver, with such wise counsellors as Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, Elijah, Peter and Joseph we were imperceptibly led to exclaim, 'Great is the wisdom, great is the glory, and great is the power of man with his Maker!' -- when on a sudden our guide came in and said, 'you must drink wine with the Lord in his kingdom and then return.' This we did, and many things which we saw are not lawful to utter, and can only be known as we learned them, by the assistance of a guardian angel.33

If this highly imaginative account would hardly qualify as church doctrine, it is, nevertheless, indicative of the general fervor with which the parousia was anticipated.

33Ibid., VI (1845), 140-142, as quoted in Swensen, pp. 142-143.
This millennial fervor, however, was not a trademark of the Saints alone. As a matter of fact, Mormon eschatology developed during a period when chiliasm was prevalent in America. The millennial teachings of Lorenzo Dow, Ann Lee, the German Pietists of Pennsylvania and Alexander Campbell had profoundly influenced American religious thinking before Mormonism arrived on the scene.\(^{34}\) Chiliastic expectations in America ran especially high in the early 1830's, just as Mormonism was getting under way. Thus it is not at all surprising that the Saints were caught up in this general religious fervor. The Painesville Telegraph for March 15, 1831, for instance, quotes Martin Harris as predicting that the faithful would see Christ in fifteen years while the non-believers would be damned.\(^{35}\)

A general belief in the immediacy of the parousia, while usually couched in more equivocal language than Harris's statement, characterized the Saints during the Ohio and Missouri periods. With the settlement of Nauvoo the Saints experienced an intermediate period of relative peace and prosperity. As a result millennialism, while still a part of Mormon doctrine, found less emphasis. This attitude will be more fully understood if it is realized that, according to Dr. Swensen, chiliastic expectations usually ran high in times of crisis, while

\(^{34}\)Swensen, pp. 25-35.

periods of political and economic stability had a tendency to
cool off millennial fervor. Again, with the expulsion of
the Saints from Nauvoo, an increased belief in the immediacy
of the coming of the Savior, with the attendant destructions
to be poured out over the Gentiles, gave the Mormons renewed
hope for the speedy delivery from their enemies. This hope
was expressed with especial fervor during the Civil War. This
war, the Saints believed, had been poured out over the nation
in direct fulfillment of a prophecy by Joseph Smith which had
predicted that South Carolina would secede from the Union and
with the aid of her sister states, would wage war against the
North. According to prophecy, this war was to end with the
destruction of the United States and, ultimately, the full
end of all nations, a condition necessary for the inauguration
of the millennial Kingdom.

If Mormonism, especially in its early period, must de-
finitely be classified as a millennial religion, Joseph Smith
was usually careful not to pinpoint the exact time of the
coming of Christ. When William Miller set the date for 1843
the Mormons were among those who denounced such doctrine vig-
orously. Referring to Miller's prophecy, Joseph Smith re-
marked at the April Conference in 1843: "Were I going to proph-
esy, I would say the end would not come in 1844, 5, or 6, or
in forty years." The Prophet, nevertheless, felt called upon

\[36^\text{Swensen, pp. 84, 107-113, 148-149.}\]
\[37^\text{D & C, 87.}\]
to declare that "There are those of the rising generation who shall not taste death till Christ comes."\(^{38}\) On another occasion, the Mormon prophet had told certain Elders to go forth and prune the vineyard before the coming of Christ; 56 years should "wind up the scene." This prediction was made on February 14, 1835 and would place the parousia in 1891.\(^{39}\) One time, when the Prophet fervently prayed to find out the time of the second coming he was told that he should see the Son of Man if he lived to be eighty-five. This would place the date for the beginning of the millennium in 1890. The Prophet was aware of the quivocal nature of this revelation, but believed that "the coming of the Son of Man ... \([\text{would}]\) not be any sooner than that time."\(^{40}\)

Nevertheless, especially in view of the prediction made in 1835, many of the Saints looked forward to the inauguration of the parousia in 1890 and 1891. As a result, during the General Conference in October, 1890, the General authorities of the Church felt called upon to tell the people that they should not expect the second coming in 1891 or in the near future.\(^{41}\) Nobody, so the scripture said, would know the hour or the day. The Lord would come as a thief in the night. But the faithful who watched the signs of the times

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\(^{38}\) _DHC_, V, 336-337.

\(^{39}\) _Millennial Star_, LII (1890), 675.

\(^{40}\) _D & C_, 130:14-17; _DHC_, V, 336.

\(^{41}\) _Millennial Star_, LII (1890), 657, 692-693.
would not be taken by surprise. One thing, however, was certain; the Lord would not come until all the signs predicted in the scriptures had been fulfilled. In 1890, a great many of the preliminaries of the parousia had not occurred yet; thus, the Church authorities felt reasonably sure that the second coming was not as imminent as the Saints wished to believe. Furthermore, with the stabilization of Mormonism, especially after the end of the struggle over polygamy, pre-millennialism retreated. If, in theory, the millennium was coming nearer every year, in the hearts of the people the parousia was moved farther away into the future. Patriarch Benjamin F. Johnson, writing in 1903, recalled that: "We were over seventy years ago taught by our leaders to believe that the coming of Christ and the millennium reign was much nearer than we believe it to be now."  

Since the signs of the times would proclaim the end of the world and the inauguration of the apocalyptic Kingdom the Saints recorded news of calamities of nature, railroad accidents, fires, steamboat explosions, wars, revolutions and signs in the heavens. Joseph Smith, in his personal history, likewise recorded all events that seemed to be portents of the parousia. Every calamity in the world was looked upon as a sign and a contribution to the end. "One and all are, to the Saint, so many cheering confirmations of his faith, and

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42 Letter of Benjamin F. Johnson to George S. Gibbs, written between April and October, 1903 (typed copy of a transcript from original by Charles S. Seller, July 1, 1911, at Brigham Young University Library), p. 18.
intimations of the triumphant recognitions of . . . [the] 'Kingdom'." But to the unbelievers such signs were not fraught with chiliastic connotations. Thus, complains an article in the Millennial Star, the unbeliever assigns spots in the sun to a natural cause. "When all nature is illuminated by the commotion of the starry heavens, as was the case in 1833 - it is but an idle tale - nothing but meteors." Wars, likewise, simply had their origin in the greed and stupidity of man. But if this was partly true, the Saints also knew that wars were brought on by divine decree which, as mentioned previously, would result in the destruction of all nations. This destruction, to be sure, was conditional; but even the most sanguine optimist among the Saints did not expect a large-scale conversion of the world to Mormonism, a feat which alone could save mankind. As it was, the Sword of Laban, which Joseph Smith and Oliver Cowdery purportedly had seen unsheathed in the Hill Cumorah as a symbol for the impending destruction, was "never to be sheathed again until the kingdoms of this world [had] become the kingdom of our Lord and His Christ." 

That the Saints never expected a majority of the world's population to accept the Gospel and join the Kingdom is illustrated by the doctrine of the gathering. This doctrine pre-

44Millennial Star, II (1841), 28.
45Brigham Young, J.D., XIX (1878), 38.
supposed the existence of an elect race, specifically the House of Israel, which was to be gathered from out of the nations like wheat from the tares. Two gathering-places were to be set up, one for the descendants of Joseph through Ephraim and Manasseh, to be established in America with the City of Zion in Jackson County, Missouri as the center, the other for the descendants of Judah and the lost ten tribes in Palestine, with Jerusalem as the center. Missionaries were sent throughout the United States, to England and continental Europe, to the Pacific Islands, to Asia and South-America to gather those of the blood of Israel.46 "So important was this missionary work considered that the final consummation of the Kingdom was not thought to be possible until this task had been completed."47 That it would have been impossible to form a political Kingdom without gathering the Saints into one place seems only logical. Thus, the gathering also became one of the fundamental means of building that Kingdom which was to receive Christ when he would descend from the clouds.48

46. The doctrine of the gathering of the House of Israel had no racist overtones. True to the universalistic aspect of Mormon theology every person who became a member of the Church through baptism was thus made a member of the House of Israel by adoption.

47. Swensen, p. 82.

48. This doctrine finds considerable mention in Mormon scripture and other Mormon literature. D & C, 29:7-11, 14-17; Joseph Smith, The Book of Mormon (Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1951 edition), Jacob 5, 6:12; 2Nephi 27:1-3; Millennial Star, III (1843), 193; Ibid., IV (1844), 161, 177; V (1844), 13, 28-31, 43-45; Orson Pratt, Latter-day Kingdom, 125, passim. For a scholarly account of
4. The Kingdom of God as a Political Organization

The strong emphasis on the millennial Kingdom in Mormon thought has led some writers to believe that the idea of a political Kingdom preceding the second coming of Christ was never entertained by the Saints. According to one scholar, the *raison d'être* of Mormonism was not to establish a temporal Kingdom, but to wait for Christ.⁴⁹ This erroneous notion may have been caused partly by the fact that it is extremely difficult to differentiate between the apocalyptic Kingdom and its predecessor. Since the one was to lead to the other, they were to be almost identical in nature, at least theoretically. The main difference between the two was mostly a matter of chronology. The one would be the kingdom militant, struggling against a hostile world. The other was the kingdom victorious, having subdued all its enemies. The *raison d'être* of the political Kingdom was brought about precisely by the fact that the Mormons did not believe that they could wait for Christ to establish the apocalyptic Kingdom; rather, the

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Saints believed they had to be actively engaged in building the Kingdom themselves. John Taylor, referring to the building of the Kingdom, declared:

We have been talking about these things, but there is much to be done in the intermediate space between the present and that impenetrable period in the great future. It is not all a matter of faith, but there is some action required; it is a thing that we have to engage in ourselves.

Mormons may have believed in miracles; but the Saints were also of a practical mind and thus aided the Lord as much as they could. Seen in this context, the efforts of the Saints to establish a political Kingdom in preparation for the Apocalyptic Kingdom became the application of the belief that, while man can accomplish nothing without the aid of the Lord, God helps only those who help themselves. If the Saints in their enthusiasm to build the Kingdom sometimes overshot their mark and expended valuable energy towards futile ends it was this philosophy of self-reliance, which made the desert "bloom as a rose."

Ultimately, so the Saints believed, they were to govern the whole world. But, as we have seen, this was not to be achieved by the Saints standing idly on the sidelines until the Savior would come. The Mormons had gained exper-

50*J.D.*, IX (1862), 341.

51An apocryphal story, widely circulated in Mormondom, relates how Heber C. Kimball once promised a Farmer that the Lord would provide him with a much needed horse if he would faithfully perform certain duties requested of him by the church authorities. When, after a year, the faithful Saint was still without a horse, Brother Kimball turned over one of his own horses to the man with the remark that a prophet of the Lord could not be made into a liar.
ience in government in Kirtland, Missouri, Nauvoo and, most of all, in Deseret. "... the time will come", predicted George Q. Cannon at a Missionary conference in 1862.

when . . . [the elders] will be called to act in a different ambassadorial capacity. The nations are not going to be all destroyed at once, as many have imagined; but they are going to stand and continue to some extent with their governments; and the kingdom of God is not all the time to continue its present theological character alone, but is to become a political power, known and recognized by the powers of the earth; and you, my brethren, may have to be sent forth to represent that power as its accredited agents . . . Young men now here today may be chosen to go forth and represent God's kingdom. You may be called to appear and represent it at the courts of foreign nations; . . . 52

B. H. Roberts made it very clear that this Kingdom was to be a "tangible, bona fide government" with officers, laws and subjects. 53

The idea of the political Kingdom of God is not only one of the most important but also one of the most neglected aspects of Mormon history. This neglect can partly be explained by the strong evidence which points to the political Kingdom of God under Mormon leadership as a serious cause for friction between the Gentiles and the Saints. Thus, in an attempt to live in the world, the Mormons were forced to modify their ideas of a political Kingdom and to relegate them to the uncertain period of a future millennium, a context in which aspirations of world government would cause little alarm to suspicious Gentiles. In a logical attempt not to arouse the already excited non-Mormon world further, Church leaders

52 Millennial Star, XXIV (1862), 103.
53 DHC, I, p. XXXVI.
thought it wise to publicize their true aims regarding the political Kingdom of God as little as possible. At times, the leaders felt it necessary to flatly negate political aspirations. Thus, Joseph Smith denied the testimony of certain apostates who had maintained that the "church organization was . . . a temporal kingdom, which was to fill the whole earth, and subdue all other kingdoms."\(^{54}\) Likewise, in 1840, when Elias Higbee was called to testify before a Senate committee, he maintained that Joseph Smith was only the spiritual leader of the Church and did not lead the people, as accused, in "temporal, civil, and political matters."\(^{55}\) If Joseph Smith could deny such accusations he was not completely untruthful, at least not from a point of semantics; for the political Kingdom of God, as we shall see, was not considered to be a church organization.

\(^{54}\) Testimony given before Judge King in the Missouri investigations, \textit{DHC}, III, 211.

\(^{55}\) \textit{Ibid.}, IV, 85.
CHAPTER II

THE THEORY OF THE POLITICAL KINGDOM

It is a rather difficult task to piece together a consistent theory of government from the mass of confusing and contradictory testimony. This difficulty may well be an indication that the political theory of the Kingdom evolved in a rather pragmatic fashion. It is all too evident that the Saints lacked a political theorist who could have worked out a coherent system of political thought. But, seen from the perspective of history, this lack of political dogma has turned out to be anything but a disadvantage to the Saints. For events forced them to change their position frequently, and under such conditions dogma usually turns into inconvenient ballast. As it is, it remains for the historian to find his way through the labyrinth of testimony to determine what actually guided the Saints in their efforts to establish the Kingdom of God on earth.

1. The Political Kingdom of God Separate from the Church

It was St. Augustine who had observed that Christ did not say "my kingdom is not of the world" but "my kingdom is
The emphasis was on this and not on world. If Joseph Smith was not likely familiar with the exegesis of this illustrious church father, the Prophet no doubt would have agreed with the famous Carthaginian at least on this one point. But Mormons considered themselves biblical literalists, and if their city of God was less ephemeral than that of Saint Augustine, it was, nevertheless, sanctioned by biblical scripture. Not only could the Mormons find no biblical injunction against a political Kingdom of God; more important, the Prophet Daniel had predicted the establishment of precisely such a Kingdom. Morman theologians considered the general Christian interpretation, which saw fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy in the establishment of the spiritual Kingdom of God in the days of Christ, to be erroneous. B. H. Roberts, in what is perhaps the most concise summarization of the Mormon viewpoint, argued that there is no "evidence in Scripture for believing that the 'kingdom,' represented by 'the stone cut out of the mountain without hands,' is any less a material kingdom than those which preceded it." Rather, this kingdom, like those before it, was going to be a

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2Daniel II:44. "And in the days of these kings shall the God of heaven set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people, but it shall break in pieces and consume all these kingdoms."

3DHC, I, p. XXXVI. Also Brigham Young, J.D., XVII (1874), 156; Orson Pratt, Latter-Day Kingdom, p. 115.
political institution and, as such, distinct from the Church.

The idea of such a distinction originated with the Prophet Joseph himself.\(^4\) Benjamin F. Johnson, who was present at a private meeting shortly before the Prophet's death, recalled him as saying that the Kingdom of God and the Church were both organized, thus suggesting a difference between the two organizations.\(^5\) But not only did the Prophet recognize a distinction between the Kingdom and the Church; he also insisted on their complete separation. This doctrine was clarified by George Q. Cannon, who explained that

> a good many of our people confound the Kingdom of God with the Church of God. Now there is a very wide distinction between the two. A man may, in one sense, be a member of the Church of Christ, and not a member of the Kingdom of God. The two organizations are entirely distinct. The Kingdom of God, when it shall prevail in the earth - as it will do - will be the civil power which will shield and protect the Church of Christ against every attack, against every unlawful aggression, against every attempt to deprive it of its legitimate rights.\(^6\)

If a man, then, might in one sense be a member of the Church and not a member of the Kingdom of God, likewise, it was possible for a person to be a member of the Kingdom of God without belonging to the Church. "For," declared Brigham Young in a sermon at the Salt Lake Tabernacle,

> ... a man may be a legislator in that body which will


\(^5\)Johnson to Gibbs, p. 9.

\(^6\)J.D., XXVI (1886), 12. For a more detailed statement by the same author see DHC, VII, 382. Also Brigham Young, *J. D.*, II (1855), 310; *Ibid.*, X (1865), 19-20.
issue laws to sustain the inhabitants of the earth in their individual rights, and still not belong to the Church of Jesus Christ at all. And further, though a man may not even believe in any religion, it would be perfectly right, when necessary, to give him the privilege of holding a seat among that body which will make laws to govern all the nations of the earth and control those who make no profession of religion at all; for that body would be governed, controlled, and dictated to acknowledge others in those rights which they wish to enjoy themselves.7

But in spite of all the theories of a separation of the political Kingdom from the Church, which seem to have been partly inspired by the separation of church and state under the Constitution, it is difficult to visualize such a separation in practical operation. For, if the Church was separate and distinct from the Kingdom of God, the former was, nevertheless, the precursor of the political Kingdom; as a matter of fact, without the Church, the organization of such a kingdom would have been impossible. According to Brigham Young, the Church was to play a vital part in setting up the political Kingdom. This kingdom was to grow "out of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints," although Young made it quite clear that the political government of God was not the Church.8 And yet, it can readily be seen that the connection between the Church and the political Kingdom must have been very close under the circumstances. John Taylor, referring to this fact, stated that

7Ibid., II (1855), 310.

8Young, J.D., II (1855), 317. DHC., VII, 381-382. A number of the early church authorities agree with Young that the Kingdom of God grows out of the Church. See Heber C. Kimball, J.D., X (1865), 240-241; Wilford Woodruff, Ibid., II (1855), 192-193; Orson Pratt, Ibid., XIII (1871), 126.
"before there could be a kingdom of God, there must be a church of God," because it would be impossible to introduce "the law of God among a people who would not be subject to and be guided by the spirit of revelation." Political programs such as Fourierism, Communism and all kind of philanthropic societies would ultimately fail because they lacked guidance by the Spirit of God.9

This fate, however, was not to overtake the government of the Kingdom of God, since it was subject to the jurisdiction of the priesthood. If the Church could not function without a priesthood organization the political Kingdom, likewise, needed the guiding hand of those who had authority to act in the name of God. The priesthood, as a matter of fact, was considered to be indispensible for setting up the political Kingdom.10 Ultimately, asserted Taylor, "the priesthood will be the only legitimate ruling power under the whole heavens."11 This idea of legitimacy was further expressed by Orson Pratt, who declared that

The kingdom of God . . . is the only legal government that can exist in any part of the universe. All other governments are illegal and unauthorized. God, having made all beings and worlds, has the supreme right to govern them by his own laws, and by officers of his own appointment. Any people attempting to govern themselves by laws of their own making, and by officers of their own appointment, are in direct rebellion against the kingdom of God.12

9Ibid., XVIII (1875), 137.
10Times and Seasons, IV (December 1, 1842), 24-25; Taylor, J.D., X (1865), 54-58; Woodruff, Ibid., XXI (1881), 281-286.
11Taylor, Ibid., VI (1859), 25.
12Orson Pratt, "The Kingdom of God" (Liverpool, 1851),
Thus, we have made the full swing of the circle. If the Church and the Kingdom of God were, in one sense, separate organizations, ultimately no distinction could be made between the two. As it was, church and state were, for the most part, separate in theory only; in reality, the priesthood that controlled the Church also controlled the state. Parley P. Pratt, in his "Standard and Ensign for the People" address, dropped all distinctions between religious and political government. "Any system of religion," he taught, "should include every branch of government that could possibly need for their dwelling with each other . . ." And in his presentation he held that the fact that the religions of the world insisted upon a distinction between themselves and the "policy of civil government" was an indication not only of their ineffectiveness but of their lack of divinity.

p. 1. See also John Taylor, J.D., I (1854), 230: "Let us now notice our political position in the world. What are we going to do? We are going to possess the earth. Why? Because it belongs to Jesus Christ, and he belongs to us, and we to him. We are all one, and will take the kingdom and possess it under the whole heavens, and reign over it for ever and ever. Now, ye kings and emperors,. help yourselves, if you can. This is the truth, and it may as well be told at this time as at any other." This doctrine was slightly at odds with the 12th Article of Faith (Pearl of Great Price /Salt Lake City: The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1951 edition/, p. 60) in which Joseph Smith had stated that "We believe in being subject to kings, presidents, rulers, and magistrates . . ." Apparently this obedience was only a temporary expedient with the Saints hopefully looking to the overthrow of all earthly governments.

13 We shall later see that the leaders of the Church were also the leading officers in the Kingdom of God.

14 J.D., I (1851), 173-174.
a religion not wholly true could not possibly develop all the resources, principles, branches, department, officers, and powers adapted to the government, organization, peace, order, happiness, and defence of society, and for its regulation while dwelling with foreign departments and powers.

A religious system presupposed a system of government. "When I say a religious system," Pratt remarked,

I mean that which unites principles of political government and religious . . . Whether men realize it or not, when they say, 'Thy kingdom come, thy will be done in earth as it is in heaven,' it is as much to say 'O God, sweep away all the falsehood and abuses of power there are in the world, whether religious or political; . . . And in the place of all these false governments and religions, in political and social life, introduce that eternal government, that pure order of things, those eternal principles and institutions, which govern society in those better worlds, the worlds of immortality and eternal life.15

Under such circumstances, the position of a Gentile as a member of the governing council of the Kingdom of God would appear extremely tenuous. For, if the Kingdom of God was to combine civil and spiritual authority under one head, the voice of one who could not combine such an authority in one person must have been weak under such a system, however tolerant the priest-legislators would have been in the exercise of their authority.

2. The Kingdom of God a Theocracy

A perfect government for all the earth. Not a republic nor a monarchy, And yet from both all principles of worth Are blessed in this great Theocracy.16

15Ibid.

Thus, in the language of rhyme if not poetry, described Charles W. Penrose the nature of the government of the Kingdom of God. If the idea of a democratic theocracy seems somehow contradictory, the fact that such contradictory concepts could exist side by side may be partly accounted for by the eclectic nature of much of Mormon thought. Eclecticism itself had found sanction in the thirteenth Article of Faith in which Joseph Smith, speaking for his church, declared that "If there is anything virtuous, lovely, or of good report or praiseworthy, we seek after these things." In Mormon thought, any contradiction between truths is considered impossible. That element of Greek drama which ran its tragic course precisely because of the opposition of two principles both equally good and true would have found no place in Mormon philosophy. The inclusion of both authoritarian and democratic principles in their theory of government, however, hardly seems to have been a premeditated effort on the part of Mormon thinkers. Rather, the inclusion of apparently contradictory ideas of government in one system seems to have been simply a pragmatic accommodation of ideas inherited from different sources. Since both sources were considered good and true contradictions, it was believed, would resolve themselves.

One source for Mormon democratic ideals was no doubt the Yankee tradition, which was part of the heritage of most

17 Joseph Smith to John Wentworth, March 1, 1842, DHC., IV, 540-541; Pearl of Great Price, p. 60.
of the early Saints. Authoritarianism, however, also can be traced partly to the Puritan New England background of many Mormons. Ideas of Old Testament Patriarchal authority were reinforced by the modern revelations of Mormonism which, with the passing of time, were increasingly interpreted to favor the hierarchical powers of a central authority.\(^\text{18}\) On the other hand, democratic ideals were to be kept intact, if only theoretically. But if the inclusion of "all principles of worth" in the governmental concepts of the political Kingdom could be reconciled in theory, in practical application such a reconciliation presupposed an interpretation of democracy quite different from contemporary American concepts.

If the persecutions intensified the strong feeling of group loyalty among the Saints, Therald Jensen's statement that the Mormons would have divided along national party lines long before they did, had it not been for the persecution and polygamy,\(^\text{19}\) will bear some modification in the light of the theory of the Kingdom of God, which clearly left no room for political parties. An editorial in the *Deseret News* pro-

\(^{18}\)According to Dr. Fielding ("Stages in Mormon History," pp. 8-10), this struggle of authoritarianism versus democracy went on for some time. Throughout the presidency of Joseph Smith, the congregation had a considerable degree of power, in spite of Smith's great personal prestige and authority. Thus, when Joseph Smith wanted to release Sidney Rigdon as his counselor, this move was not sustained by the congregation and the Prophet agreed to keep Rigdon (*DHC*, VI, 47-49). On another occasion Smith's desire to keep Frederick G. Williams was objected to by the Priesthood, (*DHC*, II, 509).

\(^{19}\)Therald N. Jensen, p. 94.
claimed that the "people only disagree where they have not sufficient knowledge of the subject under consideration, or through wickedness, which is itself the offspring of ignorance."20 Such a viewpoint could only be true in relation to the exercise of unilateral power by a central authority. In no other context would it be possible to declare that the need of two opposing political candidates is an indication of apostacy.21

The main objective of their lives, the Saints were told, was the establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. With this ultimate aim in mind, members of the Church must not divide their interests and loyalties between the Church and society at large, between political and religious matters. Thus, "when we go to the polls," admonished Charles W. Penrose his listeners, "we must go there as Latter-day Saints, to be true to our religious covenants; we cannot say, religion, you stand aside, I am a politician today."22 In keeping with this philosophy, Mormon elections for over fifty years were hardly anything more than a "sustaining" of the officers proposed or supported by the hierarchy. The Millennial Star, praising the unity of Mormon politics to its readers, described the theocratic system in operation as follows:

At mass meetings, held in all the principal precincts, delegates are chosen by unanimous vote to meet in a con-

20"Our Unity -- Its Causes and Antagonisms," The Deseret News, XIV (July 19, 1865), 332.

21Brigham Young, J.D., XIV (1872), 92-93.

22Charles W. Penrose, Ibid., XX (1880), 124.
vention, and select the names of individuals to fill the various vacant offices. In case of any dispute or dubiety on the mind of the convention, the Prophet of God, who stands at the head of the Church, decides. He nominates, the convention endorses, and the people accept the nomination. . . . So in the Legislature itself. The utmost freedom of speech free from abuse is indulged in; but any measure that cannot be unanimously decided on, is submitted to the President of the Church, who, by the wisdom of God decides the matter, and all the Councillors and Legislators sanction the decision. There are no hostile parties, no opposition, no Whig and Tory, Democrat and Republican, they are all brethren, legislating for the common good, and the word of the Lord, through the head of the Church guides, counsels, and directs.23

If such a system seemed to be at odds with the American political tradition, it was nevertheless, sanctioned by the majority of the Saints. Tales of political subjugation and bondage, circulated by the Gentiles, were for the most part fictitious. As a rule, the Saints willingly submitted to the inspired counsel of their leaders; and, theoretically at least, the people had the right to reject such counsel. John Taylor, explaining the theocratic principle, stated that "Theo-democracy operates on the principle that first God speaks and then the people have the opportunity of electing to receive his dictation or of rejecting it."24 But under such a system, law

23Millennial Star, XXVI (1876), 744, 746. The political control of the Church over its members is illustrated by an incident which occurred in Davis County as late as 1889. Two Mormons were running as selectmen, one on the ticket of the People's Party, the other as an independent. George Q. Cannon, speaking in conference, advised the electorate as follows: "Now, brethren, you will shortly have an election here. How will you act? After the order of the world to stir up strife and contention, or will you do it after the order of God, and elect the men whom God wants." It will not be difficult to guess who won the election. See Smoot Proceedings, I, 800.

24J.D., IX (1862), 9.
would never originate with the people themselves. As a matter of fact, the theocratic principle implied a strong distrust of popular government. John Taylor openly expressed his reservations about majority rule, declaring that

We talk sometimes about vox populi, vox Dei ... the voice of the people is the voice of God; yet sometimes it is the voice of the Devil, which would be more proper by vox populi, vox Diaboli; for the voice of the people is frequently the voice of the Devil. In the first place it should be the voice of God, and then the voice of the people.25

This philosophy had its more tempered origin in the Book of Mormon. When the sons of King Mosiah refused the kingship, the aged ruler thought it wise to establish a republic in spite of his belief that if a king were just and ruled in accordance with the will of God "it would be expedient that [the people] should always have kings to rule over them."26 But kings frequently did not exercise their power in accordance with the will of God; thus, it would be better to establish a republic, since, as a rule, the majority of the people usually desire that which is right. If the time should ever come "that the voice of the people doth choose iniquity" then the "judgments of God" would be poured out among the people.27 Joseph Smith himself, no doubt the source of Taylor's statements, had showed somewhat less faith in the power of the people to govern themselves than the ancient king whose record

25Ibid., VII (1850), 317, 326.
27Ibid., 29:26-27.
he had translated: "All, all speak with a voice of thunder, that man is not able to govern himself, to legislate for himself, to protect himself, to promote his own good, nor the good of the world," declared the Prophet, adding that good government "needs the wisdom of God, the intelligence of God, and the power of God." 28

3. The Political Kingdom and the Constitution

According to one scholar, the Mormon idea of a theodemocracy was in complete harmony with the original ideals of the Founding Fathers, ideals from which later generations had departed. 29 Such a concept, however, seems to be based on the fallacious assumption that use of the term democracy would in both instances imply the same meaning. But even if it had been true that Mormon theocracy was but an embodiment of the ideals of the Fathers of the Constitution, the virtue of such a conservatism could be debated on some points. A number of political scientists agree that one of the strengths of the Constitution lies in its inherent possibility of broad interpretation, also wisely provided for by the "Fathers." Thus, if they had not contemplated or encouraged, but warned against,

28DHC, V, 61, 66.

29Professor Andrus (p. 28), speaking of the absence of political parties in the Kingdom of God, claims that "Joseph Smith and his associates came closer to being the true successors of the Founding Fathers, in their original inspired concepts of the Constitution, than any other body of American thinkers."
the development of political parties, the formation of such parties, inevitable from the vantage point of historical hindsight was, nevertheless, not prohibited by the Constitution. That the Constitution became what the Supreme Court said it was may have seemed unfortunate to the Mormons, but such a development guarded against an excessive number of amendments or even the writing of a new document which might easily have become necessary in the face of a changing social order. If the Mormons did not contemplate the existence of political parties in the Kingdom of God, they may have been close to the letter of the original concept of the Constitution, but somewhat remote from its place in the historical development of American democracy.

Of this discrepancy, however, the Saints seem not to have been aware. Thus, Brigham Young insisted that the government of the Kingdom of God would closely resemble the government of the United States. "Few, if any," he declared, understand what a theocratic government is. In every sense of the word, it is a republican government, and differs but little in form from our National, State, and Territorial Governments; . . .

The Constitution and laws of the United States resemble a theocracy more closely than any government now on earth. . . . Even now the form of Government of the United States differs but little from the Kingdom of God.

30J.D., VI, (1859), 342. There seems to have been some difference of opinion among leading Mormons about the exact nature of the government of the Kingdom. Young, for instance, in elaborating on the above quoted theory, declared that the Kingdom would be a "true democratic theocracy," (Ibid., 346), and that the people would "find it a Republican Democratic Government" (Ibid., VII /1860/, 8). In answering the question of
The main difference between the two, according to Young, would be the fact that the subjects of the latter would "recognize the will and dictation of the Almighty." If, in actuality, the differences seem to have been much more extensive, they were either ignored or attributed to the supposed perversion of the Constitution by the Gentiles.

what constituted "a true Republican government," he defined it as "a government or institution that is perfect - perfect in its laws and ordinances, having for its object the perfection of mankind in righteousness. This is a true Democracy. But Democracy as it is now is another thing. True Democracy or Republicanism, if it were rightly understood, ought to be the Government of the United States" (Ibid., 10). George Q. Cannon ("Kingdom of the Last Days" in Writings from the Western Standard, published in San Francisco, California /Liverpool: George Q. Cannon, 1864, pp. 380-382), on the other hand, seems to have had a different idea about the form of government of the Kingdom. A Professor Leibee from Australia, lecturing in San Francisco in 1857, attempted to prove that the United States was the kingdom spoken of by Daniel that would subdue all other kingdoms. Cannon, rejecting this theory, pointed out that the stone cut out of the mountain without hands "was not to be a republic, but a Kingdom."

31 J.D., VI, (1859), 342.

32 Dr. Andrus (p. 21), fully accepts the word of Brigham Young and other church authorities and agrees that the government of the Kingdom indeed resembled government under the Constitution. He sees, for instance, a close relationship between the separation of powers under the United States Constitution and "a constitutional separation of powers between Zion and the political government;" but he fails to realize that any separation of powers in the Kingdom of God was highly theoretical. The President of the United States could hardly qualify for the office of Justice of the Supreme Court at the same time. But in the Kingdom of God, the leader of the Church could at the same time act as the chief executive and judge of the political Kingdom. Thus, when Justice Drummond attended a session of the Territorial legislature at Fillmore in 1856, he was exceedingly annoyed when Brigham Young dispensed with the formalities of government and mixed politics and priesthood in his dual capacity as governor and head of the Church. See Nels Anderson, Desert Saints: The Mormon Frontier in Utah (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1942), p. 161.
The Constitution was universally revered by the Saints. This respect for the supreme law of the land, no doubt a Yankee inheritance of most Mormons, was intensified by the teachings of the Prophet Joseph, who declared on one occasion that "the Constitution of the United States is a glorious standard; it is founded in the wisdom of God. . . ."33 This attitude toward the Constitution was first implicitly expressed in the Book of Mormon, where the Lord had promised that America was to be a land of liberty.34 In order to achieve and preserve this liberty, God had inspired righteous men to establish the Constitution.35 With the Constitution thus incorporated into the Mormon canon, its reverence and respect by the Saints was assured. But as Americans and frontiersmen, the Mormons also revered the Constitution no doubt for reasons that were not too different from those of their fellow Americans who settled the great West. If the American frontiersman, according to Garrison, "did not like the government he reverted to the Constitution, whose stability and assumed perfection afforded him a point of reference in the otherwise obviously variable and often chaotic order."36 And the government the Mormons believed

33DH C, III, 303-305.
34Book of Mormon, 2 Nephi 10:10-12; Ether 2:12.
35D&C, 101:79-80, "Therefore, it is not right, that any man should be in bondage one to another. And for this purpose have I established the Constitution of this land, by the hands of wise men whom I raised up unto this very purpose, and redeemed the land by the shedding of blood."
they had particularly little reason to like. Thus, reference to the Constitution gave the Saints an outlet to express an American patriotism which they could not feel and express towards the government itself. The perhaps most famous statement of this attitude, given as a reply by Brigham Young to Judge Brocchus, was to be quoted by Mormons through the generations: "I love the government and the Constitution of the United States, but I do not love the damned rascals who administer the government." 37

If, initially, the Constitution had been given by the Almighty to the United States ultimately, the Saints were taught by their Prophet, all nations would adopt "the God-given Constitution of the United States as a Paladium of Liberty and Equal Rights." 38 But this ideal end of the Constitution could be achieved only in cooperation with the Kingdom of God, whose officers would administer the Constitution after it had been perfected by divine revelation. For, although the Constitution was considered to be one of the best the human family had ever devised 39 it was "not a perfect instrument." Rather, "It was one of those stepping stones to a future development in the

37 Journal History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City), September 8, 1851, p. 4. Hereafter cited as Journal History. For further expressions of this attitude see Ibid., September 12, 1857; J.D., V (1858), 232; Ibid., VI (1859), 344.

38 Johnson to Gibbs, p. 7.

39 Albert Carrington, J.D., XVII (1875), 165-166; Orson Pratt, Ibid., III (1856), 71.
progress of man . . .”40 This statement by John Taylor had reference to the establishment of the political Kingdom of God, which, so the Saints believed, would fall heir to the ill-administered United States and its divinely inspired Constitution.41 Parley P. Pratt, in answering his own rhetorical question of whether or not the United States would continue forever, declared:

No, it is not sufficiently perfect; and, notwithstanding it has been sanctioned by the Lord at a time when it was suited to the circumstances of the people, yet the day will come . . . when the United States government, and all others, will be uprooted, and the kingdoms of this world will be united in one, and the kingdom of our God will govern the whole earth. . . .42

Pratt continued by saying that the nucleus of such a government had been formed, and that "its laws had emanated from the throne of God." The American republic had been organized to prepare the way for this government, which should "have dominion over all the earth to the ends thereof."43 In order to ex-

40Ibid., XXI (1881), 31.

41In a letter to Napoleon III, Elder Louis A. Bertrand (Millennial Star, XXIII [1861], 221) wrote as follows: "In the plan of His providence, the work of George Washington was only a provisional government, in order that His kingdom might be founded on the earth. Since the 6th day of April, 1830, when it was at first organized with only six individuals, that kingdom has so widely extended that it possesses to-day, near the centre of North America, a Territory called Utah, nearly as large as France. The work of Washington is going to miserably destroy itself. You will soon see that young and powerful kingdom in His hands the political direction of the American people, reconciling the three hostile parts of it, resolving all the great problems which are before mankind, forming the angular stone of the New World, . . . ."

42J.D., III (1856), 71-73. 43Ibid.
ercise this dominion, fundamental laws were necessary. The Con-
stitution of the Kingdom of God, received by revelation, was to provide the legal framework for a government of world-wide authority. Since the constitution of the Kingdom was patterned after that of the United States, it was no doubt in this revised form that the founding fathers were to have their inspired document become the universal law of mankind.

The Mormons, then, apparently had little regard for the Constitution as a living organism -- as it had grown with the American Republic. To the Saints, such a development seemed nothing short of adulteration, a process which would ultimately lead the United States to destruction. And yet, at the moment of greatest peril, the Elders of the Church would be called to save the inspired document; thus predicted the leaders of the Church. But if the leaders of the Church exhibited a strongly conservative attitude towards the Constitution, such an attitude was manifested only in the relationship of the Constitution to the United States. As the basic laws of the Kingdom of God, it is difficult to see how the Mormons could insist on an unchanged constitution during a period of contemplated major changes in the political setup of the world. That Joseph Smith considered the constitution of the Kingdom of God as a

44Brigham Young, J.D., XVII (1875), 157; "Minutes of the Council of Fifty" (typed MS, Brigham Young University Library) April 10, 1880. At the present time, no copy of this constitution is available.

45Brigham Young, J.D., II (1855), 182.
flexible instrument is indicated by John D. Lee, who recalled the Prophet as teaching "that no legislature could enact laws that would meet every case, or attain the ends of justice in all respects." In harmony with this philosophy Joseph Smith is said to have called the legislature of the Kingdom of God the "Living Constitution."\textsuperscript{46}

The attitude of the Saints toward the Constitution reveals a failure to\textbf{fully} understand the principles on which American democracy was based. Joseph Smith's concept of the federal system is illustrated by a revelation given at Kirtland in 1833. This revelation, a result of the early persecutions in Missouri, gave an explanation of why the Saints had been driven from Zion, and then went on to list the channels through which the victims of Gentile atrocities were to obtain redress of grievances. First, the injured were to "importune at the feet of the judge." If he failed to give satisfaction, the petition was to go to the governor of the state. Should the governor, too, prove lax in his willingness to aid the Saints in obtaining justice, redress of grievances was to be sought from the President of the United States himself. If this last resort, too, should fail the Saints, then the Lord was to "come forth out of his hiding place, and in his fury vex the nation."\textsuperscript{47} The Saints followed this advice even though


\textsuperscript{47}\textit{D & C}, 101.
the idea of a chain of command had no actual counterpart in the
federal system. When the courts of Missouri and the governor
ignored the pleas of the Mormons, they turned to Washington, 
where Congress and the President both considered the case to
be beyond their jurisdiction.

The Mormons were especially bitter about Van Buren's
failure to intercede in their behalf. Joseph Smith himself,
while a candidate for the United States Presidency, once allud-
ed to his interview with the President by remarking that if he,
\( \text{Smith} \), should be elected, he would not say, like Van Buren,
"Your cause is just but I can do nothing for you."48 But the
Prophet failed to realize that even had he been elected Presi-
dent, intercession in behalf of the Saints would have been
open to him only had he disregarded his oath of office to up-
hold the Constitution. Clearly, in their relations with the
United States Government, the Saints were not justified in
blaming Congress and the Administration for failure to act;
here, the fault lay with the Constitution itself, at least as
it was interpreted by the Supreme Court. The case of Barron
v. Baltimore49 had made it clear that

The provision in the fifth amendment to the constitution
of the United States, declaring that private property
shall not be taken for public use without just compensa-
tion, is intended solely as a limitation on the exercise
of power by the government of the United States; and is
not applicable to the legislation of the States.50

48 DHC, VI, p. XXXIV.
49 VII Peters, 243-245.
50 Ibid., p. 243.
Thus, the Supreme Court dismissed the case for want of jurisdiction. If Joseph Smith was perhaps not familiar with this particular buttress of the doctrine of States' Rights, which in this case went so far as to give the state control over the property of its citizens, he had found through personal experience how, again and again, this doctrine had been used to the great disadvantage of the Saints.

Thus, it is not difficult to understand that the Prophet was a strong nationalist in a period of sectional sentiments. Speaking of "State rights doctrines," Joseph Smith declared that they "are what feed moles. They are a dead carcass - a stink, and they shall ascend up as a stink offering in the nose of the Almighty."\(^{51}\) The Prophet apparently was rapidly learning the intricacies of Federal - State relations. If he felt bitter towards Van Buren he, nevertheless, seems to have known where to place the blame for the real source of his troubles. In an effort to remedy these difficulties, the Prophet's Presidential platform contained a proposal to give the President of the United States full power to maintain order within a state. But Joseph Smith was silent about the fact that such a law would have required at least two constitutional amendments, a detail of which he seems to have been unaware.\(^{52}\) An even greater failure to understand the Federal

\(^{51}\)\textit{DHC, VI, 95.}

\(^{52}\)Edward G. Janoski, "The Political Theory of the Mormon Church" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Pennsylvania, 1951), p. 32. This proposal would have required the repealing of Art. IV Sec. 4, and the enlarging of the executive powers in Article II.
system, however, is exhibited by the Prophet in his attempt to gain recognition for Nauvoo as a Federal District. This proposal can only be seen as an abortive attempt to escape state control at any cost for, as experiences in Utah would show, this meant little more than jumping from the frying-pan into the fire. When the limited power of the states was defined under the Civil War amendments, much of what the Prophet had desired was realized, but at that time it would only have an adverse effect on the Church, as was to be demonstrated by the relations of the Church with the Federal Government in Utah.

The reasons for the lack of a thorough understanding of the Constitution and its operation under the American system by the Saints may partly be explained — aside from a general lack of education in law and political theory among the leaders — by the all too glaring contrasts between the idealized concept of the role which the Constitution was to play in the Kingdom of God, and by the sordid facts, under which the Saints saw their beloved Constitution in operation. Thus, there was a temptation to ignore praxis and revel in theory. And yet, out of this experience the Mormons developed a unique contribution to political thought.

American political thought is based essentially on the doctrine of natural law. This idea first appeared as a defense

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53DHC, VI, 130-132.

54It will be seen that Brigham Young, facing the problem of Federal control in a Territory, turned into an ardent exponent of the doctrine of States' Rights, so vigorously denounced by Joseph Smith.
for democracy in the later Middle Ages and found its way to America especially through the philosophy of Montesquieu and John Locke. Professor Durham maintains that the development of Mormon political thought followed the general American pattern, and that the basis of Mormon thought is the concept of "a God-given natural law, which historically has buttressed democratic thought." This theory, however, leaves some important questions about Mormon thought and Mormon history unanswered. If, as Lowell had stated, everybody in America was carrying the blue-prints for a Utopia in his vest-pocket, the Mormon Utopia of a political Kingdom of God was, in some respects, so radically different from the general trend of American thinking that it clashed not only theoretically with principles of government, but very realistically with Federal and State authority; the Mormons, being the weaker in the struggle, usually were the losers. The doctrine of natural law was the basis for majority rule, and the latter the Mormons generally disliked for obvious reasons. De Toqueville had observed that the tyranny of the majority presented a real danger to principles of equality of justice. Anticipating precisely the difficulties which were to confront the Saints, the famous Frenchman observed that under the American system of democracy an unpopular minority group would have no chance of obtaining redress of grievances and would have to submit to injustice as well as it

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55G. Homer Durham, "The Democratic Crisis and Mormon Thought," Ethics, LII (October, 1941), 111.
could. The power of the majority was forcefully exercised through its control over public opinion. If an American stepped beyond the barriers erected around the liberty of opinion, so De Tocqueville argued, he was risking career and reputation, at times even his life. Under these circumstances it was not at all surprising that the Mormons, who constituted an unpopular minority, should look askance at a philosophy that served as a basis for the perpetuation of majority rule, to the disadvantage and frequently utter disregard of the minority. As a result, Mormonism substituted a doctrine of individual rights in the place of the generally accepted concept of natural law.

The political Kingdom of God was to be the vehicle for the propagation of this theory. As a logical corollary to the doctrine of individual rights, the Kingdom was to be a pluralistic society under which the various religious systems as well as individuals were to be protected in their rights. Thus, what the Mormons claimed for themselves was to be granted to everybody. With this idea in mind Joseph Smith's teachings that non-Mormons could be in the Kingdom of God will be more readily understood. Brigham Young, claiming Joseph Smith as the source for his ideas, elaborated on this concept of individual rights. Referring to the Kingdom of God as the one predict-

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56 Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America (New York: P. F. Collier and Son, 1900), I, 265.
ed by the Prophet Daniel, he continued by saying that

... it is the kingdom that is to be held by the servants of God to rule the nations of the earth, to send forth those laws and ordinances that shall be suitable and that shall apply themselves to the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints; that will apply themselves to the mother Church, 'the holy Catholic Church;' they will commend themselves to every class of infidels, and will throw their protecting arms around the whole human family, protecting them in their rights. If they wish to worship a white dog, they will have the privilege; if they wish to worship the sun they will have the privilege; if they wish to worship a man they will have the privilege, and if they wish to worship the 'unknown God' they will have the privilege; This kingdom will circumscribe them all and will issue laws and ordinances to protect them in their rights - every right that every person, sect and person can enjoy, and the full liberty that God has granted to them without molestation ... the kingdom of God will protect every person, every sect and all people upon the face of the whole earth in their legal rights.58

How such a theory would have worked, if actually applied, is difficult to tell. The Gentiles, at any rate, apparently were not very eager to have their rights protected by such a kingdom. And when Gladden Bishop, a Mormon apostate, and some of his followers tried to proselyte in Salt Lake City in 1853, Young seems to have temporarily suspended his theories, as attested to by the rapid departure of the Gladdenites from the Territory.59

58Young, J.D., XVII (1875), 156-157; see also Ibid., II (1855), 309-310; III (1856), 256; XI (1867), 275; XII (1869), 113-114.

59Speaking against the Gladdenites, Brigham Young (J.D., I [1854], 83) declared: "I say, rather than that apostates should flourish here, I will unsheath my bowie knife, and conquer or die. Now, you nasty apostates, clear out, or judgment will be put to the line, and righteousness to the plummet." It should be remembered, however, that Young was prone to hyperbole. Most of his vengeance was rhetorical.
4. **Independence of the Political Kingdom**

The theocratic nature of the Kingdom of God raises the question of how the Saints thought it possible to reconcile the idea of a state within a state with the principles of constitutional government in the United States. Parley P. Pratt, who asked this question, saw no possibility of conflict.

But some enquire, is it right - is it lawful for another government to be organized within the United States, of a theocratical nature? Yes, perfectly so! Does not the Constitution of our country guarantee to all religious societies the right of forming any ecclesiastical government they like? Certainly it does, and every intelligent man knows this to be the fact.

The nucleus of such a government is formed, and its laws have emanated from the throne of God, and it is perfect, having come from a pure fountain; but does this make us independent of the laws of the United States? No, this new government does not come in contact with the government of the United States. In keeping our covenants, and observing our religious laws and ceremonies, or the laws that God has given to the children of men, we are not required to violate the principles of right that are contained in the Constitution and laws of the United States.60

The subsequent history of conflict between the Kingdom of God and the Federal Government reveals that such a statement was more an expression of wishful thinking than a realistic appraisal of the facts. The Federal Government felt that the Mormon theocracy was a source of conflict indeed. If the government was not much disturbed by theories, the attempts of the Saints to put the Kingdom into operation caused much concern in official and unofficial circles, as will be shown later. If many of the difficulties were caused by misunderstandings, all

60 *J.D.*, III (1856), 72.
the blame cannot be placed on the Gentiles, who might have been somewhat at a loss to understand Mormons talking of an independent Kingdom of God while at the same time raising the flag of the United States, celebrating the Fourth of July and proclaiming undying loyalty to the Constitution. If much of this desire for independence was merely an expression of rhetoric and hyperbole, -- a natural result of persecution and gross federal mismanagement under carpetbag officials, -- the idea of a theocracy, nevertheless, led directly to ideas of an independent government for the Kingdom of God.

Brigham Young, speaking in the Bowery in Salt Lake City, told his listeners that

We have a nation here in the mountains that will be a kingdom by-and-by, and be governed by pure laws and principles. What do you call yourselves? Some may ask. Here are the people of the Kingdom of God. It may be some time before the Kingdom is fully developed, but the time will come when the Kingdom of God will reign free and independent.61

As suggested previously, this independence was to be attained before the advent of the Saviour, not through miraculous intervention from heaven, but through the active participation of the Saints. If this idea may have conjured up images of a Latter-day Mohammed reincarnate in the person of a Joseph Smith or Brigham Young in the minds of overly apprehensive Gentiles, such visions seriously misinterpreted the goals of the Saints. The Kingdom of God was to be established and achieve independence entirely through peaceful means.62 An article in the Mil-

61L. D., V (1858), 329.
62Therald N. Jensen, p. 10, puts forward the thesis that
lennial Star warned the Saints not to be overly eager in the establishment of the Kingdom of God.

Many have thought . . . that . . . the kingdom of God would declare itself independent, regardless of the capabilities of the people to maintain that independence, and that when this had taken place, no more obstacles would prevent its increase, and that it would at once crush everything before it which was opposed to its welfare. This is erroneous. Our heavenly Father has so far used natural means to accomplish what has been done, and will continue to do so; . . . An increase of faith and works among his people will naturally call for an increase of Territory and resources to maintain its wants, and that will be obtained legally, and as far as practicable with the sanction of that government in the midst of which the Saints dwell; for . . . the elements of increase and progression are to be found within the Constitution of the United States . . .

But that the Federal Government would have sanctioned the establishment of an independent government of God seems highly doubtful, especially in view of the Civil War, which once and for all subjugated sectional aspirations to the power of the Federal Government.

Another article in the Millennial Star compared the Kingdom of God to an infant that has to grow, just as the United States had to grow from a colony until it could declare its independence. The same would happen to the Kingdom of God. "... it is a dependency of the United States, and dependent it will literally remain, until a course somewhat similar is adopted to attain the same end -- independence." But if the logical conclusion of this analogy would

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63 Eugene Henriod, "How and When will the Kingdom of God become Independent," Millennial Star, XXIV (1862), 338.
64 Joshua Williams, "Independence of Zion," Ibid., XXIII (1861), 774.
imply that the Kingdom would have to gain independence through a revolution this idea seems not to have occurred to the author. Rather, the Kingdom was to gain independence through economic self-sufficiency. If the idea that such a principle alone would suffice for the establishment of a nation seems somewhat naive economics, nevertheless, was to play an important part in the establishment of the Political Kingdom. One of the basic economic principles of the Kingdom was to be the United Order, which was inspired by the economic ideals and practices of the early Christian church and an ideal social order practiced among the Nephites, as described in the Book of Mormon. The Mormon economic ideal, however, was not a communistic society. Private property, while to be distributed more equally was, nevertheless, not to be abandoned. If the United Order, however, remained mostly a theory and was never practiced on a large scale, the Mormons were not short of other economic ideas which would make the Kingdom of God a reality. Some of these ideas seem to have been rather an afterthought, developed from practical experience. According to Professor Arrington, "The Kingdom of God, . . . was to be realized by a thoroughly pragmatic mastery of the forces of nature." If it took wheat

65Ibid., 775.
66Brigham Young, J.D., XVII (1875), 154. The United Order is "the order of the kingdom."
67Book of Mormon, IV Nephi 1-3, 16-17.
69Arrington, Great Basin Kingdom, p. 25.
to build the Kingdom of God, "be it so;''\textsuperscript{70} declared Brigham Young emphatically.

The importance of the "gathering" as a means of establishing the Kingdom of God has already been mentioned. This gathering was not intended simply to assemble the elect of the House of Israel in a safe place so that they could escape the impending judgments to be poured out over the nations. More important, the technical and artistic "know-how" of the gathered would be of prime importance in the development of Zion. According to Brigham Young, skill in workmanship and a knowledge of the arts and sciences was necessary to build up the Kingdom of God.\textsuperscript{71} But the development of the physical Kingdom was not to be limited to politics and economics. Ultimately it was to pervade all thought and activities of the Mormons. In Utah, this ideal was realized to a great extent. According to Stenhouse, "Whether it be an agricultural fair, the meeting of the stockholders of a grocery store, the arrival of an immigrant train, the opening of a dance, always the Kingdom of God is mentioned."\textsuperscript{72}

But all these principles, political, economic and otherwise would bring about the establishment of the Kingdom and its ultimate world hegemony only because the organization of the Kingdom of God was based on "true principles" revealed

\textsuperscript{70} J.D., X (1865), 358-359.  \textsuperscript{71} Ibid.  \textsuperscript{72} Stenhouse, p. 495.
from heaven. These principles were considered superior to those of the nations of the world; the Latter had proved totally unfit to govern the human race. As a result, the time would come when the people would become dissatisfied and look to the perfect principles of the government of the Kingdom of God.

"... as this kingdom grows and acquires power and influence, it will introduce laws and regulations which will be calculated to break up the long established and iron-fettered laws of these kingdoms, because of their superiority and greater fitness to govern men." 73

If the task which confronted the Mormons seemed stupendous they, nevertheless, planned the establishment of world-government with an amazing spirit of equanimity. According to Mormon exegesis, as we have seen, the political Kingdom to be established by the Latter-day Saints was the same Kingdom which the prophet Daniel had predicted. According to his prophecy, the Kingdom was never to be destroyed, never to be left to another people, would break in pieces and consume all other Kingdoms, would fill the whole earth and stand forever. In the light of such favorable predictions, the Saints felt, the successful establishment of the Kingdom would be but a matter of time. Men might plot and scheme the overthrow of the Kingdom, but they would always be defeated. Exclaimed Lorenzo Snow:

Now talk about this kingdom being destroyed! Talk about, reason about, lay plans here and there by the combined wisdom of Governments to destroy the kingdom of God; why, you might as well try to pluck the stars from the firmament or the moon or the sun from its orbit! It can never be accomplished, for it is the work of the All-mighty.74

73 Millennial Star, XXIV (1862), 337.  
74 J.D., XIV (1872), 307.
Thus, however small in numbers the Saints may have been in comparison to the world population, with God on their side they considered themselves to be a majority capable of accomplishing anything they thought the Lord had instructed them to do. Far short though they fell in their goal of establishing a world government, the Herculean task of colonizing an arid desert region has earned the Mormon pioneers the undying gratitude and admiration of the generations which followed.
PART II

THE ORGANIZATION AND ADMINISTRATION OF THE KINGDOM
CHAPTER III

THE TEMPORAL KINGDOM, 1830-1844

On May 3, 1844, Brigham Young and Willard Richards addressed a letter from Nauvoo to Reuben Hedlock, president of the British Mission, which stated that "the Kingdom is organized; and although as yet no bigger than a grain of mustard seed, the little plant is in a flourishing condition, and our prospects brighter than ever." The "prospects" which Young and Richards had in mind referred to the establishment of the political Kingdom of God on earth. Joseph Smith had perfected an elaborate and effective priesthood organization which took care of the ecclesiastical aspects of the Kingdom. But if the political Kingdom was to become a reality a temporal government was needed. It was for this purpose that in the spring of 1844 Joseph Smith organized a special council which was to form the nucleus for such a government.

But if the Prophet waited until shortly before his sudden death for the formal inauguration of the intended

1Millennial Star, XXIII (1861), 422.
government of the political Kingdom, he had worked toward the establishment not only of a spiritual church but a temporal kingdom almost from the day the new church was founded. The establishment of the government of the Kingdom was, at least to Joseph, the concluding link in a chain of events which had started with the founding of the Church in 1830. Thus, for a full understanding of what transpired in 1844 it will be necessary to review briefly the history of the Church from 1830 to 1844 in the light of Joseph's attempts to establish the political Kingdom of God.

1. The Law of Consecration

Even before the Church was formally organized, Joseph Smith had found precedents for the establishment of a theocratic Kingdom of God in the Book of Mormon. According to Professor Durham, the fourth book of Nephi, which describes the history of a pre-Columbian American theocracy, serves as an especially significant key for the understanding of Joseph Smith's efforts "to achieve a kingdom of God on earth."²

The first opportunity to emulate the ancient Nephites came to the young church a short six months after its organization. Parley P. Pratt, Oliver Cowdery and two other Elders, who had been called to locate a site for the new Zion in Missouri and to proselyte among the Indians, stopped over at Kirtland, Ohio, and converted almost the entire Campbellite congregation of Sidney Rigdon, including Rigdon himself. These

²Durham, Joseph Smith. Prophet-Statesman, pp. 3-15; see Mosiah 29:10-29; Alma 4:11-12, 15-20; III Nephi 6:19 to 7:6; IV Nephi 1-3, 16-17.
"Disciples of Christ," who lived in a communistic order, became the nucleus for the Mormon settlement in Ohio. Joseph Smith, at first, likewise attempted to establish a communitarian society. His pattern, however, differed from the pietistic organization of George Rapp, the founder of Harmony and Economy, or the Moravians, Mennonites, Dunkards, and Shakers, "who withdrew into isolation in order to practice a way of life that valued resignation from the goals and motives of secular society." The Mormons established a "Law of Consecration" which did not completely abolish private property, but promoted the idea of "stewardship." Every man was to be "a steward over his own property, or that which he has received by consecration, as much as is sufficient for himself and family." Any surplus was to go to the Church, to be used for building the Kingdom and for distribution among the poor. This "Law of Consecration" was to be the economic basis for the temporal Kingdom. Although practical experiments built on this theory did not prove very successful, its principles were retained in theory. In the 1870's Brigham Young attempted to revive a somewhat analogous system under the "United Order." Although this experiment, likewise, foundered rapidly, faithful Latter-day Saints are still looking forward to a period when human nature will have improved sufficiently to insure successful operation of an

3Fielding, "The Concept of Stages . . .," pp. 4-5.
4D & C, 42:32
5DHC, II, 49.
ideal economic order based on the "Law of Consecration."

The United Firm as practiced in Kirtland, was one of the first expression of a Kingdom of God that was not only spiritual but temporal. After the failure of this experiment, and with the establishment of Kirtland as a more permanent settlement following the calamities in Jackson County, the Kirtland Safety Society Bank became another expression of the temporal Kingdom. When, in 1837, unwise financial speculations by church members combined with the panic of 1837 to bring economic ruin to the Kingdom in Ohio, church headquarters were removed to a temporary location in Missouri.

2. The Land of Zion

The first Mormon settlement in Missouri had been established shortly after the conversion of Rigdon and his followers in Ohio. In 1831, Independence in Jackson County was designated as the location for the New Jerusalem and the place where the temple was to be built. Land was to be one of the chief ingredients of this new Zion. The possession of an eternal inheritance was considered a basic prerequisite for the establishment of the Kingdom and the realization of the "Order of Enoch." As a result the Saints were admonished to purchase as much land as possible in the Independence region. "Behold this is wisdom, that they may obtain it for an everlasting inheritance," proclaimed Joseph Smith in a revelation.6 But the

6D & C, 57:5
inheritance in Jackson County was to be of short duration. In 1833 a Missouri mob smashed W. W. Phelps's printing press, Mormon homes, and hopes of establishing the physical Kingdom in Jackson County in the near future. An elaborate plan for the City of Zion which Joseph Smith had sent to Jackson County in June of 1833 had to be realized elsewhere.7

3. The Army of the Kingdom

When Oliver Cowdery reported news of these disturbances to Joseph Smith in Kirtland, the Prophet at first counseled the Saints to obtain redress in the Courts. The Mormons hired the firm of Wood, Reese, Doniphan and Atchison to represent their case. But when the Missouri rabble, on learning of the Mormon intentions, backed up its former threats with increased violence in the winter of 1833–34, Joseph Smith came to the conclusion that force would have to be met by force. In a revelation given on February 24, 1834 in Kirtland, the Prophet proclaimed the will of the Lord:

Behold, I say unto you, the redemption of Zion must needs come by power; therefore, I will raise up unto my people a man, who shall lead them like as Moses led the children of Israel; for ye are the children of Israel, and of the seed of Abraham, and ye must needs be led out of bondage by power, and with a stretched out arm.8

7DHC, I, 357–359. Zion was by no means the only city to be built according to this plan: "When this square is thus laid off and supplied, lay off another in the same way, and so fill up the world in these last days; and let every man live in the city, for this is the city of Zion." Ibid., p. 359. For an influence of this plan on later Mormon settlements see Lowry Nelson, The Mormon Village: A Pattern and Technique of Land Settlement (Salt Lake City: University of Utah Press, 1952), p. 39 and passim.

8D & C, 103:15-17.
Parley P. Pratt and Lyman Wight were commissioned to gather an army of 500 men, if possible, but not less than a hundred. Then, under the leadership of Joseph Smith, they were "to go up . . . unto the land of Zion . . . and organize my kingdom upon the consecrated land, and establish the children of Zion upon the laws and commandments which have been, and which shall be, given unto you."9 Without delay the army was formed, ready to march to the relief of Zion. On May 5, 1834 Zion's Camp, as the expedition had been named, left Kirtland. But when the army of about two hundred men reached Missouri it became apparent that the Mormon cause in Jackson county was lost. Military operations clearly would be of no aid to the Saints and would only aggravate an already untenable situation. In a realistic appraisal of the facts Joseph disbanded his army; the dispossessed Saints resettled in Caldwell and Clay counties.

If Zion's camp seemed like a quixotic adventure, in retrospect it was considerably more than that. B. H. Roberts saw the expedition as a sifting process and training experience for future leaders of the Church. Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Orson Pratt, Parley P. Pratt, Charles C. Rich, George A. Smith, Wilford Woodruff "and many more" participated.10 But perhaps not less significantly, Zion's Camp provided the pattern for the military organization of the Kingdom of God set up to defend the Saints during the Missouri persecutions, 1838-39. The "camp" also influenced the organization-

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9Ibid., 103:34,35. 10DHC, II, p. XXIII.
al structure of the Nauvoo Legion and, most important of all, became the pattern for the military organization under which the exodus was directed. Brigham Young, commenting on the significance of the Zion's Camp adventure, remarked: "I would not exchange the experience gained in that expedition for all the wealth of Geauga county." 11

4. The Physical Kingdom as a Cause for Persecution, 1838

In 1836, most of the Saints abandoned Clay county in favor of Caldwell county, which was specifically created by the Missouri legislature for Mormon settlement. In 1838, the Kirtland Saints joined their Missouri brethren and established a temporary Zion with Far West as the center. More than five thousand Saints quickly flocked to the new gathering place. But renewed conflict with the Gentiles led to Governor Bogg's cruel extermination order. The year 1839 again saw the Saints driven out and homeless, wandering in Illinois and Iowa.

The causes for persecution, according to Professor Ericksen, were "(1) purely religious differences, (2) the claim which the Mormons made to land of their Zion, and (3) their attitudes toward negroes." 12 Of these three factors the second, which is connected with Mormon hopes of establishing a temporal Kingdom, seems crucial. If Mormonism had merely remained a spiritual religion without insisting on gathering its members in a central location, religious and political differences

11 Ibid., p. XXIV. 12 Ericksen, p. 19.
would have provided considerably less cause for friction.

Suspected Mormon ambitions to establish a political Kingdom of God figured prominently in the expulsion of the Saints from Caldwell County. The testimonies of a number of apostate Mormons before Judge Austin A. King at Richmond, Ray County, in 1838,13 insisted that Joseph Smith had in mind to establish a temporal Kingdom of God. These testimonies, given by enemies of the Church, can hardly be considered accurate and unbiased. Some of them are obvious distortions of Joseph's plans, implying that the Prophet intended to establish the Kingdom by force, if necessary. But in the light of subsequent events the temporal if peaceful plans of Joseph Smith cannot be denied. According to the testimony of George M. Hinckle

The general teachings of the presidency were, that the kingdom they were setting up was a temporal as well as a spiritual kingdom; that it was the little stone spoken of by Daniel. Until lately, the teachings of the church appeared to be peacable, and that the kingdom was to be set up peacably; but lately a different idea has been advanced - that the time had come when this kingdom was to be set up by forcible means, if necessary.14

John Corrill, likewise, maintained that the little stone spok-

13U.S., Congress, Senate, Testimony in Trial of Joseph Smith, Jr., for High Treason, 26th Cong., 2d Sess., 1841, Senate Doc. 189. Parley P. Pratt, referring to this investigation, wrote: "this court of inquisition inquired diligently into our belief of the seventh chapter of Daniel concerning the kingdom of God, which should subdue all other kingdoms and stand forever. And when told that we believed in that prophecy, the court turned to the clerk and said: 'write that down; it is a strong point for treason.' Our lawyer observed as follows: 'Judge, you had better make the Bible treason.' The court made no reply." Autobiography of Parley P. Pratt, p. 230 as quoted in DHC, III, 212.

14U.S. Senate, Testimony in Smith Trial, 1841, p. 23.
en of by Daniel was the Mormon Church which "ultimately should be established as a temporal as well as a spiritual kingdom." That these plans, however, "were to be carried on through the instrumentality of the Danite band as far as force was necessary;"15 was malicious slander on the part of Corrill. This unverified allegation that the Danites were organized to "up-build the kingdom of God" is partly responsible for unproven speculations linking the Danites to the Council of Fifty, organized by the Prophet several years later for building the political Kingdom.

The fact that Joseph Smith insisted on leadership in both spiritual and temporal matters also caused some internal difficulties in the Church. Stenhouse claims that "as early as the second year of the Church some of the leading elders of Zion (in Missouri) were 'accusing Brother Joseph in rather an indirect way of seeking after monopolial power and authority.'"16 Objections to his temporal authority the Prophet could meet with a revelation he had received in New York in 1830 indicating that the temporal and the spiritual could not be separated.17 When the Kirtland Saints refused to accept the temporal authority of Joseph Smith, Brigham Young, in defense of the Prophet, asked the people to draw a line between the spiritual and the temporal

15Ibid., p. 13  16Stenhouse, p. 3.

17D & C, 29:34: "Wherefore, verily I say unto you that all things unto me are spiritual, and not at any time have I given unto you a law which was temporal; . . . ."
Kingdom of God; "not one of them could do it." 18

Refusal to acknowledge the authority of the Church in temporal matters figured prominently in the excommunication of Oliver Cowdery. Charges were preferred against Cowdery in Far West on April 11, 1838 by Bishop Partridge, among other things "for virtually denying the faith by declaring that he would not be governed by any ecclesiastical authority or revelations whatever in his temporal affairs." 19 In answering this charge Cowdery, in a letter to Partridge, replied that

The very principle of . . . [ecclesiastical authority in temporal affairs] I conceive to be couched in an attempt to set up a kind of petty government, controlled and dictated by ecclesiastical influence, in the midst of this national and state government. You will, no doubt, say this is not correct; but the bare notice of these charges, over which you assume a right to decide is, in my opinion, a direct attempt to make the secular power subservient to church direction - to the correctness of which I cannot in conscience subscribe - I believe that the principle never did fail to produce anarchy and confusion.

This attempt to control me in my temporal interests, I conceive to be a disposition to take from me a portion of my constitutional privileges and inherent rights - I only, respectfully, ask leave, therefore, to withdraw from a society assuming they have such a right. 20

5. The Kingdom in Nauvoo

If the Kirtland period had given the Prophet practical experience in the difficulties of combining temporal and ec-

18Brigham Young, J.D., X (1865), 363.


20Ibid., p. 433. This charge, however, was subsequently dropped by the High Council.
clesiastical authority, one short year in Far West did not suffice to apply the lessons he had learned and to consolidate his temporal authority effectively. This consolidation had to await the establishment of the Saints in Nauvoo. It was here that the Prophet could fully realize the plans for the City of Zion which he had originally dreamt of establishing in Jackson County. A call was issued for the Saints to gather in Zion; and within four years a swampy village was transformed into a city of some 20,000 inhabitants. A charter granted to the Mormons by the Illinois legislature turned Nauvoo into a virtual city-state. The city council had authority to enact any kind of ordinance "not repugnant to the Constitution of the United States or of this state." A municipal court under the jurisdiction of the mayor was empowered to grant writs of habeas corpus "so widely as to enable Mormons to escape trial under gentile jurisdiction." A municipal militia, the Nauvoo Legion, was separate from the state militia, subject only to the governor. Joseph Smith himself, as lieutenant general, became the commanding officer.

The celebration of the eleventh anniversary of the organization of the Church gave occasion to display not only the spiritual but also the newly acquired temporal power of the Kingdom of God. The laying of the cornerstone for the temple

21 DHC, IV, 239-245.
was accompanied by a military parade that did not fail to impress both Saints and Gentiles. 23 Sanguine hopes were entertained for the mission of the Legion. An article in the Millennial Star invoked divine aid to increase the Legion in membership until "it shall be able to rescue the American Republic from the brink of ruin." 24 In this same article the opinion was expressed that

Nauvoo ... is the nucleus of a glorious dominion of universal liberty, peace and plenty; it is an organization of that government of which there shall be no end - of that kingdom of Messiah which shall roll forth, from conquering and to conquer until it shall be said, that "the kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our Lord, and of His Christ," "AND THE SAINTS OF THE MOST HIGH SHALL POSSESS THE GREATNESS OF THE KINGDOM UNDER THE WHOLE HEAVEN." 25

Such sentiments, if only overconfident expressions of hyperbole, combined with an unwise display of temporal power by the Mormons to cause considerable apprehension among the Gentiles. James Gordon Bennett, editor of the New York Herald, voiced such apprehensions in an article written in an otherwise favorable and sympathetic tone: "...The Mormons can already dictate to the state of Illinois, and if they pursue the same policy in other states, will they not soon dictate to Congress and decide the presidency?" 26 Bennett was

23 DHC, IV, 326.


25 Millennial Star, III (1842), 69.

26 New York Herald, June 17, 1842, as quoted in Millennial Star, III (1842), 83. John C. Bennett in The History of
not likely aware of a revelation received by Joseph Smith, probably two months before this article was published, which was to be the basis for the organization of a government intended to become the supreme power not only in the United States but in the whole world.

the Saints (Boston: Leland & Whiting, 1842), p. 293 accused the Saints of wild schemes no doubt hatched in Bennett's imagination; such accusations are, nevertheless, significant in the light of Mormon temporal power which made them seem entirely reasonable to apprehensive Gentiles. According to Bennett "The States of Missouri, and Illinois, and the Territory of Iowa, are the regions to which the Prophet has hitherto chiefly directed his schemes of aggrandizement, and which were to form the NUCLEUS of the great MORMON EMPIRES. The remaining states were to be licked up like Salt, and fall into the immense labyrinth of glorious prophetic dominion, like the defenceless lamb before the mighty king of the forest!"
CHAPTER IV

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE COUNCIL OF FIFTY, ITS ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE AND ITS ACTIVITIES IN 1844 UNDER THE LEADERSHIP OF JOSEPH SMITH

1. Organization

The precise dating of the organization of the nucleus world government presents a problem. The minutes of what was apparently a reorganizational meeting of the Council held in 1889 state the date of its inception in precise terms: "April 7th 1842;"¹ but all the other available sources agree that the Council was organized in Nauvoo early in 1844,² with Joseph Smith and Brigham Young both giving March 11, 1844, as the exact date.³ If the 1842 date is not a mistake, it is possible that it refers to the date of a revelation concerning the Council rather than to the date of its organization.

¹ Minutes of the Council of Fifty, April 10, 1880.
² George Miller to J. J. Strang, June 12, 1849, as quoted in History of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 1836-1844, ed. Joseph Smith and Heman C. Smith (Lamoni, Iowa: Reorganized Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints, 1920), II, 793; Johnson to Gibbs, p. 9.
³ "History of Brigham Young," Millennial Star, XXVI (1864), 328; DHC, VI, 260-261.
According to the 1880 minutes, "The name given this council on the day it was organized by the Lord. April 7th 1842. Was read from the revelations..." It will be remembered that when Joseph Smith received the Apostleship it took some time before the Council of the Twelve was fully organized. Thus, it is not at all improbably that a revelation to organize a special council for political purposes preceded the actual organization of this council in 1844. It is also significant to note that, beginning with 1842, a number of special council meetings are mentioned in the Documentary History of the Church. Of special interest is a council recorded by Joseph Smith on September 28, 1843.

At half-past eleven, a.m., a council convened over the store consisting of myself, my brother Hyrum, Uncle John Smith, Newel K. Whitney, George Miller, Willard Richards, John Taylor, Amasa Lyman, John M. Bernhisel, and Lucien Woodworth; and at seven in the evening we met in the front upper room of the Mansion, with William Law and William Marks. By the common consent and unanimous voice of the council, I was chosen president of the special council. It should be noted that all those present became members of

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4Minutes of the Council of Fifty, April 10, 1880. my Italics.

5The necessity of organizing the quorum of the Twelve was revealed to Joseph Smith in June, 1829, at Fayette, New York (D & C, 18:27-39). The Prophet waited nearly six years before he complied with that revelation and commissioned Oliver Cowdery, David Whitmer and Martin Harris, at a special meeting on February 14, 1835, to seek out twelve men who would constitute the quorum of the Twelve Apostles. See Andrew Jensen, Church Chronology (2d ed. rev.; Salt Lake City: The Deseret News, 1914), p. VIII.

6DHC, VI, 39; other special council meetings are mentioned on January 20, 1842, Ibid., IV, 500, and on October 4, 1842, Ibid., VI, 45.
the council organized by Joseph Smith on March 11, 1844, with the exception of William Law who, by that time, had defected from the Church. Though it cannot be documented, it is quite possible that the 1843 council was to deliberate on the political future of the Church, especially in view of the fact that on October 1, the *Times and Seasons* published an article entitled, "Who shall be our next President?" In that same issue, the members of the Church were informed of the appointment of Elder George J. Adams on a special mission to Russia "to which is attached some of the most important things concerning the advancement and building up of the kingdom of God in the last days, which cannot be explained at this time." Although Adams had supposedly been appointed to his mission by the First Presidency, the somewhat mysterious document was signed only by Joseph and Hyrum. The omission of the signatures of Sidney Rigdon and William Law is especially significant in view of the fact that according to Benjamin F. Johnson, neither Rigdon nor Law were members of the Council organized in 1844. In view of this circumstantial evidence

7As quoted in *DHC*, Vi, 39-41.
9B. H. Roberts makes special note of the fact that Rigdon and Law did not sign the document. *DHC*, VI, 41.
10Johnson to Gibbs, p.9. It should be noted, however, that Rigdon is mentioned by Joseph Smith as meeting with the Council on March 19, 1844, *DHC*, VI, 267. Rigdon was also nominated as running mate to Smith in the campaign of 1844 by this Council. This, however, would not necessarily have entailed membership in the organization itself.
it seems not totally unreasonable to consider April 7, 1842, as the probably authentic date for the revelation of the Council and subsequent special council meetings as precedental for the establishment of the special council in 1844.

2. **Purpose and Organizational Structure**

The name of this special council, according to the 1880 minutes already quoted, was revealed to be "the Kingdom of God and His Laws with the keys and powers thereof and judgment in the hands of his servants."\(^{11}\) This is a remarkable parallel to the name of the Council given by John D. Lee: "The Kingdom of God and its Laws and Justice and Judgement in my hands."\(^{12}\) This genuine if somewhat lengthy name of the Council apparently was considered ineffable, except on special occasions in council meetings.\(^{13}\) Thus, immediately after its organization, the Prophet referred to the group as a "special council."\(^{14}\) Later, the term "general council"\(^{15}\) finds fre-

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\(^{11}\)Minutes of the Council of Fifty, April 21, 1880.


\(^{14}\)DHC, VI, 260-261, 263, 264.

\(^{15}\)DHC, VI, 274, 343, 356.
quent use. Other designations which identified the group were "Council of the Kingdom," 16 "Council of the Gods," 17 and "Living Constitution." 18 But the most popular and most frequently used designation of this organization was simply "Council of Fifty." 19 This name had its origin in the number of men which originally comprised the Council. According to Benjamin F. Johnson, an original member, the first gatherings included

... a select circle of the prophet's most trusted friends, including the twelve, but not all the constituted authorities of the Church, for presidents Rigdon, Law or Marks, the High Council or the presidents of quorums were not members of that council, which at times would exceed fifty in number. 20

There seems to have been no fixed number of members in the Council, however, George Miller, for instance, records that during the Exodus the Council "was now swelled to a great

16 George Miller, Sr. and George Miller, Jr., A Mormon Bishop and His Son, Fragments of a Diary kept by George Miller, Sr., Bishop in the Mormon Church and some records of incidents in the life of G. Miller, Jr., Hunter and Pathfinder, ed. H. M. Mills (London, England; n.d.), p. 49. Hereafter cited as Miller, A Mormon Bishop...

17 Lee, Mormon Chronicle, I, 104.

18 Lee, Mormonism Unveiled, p. 173; Diaries of Hosea Stout (typed copies of original MSS, Brigham Young University Library); I, 25; Minutes of the Council of Fifty, April 21, 1880: "ye are my constitution. . . ."

19 Millennial Star, XXV, (1863), 136; Diaries of L. John Nutall (typed copy of original MSS, Brigham Young University Library); II, 3; Lee, Mormon Chronicle, I, 97.

20 Johnson to Gibbs, p. 9; "History of Brigham Young," Millennial Star, XXVI (1864), 328: "The Council was composed of about fifty members." Miller, A Mormon Bishop..., p. 48: "... up to the number of fifty three were thus called."
crowd under Brigham's reign.21 As a rule, however, membership in the Council seems to have remained close to fifty. Thus, when the Council was reorganized in 1880, fourteen new members were added to place membership at fifty-two.22

That the Council of Fifty was to be the government of the Political Kingdom is made clear by John D. Lee:

This council aluded too is the Municipal department of the Kingdom of God set up on the Earth, and from which all Law eminates, for the rule, government & controle of all Nations Kingdoms & toungs and People under the whole Heavens but not to controle the Priesthood but to council, deliberate & plan for the general good & up-building of the Kingdom of God on the Earth.23

In order to prepare itself for this great mission, the Council met regularly to discuss, among other things, principles of government and political theory.24 But if the Council wanted to establish an effective world organization it would take more than theorizing. Of this fact the Prophet was fully aware. According to Brigham Young, Joseph Smith devised "a full and complete organization of this kingdom . . . before he was killed."25 Very little, however, has come to light about

21 George Miller, Correspondence of Bishop George Miller with the Northern Islander (Saint James, Michigan: 1855), p. 36. Hereafter cited as Miller, . . . Northern Islander.

22 Minutes of the Council of Fifty, April 10, 1880.

23 Lee, Mormon Chronicle, I, 80.

24 "History of Brigham Young," Millennial Star, XXVI (1864), 328: "We held a number of sessions, and investigated the principles upon which our national government is founded; and the true foundation and principles of all government."

25 Young, Journal of Discourses, XVII (1875), 156.
the organizational setup of the government of the Kingdom although a clerk and an historian were appointed.\textsuperscript{26} That the constitution of the Council was received by revelation has already been mentioned. That the basic law of the government of the Kingdom of God was to resemble the constitution of the United States, likewise, has been made clear. The powers and duties of the Council were executive, legislative and judicial; little, however, has come to light on how these powers were to be divided among the group. One thing was certain, Joseph Smith, president of the Church, also was president of the Council of Fifty. In this latter capacity, the Prophet was apparently intended to become the head of the political Kingdom.\textsuperscript{27} Joseph's position of leadership seems to have been precedential, for upon his death, Brigham Young, likewise, became the head of the Council of Fifty. That the president of the Church also served as the first officer in the Kingdom of God was in complete

\textsuperscript{26}Although there is indication to believe that some of the records were destroyed (Lee, \textit{Mormonism Unveiled}, p. 173), the reputation of the Mormons as conscientious and meticulous record keepers suggests that the destruction of Council of Fifty records was not a common practice. This assumption is supported by William Clayton (\textit{William Clayton's Journal /Salt Lake City: The Clayton Family Association}, 1921/, p. 74), the first clerk of the Council, who recorded that he delivered the "records of the K. of G." to Brigham Young. In 1880, L. John Nuttall records that he went to Franklin D. Richard's office and "examined the records of the council of 50 or Kingdom of God." (Nuttall II, 3). These records are not available at the present time.

\textsuperscript{27}George Miller, St. James, Michigan, June, 1855, as quoted in John Zahnd (unpublished MS, New York Public Library, n.d., n.p.).
harmony with the theocratic theory of the Kingdom. Ultimately, Christ was to be the supreme authority in both the Church and the political Kingdom.

In keeping with the theory of individual rights, non-Mormons were to represent the Gentiles in the government of the Kingdom. This theory was partly realized in the Council of Fifty; according to Brigham Young, several of the members of the original Council "were not members of the Church."28 For the most part, however, the inclusion of Gentiles in the Council seems to have been more a matter of theory than actual practice. A checking of available membership lists fails to turn up any non-Mormons on the Council, although John D. Lee mentions a man by the name of Jackson as belonging to the Council without being a member of the Church.29 Undocumented speculation that Colonel Thomas L. Kane was a secretly baptized member of the Church links the disinterested advocate of the Mormon cause with the Council. Whatever Kane's relation to the Church, he actively participated in Council of Fifty deliberations at Winter Quarters.30 Another Gentile whose membership in the Council was highly probable is Daniel H. Wells. Wells, a justice

28"History of Brigham Young," Millennial Star, XXVI (1864), 328.
29Lee, Mormonism Unveiled, p. 173.
30"Diaries and Official Records of John D. Lee, May 1844 - November, 1846 and December, 1850 - February, 1951 and records, 1861-1878" (typed copy of a MS copied by Mrs. J. A. Henrie from originals at the L.D.S. Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, at Brigham Young University Library), pp. 166-168.
of the peace in Nauvoo, was actively engaged in the Mormon cause. On one of the many errands he performed for the Saints he went with George Miller -- later to become a member of the Council of Fifty -- to Governor Carlin to speak in behalf of the Mormons. Wells was also commissioned as a Brevet Brigadier General of the Nauvoo Legion in 1844. During the expulsion of the Mormons from Nauvoo the Saints bestowed upon him the title "Defender of Nauvoo" for his fearless and vigorous support. In 1846, he joined the Mormons on their trek west and was baptized in Iowa. The fact that Wells appears on membership lists of the Council of Fifty in early Utah suggests that he may deliberately have forgone baptism in Nauvoo in order to avail the Church and the Council of Fifty of his services as a sympathetic gentile. If, ultimately, membership in the Council of Fifty of non-Mormons was considered to be a benevolent concession by the Saints to the Gentile world in 1844, with the Mormon-Gentile ratio of power in the reverse of anticipated future developments, membership of a Gentile in the Council while hardly advantageous to non-Mormons may have been of some benefit to the persecuted Saints.

Because the priesthood was to be the basic source of authority even in the political Kingdom, it is doubtful that the Gentiles, lacking this authority, were to have a major voice in shaping the policies of the Council. There is some

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31 *Millennial Star*, XXIII (1861), 423.
32 *DHC*, VII, 614.
indication that important Council decisions were directed by an inner circle to which not all of the members had access. Hosea Stout, in a diary entry dated February 18, 1845, relates that in a meeting of the board of the Mercantile and Mechanical Association of Nauvoo three members of the board, Bent, Rich and Hunter, were released because they had been appointed to serve on the board of the "Living Constitution." According to John D. Lee, "Living Constitution" was another name for the Council of Fifty. Lee's statement is corroborated by a quote from a revelation on the Council of Fifty, included in the 1880 minutes of the Council: "Ye are my Constitution and I am your God and ye are my Spokesmen." The "Living Constitution", then, is clearly identified as a synonym for "Council of Fifty." It now remains to establish the identity of Bent, Rich and Hunter since Stout does not mention their Christian names. Samuel Bent, Charles C. Rich and Edward Hunter are listed as members of the original Council of Fifty organized in the Spring of 1844 in Nauvoo and appear on membership lists which can be compiled from available sources in the early Utah period. See Appendix: I am preparing several lists. Rich and Hunter still belonged to the group when it was reorganized in 1880. This evidence strongly suggests that the three men Stout lists as having been appointed to the board of the Liv-

33Stout, I, 25.

34Lee, Mormonism Unveiled, p. 173.

35Minutes of the Council of Fifty, April 21, 1880.
ing Constitution in 1845 can be identified as Samuel Bent, Charles C. Rich and Edward Hunter. The establishment of these points leads to the crux of this discussion: The fact that Bent, Rich and Hunter were charter members of the Council of Fifty in Nauvoo precludes the idea that they were appointed as new members of this organization in 1845. Rather, appointment to the board of the Living Constitution seems to indicate that the three men were placed on a steering committee or inner circle which may have existed in the Council. This idea is supported by the fact that the new duties required the men to resign from the board of the Mercantile and Mechanical Association. Ordinarily, Council of Fifty members were encouraged to act as supervisory members of political, economic, and civic organizations.

The existence of a central committee in the Council is further suggested, if indirectly, by another diary entry of Hosea Stout in 1849, which reads that "On Tues Evening I received a notification to meet the House of Representatives on Sat next I being a member of that Body. By what process I became a Representative I know not." 36 That a prominent Utah historian was mystified as to how the Legislature of the State of Deseret came into being is understandable if one realizes that the author was not aware of the existence of the Council of Fifty at the time. 37 But if a member of this Council was

36 Stout, IV, 78.

37 Dale Morgan, "The State of Deseret," Utah Historical Quarterly, VIII (1940), 88: "It would be interesting to know how the members of the General Assembly were selected. There is no record of an election."
himself mystified as to how he became a member of a legislature organized precisely by the Council of Fifty the mystification becomes almost universal. In the light of the previous discussion, Stout's puzzlement may be explained by the existence of an inner circle in the Council of Fifty which may have outlined certain policies without the general knowledge of all the members of the Council.

In spite of the theory of separation of Church and State, which was to be a basis for government in the Kingdom of God, it seems almost certain that ecclesiastical rank was a powerful source of prestige in the political Kingdom. Influence of high Church officers in the Council was especially strong since not only the President of the Church but the quorum of the Twelve Apostles as well were members of the Council of Fifty, apparently by virtue of their Church positions. When the First Presidency was reorganized in 1849, of the four Apostles chosen, two had not yet been initiated into the Council of Fifty. This matter was taken care of shortly after their ordination to the Apostleship.\(^\text{38}\) In 1880, the procedure was exactly the reverse. Francis M. Lyman, John Henry Smith and Moses Thatcher were initiated into the Council of Fifty in April and ordained to Apostles after the reorganization of the First Presidency at the following October Conference.

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\(^{38}\)Lee, Mormon Chronicle, I, 102. Lorenzo Snow, Erastus Snow, Franklin D. Richards and Charles C. Rich were ordained Apostles Feb. 12, 1849. Richards was initiated into the Council March 17, Lorenzo Snow apparently on March 10.
If this change in procedure was merely accidental or a result of a basic change in Church policy cannot be determined.

That the Twelve had special responsibilities to fulfill not only in the Church but also in the political Kingdom was made clear by Joseph Smith who, according to Benjamin F. Johnson

"... stood before that association of his select friends, including all of the Twelve, and with great feeling and animation he graphically reviewed his life of persecution, labor and sacrifice for the church and the Kingdom of God, both of which he declared now organized upon the earth, the burden of which had become too great for him longer to carry, that he was weary and tired with the weight he had so long borne, and he then said, with great vehemence: "And in the name of the Lord, I now shake from my shoulders the responsibility of bearing off the Kingdom of God to all the world, and here an now I place that responsibility, with all the keys, powers and privileges pertaining thereto, upon the shoulders of you the Twelve Apostles, in connection with this council: and if you will accept this, to do it, God shall bless you mightily and shall open your way, and if you do it not you will be damned."39

According to Wilford Woodruff, this so called "last charge" of the Prophet represented the climax of several months of intensive instruction to the Council of the Kingdom.

It was not merely a few hours ministering to them the ordinances of the Gospel; but he spent day after day, week after week and month after month, teaching ... the things of the Kingdom of God. Said he, during that period, "I now rejoice. I have lived until I have seen this burden, which has rested on my shoulders, rolled on to the shoulders of other men; now the keys of the kingdom are planted on the earth to be taken away no more for ever."40

Exactly what the Prophet taught in these meetings is at best a matter of conjecture since the deliberations of the

39Johnson to Gibbs, p. 10. (My Italics)
40J.D., XII (1869), 164.
Council of Fifty were shrouded in secrecy from the very beginning. Patriarch Benjamin F. Johnson, who was present at every session of the Council of Fifty in the Nauvoo period, relates that the "sittings of the Council were always strictly private." Even 59 years after these original meetings Johnson did not feel free to divulge the private teachings which the Prophet had imparted to the Council of Fifty in 1844. That secrecy was a protective measure not only against the possibility of Gentile "misunderstandings" but also of the Latter-day Saints as well is made clear by Johnson who states that only after attending the meetings of the Council of Fifty did he and his associates begin

"... in a degree to understand the meaning of what he had so often publicly said, that should he teach and practice the principles that the Lord had revealed to him, and now requested of him, that those then nearest to him in the stand would become his enemies and the first to seek his life."  

Secrecy, however, was considered important not only in matters of theory and doctrine. A diary entry by John D. Lee suggests that the confidential nature of the administrative and governmental activities of the Council may have been of even greater importance.

At 9 morning, Sat., 31st, council convened at the House of H. C. Kimble's. The meeting having been called to order by the Pres., arose & said that a member of the council had been guilty of divulging the secrets of this council & that John Pack was charged with it & related that Jackson Redin had been to H. C. Kimble,

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41 Johnson to Gibbs, p. 9.
42 Ibid.
O. P. Rockwell, & others & told that John Pack had warned him to leave this place fourth with or he would not have the liberty, intimating that his life was in danger. O. P. Rockwell, H. C. Kimble & other[5] bor record to the same. Counsellor Pack pled innocence so far as revealing anything to Redding that belonged to this Council. Said that he had some conversation with Redding about a debt that owed him, in which he told Jack that his past Life was so dishonest that it had rendered his Person unsafe. After counsellor Morley & others had Spoken, Pres. B. Y. took the Floor. Said that Bro. Pack had not wisdom enough to keep the Secrets of this Council locked up in his own Breast & there was others. Cahoons Fath[er] is an other man that is not fit to Sit in the council of the Gods. Members of this council should be men of firmness and integrity, that when they leave this council Room that the things that belong to this council should be as safe as though it was locked up in the silent vaults of Eternity, but such things must be overcome or the men who indulge in them will be dropped from this council. I mean Just what I say. J. Pack pled for Forgiveness, Said try me a little longer. Then, if I don't prove true, deal with me as you think proper, if it is to cut my head off, & he wept bitterly like a child. His request was granted.[43]

According to Lee, secrecy went at times so far that if records were kept at all they were burned at the close of each meeting.[44] In diary entries which mention the Council, Lee generally designated the name of the Council as YTFIF [fifty spelled backwards][7], in an apparent attempt to protect the identity of the Council.[45] William Clayton, the first clerk of the Council of Fifty, likewise tried to shield references to the Council in his diary from the unininitiated by calling it "K. of G."[46]

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To the outsider these patterns of secrecy easily may have suggested the sinister. The possible connection of the Council of Fifty with the administration of "blood atonement" - as alluded to above by Lee in connection with John Pack's indiscretion -- and insinuations that the Council was the revived version of the "Danite Band" have led to speculations of crimes and atrocities committed by the Council. No evidence has come to light which could support such a theory.

Another reason for secrecy may have been to keep private certain rituals apparently connected with the Council. William Clayton mentions meetings of the group in which members were dressed in special robes and ornaments and "offered up" secret signs. Guards were placed around the meeting place to prevent interruption. In one case the guards were made up of two members who had no special clothing with them. Benjamin F. Johnson suggested that Council members were subject to certain rules and regulations which demanded careful and prompt observation. New members had a "charge and obliga-

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47 The idea of blood atonement seems to have had little significance in the Nauvoo period. The connection of the Council to this doctrine will be more fully discussed Infra., Chap. VI.

48 Thomas Ford, History of Illinois (Chicago: S. C. Griggs & Co., 1854), 322: "It is now at this day certain also, that about this time the prophet reinstituted an order in the church, called the 'Danite Band.'"


50 Johnson to Gibbs, p. 9.
"tion" explained to them by some of the senior members of the organization. Being called into the Council was considered a signal honor.

3. Activities

If, ultimately, the Council of Fifty was to rule the world as the governing body of the political Kingdom of God, necessity diverted the activities of the Council to less impressive if more urgent tasks. As a matter of fact, it was primarily for the solution of immediate problems pressing upon the Church that the Prophet first organized the Council. According to Brigham Young,

Joseph commenced the organization of a Council for the purpose of taking into consideration the necessary steps to obtain redress for the wrongs which had been inflicted upon us by our persecutors, and also the best manner to settle our people in some distant and unoccupied territory; where we could enjoy our civil and religious rights, without being subject to constant oppression and mobocracy, under the protection of our own laws, subject to the Constitution. . . .

We prepared several memorials to Congress for redress of grievances, and used every available means to inform ourselves of the unoccupied territory open to settlers.

As a result of Council decisions, Lyman Wight and Heber C. Kimball were sent to Washington "to present memorials to Congress, for redress of wrongs sustained by the Saints

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51Lee, Mormon Chronicle, p. 102; Minutes of the Council of Fifty, April 10, 1880.

52Minutes of the Council of Fifty, April 10, 1880; "Being called into the Council appears to me to be one of the greatest steps in my life."

53"History of Brigham Young," Millennial Star, XXVI (1864), 328.
while in Missouri."\textsuperscript{54} This attempt apparently was no more successful than earlier Mormon attempts to obtain justice. Congress, basing its decision on the contemporary interpretation of the Constitution by the Supreme Court, considered the case beyond its jurisdiction.

Of far greater import, and destined to be more successful, were the Council's deliberations on the removal of the Saints to an unoccupied territory. Increasing difficulties in Nauvoo did not augur well for the future of the Mormon's in Illinois. Even before the organization of the Council of Fifty, Joseph Smith had taken up the idea of looking for a place where the Saints might build up their Kingdom unmolested.\textsuperscript{55} The immediate cause for organizing the Council of Fifty came with the arrival of Bishop George Miller in Nauvoo, who had brought with him two letters, one addressed to the First Presidency of the Church, the other to Joseph Smith personally. These letters, written by Lyman Wight and George Miller -- who were the leaders of the Black River Lumber Company in Wisconsin Territory,\textsuperscript{56}

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{54}Ibid., p. 727.
\item \textsuperscript{55}DHC, VI, 222: "I instructed the Twelve Apostles to send out a delegation and investigate the locations of California and Oregon, and hunt out a good location, where we can build a city in a day, and have a government of our own, get up into the mountains, where the devil cannot dig us out, and live in a healthful climate, where we can live as old as we have a mind to."
\item \textsuperscript{56}This company, located at Black River Falls, was organized by the Saints during the early 1840's to provide lumber for the construction of the Nauvoo Temple and the Nauvoo House. See Andrus, p. 46; also Ibid., passim, for a discussion of the plans of the general Council to relocate the Saints.
\end{itemize}
informed the First Presidency that "we have in our minds to go to the table-lands of Texas, to a point we may find to be the most eligible, there locate, and let it be a place of gathering for all the South."  

Joseph Smith, in his personal history, recorded that on March 11, 1844, he had organized a special council,

... to take into consideration the subject matter contained in the above letters, and also the best policy for this people to adopt to obtain their rights from the nation and insure protection for themselves and children; and to secure a resting place in the mountains, or some uninhabited region, where we can enjoy the liberty of conscience guaranteed to us by the Constitution of our country, rendered doubly sacred by the precious blood of our fathers, and denied us by the present authorities, who have smuggled themselves into power in the States and Nation.  

The Council acted on the matter immediately, for only three days later, Lucien Woodworth was sent to Texas to negotiate with Sam Houston and the Texas Congress for the acquisition of a large tract of Territory, running

... north of a west line of the falls of the Colorado River to the Nueces, thence down the same to the Gulf of Mexico, and along the same to the Rio Grande, and up the same to the United States Territory.  

A treaty between the Kingdom of God and the Republic of Texas was to be entered into, if possible. Texas was to "acknowledge us as a nation; and, on the part of the church, we would help them defend themselves against belligerent powers."  

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57 DHC, VI, 256.  
58 Ibid., p. 261.  
59 Miller, A Mormon Bishop ..., p. 48.  
60 Ibid.
worth returned from his mission on May 2, 1844. The following day, he reported to the Council of Fifty. Three days later, on May 6, the Council seems to have held some important deliberations; Joseph Smith recorded that he "attended general council all day."61 George Miller, who was present at these deliberations recalled that

It was altogether as we could wish it. On the part of the church there were commissioners appointed to meet the Texan Congress to sanction or ratify the said treaty, partly entered into by our minister and the Texan cabinet. A Mr. Brown, Lucian Woodworth and myself were the commissioners appointed to meet the Texas Congress, and, upon the consummation of the treaty, Wight and myself were to locate the Black River Lumber Company on the newly acquired territory, and do such other things as might be necessary in the promises, and report to the Council of the Kingdom.62

On that same day, the Council of Fifty also sent Almon Babbitt on a mission to France. Professor Andrus ascribes political significance to Babbitt's mission and surmises rather logically that it seems not likely that the Council, after a day-long session which was primarily concerned with political matters, would send some Council members on a political mission to Texas while assigning Babbitt on religious business to France. Rather, so Dr. Andrus argues, Babbitt's mission may well have been intended to determine the reaction of the French government to Mormon proposals of establishing an independent state in the Rio Grande region.63 That such designs were actually entertained by the Council is substantiated by

61 DHC, VI, 356.
62 Miller, A Mormon Bishop . . ., p. 49.
63 Andrus, p. 62.
Orson Hyde who, in a letter from Washington D.C., cautioned the Saints against the establishment of an independent government in Texas. The heavy financial burden of an army and a navy, warned Hyde, might well prove more than the new government might be able to handle. 64

Hyde himself had been sent to Washington by the Council of Fifty to negotiate with the Federal Government for aid in settling the Saints in some other unoccupied region of the West. It was in connection with this mission that on March 21, Willard Richard had been appointed by the Council to draw up a memorial to Congress, requesting the Federal government to give Joseph Smith authority to raise an army of 100,000 men to extend the authority of the United States throughout the West. On March 26, this memorial was read, discussed and approved by the Council of Fifty. Nine days later, Hyde was off to Washington, the memorial in his pocket. From Washington the emissary of the Council reported that the Saints could expect little support of the Federal Government for their plan and advised Joseph and the Council that "If the Saints possess the kingdom I think they will have to take it; and the sooner it is done the more easily it is accomplished." 65

Hyde also informed the Council that in the opinion of Senator Douglas the Saints could

64 Orson Hyde to First Presidency, April 30, 1844 (original at L. D. S. Church Historian's Office, Salt Lake City, Utah).

65 DHC, VI, 372.
equally as soon go to that country without an act of Congress as with; "and that in five years a noble state might be formed; and then if they would not receive us into the Union, we would have a government of our own."66

In yet another bid to relocate the Church and establish the Kingdom -- no doubt related to the above mentioned inquiries of the Council into the possibilities of settling the Church in the West -- Joseph Smith ordered a small expedition under the leadership of James Emmett to migrate to the Missouri River and establish a temporary settlement, presumably in preparation for moving the Church west. Emmett, an original member of the Council of Fifty, was instructed to keep his mission strictly confidential. It is possible that only a small inner core of the Council previously mentioned was aware of this mission. Lyman Wight, as will be seen, later insisted that he was carrying out the plans of the Council of Fifty by settling in Texas, thus revealing that he most likely was ignorant of Emmett's mission. That Emmett proceeded under the authority of the Council of Fifty, however, is suggested by a member of the expedition who recorded that the commission had proceeded from "the highest court on the earth."67

The possible establishment of the Kingdom of God either in Texas or some other part of the West, however, would have to await the outcome of the presidential election in

66 Ibid., 374.

1844. The Council of Fifty seems to have considered the election of Joseph Smith to the presidential chair as a possible alternative for the establishment of the political Kingdom. As a result, the traditional interpretation of Joseph's candidacy will have to be modified to some degree. That the Prophet's move was partly a political expedient to give the Mormons an excuse to vote an independent ticket is true. The Saints, holding the balance of power between the Whigs and Democrats in Illinois, naturally looked for a way to extricate themselves from the political difficulties into which they had been drawn by their unenviable position. Furthermore, a political campaign would give the Mormons an opportunity to dramatize their cause before the Nation, and finally, campaign speeches could be used effectively to propagate Mormonism. 68 That the Prophet did not seriously expect to win the election, argues B. H. Roberts, is indicated by the various projects he entertained to move the Saints west. 69 But if it is possible that the Mormons may have been pessimistic about their Prophet's success in running against Clay and Van Buren they did not, as a rule, reveal this possibility openly. Newspaper editorials in Nauvoo spoke optimistically of the ambitions of "General

68 Durham, Joseph Smith, Prophet-Statesman, p. 145; Roberts, Rise and Fall of Nauvoo, p. 252.

69 Roberts, Rise and Fall of Nauvoo, p. 260. From a strictly syllogistic point of view, this logic could be reversed to show that Smith's presidential campaign indicated that he was not as seriously interested in moving west as was heretofore believed.
The Prophet himself, perhaps only facetiously, remarked that "there is oratory enough in the Church to carry me into the presidential chair first slide." If the mock elections held on the steamboats between St. Louis and Nauvoo had been an indication of a national trend, the outcome of the election would not have been in doubt. Recorded the Nauvoo Neighbour on May 6, 1844 under the heading of "Steamboat Election."

On the last upward voyage of the Osprey from St. Louis to this place, as usual, the merits of the several candidates for the next presidential election were discussed. A vote was taken, and the following was the 'state of the polls' as handed us by a Gentleman who came as passenger:

The ladies are altogether forsaking Van Buren, and the Gentlemen as a matter of course are following after. There is a wonderful shrinkage in Henry Clay, but the General is going with a rush. Hurrah for the General!

Although the candidacy of Joseph Smith for the Presidency was first decided on in a meeting of the Council of the Twelve on January 29, 1844, there is reason to believe that the Prophet's candidacy may have been proposed as early as September 28, 1843 in a special council meeting mentioned previously. This council, as will be remembered, may have been the nucleus for the Council of Fifty. According to George

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71 DHC, VI, 188.
72 As quoted in Millennial Star, XXIII (1861), 578.
73 DHC, VI, 188: "... moved by Willard Richards, and voted unanimously--
That we will have an independent electoral ticket and that Joseph Smith be a candidate for the next Presidency; and that we use all honorable means in our power to secure his election."
Miller, the decision to run Joseph Smith for President of the United States was made in the Council of Fifty. In the light of all available evidence, however, this "decision" seems to have been more of a reaffirmation of earlier plans. The Elders were to be sent out on missions

...to all the States to get up an electoral ticket, and do everything in our power to have Joseph elected president. If we succeeded in making a majority of the voters converts to our faith, and elected Joseph president, in such an event the dominion of the kingdom would be forever established in the United States; ... 74

As a result of this Council decision, the entire Church organization was pressed into the services of the Kingdom of God. Brigham Young was appointed campaign director. The Council and the Elders were assigned to campaign in all twenty-six states and one Territory. Miller's statements are substantiated by Joseph Smith himself who recorded under the date of April 25, 1844 that he attended "general council from 10 till 12, and from 2 to 5, when they adjourned sine die, after appointing a State Convention to meet in Nauvoo on 17th May. The Council then dispersed to go abroad in the nations." 75 At the State convention, which went off as planned, Sidney Rigdon was put up as running-mate to the Prophet after James Arlington Bennett and Solomon Copeland, both non-Mormons, had declined to run on the Mormon ticket. 76

74 Miller, A Mormon Bishop . . ., p. 49.
75 DHC, VI, 343.
76 Roberts, Comprehensive History, II, 207.
If it seems unreasonable from a modern point of view that the Council of Fifty should have entertained any hopes at all for the election of the Prophet it must be kept in mind that the Saints believed that with God on their side they constituted a majority; the Lord could open the way for anything he wished to have accomplished, just as in the days of ancient Israel. Even then, it should be kept in mind that the Council never considered the candidacy of Joseph Smith as more than an alternative among several other possibilities for establishing the Kingdom. If this attempt should fail, the Council, according to George Miller, "... could fall back on Texas, and be a kingdom notwithstanding."77

With the presence of such an important extra-legal governmental body in Nauvoo, the question naturally arises whether or not the Council of Fifty had any influence on the political, economic or civic affairs of the city in this early period. John D. Lee records that during the Utah phase, Brigham Young suggested "That when a man ... [is] taken out of this Council to do business, let that man be chairman of whatever committie he may belong to, thus the chairman can report to the Council."78 Although there is some evidence of interlocking membership during the early period of the Council, overlapping responsibilities of its members seem to have been more accidental than intentional. Joseph Smith was Mayor of

77 Miller, A Mormon Bishop . . ., p. 49.
78 Lee, Mormon Chronicle, I, 92.
the city before he organized the Council. Several city-council members, likewise, had been appointed to their positions before they became members of the Council of Fifty. That such positions, however, could be used to advantage by the Council seems only a reasonable assumption. From the frequent meetings of the Council in the room over Joseph Smith's store, the Masonic Hall and Henry Miller's house, nothing has come to light, however, that would indicate a direct influence of the Council in its official capacity on the affairs of the city.

Strangely enough, however, the Council of Fifty, although not an ecclesiastical body, seems to have had some influence on Church matters. An entry in Joseph Smith's personal history on April 18, 1844, shows that after lengthy deliberations by the general council another council was called for 6 p.m. at which "Robert D. Foster, Wilson Law, William Law and Jane Law, of Nauvoo, and Howard Smith of Scott County Illinois," were cut off from the Church "for unchristianlike conduct." 79 Of the thirty-two persons present at this meeting, twenty-two can be positively identified as members of the Council of Fifty. Of the remaining ten, several very likely also were members of this organization. 80 It will be remembered that this excommunication of the Laws and Foster led to the immediate causes for the assassination of Joseph

79 DHC, VI, 341.

80 During the Utah period Lee (Mormon Chronicle, I, 96), mentions that the Council of Fifty decided to excommunicate several Mormon Battalion members for immoral conduct.
Smith. Most of the members of the Council of Fifty were away from Nauvoo, campaigning for their leader, when news of the untimely death of the Prophet reached them.

The members of the Council were not likely aware of the fact that their activities, real or suspected, had contributed to the martyrdom of Joseph. Although the Council of Fifty had conducted its deliberations in utmost secrecy -- or perhaps because of this fact -- rumors were spread "that the Mormons entertained the treasonable design, when they got strong enough, of overthrowing the government, driving out the old population and taking possession of the country, as the children of Israel did in the land of Canaan." 81 None other than Governor Ford linked these designs to the activities of the Council of Fifty:

It seems, from the best information that could be got from the best men who had seceded from the Mormon Church, that Joe Smith about this time conceived the idea of making himself a temporal prince as well as spiritual leader of his people. He instituted a new and select order of the priesthood, the members of which were to be priests and kings temporally and spiritually. These were to be his nobility, who were to be the upholders of his throne. He caused himself to be crowned and anointed king and priest, far above the rest; and he prescribed the form of an oath of allegiance to himself, which he administered to his principal followers. To uphold his pretensions to royalty, he deduced his descent by an unbroken chain from Joseph the son of Jacob, and that of his wife from some other renowned personage of Old Testament history. The Mormons openly denounced the government of the United States as utterly corrupt, and as being about to pass away, and to be replaced by the government of God, to be

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administered by his servant Joseph.\textsuperscript{82}

Wilson Law who, after his excommunication became one of the most bitter enemies of the Prophet, was himself not slow in accusing Joseph Smith of disloyalty to the government.\textsuperscript{83} Endeavoring to obtain a warrant against Joseph for treason, Law maintained that on one occasion he had heard the Prophet, while preaching from Daniel I:44, declare "that the kingdom referred to was already set up, and that he was the king over it."\textsuperscript{84} Rumors implying that the Prophet assumed royal pretensions are somewhat substantiated by George Miller who stated on one occasion that "In this council we ordained Joseph Smith as King on earth."\textsuperscript{84} More than likely, the term king had reference to the Prophet's position as the contemporary head of the Kingdom of God on earth of which he was at best the vice-regent. The title of King was reserved for Christ himself.

According to some anti-Mormon sources, the Saints and their Prophet were not persecuted for their religious beliefs but for their political designs. Declared John Hyde, a Mormon apostate: "As a religion, Mormonism can not be meddled with; as a civil polity it may."\textsuperscript{85} From its very in-

\textsuperscript{82}Ford, pp. 321-322.

\textsuperscript{83}"History of Joseph Smith," \textit{Millennial Star}, XXIV (1862), 359.

\textsuperscript{84}Miller in Zahnd MS.

ception," maintained another enemy of the Church, "Mormonism has . . . been essentially a politico-religious organization, and as such, has clashed with the governmental institutions of every state and territory in which it has acquired habi-
tat."86 That Mormon ambitions to establish a political King-
dom were a major cause for persecution and were, to some de-
gree, responsible for the death of Joseph Smith was recog-
nized by Mormons as well. E. W. Tullidge, writing in the
Millennial Star, observed:

. . . the future mighty empire of "Mormondom" has already
often been foreshadowed in Gentile prophecies, presenti-
ments, and fears; and day after day a feeling is fast
coming over the people that the work which has grown out
of the mission of Joseph, and now carried onward under
the headship of Brigham, will soon form the most impor-
tant part of the awfully stupendous drama of the last
days. Aye, it was this very sentiment of the future
empire of the Saints which had from the first been grow-
ing up in the minds of the people of America, that urged
them to the desperate, murderous, and unlawful attempts
to root up the work of God, destroy the mission of Jo-
seph, murder him and some of his chief followers, blot
out the destiny of "Mormonism," and exterminate the
Saints. It is because there has, day after day, and
year after year, grown up and fast spread in America a
realization, and with it a fear of the empire-founding
character of "Mormonism" and the "Mormons," that this
Church has such heartrending pages in its history. It
is because of the growth of this presentiment and fear
that a Joseph, a Hyrum, a Parley a David Patten, and
may others of the chief Elders and Saints have been di-
rectly or indirectly Martyred.87

The doctrine of the political Kingdom of God was but
one of several causes that led to the assassination of Joseph

86 Joseph Nimmo, Jr., The Mormon Usurpation (Huntington,

87 E.W. Tullidge, "Views of 'Mormonism' and the 'Morm-
mons'," Millennial Star, XXIII (1861), 125.
Smith. Nevertheless, this doctrine has become a more significant factor in the death of the Prophet than has heretofore been suspected. But whatever the causes, the Prophet was dead; and the Kingdom seemed to be left without a leader when it needed one most.
CHAPTER V

THE COUNCIL OF FIFTY AND THE KINGDOM OF GOD DURING THE APOSTOLIC INTERREGNUM, 1844-1847

1. The Succession Controversy

The death of the Prophet and his brother Hyrum in 1844 was a serious blow to the Saints. The enemies of the Church felt that with its leader gone, Mormonism was headed for an inglorious end. For a while it seemed as if anti-Mormon predictions were being fulfilled. Lacking a precedent or explicit instructions for the appointment of a successor, the Mormons seemed to be splitting into many factions with each leader claiming to have fallen heir to the mantle of the Prophet. This claim was successfully defended by Brigham Young who, as head of the Quorum of the Twelve, asserted his and the Apostle's right to lead the Church, a claim sustained by an assembly of Saints on August 8, 1844. Sidney Rigdon who, a few days earlier, had provoked the whole question of leadership by asking the Church to appoint him as a "guardian" was excommunicated. Thus, the question of succession was solved within six weeks of the Prophet's death; Brigham Young had established a precedent which was to become a pattern in the Church.
But not all of the Saints accepted the new authorities. Many followed the self-appointed leaders of the many splinter groups which arose in the wake of the Prophet's death. It is not the purpose of this study to make a comprehensive investigation of these movements. But some of the claims of leadership were connected with the Council of Fifty and the Kingdom of God; and these claims bear investigation in the context of this study.

On July 30, 1844, George Miller and Alexander Badlam wanted to "call together the Council of Fifty and organize the Church." Apostles George A. Smith and Willard Richards informed the two petitioners "that the Council of Fifty was not a Church organization." Membership in that group was irrespective of religious beliefs; the Council had been organized primarily to obtain redress of grievances and to find a place where the Saints could live in peace; "the organization of the Church belonged to the Priesthood alone."¹

Lyman Wight, himself a member of the Quorum of the Twelve, likewise seems to have considered the authority of the Council of Fifty as being superior to that of the Apostles. In an address delivered in December of 1851 he declared that

... the first thing to have been done after the death of Joseph Smith would have been to have called the fifties together from the four quarters of the earth, which contained all the highest authorities of the church. As you will readily see, that had not the fifty constituted the highest authorities, it would have been a species of weakness to have ordained all the highest authorities in-

¹DHC, VII, 213.
to that number. The fifties assembled should have called on all the authorities of the church down to the lay-members from all the face of the earth, as much as convenient, and after having taken sweet counsel together, in prayer and supplication before God, acknowledged our sins and transgressions which had caused our head to be taken from our midst; and then have called on young Joseph, and held him up before the congregation of Israel to take his father's place in the flesh! Then should he have received intelligence of our forgiveness of our sins and transgressions, and we had then went on and finished the temple according to the revelations of God, and the word of his servants - then should we so have done - then should the fifty have sallied forth unto all the world, and built up according to the pattern which Bro. Joseph had given; the Twelve to have acted in two capacities, one in opening the gospel to all the world, and organizing churches; and then what would have been still greater, to have counseled in the Grand Council of heaven, in gathering in the house of Israel and establishing Zion to be thrown down no more forever. In this way the church might have moved smoothly on, and onward, until the final redemption of Zion, and the building of the great temple therein.\(^2\)

Such claims, however, apparently were disavowed by the majority of Council of Fifty members.

With the death of Joseph Smith, hopes of getting the Kingdom established through a presidential election were naturally shattered. Some Council members now thought that the opportune time had come for establishing the Kingdom in the Texas region. Accordingly, George Miller and Lucien Woodworth went to Brigham Young and suggested that the negotiations with the Texan Congress for the acquisition of territory be renewed. Recalls Miller of this meeting:

... to my utter astonishment Brigham refused having anything to do in the matter; that he had no faith in it, and would do nothing to raise means for an outfit or expenses. Thus all hopes were cut off to establish dominion of the kingdom, at a time that there seemed to be a crisis, and I

\(^2\)Smith and Smith, History of the Church... (Reorganized), II, 90-91.
verily believed all that we had concocted in council might so easily be accomplished. I was really cast down and dejected.3

Brigham Young, no doubt in deference to previous Council decisions, nevertheless gave Wight permission to take the "Pine Company" to Texas, but he insisted that all other Church members stay in Nauvoo.4 Wight thereupon, led the Black River Lumber Company to Texas -- if with the permission of Brigham Young, most certainly without his blessings.

The Council of Fifty apparently was of significant importance to this small group. William Leyland, in his journal, recorded that a special resolution was made to "fellowship Lyman and George [Miller, who later joined Wight] in their standing as two of the Fifties."5 Later, after the main body of the Saints had arrived in the Salt Lake Valley, the quorum of the Twelve summoned Wight to Utah. He, however, -- still insisting on the superior authority of the Council of Fifty, -- declared that "nobody under the light of the heavens except Joseph Smith or John Smith, the president of the Fifty, could call him from Texas to come to Salt Lake City."6 This answer the quorum considered sufficient grounds for excommunication and acted accordingly.

3Miller, Northern Islander, p. 24.
4DHC, VII, 254-255.
5Journal of William Leyland as quoted in Heman Hale Smith, "The Lyman Wight Colony in Texas, 1846-1858" (typed copy of unpublished MS, at University of Texas, Brigham Young University Library), p. 22.
6Ibid., p. 21.
James Emmett was another member of the Council of Fifty who showed reluctance in following the leadership of Brigham Young. Emmett, it will be remembered, had been instructed by Joseph Smith to lead a small company to the Missouri river in preparation for the possible removal of the Saints west. After the Prophet's death he apparently acted on his original instructions and, against the advice of Brigham Young, moved with a company of Saints into Iowa. When he ignored Brigham Young's request to return to Nauvoo, two emissaries of the Council of Fifty were sent to investigate the situation. They found Emmett's company at the Iowa river, "in a deplorable condition."

Disfellowshipped for his disobedience, Emmett returned to Nauvoo and promised to obey the leading authorities upon the restoration of his priesthood. But a year later, at Winter Quarters, further difficulties again led to the permanent withdrawal of fellowship from Emmett and his company. 7

Sidney Rigdon, whose membership in the Council is rather dubious, apparently limited his aspirations to building the spiritual church. 8

More temporal ambitions had James Strang who, next to Rigdon, was the main contender for the succession. Strang, who had come to Nauvoo early in 1844 out of curiosity, met Jo-

7DHC, VII, 377, 383-384, 434, 618.

8Brigham Young, (DHC, VII, 234), in a veiled allusion—possibly to the Council of Fifty—hinted at Rigdon's lack of qualification for leadership: "Why will Elder Rigdon be a fool? Who knows anything . . . of the organization of the kingdom of God."
Joseph Smith and, on February 25, was baptized in the unfinished Temple by the Prophet himself. A week later, Hyrum ordained him an Elder. If Strang ever became a member of the Council of Fifty it is nowhere recorded. But, like the members of that Council, he was engaged in looking for a place to settle the Saints. In a letter to the Prophet on May 24, he suggested the establishment of a future Zion in Wisconsin territory. As a result of this suggestion Joseph Smith sent the future Prophet of Voree and Beaver Island to Burlington on the White River to make a survey of the area for the possible settlement of the Saints. Having satisfied himself of the suitability of the location, Strang requested authority from Joseph Smith to "plant a Stake." According to Strang's own version, the Prophet not only gave permission to organize a Stake but implied that the selected site would be the location of the future Zion, and Strang successor to the Prophet. Whatever truth there may have been to these assertions, they were vigorously maintained by Strang after Joseph's death.9

What makes Strang especially significant in connection with this study is the fact that his movement, more than any other splinter group, insisted on the establishment not only of a church but a political Kingdom of God. If Strang may never have been a member of the Council of Fifty himself, his kingdom on Beaver Island, nevertheless, looked like a garbled

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product of that Council. This resemblance is not at all surprising since at least two former members of that organization, William Smith -- a brother of the Prophet -- and George Miller, joined Strang's Kingdom.

According to Milo Quaife, "a surprisingly comprehensive framework of theocratic government was set forth, ample in scope to serve the needs of a kingdom of whatever size." Even before the removal of the colony to Beaver Island a secret society, which was to be the governing body of the group, was organized at Voree, Wisconsin -- the first headquarters of Strang's organization. This society, called the Order of the Illuminati, had Viceroys, a General in Chief, and noblemen of the Grand Council. Members of the council had to swear an oath of allegiance which, in part, went as follows:

And I do further, in like manner, promise, covenant and swear that I will uphold sustain and obey the said James J. Strang and his lawful successors, if any he has, each in his time as the Imperial primate and actual Sovereign wheresoever and in whatsoever kingdom state or dominion I may be; and in preference to the laws, commandments and persons of any other Kings, Potentates, or States whatsoever, and will yield obedience to the revelations he shall give; the Laws made by the Grand Council of Nobles of God's Kingdom, with his concurrence; and the decrees he shall make, as the Supreme Law, above and superceding all laws, obligations, and mandates of any other person, authority, or power whatsoever.

After the removal of the society to Beaver Island, Strang had

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11Riegel, pp. 190, 110.
12Quaife, p. 56.
himself installed as God's viceroy. Four hundred spectators witnessed the formal establishment of the Kingdom of God on earth. Strang, clad in a robe of bright red, advanced to a throne where George J. Adams placed a crown on the head of the self-styled prophet-king. Divine sanction for this performance was derived from the Book of the Law of the Lord, a collection of purported revelations received by Strang which provided for a theocracy based upon principles of unmitigated absolutism. The King was the supreme master in every sphere of human thought and action. He was to execute judgment ... overthrow the rebellious ... punish those who do wickedly ... rule the nations ... declare Laws and Commandments ... This Book of the Law ..., while differing from Latter-day Saint theology to a considerable degree is, nevertheless, strongly reminiscent of many Kingdom of God concepts taught in Nauvoo and Utah. The following revelation almost reads like a paraphrase of one of Orson Pratt's statements on the Kingdom of God:

It follows, therefore, that every form of government among men, which was not instituted of God, is a usur-

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13 George J. Adams, it will be remembered, had been called on a confidential mission to Russia in 1843. He never fulfilled this mission. Later, after leaving Strang, he formed a church of his own. See Cecil E. McGavin, "Apostate Factions Following the Martyrdom of Joseph Smith," The Improvement Era. XLVII (1949), 498.

14 Quaife, p. 94. It is quite possible that Strang got his ideas of having himself crowned king from George Miller who, in a letter written at St. James, claimed that Joseph Smith was ordained as "King on earth" in the "Council of fifty-three princes of the kingdom." (Miller, as quoted in Zahnd, n.p.).

15 Riegel, p. 174.
pation, and that every exercise of the proper functions of government under it, is a taking of the name of God in vain, as every exercise of functions not proper to government, is tyranny.16

In the face of all this evidence, it seems most certain that Strang's Kingdom was a garbled version of the Kingdom to be organized under the leadership of the Council of Fifty. But unlike that latter Kingdom, Strang's Kingdom -- for all practical purposes -- ended with the death of its leader by an assassin's bullet.

Still another aspirant to the mantle of the Prophet Joseph who seemed to have had ideas of establishing the Kingdom of God was Gladden Bishop. Bishop, who later made an unsuccessful attempt to convert the Utah Saints to his point of view, attracted some of the Wisconsin Mormons to his cause. According to one Mormon observer, Bishop claimed to be "the personification of the Holy Ghost; . . . he has organized what he calls the Kingdom of God, and it was the queerest performance I ever saw."17

16 James Strang, The Book of the Law of the Lord (Beaver Island, Michigan: A.R.I., Royal Press, n.d.), p. 21. See Orson Pratt, The Kingdom of God (Liverpool, 1851), p. 1: "The kingdom of God is an order of government established by divine authority. It is the only legal government that can exist in any part of the universe. All other governments are illegal and unauthorized. God, having made all beings and worlds, has the supreme right to govern them by His own laws, and by officers of His own appointment. Any people attempting to govern themselves by laws of their own making, and by officers of their own appointment, are in direct rebellion against the kingdom of God."

2. **Activities of the Council in Nauvoo under Brigham Young, 1845-1846**

Although these movements did not affect the main body of the Church at Nauvoo too much, the Council of Fifty itself was seriously depleted. At least seventeen of its early members cannot be found on membership lists in early Utah.\(^{18}\) If the Council, nevertheless, emerged out of the succession crisis stronger than ever, this strength was partly the result of the vigorous leadership of Brigham Young\(^{19}\) and partly a consequence of Gentile persecution; if the Kingdom was to survive, the Council had to tighten its muscles.

It appears logical that with the accession of Brigham Young to the leadership of the Church a reorganization of the Council would be effected. One such reorganization seems to have taken place sometime in February of 1845, when, as mem-

\(^{18}\)Joseph Smith and his brother Hyrum, of course, had been murdered. William Smith, a brother of the Prophet, was excommunicated October 12, 1845. Sidney Rigdon, it will be remembered, lost his standing in the Church in 1844. James Emmett and George Miller lost their membership at Winter Quarters, in 1846. John E. Page, likewise, was excommunicated by a vote of the Quorum of the Twelve at Winter Quarters, June 27, 1846. Lyman Wight was not excommunicated until 1849. William Marks, whose membership in the Council is somewhat uncertain, left at Nauvoo, in 1846. Alpheus Cutler started an apostate movement of his own. Alexander Badlam, Uriah Brown, J. W. Coolidge, Amos Fielding, P. S. Hollister, Lorenzo Whasson, and Lucien Woodworth also lost their membership during this period, whether through death or apostacy cannot be determined.

\(^{19}\)One member of the Council of Fifty asserted that "to us president Young's ordered /sic/ always countermanded every thing else as he holds the keys of the kingdom and that we allways disobeyed every thing for him. . . ." (Stout, II, 222).
tioned previously, three members of the board of the Mercantile and Mechanical Association were released in order to assume responsibilities on the board of the "Living Constitution." Brigham Young, in his MS history, records the first meeting of the General Council as taking place on March 1, 1845 and mentions frequent meetings thereafter.

During this period the Council seems to have exerted a greater influence on Nauvoo municipal affairs than under the leadership of Joseph Smith. The system of interlocking chairmanships and directorships -- attention to which was first called by Professor James R. Clark21-- apparently had been worked out to some degree by this time. According to Dr. Clark, "at least ten civic and religious leaders had joint membership on the Council of Fifty and on the roster of school officials."22 The chairman of the Mercantile and Mechanical Association belonged to the Council of Fifty, and so did four out of the twelve board members. Two out of these twelve men were called into the Council before the Saints left Nauvoo.23 At a municipal election held on February 3, 1845 out of a total of fourteen officers -- "elected without a dissenting vote" -- at least seven, including the mayor, were members of the Council.

20 DHC, VII, 379. In a footnote, Brigham Young explained that "General Council is the Council of Fifty."

21 Clark, Utah Historical Quarterly, XXVI (1958), 143-145.

22 Ibid., p. 144.

23 DHC, VII, 369.
of Fifty; one alderman and one council man appear on subsequent lists of that same Council.24

After the repeal of the Nauvoo City Charter by the Illinois legislature it was the Council of Fifty which corresponded with Governor Ford on the best method of organizing the city. Ford's proposal, which would have required a complicated chain of twelve different incorporations, was rejected. Instead, the Council incorporated "a small portion of the city . . . as the town of Nauvoo and Alpheus Cutler, Orson Spencer, Charles C. Rich, Theodore Turley and David Fullmer were appointed trustees;" Hosea Stout was appointed as captain of the police. Assessors, collectors and other officers also were installed.25 At least three of the five trustees were members of the Council of Fifty.

With all these important governmental matters pressing on the Saints it seems surprising that the Council found time to take care of matters that seem trivial for a group supposedly chiefly concerned with policy decisions. Thus, the Council of Fifty deliberated on matters concerning the Nauvoo House, the Printing Office and the history of the Church. It decided when construction should commence on the walls of the temple and sent an emissary to Lyman Wight's camp to inform itself of his movements.26

24Ibid., p. 370.

25Ibid., pp. 399-400. Stout was initiated into the Council of Fifty in January of 1846.

26Ibid., pp. 380, 387-388, 405.
But of far greater importance for the welfare of the Saints were the Council's deliberations on how to meet the mob violence which was threatening to break into open civil war in 1845. "It was considered best for those who are hunted with writs to go on missions;"\textsuperscript{27} decided the Council. This measure, it was believed, would ease friction somewhat. When turmoil, nevertheless, increased, the Council agreed to write letters to Governor Ford and J. B. Hoge to discuss the threats of the mob. Measures were taken to prepare the Saints for defense should they be attacked. The Council was fully aware of its responsibilities in maintaining peace and decided "to pursue a medium course avoiding extremes that might raise an excitement in the country."\textsuperscript{28} In the fall of 1845 Gentile depredations in Hancock County increased alarmingly. On October 4, the General Council met to consider correspondence received from General Hardin, the governor, and a committee of citizens from Quincy, all to the effect that the Saints could expect no protection and that, unless the Mormons left Illinois the following spring, serious bloodshed would most likely result.\textsuperscript{29}

During this period, the Council of Fifty again seems to have been a target for Gentile accusations and as such, a cause of persecution. In a writ issued for the arrest of prom-

\textsuperscript{27}\textit{Ibid}., p. 380.
\textsuperscript{29}\textit{Ibid}., 453-454.
inent citizens of Nauvoo for treasonable designs against the state mention was made, among other things, of a private council of which the accused supposedly were members. John S. Fullmer, a member of the Council of Fifty, reported while on an errand for the Council that

...the apostates are trying to get up an influence with the president of the United States to prevent the Saints emigrating westward, and that they have written to the president informing him of the resolutions of the General Council [Council of Fifty] [sic] to move westward, and representing that Council guilty of treason, etc.

Whatever treasonable designs the Gentiles, even those sympathetic to the Church, suspected the Council of plotting in its secret meetings, the Saints were apparently unaware of. Brigham Young himself, in commenting on a letter he had received from James Arlington Bennett of New York, in which the writer applied for a generalship in the Nauvoo Legion with the hope of fighting "Napoleon's battles over again, either in Nauvoo or elsewhere," remarked that "this wild spirit of ambition has repeatedly manifested itself to us by many communications received from various sources, suggesting schemes of blood and empire, as if the work of the Lord was intended for personal aggrandizement."

3. The Exodus

The ultimatum of General Hardin and the citizens of

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30 Ibid., p. 444.
31 Ibid., pp. 495-498.
32 Ibid., p. 429.
Hancock County gave added impetus to the Council's preparations of moving the Saints westward. Brigham Young, to be sure, had never lost sight of this goal when it became apparent that settlement in an unoccupied region of the West was the only alternative remaining to the Saints for establishing the Kingdom. As early as March 1, 1845, the Council of Fifty had decided to "send nine brethren westward, to search out a location for the Saints." Many subsequent Council meetings, likewise, dealt with the removal of the Saints to the West. It was this Council which drafted and sent out a letter appealing to President Polk and the governors of all the states except Missouri and Illinois for their support in delivering the Saints from mob pressures and helping them obtain a refuge in the West.

Only Governor Drew of Arkansas sent a "respectful" answer to the Council. On September 9, 1845, the Council of Fifty "Resolved that a company of 1500 men be selected to go to Great Salt Lake valley and that a committee of five be appointed to gather information relative to emigration, and report the same to the council." Three weeks later, Parley P. Pratt, in a preliminary report to the Council, calculated that it would require about 250 dollars to equip a family of five; and on October 4, the committee appointed on September 7 made a full and detailed report of the necessary requirements for

33Ibid., p. 379
34Ibid., pp. 401-404.
36DHC, VII, 439.
37DHC, VII, p. 447.
outfitting the Saints on their projected journey.\textsuperscript{38}

Anti-Mormon depredations became so violent during the winter that the Council had to alter its original plans of moving away in the spring. As a result, January saw the last preparations of the Council for sending the first companies of Saints on their way. Under the date of January 13, 1846, Brigham Young, in his MS history, recorded that "A council was held in the Temple."

The captains of fifties and tens made reports of the number in their respective companies, who were prepared to start west immediately, should the persecutions of our enemies compel us to do so: one hundred and forty horses and seventy wagons were reported ready for immediate service.\textsuperscript{39}

Six days later Hosea recorded that another meeting of the Council had been held in the temple at which time again the problem of emigration was discussed and the captains of the different companies were asked to prepare as many of their men to start for the West as could without leaving their families to suffer.\textsuperscript{40} On February 4, flatboats and skiffs took the first company of Saints across the Mississippi. Significantly enough, Charles Shumway, a member of the Council of Fifty was

\textsuperscript{38}\textit{Ibid.}, pp. 454-455.

\textsuperscript{39}\textit{DHC}, VII, 567. Hosea Stout identifies this council as the Council of Fifty. In a diary entry dated January 13, 1846 (II, 123), Stout records that he "went . . . to the Temple at ten o'clock and met with the Council of Fifty. This is the first time which ever I met with that Council. The subject of our removal West was discussed & I was well entertained."

\textsuperscript{40}\textit{Ibid.}, p. 127.
the first to cross the river. 41

But if the Council of Fifty had launched the exodus, its work did not end here. According to Benjamin F. Johnson, the Council directed "all general movements relating to our exodus as a people from Nauvoo." 42 In order to effectively direct this gigantic task, the Council of Fifty effected several reorganizations of the "camp of Israel." 43 John D. Lee and William Clayton record frequent meetings of the Council in tents and temporary shelters along the way. 44 In these meetings the Council deliberated on the best route to be taken by the Saints, voted that the Nauvoo temple be sold for 200,000 dollars, met with Colonel Kane and deliberated on reports from England which seemed to augur well for a settlement of the British Saints on Vancouver Island. 45 During the trip, the entire Council assembled only rarely, if at all. John D. Lee's dia-

41 Roberts, III, 40, Comprehensive History. A few days later the river froze, thus enabling the Saints to cross on the ice.

42 Johnson to Gibbs, pp. 22-23.

43 Professor Andrus p. 73, has noted three organizational changes during the initial stages of the exodus: (1), at Sugar Creek, nine miles from Nauvoo; (2), Richardson's point, 35 miles from Nauvoo and (3), Chariton River. For a more detailed account of the exodus see Ibid., pp. 67-86. Dr. Andrus, however, in failing to consult the journals of William Clayton, has missed some interesting and significant activities of the Council of Fifty.

44"Diaries and Official Records of John D. Lee, 1846" (typed MS from originals, Brigham Young University Library), pp. 103, 104, 110, 163; Clayton, pp. 40, 202.

ries, especially, indicate that for the most part, only groups of the Council met along the way to discuss certain phases of the western movement. At Winter Quarters, however, several meetings of the whole Council were convened. The importance of these meetings is illustrated by the fact that Brigham Young sent a special express message to George Miller and James Emmett who had encamped at Ponca Village, about 150 miles from Winter Quarters, to attend the Council.\textsuperscript{46} It was in these meetings of the Council of Fifty that final plans were made for the trip to the Great Basin. Most likely changes of previous plans of the Council were also discussed, caused by the formation of the Mormon Battalion during the summer of 1846.

B. H. Roberts has shown long ago that the enlistment of this Battalion, contrary to popular belief, was neither a "demand" nor "requisition" nor "draft" of the United States government. Rather, a contingent much larger than 500 men was actually offered the administration by the Mormons "and the service was almost piteously pleaded for" by Jesse C. Little, representative of the Saints in Washington.\textsuperscript{47} The records of George Miller and Benjamin F. Johnson, as quoted by Dr. Andrus, clearly show that the Council of Fifty was the prime mover to get the Battalion organized.\textsuperscript{48} Recalled Benjamin F. Johnson:

\begin{itemize}
\item \textsuperscript{46}Miller, \textit{... Northern Islander}, p. 35.
\item \textsuperscript{47}DHC, VII, 612-613.
\item \textsuperscript{48}Andrus, pp. 81-82, who quotes Miller, \textit{A Mormon Bishop...}, p. 24, and Johnson to Gibbs, pp. 22-23.
\end{itemize}
To show you that I did know the motive of President Young in sending the Battalion, I will say, that I was one of that special council organized by the Prophet, of which I have written... The arrival of Colonel Little and company at Garden Grove, with the requisition, by count for five hundred volunteers for the American Army... was well understood at the time, as the subject was fully ventilated by the Council.49

But if this was the case, it is somewhat difficult to understand why a member of the Council of Fifty would at first become indignant at the request for the Battalion and consider it a plot against the Mormons by the government. "I confess that my feelings was uncommonly wrought up against them," recorded Hosea Stout in his diary.50 Again, the most logical explanation would be that not all important Council decisions were made by all the members.

Having thus to deliberate on many important policy decisions, the Council of Fifty could not well attend to all the administrative details resulting from such a mass exodus. Consequently, when the Saints reached the vicinity of Council Bluffs, a "Municipal High Council,"

consisting of 12 men appointed who were endowed with all the powers of a High Council of the church and also the powers a common council of a municipality and hence all the Legislative powers both political and ecclesiastical centered in them...

49Johnson to Gibbs, pp. 22-23.

50Stout, II, 253-254. Earlier, when Stout (II, 232-233) had found out about the war against Mexico he recorded: "I confess that I was glad to learn of war against the United States and was in hopes that it might never end until they were entirely destroyed for they had driven us into the wilderness & was now laughing at our calamities."

51Ibid., p. 280.
Nevertheless, in keeping with the policy of interlocking directorships, four members of this Council, including the president, were members of the Council of Fifty.

The relationship of the Council of the Twelve and the Council of Fifty during the exodus presents somewhat of a problem. If the Council of Fifty was a policy-making body, there seems to have been some overlapping of jurisdiction with the Council of the Twelve, whose authority, especially at Winter Quarters, seems to have been primary and final. Hosea Stout records that the Municipal High Council was to "act under the jurisdiction of the Twelve of course."52 It should be remembered, however, that the "Twelve" were also members of the Council of Fifty. Thus, the events of the exodus seem to substantiate the idea that a complete separation of spiritual and temporal authority under the Kingdom of God was practically impossible. This point is further illustrated by the fact that the revelation concerning the "Journeyings of Israel," received by Brigham Young in January of 1847, "was first laid before the Council as a revelation to the church and acknowledged by the Council of Fifty. The revelation was then presented to the First Presidency of the seventies and so on down and acknowledged."53

Special religious rites performed during the trip also reveal the theocratic nature of the Council of Fifty. Wil-

52 Ibid.
53 Journals of John D. Lee 1846-47 and 1859, p. 53.
William Clayton, in his journal, mentions two ceremonial gatherings of the group, one on Saturday, May 30, 1846 and the other exactly a year later, on Sunday, May 30, 1847. The 1847 meeting was conducted by seventeen of the eighteen members of the Council of Fifty who accompanied the first group of Saints to the Salt Lake Valley. It must have been somewhere in Wyoming that

... all the members of the council of the K. of G. in the camp except brother Thomas Bullock, went unto the bluffs and selecting a small, circular, level spot surrounded by bluffs and out of sight, we clothed ourselves in the priestly garments and offered up prayer to God for ourselves, this camp and all pertaining to it, the brethren in the army, our families and all the Saints, President Young being mouth. We all felt well and glad for this privilege. ... Albert Carrington and Porter Rockwell. ... having no clothing with them, stood guard at a little distance from us to prevent interruption.

When the courageous group reached the Valley of the Great Salt Lake it was only fitting that the first men to view the future Kingdom were two members of that Council which had organized the Exodus and had brought its first stage to a successful completion.

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54 Clayton, pp. 40, 202. The fact that the two meetings were held exactly a year apart, one on a Saturday, the other on a Sunday, would suggest that May 30 may have had special significance to the Council. No special even in church history however, can be traced to that date except that on May 30, 1845, the murderers of Joseph Smith were acquitted.


57 Orson Pratt and Erastus Snow.
CHAPTER VI

THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE KINGDOM
IN THE MOUNTAINS, 1847-1851

As a transplanter of people the Council of Fifty had done its job well. This completion of its original mission left the Council free to assume other responsibilities consistent with the purpose of its organization. Having established the Saints in the Great Basin of the Rocky Mountains, the Council was presented with a singular opportunity for organizing, the government of God without Gentile interference. Biblical prophecy seemed to augur well for the establishment of the Kingdom. Earlier Mormon exegesis had interpreted Isaiah's prediction, "that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains,"1 rather metaphorically, insisting that "it should be in the center of the land."2 Now, Isaiah's prophecy and that of Daniel, which referred to the Kingdom of God as a stone "cut out of the mountain,"3 could be interpreted literally. An editorial in

1Isa. 2:2-3.  
2DHC, VI, 318-319.  
3Dan. 2:45.
the Millennial Star declared: "The nucleus of the mightiest nation that ever occupied the earth is at length established in the very place where the prophets, wrapt in sacred vision, have long since foreseen it."\(^4\) Orson Pratt, who applied himself to the task of exegesis, showed that the government of God would have to originate "in a high place of mountainous region."\(^5\) Parley P. Pratt, in his "Standard and Ensign for the People" address, declared that

. . . the kingdom of God is nigh at hand; we may then begin to look around for it. We must not look to Russia, or to England, to become this kingdom, but to the smallest of the governments of the world . . . Where must we look for it? In the very spot it has room to grow, and in its smallness be overshadowed with weeds and plants of other kinds; so we must look for its organization, establishment, and development in some country where that little few compose the majority, and should rule. Now with these great characteristics, and plain directions, which any man can gather from the Bible, we need not look to any other place where we may find this kingdom. Then among the Saints right here, where they compose the majority, where there is another larger government, where they are hemmed in with mountains, and can establish peace, and a kingdom, and a government, and a law.\(^6\)

Speaking at the Tabernacle in July, 1855, Brigham Young told his listeners that the Kingdom of God was "actually organized and the inhabitants of the earth do not know it."\(^7\) The government of this Kingdom in Utah had been formed immediately after the Council of Fifty had completed its task of directing the exodus.

\(^4\)Millennial Star, XIX (1857), 630.
\(^5\)Orson Pratt, Latter-day Kingdom, p. 117.
\(^6\)J. D., I (1854), 181-182
\(^7\)Ibid., II (1855), 310.
1. The High Council as the First Regulator of Temporal Affairs

The first government in the Valley, however, was organized along the lines of the temporal government established at Winter Quarters. Before Brigham Young and other members of the Council of Fifty left for the East, it was decided that "Uncle" John Smith, who was expected to arrive with the next company, should preside over ecclesiastical and temporal affairs in the new settlement. When President Young met Smith and the west-bound company at South Pass, the organization of the first authority in the Valley was effected, at least on paper. John Smith carried a letter, signed by Brigham Young, with him to the Salt Lake Valley which nominated him as presiding officer:

It is wisdom that certain officers should exist among you, to preside during our absence, and we would nominate John Smith to be your president, with liberty for him to select his two councilors, and we would suggest the names of Chas. C. Rich and John Young. We would nominate Henry C. Sherwood, Thos. Grover, Levi Jackman, John Murdock, Daniel Spencer, Stephen Abbott, Ira Eldredge, Edison Whipple, Shadrach Roundy, John Vance, Willard Snow, and Abraham O. Smoot for a High Council; whose duty it will be to observe those principles which have been instituted in the Stakes of Zion for the government of the Church, and to pass such laws and ordinances as shall be necessary for the peace and prosperity of the city for the time being, if such there need be, though we trust few or none will be necessary; for you have had line upon line, and precept upon precept, and know what is right; and our motto is, 'Every person do their duty.'

Young's suggestions were carried out to the letter. On October 3, 1847, the settlers installed the proposed officers; Charles C. Rich became military commander, John Van Cott, marshal, and Albert Carrington, clerk, historian, and deputy postmaster.

Journal History, September 9, 1847.
Of this group Smith, Rich, Spencer, Snow, Roundy, and Carrington were members of the Council of Fifty. According to Dr. Andrus, John Young became a member the following year. This High Council functioned as an executive, judicial and legislative body until the fall of 1848. By that time, Brigham Young and most of the Council of Fifty had permanently settled in the Valley and began to assume general direction of temporal affairs, although the High Council was not formally relieved of municipal duties until January 6, 1849.

2. Provisional Government under the Council of Fifty

In the light of the activities of the Council of Fifty, previous views on the origin of government in the Great Basin will have to be modified. Mormon theocratic government was not merely an "emergency exercise of jurisdiction and direction . . . literally thrust upon [the Church] . . . and . . . entirely explainable in terms of the existing crisis." Rather, this

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9Ibid., January 20, 1849; Andrus, p. 89.

10Morgan, p. 77. Morgan, unaware of the existence of the Council of Fifty, remarks that "It is not clear how far these acts proceeded from the High Council after the return of Brigham Young. The L.D.S. archives are not very illuminating, for Council 'continued as a designation after January 6, 1849, just as it had before that date, when it was voted that the High Council be relieved of municipal duties.' It is possible that 'council' came to have a more restricted meaning, perhaps referring to Brigham Young and a small circle of advisers (more particularly the Quorum of the Twelve)." Ibid., p. 78. It is now clear that this "council" was the Council of Fifty.

government apparently was carefully planned under the direction of the Council of Fifty. Later, when a purely civil government threatened to encroach upon the theocracy, serious difficulties resulted. If it seemed church policy "to curtail or even to withdraw from the performance of several of its assumed political functions," such a withdrawal was limited to the extremely thin line which separated the Council of Fifty from the Church.

It is somewhat difficult to determine exactly when the Council of Fifty took over the reins of government. The first record of a Council of Fifty meeting in the Salt Lake Valley is found in the diaries of John D. Lee. An entry on December 9, 1848 states that "The council of Y T F I F again met at the House of H. C. Kimbals," thus suggesting previous meetings in Salt Lake City. Unfortunately the section of the diary mentioning such earlier meetings is missing. The existing portion of this diary begins abruptly with an undated entry referring to the Council of Fifty with allusions to previous references to the Council.

Dale Morgan suggests that a "council" (now identified as the Council of Fifty), organized itself into a legislature even before the formal establishment of the State of Deseret.

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12Ibid.
13Lee, Mormon Chronicle, I, 80. [My Italics]
14Ibid. The diary begins: "This council aluded too is the Municipal department of the Kingdom of God . . ." 
15Morgan, p. 79; Andrus, pp. 91-109.
Exactly when this organization took place is difficult to determine but must have occurred in one of the meetings alluded to but not recorded in the existing part of Lee's diary. The legislative functions of the Council of Fifty during the winter of 1848-49 and the following spring are suggested (1) by the language in which Lee couches his diary entries on Council of Fifty meetings and (2) by the nature of the business transacted by the Council. Lee mentions frequent "conventions" of the Council and records that he "met in a Legislative capacity with the Council of Fifty;" in another meeting he designates the organization as a "Legislative Council" or Legislation Council;" matters are discussed before the "House"; "committees" handle various aspects of government.16 The idea that the Council of Fifty functioned as a legislature before the organization of "Deseret" is also supported by Hosea Stout who recorded that on February 25, 1849, "several ordinances were read which were passed yesterday by the Legislative Council . . ."17

If the Council, in theory, was to be the nucleus for a world government under the auspices of the Kingdom of God, it served a much more specific and practical purpose in early Utah. For more than a decade the Saints had to struggle for mere survival, and if some theorizing took place in occasional Council meetings and conference sermons, the ordinances and

16Lee, Mormon Chronicle, I, 86-105.

17Stout, IV, 47; that this Legislative Council was identical with the Council of Fifty is corroborated by Lee, Mormon Chronicle, I, 94-96.
legislative acts of the Council show that at least in the early
days notions of universal government had to give way to the
more pressing needs of wresting the means of existence from a
hostile environment. It was the Council of Fifty which regu-
lated the distribution of land, determined water rights, grant-
ed mill privileges, discussed the appropriateness of price con-
trol measures in the face of inflation, and legislated stray
pen laws to keep the cattle under control. The Council dis-
patched members to operate ferries which sped immigration of
the Saints and selected plots for a cemetery.\textsuperscript{18} It ruled that
persons discovered riding a horse or mule which did not belong
to them would be fined "not less than 25 dollars for each of-
fense, and all damage, one half to the Public Treasury, the
other to the complainant."\textsuperscript{19} Concerned with public safety,
the Council of Fifty passed an ordinance appointing a committee
of three to organize the Nauvoo Legion.\textsuperscript{20} The Council also
voted to build an arsenal. In charge of public works, the
Council decided that a public revenue should be raised in or-
der to erect bridges, construct roads, and for other public
purposes. The amount of tax on all property was to be one per-
cent. John D. Lee reports Brigham Young as saying that "at
no time since the rise of this church has money ever been So
Plenty as at this time, & that he would rather raise the Tax

\textsuperscript{18}Lee, Mormon Chronicle, I, 80-109.
\textsuperscript{19}Ibid., I, 96.
\textsuperscript{20}Journal History, March 9, 1849; Andrus, p. 94.
to 1½ per ct., then to reduce it to ½ per ct. . . ."21 Albert Carrington was appointed assessor, collector and treasurer and was admonished to use his discretion in assessing the taxes. "... pin down upon the rich & porcurious 22" he was told, "but when approaching a poor man or a widow that is honest, instead of Taxing them, give them a few 'dollars'."22

During the winter of 1848-49, food was extremely scarce, and it became the Council's responsibility to ascertain the amount of bread-stuffs available in the valley and assure equitable distribution. John D. Lee reports that on February 9, the Council of Y T F I F met agreeable to adjournment. The Meeting having been duly opened, the several committe reported favor [table]. The comity on the situation of the camp of Iseral relative to provisions reported a little over three fourths of a pound of Bread stuff to each person per day, over one year old, till the 9th of July, 1849; & to 4,000 souls 1,100 Milk cows; & doubtless there is more grain in the valley then what has been given in. Pres. B. Young Said that we are Safe; still he Said that he was not disappointed, for he believed all the while that corn was not so scarce as many expected, & that there is at least on lb. to each person per day at this time, & if those that have do not sell to those that have not, we will just take it & distribute among the Poors, & those that have & will not divide willingly May be thankful that their Heads are not found wallowing in the Snow.23

With all these measures far removed from ideas of world government such ideas, nevertheless, still seem to have existed in the heads of at least some members of the Council. When Albert Carrington, chairman of the committee on weights and measures, reported that after an examination of different sys-

21Lee, Mormon Chronicle, I, 89.
22Ibid.
23Ibid., I, 88.
tems the French standard seemed to be the "most correct and simple, . . . C. P. Lott said that he was entirely opposed to adopting the System of any Nation, that we should be a parson [pattern] to the world instead of our following their rules, weights & measurs." But common sense seems to have prevailed when President Young proposed that the weights and measures be arranged in "the most easy, simple, plain System that could be had."  24

The Council even deliberated on sending mail to the Pacific Coast to establish contact with the California Saints. John D. Lee records that "Amasa Lyman & O. P. Rockwell be del-
[elided] gated to select a company of 30 men & Go through with the Mail, teaching the Brethren what to do & read the Epistle to them; & gather up Tithing."  25

Important, even in this early period, were the Council's functions as a colonizing agent. The Saints had been in the Valley for less than two years when the Council of Fifty decided to send some thirty families to colonize Utah valley. Council members under the direction of Brigham Young himself would likely accompany the group and select the site of settlement; so records John D. Lee.  26

The judicial function of the Council of Fifty during this early period, obvious in the true title of the organization, "... judgment in the hands of his servants,"  27 is most

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27Minutes of the Council of Fifty, April 10, 1880.
vividly illustrated in the case of Ira West, Thomas Byres and others, to whom reference was made in a Council of Fifty meeting on March 3, 1849. Lee records Brigham Young speaking as follows:

Then can the members of this council suffer their sympathy to arise to the extant that mercy will Rob Justice of its claims, Suffering infernals, thieves, Murderers, Whoremongers & every other wicked curse to exist, through mercy to live among us, adding sin to sin, crime to crime, currupting the morals of the People when their Blood ought to flow to atone for their crimes. I want their cursed heads to be cut off that they may atone for their Sins, that mercy may have her claims upon them in the day of redemption.28

On the following day, the matter was discussed in more detail.

The first business before House was the case of Ira E. West. The council all agreed that he had forfeited his Head, but the difficulty was how he should be disposed of. Some were of the opinion that to execute him Publicly, under the traditions of the People, would not be safe; but to dispose of him privately would be the most practicable, & would result in the greatest good. The People would know that he was gone, in some strange manner, & that would be all they could suggest, but fear would take hold of them & they would tremble for fear it would be thire time next. Others thought to appoint a Supreme Judge & twelve counsellors or a Jury of twelve men, to try criminals offenses in Public, & pass Sentences upon them; that it would meet the entire approbation of the community at large, for it would be in accordance with the gentiles' customs of the Land; . . . .29

The confusion of procedure suggests that the circumstance and the procedure decided upon may have been precedental.

These discussions are obvious allusions to the doctrine of blood atonement, the administration of which the Council apparently considered to fall within its jurisdiction. According to this doctrine certain offenses, such as murder and adult-

tery, were so serious that the atonement of Christ was thought to be effective in behalf of the offenders only if their blood was shed. The doctrine was taught with special fervor during the Reformation of 1856-57 by Jedediah Grant, a member of the Council of Fifty. In a sermon in Salt Lake City Grant declared:

I say, that there are men and women that I would advise to go to the President immediately, and ask him to appoint a committee to attend to their case; and then let a place be selected, and let that committee shed their blood.

... I would ask how many covenant breakers there are in this city and in this kingdom. I believe that there are a great many; and if they are covenant breakers we need a place designated, where we can shed their blood.

... And you who have committed sins that cannot be forgiven through baptism, let your blood be shed, and let the smoke ascend, that the incense therof may come up before God as an atonement for your sins, and that the sinners in Zion may be afraid.30

But if blood atonement found frequent mention, especially in anti-Mormon literature, no case where the doctrine was actually administered can be documented.31 In the case of West and Byres, President Young, although declaring that they had "forfeited their heads and shall lose them," finally decided to let the case rest until state officers were installed.32 This decision indicates that Young apparently was aware of the

30J.D., IV (1857), 49-51

31For a more detailed account of blood atonement, especially during the Reformation, see Gustive Larson, "The Mormon Reformation," Utah Historical Quarterly, XXVI (1958), 60-63. Larson (Ibid., p. 62) cites "a verbally reported case of a Mr. Johnson in Cedar City who was found guilty of adultery with his stepdaughter by a bishop's court and sentenced to death for atonement of his sin. According to the report of the reputable eyewitnesses, judgment was executed with the consent of the offender who went to his unconsecrated grave in full confidence of salvation through the shedding of his blood."
extra-legal character of his "legislature." This situation was remedied by the Council of Fifty itself, which had set March 12, 1849 as the date for the election of state officers.\textsuperscript{33}

3. Establishment of the State of Deseret

Various alternatives for the establishment of a legal government had been discussed by Brigham Young and leaders of the Council of Fifty even before most of its members had arrived in the Valley. When the Mormons left Nauvoo, the Great Basin was Mexican territory, a fact of which the Saints were not ignorant. But persecution had embittered the Mormons against the government of the United States, which was held responsible for failure to help the Saints obtain redress of grievances for the wrongs inflicted in Missouri and Illinois.\textsuperscript{33} If removal to the Great Basin meant the establishment of an independent government, this was not the first time that the Mormons had considered such a possibility.\textsuperscript{33} Nevertheless, in 1848 the Saints were also considering possible affiliation with the United States even before they were informed of the final Status of the Great Basin. On June 28, 1848, George A. Smith and Ezra T. Benson wrote to Brigham Young:

\textbf{... If ...} you find it wisdom to petition Congress for annexation as a state in the American union or for Territorial privileges, send the petition to us by some of the brethren coming from your place next fall, or as soon as is convenient, and if you do, we would suggest the appointment of a delegate to Congress, with credentials of his election by the people as the bearer of this petition. If the petition was favorably received he might be admit-

\textsuperscript{33}Journal History, March 4, 1849.
ted to the floor of the lower house; if not he would be considered the accredited agent of the people and be heard in any of the committee rooms. As the Mexican Congress has refused to ratify a treaty of peace with the U. S., which Government may finally have jurisdiction over the basin it is impossible for us at present to tell; but as we are in possession of the soil our destiny would be independence should Mexico maintain her old lines. We are not particularly in favor of either plan, but are willing to abide your better judgment, and are willing to use our humble endeavors to the utmost in carrying out any project you may desire for the establishing of the 'kingdom of God and his Laws'."34

Possible affiliation with the United States was considered an expedient that would facilitate the transaction of business with the U. S. government through Mormon agents "and thus save great expense and loss; but," declared Smith and Benson, "we go in, for once in all our life, if possible, to enjoy a breath of sweet liberty and independence."35

In a letter dated October 10, 1848, Smith and Benson again called the disadvantages of an affiliation with the United States to the attention of Brigham Young:

We are aware that you are under great difficulty for the want of a Judiciary Department through which you can do business with the United States; as no soldier can get his land warrant, extra pay or widow her pension, without a magistrate and public seat. This no doubt involves thousands of dollars which our people might have the benefit of, could they have this legal communication, but the manner which our Government treated the people of Oregon Territory was to furnish them with a set of starved office seekers, hungry for a loaf from some quarter to be governor, judges and big men, irrespective of the feelings or rights of the hardy emigrants who had opened the coun-

34Journal History, June 26, 1848, as quoted in Morgan, pp. 79-80. It should be noted that the term "Kingdom of God and his Laws" is identical with the quotation in the 1880 Minutes of the Council of Fifty.

35Ibid., p. 80.
ry, made the roads, killed the snakes, etc., etc. 36
But with the ratification of the treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo earlier in the year -- news of which certainly must have reached the Mormons by October -- the establishment of the "Kingdom of God and His Laws" as an independent government became unfeasible if not impossible. According to Frederick Logan Paxson there was nothing for the Saints to do "but make the best of these facts" and seek affiliation with the Union. 37

Thus, on December 9, 1848, the Council of Fifty met \( \text{at the house of Heber C. Kimball} \) to deliberate on the advisability of petitioning Congress for a territorial government. It was agreed upon that such a government should only be requested with the understanding that the Mormons could choose their own officers. "... Should they send such men as Liburun Boggs, Neal [underline], [underline]Gilliam Benton, King, William & others," records John D. Lee, "... we would send them Cross Lotts to Hell, that dark & dreary Road where no traveler ever returns." 38 Officers nominated for the proposed territory were Brigham Young, governor; Willard Richards, secretary; Heber C. Kimball, chief judge; Newel K. Whitney and Parley P.

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36 Journal History, October 10, 1848, as quoted in Morgan, p. 80.


38 Lee, Mormon Chronicle, I, 80; Hosea Stout (IV, 36) records that on December 5, 1848 he "Went to the office and first heard of the move to petition to the Govt for a Terrl. Govt here."
Pratt, associate judges; John Bernhisel, marshall. Bernhisel, Daniel H. Wells, and Joseph L. Heywood were appointed to draft a petition to be forwarded to Congress. A committee of ten was appointed to obtain the names of all the inhabitants of the valley and the surrounding areas, to be included in the petition. The name of the territory was to be Deseret, with boundaries that carved out a sizable empire. On December 13, Brigham Young, Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards, John Taylor, John M. Bernhisel, Joseph L. Heywood, Daniel H. Wells, William W. Phelps, and Thomas Bullock went over various proposed memorials to Congress. "None were accepted except that which was dictated by Willard Richards." This entry in the Journal History is strangely at odds with John D. Lee's record, according to which Bernhisel, Wells and Heywood reported their proposed drafts for a petition to the Council on December 16, at which time the petition was further discussed and Parley P. Pratt added to the committee. According to Lee, the final form of the draft was not accepted by the Council until January 6, 1849. At that time, John M. Bernhisel was appointed to go to Washington to present the petition to Congress.

39Lee, Mormon Chronicle, I, 80-82.
40Morgan, p. 83.
41Journal History, December 13, 1848. All those attending the meeting were members of the Council of Fifty. Stout (VI, 37) records that the petition was already circulating for signatures on December 10, some time before its final approval.
42Lee, Mormon Chronicle, I, 82. 43Ibid., p. 86.
When Bernhisel finally left for the national capital on May 3, 1849, the document had grown twenty-two feet long, bearing 2270 signatures.44

But if the Saints were to wait for the inauguration of formal government until they had obtained the blessings of Washington they might have to wait a long time. Realizing this problem, and eager to organize a government incorporating the ideals of the Kingdom of God, the Saints took further steps towards the inauguration of formal government with the publication of a circular on February 1, 1849, giving notice to "all the citizens of that portion of Upper California, lying east of the Sierra Nevada Mountains that a convention will be held at the Great Salt Lake City, . . . on Monday, the fifth day of March next, for the purpose of . . . organizing a Territorial or State government."45 In keeping with this proclamation, a convention was held in Salt Lake City on March 5th. Daniel Spencer was elected chairman; William Clayton, secretary; Thomas Bullock, assistant secretary; and Horace S. Eldredge, marshal. A committee of ten was appointed to draft a constitution. The members of this committee were Albert Carrington, Joseph L. Heywood, W. W. Phelps, David Fullmer, Charles C. Rich, John Taylor, Parley P. Pratt, John M. Bernhisel, and Erastus Snow.46 Although it is difficult to determine what

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44Morgan, p. 82.
45Constitution of the State of Deseret, p. 1, as cited in Morgan, p. 84.
46Neff, p. 115.
role the Council of Fifty played in these proceedings, it should be noted that all the officers of the convention and all members of the constitutional committee were members of the Council of Fifty. The fact that the constitution was read to the re-assembled convention only three days later, on March 8th, while it apparently took a whole month to draft a petition to Congress would suggest that the constitution -- compiled in a time that would ordinarily seem incredible -- may have been framed after an already existing pattern, possibly the constitution of the Kingdom of God. 47 On Saturday, March 10, the constitution was unanimously adopted by the convention. 48

But the constitution had been adopted for only two days when it was subjected to a curious and still not fully explained violation. Article 5 of the new document provided for an election of a General Assembly, "and other officers under this Constitution," to be held "on the first Monday of May next." 49 This date conflicted strangely with a Council of Fifty decision made on March 4th, one day before the opening of the Constitutional convention, providing for an election to be held on

47 This idea is supported by a reading of the Constitution of Deseret. As mentioned previously, the constitution of the Kingdom was to be patterned after that of the United States. Article 8, "Declaration of Rights," is especially illuminating. Many passages were couched in the identical language of the U.S. Constitution and the Declaration of Independence. Special emphasis was placed on individual rights, a key doctrine of the Kingdom of God. See Constitution of the State of Deseret, in Morgan, pp. 156-163.

48 Neff, p. 115.

49 Constitution of Deseret, in Morgan, p. 160.
March 12th "for the purpose of Electing the following men to fill the different Stations in office:" Brigham Young, governor; Heber C. Kimball, chief justice; Willard Richards secretary of state; Newel K. Whitney and John Taylor, associate justices; Horace S. Eldredge, marshal; Newel K. Whitney, treasurer; Albert Carrington, assessor and collector; and a justice of the peace in each ward. W. W. Phelps, Amasa M. Lyman, John Taylor, Parley P. Pratt, and Jedediah M. Grant were appointed to "fill out the ticket for the ensuing election." On March 10th, after this group had reported back to the Council, it was "Voted that the report of the Committee, with the ticket, be received." The election came off on March 12th as planned by the Council of Fifty. "Everything," remarks Neff, "had been cut and dried, ... How to account for the duplicate procedure, and the inharmonious results is difficult to fathom, so slight is the record." One thing, however, is certain: In the light of the activities of the Council of Fifty, these irregularities refute the notion that with the birth of civil government in Utah on March 10, 1849, "the Mormon experiment in theocracy as a result passed into history."52

Rather, the activities of the Council of Fifty seem to indicate that Mormon theocracy was strengthened. The open disregard of the Council for the provision in the organic act

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51 Neff, p. 121.
52 Ibid., p. 112.
setting the election for May certainly cannot be interpreted as a sign that the Council was relinquishing some of its prerogatives. Dr. Andrus, in trying to find an explanation for the conflicting procedure, asks how it could be possible that the General Council apparently "could allow its political position to be challenged by courting the idea that popular procedures of the day could be reconciled, in the organization of Deseret, with procedural patterns inherent in their idea of government under the Kingdom of God?" 53 Andrus arrives at a partial explanation by observing "that it was not considered proper for the new government to be established through arbitrary means . . . There was no need to emphasize the theocratic aspects of the Government of God." 54 But if this was so why did the Council force through an "election" on March 12 to insure installment of its own officers? A more obvious explanation seems to be that the Council, experimenting with democratic appearances for a while, perhaps in attempt to more readily get approval for its projected State of Deseret from Washington, simply did not want to risk a possible weakening of its position through the election of outsiders. Washington might grant statehood, but the Council might not be in control.

The Council of Fifty continued in its function as an extra-legal government until the inauguration of the State of Deseret. Thus, the Council organized the already proposed

53Andrus, p. 115. 54Ibid., pp. 115-116.
Nauvoo Legion on April 28, 1849. The following officers were elected by unanimous vote: Daniel H. Wells, major general; Jedediah M. Grant, brigadier general of the first cohort; Horace S. Eldredge, brigadier general of the second cohort; John S. Fullmer, colonel of the first cohort; John Scott Colonel of the second cohort. Of these officers only John Scott may not have been a member of the Council of Fifty. Benjamin F. Johnson, Hosea Stout, and George D. Grant were some of the other officers who also belonged to the Council. The election of these officers seems to have been not a completely cut and dried procedure, for when John Pack and John D. Lee, also members of the Council of Fifty, were "nominated for Majors by regular authority" they were "hissed down" by the people."55

On July 2, 1849, the General Assembly of the State of Deseret convened for the first time. A bi-cameral legislature was organized. How the legislators received their mandate, however, is difficult to determine. At the election on March 12, 655 votes were cast for state officers, but no record of an election for the legislature has so far been found. As mentioned previously, at least one of the legislators was himself mystified by what procedure he had received his mandate.56

This mystery is partly cleared up by Benjamin F. Johnson, who recalled that the Council of Fifty became the legislature of the State of Deseret.57 This assertion is partly supported

55Stout, IV, 63. 56Ibid., 78. 57Johnson to Gibbs, p.23.
by a comparison of the rolls of the legislature with membership lists of the Council of Fifty. Such a check, however, reveals that not all members of the new government belonged to the Council. Johnson's memory may have been dimmed somewhat by time. Still, the executive department was made up entirely of Council of Fifty members; all positions on the judiciary, likewise, were filled by the Council. Of the 16 officers and members of the Senate, at least 13 belonged to the Council of Fifty. In the House the Council did not quite hold the balance of power, at least not numerically. Of 29 officers and members only 14 belonged to the Council. The delegate to Congress, Almon Babbitt, likewise held a seat in the Council of the Kingdom. All told, at least 34 out of 52 members of the new government belonged to the Council of Fifty.58 There seems to be no question, however, that the Council, holding all the key positions, was in complete control. The formal establishment of the State of Deseret, then, was little more than a de jure confirmation of a de facto situation.

The new legislature did not convene for its first true legislative session until December, 1849. At this session the only ordinance passed was to give a more official status to the Nauvoo Legion, organized by the Council of Fifty earlier in the year.59 Following the precedent of the Council of Fifty

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58 See Appendix

59 Laws and Ordinances of the State of Deseret, as quoted in Morgan, p. 167.
the legislature held this session and subsequent meetings in Heber C. Kimball's schoolroom. Because the legislative actions of the General Assembly were studied in detail by Dale Morgan, there is no need to repeat them here, 60 with the exception of an ordinance passed on January 16, 1851, for the establishment of Probate Courts. 61 The exact relationship of these courts to the Council of Fifty cannot be determined, but a combination of facts seems to indicate that the Probate Courts acted as the extended arm of the Council of Fifty, administering the Kingdom of God on a local level. The Probate Judge himself had the greatest direct influence on county government. It was his duty to choose the first officers of the county. In many ways, the duties of the Probate Judge were comparable to those of a county commissioner. His position was non-elective, subject to appointment by the legislature and the Governor. Since both these branches of government, at least in the State of Deseret, were controlled by the Council of Fifty, it seems only logical to assume that the appointment of the Probate Judges was controlled by that Council. Later, under territorial administration, the Probate Courts also assumed criminal jurisdiction to fill a temporary void created by the departure of the "runaway judges." But even after the anti-Mormons had

60 Morgan, pp. 96-113. A reprint of the Constitution and the ordinances of the State of Deseret are found Ibid., pp. 156-231.

61 "An Ordinance, for establishing Probate Courts, and defining the duties thereof," as quoted in Morgan, p. 211; also Stout, IV, 136.
been replaced by more sympathetic judges, the Mormons refused to relinquish their position of power to the district courts. Not until 1874, with the passing of the Poland Act, did the Mormons lose this significant tool for controlling the political Kingdom. 62

The fusion of Church and state under Deseret is further revealed by an act of the General Assembly passed on September 14, 1850 which granted legal status to the Perpetual Emigrating Company. As mentioned previously, the doctrine of the "gathering" was especially significant for the establishment of the temporal Kingdom. Deseret, the Saints believed with some justification, had become the permanent abode of the Kingdom, at least until the nations of the earth would be destroyed. By then, the Kingdom was to attain considerable power. People were needed to achieve this end. As a result, the doctrine of the "gathering" was strongly emphasized during the early period of the history of the Church in Utah. The Council of Fifty had directed the exodus. Thus, it was only logical that it should continue in its role of transplanting the elect to the new Zion. When, in September of 1849, Brigham Young "proposed the creation of a revolving fund for the purpose of helping the poor to reach Salt Lake," 63 a committee to raise the necessary sum was appointed, consisting of Willard Snow, John S.


63 Larson, Prelude to the Kingdom, p. 106.
Fullmer, Lorenzo Snow, John D. Lee, and Franklin D. Richards. Significantly enough, all of these men were members of the Council of Fifty. On September 7, 1850, Willard Snow, Edward Hunter and Daniel Spencer were appointed to direct the operations of the rotating fund, now named Perpetual Emigrating Fund. It was further decided to organize the fund into a company. On September 11th, "Daniel H. Wells presented a bill for an ordinance to incorporate the Perpetual Emigrating Poor Fund Company, which was read and accepted and referred to a select committee of five, namely: D. H. Wells, G. A. Smith, P. P. Pratt, W. Snow, and E. T. Benson."64 Three days later, as already mentioned, the company was chartered by the State of Deseret. This act of incorporation was confirmed and amended by the Territorial Legislature on October 4, 1851 and on January 12, 1856.65 On September 15, 1850, officers of the company were elected at a special conference of the Church. Six names were presented as candidates for the directorship; but since all six candidates were members of the Council of Fifty, this democratic gesture did not place the Council's prospects of leadership in jeopardy.66

Brigham Young was chosen President, with the following

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64 *Deseret News*, I (September 1850), 112.


66 The six candidates were Brigham Young, George A. Smith, Daniel H. Wells, Willard Richards, John Smith, and Newel K. Whitney (Larson, *Prelude to the Kingdom*, p. 127).
assistants, Heber C. Kimball, Willard Richards, Newel K. Whitney, Orson Hyde, George A. Smith, Ezra T. Benson, Jedediah M. Grant, Daniel H. Wells, John Brown, William Crosby, Amasa Lyman, Charles C. Rich, Lorenzo D. Young, Parley P. Pratt. At a subsequent meeting the company completed its organization as follows: Willard Richards, Secretary; Newel K. Whitney, Treasurer; Thomas Bullock, Recorder. Upon the death of Whitney soon thereafter, Daniel Spencer succeeded him as Treasurer. Orson Hyde, Orson Pratt, Franklin D. Richards and John Brown were appointed travelling agents for the company.67

John Brown, William Crosby and Lorenzo Young are the only men in this group whose membership in the Council of Fifty cannot be verified.

The activities of the Council of Fifty, then, make it obvious that the fusion of church and state continued under the State of Deseret, confirming Captain Stansbury's observation on this point:

While there are all the external evidences of a government strictly temporal, it cannot be concealed that it is so intimately blended with the Church that it would be impossible to separate one from the other. This intimate connection of the church and state seems to pervade everything that is done. The supreme power in both being lodged in the hands of the same individuals, it is difficult to separate their two official characters and to determine whether in any one instance they act as spiritual or merely temporal officers.68

Had Stansbury been fully aware of the hopes and dreams of the Saints, he might have added that this theocratic form of government represented the most complete realization of the Kingdom of God on earth the Saints had yet experienced.69

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67Ibid., p. 115.


69The perspective of history reveals that Deseret was the most complete realization of the political Kingdom the Saints would ever experience.
4. The Establishment of Territorial Government

The Kingdom was not to enjoy this relative independence and complete harmony between church and state very long. Brigham Young and the Council, as realists, realized that the time for a completely independent Kingdom of God obviously had not yet arrived. It will be remembered that already in December of 1848 the Council of Fifty had initiated steps to gain territorial recognition for the new settlement. Bernhisel had left for Washington the following May. But with the organization of the State of Deseret President Young and the Council apparently thought that the establishment of a state might have some chances in Congress. On July 19 Brigham Young wrote Orson Hyde at Kanesville:

Since the Dr. has left we have continued to agitate this subject of statehood until it has resulted as you will perceive by accompanying documents into a regular state organization. We could not well await the tardy operations of the Federal Government without adopting some form suited to our present necessities, and had in part adopted our present form before our last communication to you.

We have now completed our organization so far as to elect a delegate with whom we expect your co-operation in obtaining our admission as a sovereign and independent state into the Union upon an equal footing with the original states.70

This letter reveals that Brigham Young apparently realized that the doctrine of States' Rights, which had worked to the detriment of the Saints in Missouri and Illinois, could be used to

70Journal History, July 19, 1849, as quoted in Morgan, p. 90. The General Assembly had met on July 3rd and passed a resolution to "memorialize the Congress of the United States, for a State, or Territorial Government." Morgan, pp. 88-89.
great advantage in the establishment of the political Kingdom of God in the mountains. The clauses "sovereign and Independent" had much greater significance before the introduction of the Civil War amendments into the Constitution. Had Deseret achieved statehood, the political control of the Council of Fifty would no doubt have continued with little outside interference. Apparently with such hopes in mind, Almon Babbitt was sent to Washington to reverse Bernhisel's policy and direct every effort towards the recognition of Statehood for Deseret.71

Babbitt's mission, however, was not to be successful although Mormon antagonism in Congress at this time was negligible. But the sectional controversy over slavery worked just as effectively to frustrate Mormon ambitions. Failure of an effort to attach the Wilmot proviso to the organic act lost the Saints the support of most northern Congressmen. To the government which the Mormons finally received they owed a rather dubious gratitude to Southerners and Northern advocates of popular sovereignty.72 In a special message to the General Assembly on March 8, 1851, President Young summarized the

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71 In the light of these events Leland Creer's recent interpretation ("The Evolution of Government in Early Utah," *Utah Historical Quarterly*, XXVI (1958), 37) that the Saints petitioned for a territorial government because they seemed to be "mistrustful of their application for a sovereign state government being favorably received" will have to be reversed.

achievements of the State of Deseret which, for the most part, would have to be credited to the Council of Fifty:

"... whatever may be the career and destiny of the YOUNG but growing Republic, we can ever carry with us the proud satisfaction of having erected, established, and maintained a peaceful, quiet, yet energetic government, under the benign auspices of which, unparalleled prosperity has showered her blessings upon every interest."

A month later, on April 5th, the legislature of Deseret voted for its own dissolution.

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73*Deseret News*, March 8, 1851, as quoted in Morgan, p. 112.
CHAPTER VII

THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND THE COUNCIL OF FIFTY DURING THE TERRITORIAL GOVERNMENT, 1851-1890

If one brief chapter will suffice to discuss the activities of the Council of Fifty over a period of forty-five years, such brevity, while lamentable, cannot be avoided because of an almost complete lack of sources. John D. Lee's diary entries in 1849 contain the last direct references to the Council of Fifty for over a decade. In 1862 Brigham Young makes a significant allusion to this Council in a private speech to the "ghost legislature" of Deseret; and in 1868 Abraham O. Smoot makes another brief reference to the Council of Fifty in a meeting of the School of the Prophets. From then on the records remain silent until 1880, when the diaries and letter-books of L. John Nuttall lift the secrecy ever so slightly. In combination with a membership list and a fragmentary copy of minutes of the Council, also dated 1880, these records give us the most significant glimpse of the Council since 1849. The gap during the intervening period can only be filled if the historian resorts to conjecture and circumstantial evidence. Most of this evidence will
have to be based on a comparison of membership lists of the Council of Fifty -- which can be reconstructed between 1847 and 1849 and which are supported by the 1880 list --: with the rosters of various political, ecclesiastical and economic organizations. Such a comparison reveals that a significant percentage of these organizations had members of the Council of Fifty in leading and controlling positions. A detailed investigation of all such positions held by members of this Council, however, goes beyond the scope of this study. In this chapter only a few significant organizations and their membership will be investigated to suggest the influence of the Council.

Another important source of circumstantial evidence can be found in the anti-Mormon literature which originated in the territory during this period. Although anti-Mormon invective usually overshot its mark and seriously misinterpreted Mormon aspirations and activities, an examination of these documents will show that, after allowance has been made for distortions, the writers of these pamphlets were at times closer to the truth than even they themselves possibly suspected. Nevertheless, it is impossible with the presently available sources to reconstruct a complete framework of the political Kingdom of God during this period. The discovery

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1A biographical study of each member of the Council of Fifty in relationship to the influence he exerted in his respective community, political, economic, religious, civic, and cultural, should prove very enlightening.
of additional sources may significantly alter the present interpretation.

The manner in which territorial government was inaugurated suggests that the Council of Fifty apparently expected that the change in governments would be little more than a change of labels. If the new government could operate without Gentile interference, little would be lost, and affiliation with the United States would only be step forward. After the organic act creating the new territory was signed by President Fillmore on September 9, 1850, John M. Bernhisel exerted all his efforts to secure appointment of his suggested list of territorial officers, all of whom were Mormons. His influence with President Fillmore, however, did not prove sufficient. When news of the approval of the organic act reached Salt Lake City on January 27, 1851, the Mormons were disappointed to find that the Chief Justice, two associate justices, and the Secretary of the Territory were to be non-Mormons.

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2Roberts, Comprehensive History, III, 509-510. The officers suggested by Bernhisel were: Brigham Young, governor; Willard Richards, secretary; Zerubbabel Snow, chief justice; Heber C. Kimball and Newel K. Whitney, associate justices; Seth Blair, attorney general; Joseph Heywood, marshal. Bernhisel may have been under instructions from the Council of Fifty to secure nomination from that body, if possible. In a letter to Brigham Young he explains: "I did not present the name of Mr. John Taylor because he was absent in Europe nor that of Daniel H. Wells, Esq., for United States Attorney, because I had previously ascertained that no gentleman who was not learned in the law could be appointed" (quoted in Morgan, pp. 130-131). Seth M. Blair, who received the appointment, was a Mormon, but apparently did not belong to the Council of Fifty.

3Roberts, Comprehensive History, III, 501. Officers appointed by Fillmore were Brigham Young, governor; B. D. Harris, secretary; Lemuel H. Brandebury, chief justice; Perry
But, as the Saints were to find out later, they should have been grateful that Brigham Young was appointed governor. On February 3, 1851, Daniel H. Wells, chief justice of the State of Deseret and member of the Council of Fifty, administered the oath of office to Brigham Young. Even before any of the territorial officers had arrived in the Valley, the machinery of the new government had been put in motion. A territorial census was held and preparations were made for general elections to be held August 4, 1851. Of thirty-nine legislators elected from the various counties, at least twenty were members of the Council of Fifty. Again, the upper house was made up almost entirely of Council members. The ratio of Council of Fifty members in the House of Representatives was somewhat lower than in the legislature of Deseret. Of the twenty-four members of the lower house, only nine can be positively identified as belonging to the Council of Fifty. There is a possibility, however, that other members of the legislature belonged to the Council of Fifty whose membership in this Council cannot be verified. Death apparently was the principal cause for turnover of personnel in the Council during this period. Newel K. Whitney and Cornelius P. Lott, for instance died in 1850. Who replaced these two in the Council cannot be

E. Brocchus and Zerubbabel Snow, associate justices; Seth M. Blair, U. S. attorney; Joseph L. Heywood, U. S. marshal. Of the Mormons Snow and Blair apparently did not belong to the Council of Fifty. The possibility that they were subsequently initiated into this Council cannot be verified.
determined. 4

When the federal appointees from the East arrived in the summer of 1851 they found to their perhaps a little naive amazement that territorial government was already well on its way. The celerity with which the Saints responded to their new status may be interpreted in several ways. The speedy organization of territorial government may serve as evidence that the Mormons were loyal American citizens, eager to prove their allegiance to the American Flag. The Saints may have been tired of provisional governments and may have wanted to establish a more formal government as soon as possible. These explanations, no doubt, are logical, and partly true. But it seems not unreasonable to suppose that the Council of Fifty may have thought it much easier to exert its influence on the formation of the new legislature without the supervision and interference of possibly unsympathetic Gentile members of the new government. This conjecture may serve as an added explanation for what some of the federal appointees, on their arrival, considered undue haste in the formation of the new government.

B. D. Harris, territorial secretary, insisted on the observance of all legal technicalities and refused to recognize the legislature as a legal body. 5 Harris's obstinacy,

4Stout, IV, 127. Charles C. Rich and Wilford Woodruff took the place of the deceased in the Senate of Deseret. Rich and Woodruff, however, already belonged to the Council of Fifty.

5Stout, IV, 168. Technically, Harris should have called and supervised the election.
and some unwise and tactless remarks by Judge Brocchus concerning polygamy, touched off a controversy that was to give the Mormons a first taste of the difficulties with federal officials that were to plague them for forty years. If this explosion was ultimately to bring the "twin relic" into national prominence, the immediate cause for the conflict had, nevertheless, been the suspected theocratic nature of the new government. This conflict was to take on larger proportions in the not too distant future. For the time being, however, more serious conflict was avoided by the rapid flight of the "foreign" officials from the territory.6

With the departure of the unwelcome outsiders the Saints could continue to run affairs according to their own liking. On October 4, 1851, the ordinances of the State of Deseret were legalized by a joint resolution of the legislature.7 Since the laws of Deseret had been enacted under the controlling hand of the Council of Fifty, this act insured the perpetuation of the legal measures of this organization, and serves as an added illustration of the almost complete

6For an account of the controversy over the three "run-away officials" who left Utah late in 1851 see Neff, pp. 168-177. That polygamy actually played a negligible role in this first controversy, and that the main cause of controversy, aside from the obvious lack of tact and good manners on the part of the officials, was the theocratic nature of the Mormon government is brought out in U.S., President, 1850-53 (Fillmore), Message from the President of the United States Transmitting Information in Reference to the Condition of Affairs in the Territory of Utah, 34d Cong., 1st Sess., Executive Doc. No. 25.

7Laws of Utah, 1852, p. 222.
control which the Council of Fifty exerted over the government, even under territorial jurisdiction. An examination of the legislative committees reveals that most if not all of them were controlled by the Council of Fifty. The important committee on territorial expenditures, for instance, consisted of Wilford Woodruff, Hosea Stout, and Benjamin F. Johnson, all of whom were members of this Council.8 Control of finances always has been an important source of power. The Council of Fifty used this power effectively, especially in advancing the Probate Courts over the District Courts. During the administration of Governor Cumming, when the struggle between Probate and District Courts became acute, the Mormons were able to retain power by simply failing to provide funds for the latter.9

The theocratic nature of the legislature, even under territorial administration, is suggested by John D. Lee, who attended the tenth annual session as a representative during the winter of 1857-58. Under a diary entry of January 5, 1858, Lee records: "This evening the Members of the Legislators Met at the Endowment Room & rec[eived] lectures upon clothing ourselves [in] Priestly Robes & Praying &c."10

8Stout, IV, 170.


10Lee, Mormon Chronicle, I, 142. On January 7, 1858, recorded: "At nine moring the members living at a distance Met in the Endowment Room by request of Pres. H. C. Kimble to clothe
Lee's journal, though not mentioning the Council of Fifty directly during this period, illustrates some of the responsibilities devolving upon a member of that Council in directing the affairs of the Kingdom away from the center of the Church. On January 18, 1858, for instance, the Legislative Assembly discussed a bill to organize a bank. On his return to Washington County, Lee addressed "the inhabitants of this city upon the subject of the Bank of the Kingdom of God, after which a vote was taken expressive of the feelings of the People with regard to supporting that institution." The language in which Lee couched his address suggests that while he represented the people in the territorial legislature he considered himself a legislator of the Kingdom of God. During the Utah war, Lee also served as commanding officer of the militia in Washington County. It was he who received confidential instructions, directly from Brigham Young, on the scorched earth policy as it was to be carried out in southern Utah in case of invasion. The President also requested Lee to furnish teams and wagons for the emergency. Lee was further instructed by Young: "As we Shall not Sow nor plant any more North of Utah county this Season, you will (also) See the propriety of raising all the flax, Sugar-cane, cal, Barly, corn, Potatoes & other vegetables &c. that (you) are able to." Lee & be instructed in the Prayre circle" (ibid.). Whether "members" refers to the Council of Fifty or the Legislature is not clear. Apparently there was little difference at the time.

11Ibid., 164.
12Brigham Young to John D. Lee, March 24, 1858, in Lee, Mormon Chronicle I, 156.
also served as Probate Judge, Assessor, Collector, and County Clerk. It seems only reasonable to assume that Lee's standing in the Council of Fifty may have had considerable influence on his temporal authority. In spite of this considerable power, however, Council members seem to have used it with restraint. The Council apparently had instructions to observe the law and refrain from star chamber methods. When, in 1859, the county seat was removed to Washington City, Lee had to give up his position as Probate Judge because, so he recorded, "the law requires the Judge to reside at the Co. seat & I resided at Harmony." In ecclesiastical matters Lee was as much subject to local authorities as his fellow citizens. Brigham Young, in a letter, counseled his staunch follower in some marital difficulties: "I perceive also that if time & the spirit of the Lord do not mend the breach my counsel would be unavailing or its results but temporary. Your Bishop & Prest. Haight may direct you in this matter if you feel to ask and abide their counsel." There seems to have been no set rule for a division of temporal and ecclesiastical positions in the Council. Abraham O. Smoot, another member of the Council of Fifty, served as Bishop and Stake President in Utah Valley, and at the same time represented Wasatch and Utah Counties in the legis-

13Records of Probate Court at Washington County in Lee, Mormon Chronicle I, 325.


15Young to Lee, February 1, 1857, in Lee, Mormon Chronicle I, 323.
lative assembly.16

As brought out by John D. Lee's records, the influence of the Council of Fifty clearly extended far beyond the legislative halls of the territory. Dr. Clark has suggested that the principles of interlocking directorships was worked out to the fullest extent during the territorial period. "This ... practice would allow the Council of Fifty to know what each of the various agencies of Government, civil, political, economic, and educational, were doing and to influence their decisions without having complete control of personnel."17

This concept of the function of the Council is supported by an examination of various companies in early Utah. The Deseret Express and Road Company, the Deseret Agricultural and Manufacturing Society and the Deseret Iron Company are only representative examples of organizations that had members of the Council of Fifty on their board of directors.18

The lack of information on the Council of Fifty during the 1860's apparently suggested to some scholars that the Coun-

16 Journal History, January 11, 1869, pp. 3-4. When Smoot was asked about his political affiliations, he replied that his politics were "the Kingdom of God" (Deseret News, February 19, 1868).

17 Clark, "Church and State Relationships in Education in Utah," p. 81.

18 Acts, Resolutions and Memorials passed at the Fifth Annual Session of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Utah (Great Salt Lake City, 1855), pp. 35-37, 235. Of the seventeen members of the board of the Deseret Express and Road Company, for example, at least nine belonged to the Council of Fifty.
cil may have given up some of its influence during this period. Professor Arrington, for instance, acknowledges the important role played by the Council in "shaping Mormon economic policy during the first decade in Utah,"19 but after that period, he maintains, the Council lost much of its influence. According to Arrington the School of the Prophets, when it was organized in 1867, became the immediate successor to the Council of Fifty. Dr. Arrington supports his assertion by calling attention to the detailed and large-scale economic planning instigated by the "School" as a defense against the influx of the Gentiles with the coming of the railroad in 1869.20 Council of Fifty activities, however, can definitely be documented during this period. The minutes of the School of the Prophets in Provo indicate that the "School" was largely responsible for detailed planning and for carrying out the principles of "defensive economy;" but the principle itself and some of the more important projects, these records indicate, originated with the Council of Fifty.21 Abraham O. Smoot, at a meeting of the School of Prophets, declared:

After conference the council of 50 met and while at the meeting it was proposed that we organize a Mercantile Cooperative Association - in the first place to start a wholesale store so that the necessities of the people may be supplied and not do as our merchants have in bring-

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19Arrington, p. 245.

20Ibid., pp. 245-251.

21Minutes of the Provo School of the Prophets, passim, in Provo Stake Tabernacle Records (Microfilm copy, Brigham Young University Library).
ing such things that our people want and not necessities.  Speaking at a priesthood-meeting two days later, Smoot instructed the Bishops and teachers in the same manner: "Give the Co-operative system your influence and support, it is a measure concocted by the Council of Fifty as Suggested by the President."  

The clarification of the relationship between the co-operative movement and the Council of Fifty throws some interesting light on a peculiar passage in an article on "Utah's Commerce and Co-operation," published in *Tullidge's Quarterly Magazine*:

"... the covenant of co-operation between Zion and her people is forever. The point is all deserving of historical note, for it suggests views of a vast and perfected co-operative movement of which 'Z.C.M.I.' itself is but a prophecy. Another point we will notice, very peculiar in the annals of commerce... is that the covenant is between such persons as Brigham Young, George Q. Cannon, and George A. Smith as Apostles of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints and William Jennings, William H. Hooper, Horace S. Eldredge and others, as the chief builders of the commercial and financial power of the state of community. This combination will stand as one of the most peculiar and remarkable incorporations in the history of modern societies."  

Did the writer of this article know more about this "covenant" than he was willing to let his readers know? Young, Cannon, Smith, Hooper, and Eldredge were members of the Council of Fifty at the time; Jennings was initiated into the group in 1880.

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23*Records of the Bishops' Meetings, Provo, 1868-1875* (Microfilm copy, Brigham Young University Library), October 15, 1868.

24*Tullidge's Quarterly Magazine*, I (1881), 389.
In the light of this documentary evidence Arrington's interpretation will bear revision. Rather than the originator of its own policies, the School of the Prophets seems to have been the extended arm of the Council of Fifty for carrying out the latter's program of defensive economy. The vastness of the economic program to be undertaken would support such a view. During the first decade in Utah the population was sufficiently small to allow the Council to supervise and carry out its programs in considerable detail. But during the 1860's, and especially after the coming of the railroad, the territory had developed into a sizable inland empire that extended beyond maps and legal documents. Such an empire could not possibly be controlled in every detail by a group of some fifty men. The existence of other organizations, carrying out the orders of the Council, seems only a logical assumption.

President Buchanan's ill-starred Utah expedition of 1857-58, which, as Dr. Poll has shown, was to a large degree a reaction of the northern Democrats to the Republican "twin relics" platform of 1856, placed the territory under a temporary army of occupation. When the first news of the approaching army reached Salt Lake City in July of 1857, Brigham Young was seriously considering secession from the Union. In a speech on August 2, 1857, he declared:

The time must come when there will be a separation between this kingdom and the kingdoms of this world. Even in every point of view, the time must come when this king-

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dom must be free and independent of all other kingdoms.

Are you prepared to have the thread cut today? . . .
I shall take it as a witness that God desires to cut the thread between us and the world when an army undertakes to make their appearance in this Territory to chastize me or to destroy my life from the earth. . . . We will wait a little while to see; but I shall take a hostile move by our enemies as an evidence that it is time for the thread to be cut.26

Thanks to the good offices of Colonel Kane and the good sense of both Governor Cumming and Brigham Young the conflict found a peaceful solution. But it seems not likely that President Young would have carried out his threat under any circumstances. The Kingdom was hardly powerful enough to maintain independence. Young's speech, weighed against Mormon actions, would indicate that while the Saints did not believe in overt acts of rebellion to achieve independence for the Kingdom of God they were eagerly watching for a propitious moment to inaugurate their own independent government.

Such ideas, however, apparently were held in abeyance until shortly before the termination of Governor Cumming's term of office in 1861. During the Cumming administration the influence of the Council of Fifty on the government seems to have diminished but little, if at all. Cumming solved a difficult situation with much tact and more cooperation. Records John D. Lee:

"3 Horns or heads are now exerting their Power: Ecclesiastical, civil, & military, or rather Despotic in the Territory. Govnr A. Cummings, with the assistance of the P. H., are trying to enfource the civil law & Mentin order, while the Desticts (Judges, Cradlebaugh in particular, who is noto-

26Journal History, August 2, 1857.
rious for hatching up litigation) backed by the Military are endeavouring to Establish a Dispotic order of things, . . ."27

But even before the expiration of Cumming's term of office, the outbreak of the Civil War seemed to augur well for the speedy establishment of the Kingdom of God as an independent government. The Saints began to remember a prophecy which had been given by Joseph Smith on December 25, 1832 in which he had predicted that war, beginning in South Carolina, would envelop the earth and lead to the "full end of all nations."28 The destruction to be poured out over the United States, furthermore, was to be a punishment on the nation for its persecution of the Saints and attempted overthrow of the Kingdom of God.29 This punishment Joseph Smith, likewise, had predicted. In a conversation on May 18, 1843, with Stephen A. Douglas, the Prophet had declared:

. . . I prophecy in the name of the Lord God of Israel, unless the United States redress the wrongs committed upon the Saints in the state of Missouri and punish the crimes committed by her officers that in a few years the government will be utterly overthrown and wasted, and

27Lee, Mormon Chronicle, I, 208. Lee uses the letters P. H. several times in this portion of the diary. The context seems to establish the letters as an inversion of H. P., possibly standing for Holy Priesthood, thus giving further evidence of the theocratic nature of the territorial legislature.

28D & C, 87.

29This idea found frequent mention in contemporary Mormon literature. See Millennial Star, XXIII (1861), 97-102, 137, 161, 220, 297; J.D., XI (1865), 153.
there will not so much as a potsherd be left. 30

Even before the outbreak of hostilities George Q. Cannon pointed out the inevitability of conflict. Some people, he suggested, might think that war could be avoided; but Joseph Smith had predicted the downfall of the Government and this prediction must be fulfilled. 31 Even though Brigham Young proclaimed his loyalty to the Union in the first message he sent to celebrate the opening of the overland telegraph, Stenhouse accused the Mormon leader of desiring confederate victory. Such a victory, argues Stenhouse, would have set a precedent for the possible secession of Utah to fulfill the sentiments expressed in a hymn frequently sung during that period:

High on the mountains the ensign we see;
Fall'n is the Gentile power,
Soon will their reign be o'er,
Tyrants must rule no more, Israel is free! 32

An entry in the diary of Charles Walker under the date of April 28, 1861, however, seems to describe Mormon sentiments more accurately:

the Virginians are preparing to seize the capital at Washington, and where it will end they know not, but the Saints know and understand it all. . . . Bro. Brigham spoke of the things in the East said he hoped they would both gain the victory said he had as much sympathy for them as the Gods and Angels had for the Devils in Hell. 33

30 DHC, V, 394.
31 J.D., VIII (1860), 301.
32 Stenhouse, p. 499.
33 Diary of Charles Walker, I, 225. In another sermon Brigham Young, in one of his typical expressions of hyperbole, declared that he would rather see his young men "in hell first" than have them enlist for military service (J.D., X [1863] 111).
But whatever the rhetorical expressions of the Mormons and their leaders, no openly hostile actions towards the government occurred. 1861 would have been the most propitious year for secession had the Mormons desired it. But no actual movements in that direction can be detected. The Saints seem to have assumed a waiting attitude; if the Lord saw fit to permit the destruction of the United States they would be ready to take over. Heber C. Kimball declared:

... We shall never secede from the Constitution of the United States. We shall not stop on the way of progress, but we shall make preparations for future events. The south will secede from the North, and the north will secede from us, and God will make the people free as fast as we are able to bear it.34

The "preparations" which Kimball had in mind undoubtedly had their origin in the efforts of the Council of Fifty to obtain statehood for Deseret. Statehood as a step towards independence was by no means an illogical goal of the Council, as mentioned previously. As late as 1874, even after the Civil War amendments had been passed Brigham Young summed up some of his reasons for wanting statehood for the Kingdom of God:

We regret that we are not in a capacity to make our own laws pertaining to our domestic affairs as we choose; if we were in a State capacity we could do so. The legislature would have the right to deed our property to the Church, to the Trustee-in-Trust, if we chose, or in any other way the people would like to deed their property to God and his kingdom. But we can not do this now, we are not a State - We are in the capacity of servants now...35

34Deseret News, IX (May 1, 1861), 65. (My italics) Kimball's careful wording should be noted: "We shall never secede from the Constitution ... ." rather than the Union.

35J.D., XVII (1875), 157.
But before the Civil War, as mentioned previously, statehood meant infinitely more. There can be little doubt that the Council of Fifty would have been in complete control in such a Mormon state. Frank Cannon's accusation that the Mormons attempted to gain admission to the Union in order to escape the Union's authority, as paradoxical as this statement may sound, has a kernel of truth in it.\footnote{Cannon, \textit{Brigham Young and his Mormon Empire}, p. 171.}

The territorial legislature had petitioned Congress for statehood in 1852, 1853, and 1854, but all these memorials were ignored. In 1856, a constitutional convention met in Salt Lake City, approved a slightly altered constitution and sent a delegation to Washington to seek admission. By this time, anti-Mormon sentiment in the capital had developed to a point where the delegates did not even present their credentials to Congress.\footnote{Morgan, p. 133.} The outbreak of the Civil War again fanned the hopes of the Mormon legislators. In January of 1862, another constitutional convention met, nominated Brigham Young for governor, Heber C. Kimball for lieutenant governor, and John M. Bernhisel for member of Congress. In the ensuing election, Young and Kimball each received all of the 9,880 votes cast; Dr. Bernhisel received eighteen less.\footnote{Ibid. p. 136.} Again, Mormon attempts met with failure in Congress. But this time, the Mormons refused to disband, and for at least eight years, the organization of the State of Deseret continued in the enigmatic meet-
ings of the "Ghost legislature." Stenhouse records that

... Deseret merged into Utah officially, but the State organization was continued and exists to-day as much as ever it did. Nominally, the civil authority is Utah: de facto, it is Deseret. The Government pays the Territorial legislators their per diem for making the laws of Utah, and hands them their mileage at the end of the session. On the day succeeding the close, Brigham, as governor of Deseret, convenes them, and someone proposes that the laws of the legislature of Utah be adopted by the State of Deseret.39

The reasons for keeping up this duplicate governmental organization seem to be found in Heber C. Kimball's previously mentioned idea of "preparedness." This idea is supported by a private message given to this "legislature" on January 19, 1863, by Brigham Young:

Many may not be able to tell why we are in this capacity. I do not think that you see this thing as it is. Our organization will be kept up. We may not do much at present in this capacity, yet what we have done or shall do will have its effect... This body of men will give laws to the nations of the earth. We meet here in our second Annual Legislature, and I do not care whether you pass any laws this Session or not, but I do not wish you to lose one inch of ground you have gained in your organization, but hold fast to it, for this is the Kingdom of God... We are called the State Legislature, but when the time comes, we shall be called the Kingdom of God. Our government is going to pieces, and it will be like water that is spilt upon the ground that cannot be gathered... I do not care whether you sit one day or not. But I do not want you to lose any part of this Government which you have organized. For the time will come when we will give laws to the nations of the earth. Joseph Smith organized this government before in Nauvoo, and he said if we did our duty, we should prevail over all our enemies. We should get all things ready, and when the time comes, we should let the water on to the wheel and start the machine in motion.40

The language in which Young couched this address seems to in-

39Stenhouse, p. 276.

40Journal History, January 19, 1863. (My italics.)
dicate that this assembly may have been identical with the Council of Fifty. Only fourteen members of this assembly, however, can be positively identified as belonging to that Council. Since the list reconstructed from members belonging to the Council in 1849 serves as the chief means of identifying Council members in this legislature it is quite probable that other members of this group almost certainly belonged to the Council of Fifty. A comparison with the 1880 list, however, reveals, that a number of members of this legislature still living in 1880 clearly did not belong to this Council. Young may have given these representatives a temporary membership in the legislature of the Kingdom without initiating them into all the secrets of the organization. This idea is again supported by the language of President Young's address. Many of the instructions would seem superfluous to initiated members of the Council of Fifty. Why the meetings of this "legislature" were finally given up can only be conjectured. It seems logical to assume that with the victorious emergence of the Union from the Civil War the Council saw its hopes dissolved for establishing the Kingdom in the near future. There seemed to be no need for keeping the wheel in working order when water was obviously nowhere in sight.

The long delay of statehood for Utah, to a degree, was a direct consequence of the suspected activities of the Council of Fifty. The opposition which the Kingdom of God was to encounter was already dimly outlined in Utah's political horizon in 1849. In the territorial papers of the U. S. Senate, a letter is on file which was referred to the Committee on Ter-
tories on December 31, 1849. This letter, signed by William Smith, brother of the Prophet Joseph and one time member of the Council of Fifty, warns against the establishment of the State of Deseret:

Your petitioners know most assuredly that Salt Lake Mormonism is diametrically in opposition to the pure principles of virtue, liberty, and equality, and that the rulers of the Salt Lake Church are bitter and inveterate enemies of our government. They entertain treasonable designs against the liberties of American free-born sons and daughters of freedom. They have elected Brigham Young, (who is the president of their church) to be the Governor of the proposed State of Deseret. Their intention is to unite church and state and whilst the political power of the Roman pontiff is passing away, the American tyrant is endeavoring to establish a new order of political popery in the recesses of the mountains of America . . .41

Later, with an increasing influx of Gentiles into the Territory, such accusations were to be reiterated in much stronger form. The ensuing dramatic conflict between church and state over polygamy has somewhat obscured Mormon attempts to realize a temporal Kingdom of God as a cause of controversy. But, as first suggested by Dr. Clark, the political Kingdom of God of Mormonism served as another fundamental source of conflict between church and state.42 Such a viewpoint finds support in the anti-Mormon literature of the period. Beadle, for instance, considers political control of

41U.S. Congress, Senate, Territorial Papers 1789-1873; Utah, December 13, 1849 - June 11, 1870, "Petition of Wm. Smith and others, members of the Church of Latter-day Saints, against the admission of the Salt Lake Mormons into the Union as a State."

42Clark, "Church and State Relationships in Education in Utah," p. 22; Utah Historical Quarterly, XXVI (1958), 135-137.
the Church as far worse than polygamy: "Thus it is the union of Church and State, or rather, the absolute subservience of the State to the Church, the latter merely using the outside organization to carry into effect decrees already concluded in secret council, that makes Mormonism our enemy." The following quotation from an anti-Mormon pamphlet is a typical statement of Gentile apprehensions during the later period of the nineteenth century:

Had Deseret been admitted as a state of the Union, the States would been confronted not only by polygamy, a foul blot upon civilization, but by a state dominated by an autocratic hierarchy, whose cardinal principle it is that the so-called 'Kingdom of God on Earth,' i.e. the Mormon Church-State is the only legitimate government on earth, and that all other states and nations must eventually acknowledge its sway. The expurgation of this incubus upon the nation would undoubtedly have involved a civil war.

Another representative example of this kind of anti-Mormon literature can be found in a pamphlet published by the Salt Lake Tribune Co. during the 1880's, titled *The Mormon Conspiracy to Establish an Independent Empire to be called the Kingdom of God on Earth; the Conspiracy Exposed by the Writings, Sermons and Legislative Acts of the Prophets and Apostles of the Church.* This pamphlet quotes extensively from discus-

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45 I am indebted to Dr. James R. Clark for an original copy of this pamphlet.
sions of the Kingdom of God by Parley P. Pratt, Orson Pratt, John Taylor, Brigham Young, and other leaders of the Church. Many of the passages are quoted out of context and distort the views of the Church leaders. The basic premise of this article seems to be that even if polygamy were abolished, Utah should not be admitted into the Union until church and state were clearly separated:

Congress after Congress has been importuned by the saints for the privilege of coming in, but the request has been denied each time, wholly on account of the polygamous practices of Utah's people, which they could not give up. How strange it is, that a matter of comparatively small consequence to the nation as polygamy is, should have served as the sole means of many years to hold in check this diabolical conspiracy for the founding of a theocratic empire in the very heart of the greatest and freest Republic the world has ever known!46

However much Mormon ambitions were exaggerated and distorted, these articles, nevertheless, in places, come very close to the truth. Mormons were certainly not engaged in any evil and insidious conspiracies, but, as we have seen through the activities of the Council of Fifty, the Kingdom of God was much more than an ecclesiastical concept.

During the late 1870's, the activities of the Council of Fifty apparently were suspended. The death, in 1877, of Brigham Young, who had exerted a dominant influence on the Council, may have been responsible for a temporary interruption of the Council's work. The argument from silence alone, however, would not suffice to support such a supposition. But

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46Ibid., pp. 15-16.
a reorganization of the Council which occurred in 1880 supports logic with facts. On March 3, 1880, L. John Nuttall wrote the following letter to George Q. Cannon in Washington, D. C.:

Dear Brother: At the last meeting of the Council of the Apostles, the propriety of calling together the Council of Fifty was considered. On enquiry as to the whereabouts of the records and names of the members it was understood that you have the custody thereof upon which I was directed to write to you for such information as will put the Council in possession of said records, preparatory to calling the members together. Please answer at your earliest convenience. . . .47

On March 20, 1880, Nuttall acknowledged the receipt of the records: "Dear Brother: Yours enclosing the key of small box came safely to hand; we have also obtained the box and records in good shape. . . ."48 On Monday, March 29, Nuttall recorded in his diary that he "Went this morning with Elder Franklin D. Richards at his office and examined the records of the council of 50 or Kingdom of God and made out lists of members now living."49

The reorganization of the Council apparently took place immediately following the General Conference in April. On Saturday, April 10, the Council of Fifty convened at 10 a.m. in the Council House and at 2 p.m. at the City Hall. According to the minutes of these meetings, "Some of the first members spoke upon the objectives of the Council &c. & repeated many

48Ibid., p. 178.
49Diaries of L. John Nuttall (typed copy of original MSS, Brigham Young University Library), II, 3.
things that had been said by the Prophets. Elders Taylor, Rich, Woodruff, E. Snow, B. F. Johnson, E. Junter & Joseph Young."\(^{50}\)

Only one meeting seems to have been held thereafter before the Council adjourned for October 5, 1880. On April 21st, the Council again convened at the city hall. At this meeting Feramorz Little, mayor of Salt Lake City, was "admitted as a member."\(^{51}\)

The records of the Council indicate that thirty-eight old members were on the lists when the reorganization occurred. During April, fourteen new members were initiated. These fourteen initiates were ecclesiastical, political, and economic leaders of the territory. Two of them were to be ordained Apostles at the following October Conference of the Church.\(^{52}\) The fact that the Council adjourned until October 5, would suggest that meetings were to be held at conference time when the largest number of Council members could be gathered together in one place. But even then, nine members of the Council of Fifty were absent during its April reorganization in 1880.\(^{53}\)

The reasons for the re-gathering of the Council, and the matters discussed at its meetings, again, are only a matter of conjecture. The records are silent on these points. In

\(^{50}\)Minutes of the Council of Fifty, April 10, 1880.

\(^{51}\)Ibid., April 21, 1880.


connection with the reorganization, several factors should be noted. 1880 was proclaimed as a jubilee year throughout the Church. That same year, in October, saw the reorganization of the First Presidency under the leadership of John Taylor. President Taylor, it is well known, was the exponent of a very conservative and fundamentalistic viewpoint in the Church. The Council of Fifty, organized by the Prophet Joseph himself through revelation, could apparently not simply be pushed aside. Such considerations, however, very probably were secondary, for the reorganization, both of the Council of Fifty and the First Presidency, occurred at a very crucial period in Mormon history. The Shaffer-McKean conspiracy and the Poland Law reveal the increased anti-Mormon activities during the 1870's. When the Supreme Court of the U. S., on January 6, 1879, upheld the decision of the lower courts in the conviction of George Reynolds for polygamy, the leaders of the Church apparently realized that they would have to steel themselves against a Gentile onslaught. As a first sign of increased pressure, the Liberal Party attempted to break Mormon domination of Congressional representation in 1880 by challenging George Q. Cannon's qualifications to represent Utah in Congress on the grounds that he was a polygamist and an unnaturalized alien. 54 It

54 Out of six delegates to Congress during the territorial period, five were Mormons. Of the latter, Babbitt, Bernhisel, Hooper and Cannon belonged to the Council of Fifty. The single Gentile representative (J. F. Kinney) was highly sympathetic to the Mormon cause and may have been a member of the Council. John T. Caine almost certainly was initiated into the Council; this supposition, however, cannot be documented.
seems not at all improbable to assume that the Council of Fifty may have deliberated on campaign strategy to insure the re-election of George Q. Cannon. When the ballots were counted in November, Cannon's return to Washington was assured. He had received 18,568 votes against 1,357 votes that went to the candidate of the Liberal Party, Allen G. Campbell.\(^{55}\)

The political circumstances of Utah in 1880 and the following years lend credence to the assumption that the Council of Fifty may have become a central committee to direct the defense of the Kingdom against the anti-Mormon onslaught. A somewhat cryptic letter in Nuttall's letterbook, written to Bishop William D. Johnson of Kanab on January 5, 1881, seems to indicate that at its October meetings in 1880, the Council of Fifty may have decided either to expand its organization, or to create subsidiaries attached to the Council. Writes Nuttall:

> In regard to the admission of more members to the C\[1\] I do not think it would be advisable at present. In a short time we may organize another, then changes and other admissions may be made. What instructions you may have to impart to those two brethren named, can be done in the usual manner. - Do not forget to uphold the authorities of the Church and Bro. Cannon at Washington - I am not surprised at the condition of the Canaan Herd, and look for their dissolution.\(^{56}\)

The somewhat naive cryptograph C\[1\] obviously stands for Council. The confidential nature of this organization is indicated by the language in which the letter is couched. That

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\(^{55}\)Jensen, Church Chronology, p. 107.

\(^{56}\)Nuttall, Letter Book 1879-1881, p. 356.
this Council apparently had a political function seems to be suggested by Nuttall's allusion to Cannon and to the "Canaan Herd." This assumption is supported by the fact that the real onslaught against polygamy began after the passing of the Edmunds law in 1882. In 1881, the most serious threat to the Kingdom was the increased activity of the Liberal Party. When, with the passing of the Edmunds law in 1882, and the Edmunds-Tucker law in 1887, polygamy was made the central issue to crush Mormon political control, even a Council of Fifty proved powerless to protect the political Kingdom from destruction. In 1890, the leaders of the Church decided to submit to the demands of the government. With the proclamation of the Manifesto not only polygamy ceased to be an issue in Utah politics, but the political Kingdom of God, likewise, gradually ceased to arouse the passions of both Mormons and Gentiles. A new era in Utah politics obviously had no room for the activities of a Council of Fifty. Dreams of a political Kingdom of God faded away into an inexorable past.

A single explanation as to why this development occurred will not suffice. That the disproportionate growth of power between the United States and the Kingdom had the greatest effect on this development is true; the passing of each year made it more obvious that the chances for the Kingdom of God to control the United States, let alone the world, were becoming slimmer and slimmer. As a result, there was a growing tendency, especially among the youth of the Church, to become identified with the mainstream of American life. The
loyalties to the People's Party, which had controlled Mormon politics and which itself, no doubt was influenced by the Council of Fifty, were abandoned. Mormons and Gentiles alike began to affiliate politically along national party lines.

Another factor which significantly contributed to the atrophy of political aspirations in connection with the Kingdom of God was a fading away of the millennial dream to an uncertain future. The idea of the political Kingdom, it will be remembered, was intimately connected with a belief in the imminence of the parousia. But the signs of the times did not find as rapid a fulfillment as the Saints had expected. Thus, with the passing of the years, the prospects for Christ's return were moved farther ahead into the future. With one of the most significant incentives for building the Kingdom disappearing, it seems only logical that ideas of world government dwindled.

But these were not the only reasons why the Kingdom no longer inspired the imagination of the Saints. The political Kingdom was not only a vehicle for world government; perhaps more significantly, it served as a rallying point that allowed the persecuted Saints to take a stand against an unsympathetic Gentile majority. If, on the one hand, the political Kingdom was a major cause for persecution, on the other hand, persecution resulted in a strong feeling of group-loyalty among the Saints. The Kingdom had become a vehicle for expressing
these loyalties. Even more important, the Kingdom had provided a framework for political theories of a minority group which had experienced the weaknesses and the injustices of a country governed by majority rule.

Finally, when the Mormons submitted to the "powers that be," the doctrine of individual rights lost much of its urgency. Thus, with another idea dwindling, the political Kingdom had but little left to sustain it. Those who had actively participated in its building were gradually passing away. Children and grandchildren, if they were at all aware of the dreams of their fathers, projected such hopes into a future that seemed more of a remote ideal than a cradle for the realization of ideas about world government. A new era had dawned; new problems called for different approaches to their solution. During this second period of Mormon history the Saints looked upon the restoration of the gospel primarily as a preparation for the Kingdom of Heaven. A carefully worked out "plan of salvation" required many spiritual and temporal duties of the faithful; but the political Kingdom was but a drop of water, lost in the vast sea of the past.
APPENDIX I

MEMBERSHIP LISTS OF THE COUNCIL OF FIFTY, 1844-1880

The only complete list of the Council is the one in 1880. All other lists had to be compiled from a variety of sources and are incomplete. The sources cited for a particular membership list do not necessarily include all the names mentioned in that list. The basis for the list in colonial Utah, 1847-1849, for instance, is John D. Lee's diary for that period, published by Huntington Library. Lee, however, does not mention a number of names appearing on that list. John D. Parker, for example, is not mentioned in this particular portion of Lee's diary. Since Parker, however, was an original member of the Council when it was organized in Nauvoo and also appears on the 1880 list as an old member it seems only logical to assume that Parker belonged to the Council of Fifty in 1849.
Council of Fifty under Joseph Smith, 1844

Babbitt, Almon
Badlam, Alexander
Bent, Samuel
Bernhisel, John M.
Brown, Uriah
Cahoon, Reynolds
Clayton, William
Coolidge, J. W.
Cutler, Alpheus
Emmett, James
Fielding, Amos
Fullmer, John S.
Haws, Peter
Hollister, D. S.
Hunter, Edward
Hyde, Orson
James, Samuel
Johnson, Benjamin F.
Kimball, Heber C.
Lyman, Amasa
Marks, William
Miller, George
Page, John E.
Parker, John D.

Phelps, William W.
Pratt, Orson
Pratt, Parley P.
Rich, Charles C.
Richards, Levi
Richards, Willard
Rigdon, Sidney
Rockwell, O. P.
Smith, George A.
Smith, Hyrum
Smith, John
Smith, Joseph
Smith, William
Snow, Erastus
Spencer, Orson
Taylor, John
Whasson, Lorenzo D.
Whitney, Newel K.
Wight, Lyman
Woodruff, Wilford
Woodworth, Lucien
Young, Brigham
Young, Joseph

Sources: DHC, VI, 260-261, 263, 267, 341; Johnson to Gibbs, passim.
Council of Fifty during the Exodus, 1846-47

Babbitt, Almon
*Benson, E. T.
Bent, Samuel
Bernhisel, John
*Bullock, Thomas
Cahoon, Reynolds
*Carrington, Albert
*Clayton, William
Cutler, Alpheus
Emmett, James
Fullmer, John S.
Grant, George D.
Grant, Jedediah M.
Haws, Peter
Hunter, Edward
Hyde, Orson
Johnson, Benjamin F.
*Kimball, Heber C.
Lee, John D.
Lewis, P. B.
*Lyman, Amasa
Miller, George
*Pack, John
Parker, John D.
Phelps, William W.
*Pratt, Orson
Pratt, Parley P.
Rich, Charles C.
Richards, Levi
*Richards, Willard
*Rockwell, O. P.
*Rockwood, Albert P.
*Roundy, Shadrach
*Shumway, Charles
*Smith, George A.
Smith, John
*Snow, Erastus
Spencer, Daniel H.
Spencer, Orson
Stout, Hosea
Taylor, John
Turley, Theodore
Whitney, Newel K.
*Woodruff, Wilford
*Young, Brigham
Young, Joseph
*Young, Phineas H.


*Members of first pioneer company to reach the Great Basin, 1847.
Council of Fifty in Colonial Utah, 1847-49

| Babbitt, Almon | Pratt, Orson |
| Benson, E. T. | Pratt, Parley P. |
| Bent, Samuel | Rich, Charles C. |
| Bernhisel, John | Richards, Franklin D. |
| Bullock, Thomas | Richards, Levi |
| Cahoon, Reynolds | Richards, Willard |
| Carrington, Albert | Rockwell, O. P. |
| Clayton, William | Rockwood, Albert P. |
| Eldredge, Horace | Roundy, Shadrach |
| Fielding, John | Shumway, Charles |
| Fullmer, John S. | Smith, George A. |
| Grant, George D. | Smith, John |
| Grant, Jedediah M. | Snow, Erastus |
| Haws, Peter | Snow, Lorenzo |
| Heywood, Joseph L. | Snow, Willard |
| Hunter, Edward | Spencer, Daniel H. |
| Hyde, Orson | Spencer, Orson |
| Johnson, Benjamin F. | Stout, Hosea |
| Kimball, Heber C. | Taylor, John |
| Lee, John D. | Wells, Daniel H. |
| Lott, Cornelius P. | Whitney, Newel K. |
| Lyman, Amasa | Woodruff, Wilford |
| Morley, Isaac | Young, Brigham |
| Pack, John | Young, John W. |
| Parker, John D. | Young, Joseph |
| Phelps, William W. | |

Council of Fifty, 1880

Bernhisel, John M.
Bullock, Thomas
Burton, R. T.
Carrington, Albert
*Cannon, Angus M.
Cannon, George Q.
Clinton, John
*Cluff, W. W.
Eldredge, Horace
Fullmer, John S.
Heywood, Joseph L.
Hooper, William H.
Hunter, Edward
*Jennings, William
Johnson, Benjamin F.
Kimball, Charles S.
Kimball, David P.
Kimball, H. P.
*Little, Feramorz
*Lyman, Francis M.
*Nuttall, L. John
Pack, John
Parker, John D.
Pratt, Orson
Pratt, Parley P., Jr.
*Preston, William B.
Rich, Charles C.
Rich, Joseph C.
Richards, Franklin D.
*Richards, Franklin S.
Richards, H. J.
Sharp, John
Shumway, Charles
Smith, Elias
*Smith, John Henry
Smith, Joseph F.
*Smith, Silas S.
*Smith, William R.
Smoot, Abraham O.
Snow, Erastus
Snow, Lorenzo
Stout, Hosea
Taylor, George J.
Taylor, John
*Taylor, William W.
*Thatcher, Moses
Wells, Daniel H.
*Wells, Junis F.
Woodruff, Wilford
Young, Brigham, Jr.
Young, John W.
Young, Joseph

Sources: Minutes of the Council of Fifty, 1880.
* New Members
APPENDIX II

MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL OF FIFTY IN SELECTED LEGISLATURES
Members of the Council of Fifty in the Legislature of Deseret, 1849.

Senate
*Cahoon, Reynolds
*Fielding, Joseph
*Lott, Cornelius P.
*Morley, Isaac
Pettigrew, David
*Phelps, William W.
*Rich, Charles C.
Richards, Phineas
*Roundy, Shadrach
*Smith, John
Smoot, Abraham O.
*Spencer, Daniel
*Whitney, Newel K.
*Young, John

*Bullock, Thomas: Clerk
Scott, John: Sergeant-at-Arms

House of Representatives
Andrews, Simeon
Davis, Daniel C.
Eldredge, Ira
Fullmer, David
*Fullmer, John S.
*Grant, Jedediah M.
Haight, Isaac
Hickenlooper, William
Higbee, Isaac
Hunt, Jefferson
Johnson, Joel H.
Lewis, P. B.
Murdock, John
*Pack, John
*Pratt, Parley P.
*Richards, Franklin D.
*Shumway, Charles
*Snow, Lorenzo
*Snow, Willard
*Stout, Hosea
Stratton, Joseph A.
Taft, Seth
*Taylor, John
Van Cott, John
Wallace, George B.
*Wells, Daniel H.

*Carrington, Albert: Clerk
*Lee, John D.: Assistant Clerk
*Grant, George D.: Sergeant-at-Arms

Source for the legislature of Deseret: Morgan, pp. 88-89.
*Members of the Council of Fifty in the first territorial legislature, 1851.

**Legislative Council**

*Benson, E. T.*  
*Dana, Charles R.*  
*Farr, Lorin*  
*Fullmer, John S.*  
*Grant, Jedediah M.*  
*Hunter, Edward*  
*Johnson, Aaron*  
*Kimball, Heber C.*  
*Morley, Isaac*  
*Pratt, Orson*  
*Richards, Willard*  
*Smith, George A.*  
*Spencer, Orson*  
*Wells, Daniel H.*  
*Williams, Alexander*

**House of Representatives**

*Brimhall, George*  
*Brown, James*  
*Brown, John*  
*Browning, James*  
*Dillie, David*  
*Evans, David*  
*Felt, Nathaniel*  
*Fullmer, David*  
*Groves, Elisha H.*  
*Hancock, Levi*  
*Johnson, Benjamin F.*  
*Miller, William*  
*Phelps, W. W.*  
*Richards, Phineas*  
*Rockwood, Albert P.*  
*Rowberry, John*  
*Sherwood, Henry B.*  
*Shumway, Charles*  
*Snow, Willard*  
*Spencer, Daniel*  
*Stout, Hosea*  
*Woodruff, Wilford*  
*Wooley, Edwin*  
*Young, Joseph*

Source for the territorial legislature: Kate B. Carter (ed), *Heart Throbs of the West* (Salt Lake City: Daughters of Utah Pioneers, 1939), I, 37.
Members of the Council of Fifty in the Territorial Legislature, 1863-64.

**Legislative Council**

*Benson, E. T.*  
*Carrington, Albert*  
*Harrington, Leonard*  
*Hyde, Orson*  
*Johnston, Aaron*  
*Lyman, Amasa*  
*Rich, Charles C.*  
*Smith, George A.*  
*Snow, Erastus*  
*Snow, Lorenzo*  
*Spencer, Daniel*  
*Wells, Daniel H.*  
*Woodruff, Wilford*

**House of Representatives**

*Allred, Reddick N.*  
*Callister, Thomas*  
*Cluff, David Jr.*  
*Eldredge, Ira*  
*Farr, Lorin*  
*Hunt, Jefferson*  
*Johnson, Joseph E.*  
*Long, John V.*  
*Lunt, Henry*  
*Maughan, Peter*  
*Patten, John*  
*Pitchforth, Samuel*  
*Pratt, Orson*  
*Preston, William B.*  
*Richards, F. D.*  
*Rockwood, A. P.*  
*Rowberry, John*  
*Smith, William*  
*Stoker, John*  
*Taylor, John*  
*Thurber, Albert K.*  
*Van Cott, John*  
*Wall, William M.*  
*Wandell, Charles W.*  
*Wooley, Edwin D.*  
*Wright, Jonathan C.*

*John Taylor: Speaker*  
*Thomas Bullock: Chief Clerk*  
*William W. Phelps: Chaplain*

Source for the legislature: *Names of the Members and Officers of the Legislative Assembly of the Territory of Utah, with the Standing Committees, Thirteenth Annual Session, 1863-64.*
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THE THEORY AND PRACTICE OF THE POLITICAL KINGDOM OF GOD
IN MORMON HISTORY, 1829-1890

(212 pages)

An Abstract of the Thesis of
Klaus J. Hansen
In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements
For the Degree of
Master of Arts
in
History

Russel B. Swensen
Clinton F. Larson
Chairman, Advisory Committee
Member, Advisory Committee

Brigham Young University
July 1959
ABSTRACT

The history of Mormonism reveals that almost from its beginning, the new church was to be not only a basis for an ecclesiastical Kingdom of God but for a temporal Kingdom as well. This temporal Kingdom, never fully realized, was to develop into a political state preparatory to the inauguration of the Apocalyptic Kingdom. Ultimately, this Kingdom was to rule the whole world.

The political and ecclesiastical Kingdoms were to be two separate institutions. Gentiles were not only considered eligible to become members of this political Kingdom, regardless of their religious affiliations, but might also represent their respective groups in the governing Council of this Kingdom. This concession was a logical corollary of a special emphasis on the doctrine of individual rights which, in Mormon political thought, had replaced the traditional concepts of majority rule. The doctrine of individual rights was to serve as a check against the injustices which, as the Mormons had experienced themselves, could occur only too easily under majority rule. The political Kingdom of God was to be the vehicle for realizing these ideas.
The constitution of this Kingdom was to resemble closely the constitution of the United States. The leaders of the Church apparently saw no contradiction between democratic ideals and theocratic practices.

Theory and practice did not always merge in the organization and administration of this Kingdom. When Joseph Smith organized the nucleus of a political government for the Kingdom of God in 1844 it became rather obvious that the separation between the political and the ecclesiastical Kingdom was rather theoretical; the leading officers of both organizations were identical.

The Council of Fifty, as this embryo world government was most generally called, actively worked to bring about the political Kingdom of God. In response to its immediate cause for organization, the Council explored the possibilities for relocating the Saints in an uninhabited region where they might build the Kingdom without interference. After the untimely death of Joseph Smith it was this Council which organized and directed the exodus of the Saints to the West.

Once established in Utah, the Council of Fifty organized the political government of the Saints and petitioned Congress for admission as a state into the Union. Unsuccessful in this attempt, the Council assumed a controlling position in the territorial government, which was organized under the compromise of 1850. The theocratic nature of the new government aroused the suspicions of federal officials; friction between the federal government and the Mormons lasted as long as the
Council of Fifty directed the political affairs of the territory.

The influence of the Council, however, extended far beyond the sphere of politics. It was this Council which supervised the colonization of the territory and controlled its economic developments. Members of the Council of Fifty influenced all aspects of social organization in their respective communities, political, religious, economic, cultural, and educational.

This suspected influence of the Council was greatly represented by non-Mormons in the territory. Beginning in 1870, an anti-Mormon crusade attempted to wrest political control of the territory from the Church. The attack on polygamy helped to accomplish this end. When, in 1890, the Church submitted to the state, political control was abandoned along with polygamy. As a result, the Council apparently ceased to function.

Mormon dreams of establishing the political Kingdom were intimately connected with a belief in the immediacy of the parousia. The relegation of the millennium to a less immediate future, likewise, contributed to the atrophy of the political Kingdom. In the twentieth century, the Mormon Kingdom of God had an exclusively ecclesiastical basis.

Russell B. Swensen

Clinton F. Larson