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About

The Scroll is the undergraduate historical journal of the University of Southern California's Phi Alpha Theta chapter. The journal seeks to promote student authorship of and engagement with high quality historical writing. There are two editions per year, one published each semester. After publication, The Scroll invites the edition's student authors to present at The Scroll Unrolled conference, giving students valuable experience presenting their original research.

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Editor's Note

Dear Reader,

Welcome back to The Scroll for our second issue of the year. Writing this so soon after Thanksgiving, I would like to begin by expressing my gratitude to all those who have helped make this edition possible. Thank you to our editorial team, led by Managing Editor Connor Brown, for their excellent work during this unique semester. They could have succumbed to the difficulties of publishing remotely but instead doubled down on their efforts, producing an issue I am quite proud of. Beyond the team, I would like to thank Dr. Lindsay O'Neill and our Faculty Review Board for guiding us through the publication process. When it comes to navigating issues of terminology and structure, their advice has been invaluable.

The four articles following this note all engage with a central theme of this year: resistance. During the summer and fall months, we have witnessed historic social and political movements across the nation challenging injustice and inequity wherever it appears. Last month, The Scroll entered the conversation surrounding these movements with our publication of The 1880 Project in collaboration with Yale and other universities. We highly recommend you give it a read. And while we did not intend to publish the second issue of The Scroll around this one unifying topic of resistance, the theme shone through in all the best papers we received.

First, Lauren Bikhazi's article "Prosperity, Protest and Persecution" addresses how lawyers resisted Nazism in Third Reich Germany, offering three fascinating examples of how the legal profession shaped individual resistance. Jenny Cheung continues the exploration of anti-Nazism, focusing on Jewish resistance in Northern Greece during the Holocaust. Both papers make great use of the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive. Next, Frank Cullison reframes the narrative of Mexican secularization in Alta California using documents from USC Libraries' Special Collections to examine indigenous agency and resistance. Also focusing on the American West, Christopher Aranda deals with the Mexican-American response to frontier vigilantism in early twentieth-century Texas. Finally, the issue concludes with an interview between Dr. Aro Velmet and our editor Mallory Novicoff, which is worth a read for anyone considering a future in academia.

Sincerely,

Editor in Chief at The Scroll

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Prosperity, Protest, and Persecution

The Fate of Anti-Nazi Lawyers under Hitler's Regime

By: Lauren Bikhazi '22

This essay explores the experiences of anti-Nazi lawyers in Adolf Hitler's Third Reich and the Nazi regime at large, seeking to uncover how lawyers defied anti-semitism by employing their own forms of resistance. The primary and secondary sources cited throughout this paper highlight anti-Nazi lawyers who protested anti-semitic intiatives and aided the Jewish Resistance through individual efforts. More broadly, this essay explores how the legal profession helped shape lawyers' advocacy for Jews, despite Nazi intimidation. The paper's central question asks how anti-Nazi lawyers, in both Germany and occupied territories, employed their own forms of resistance to combat anti-semitism and the persecution of Jews. The research materials confirmed that anti-Nazi lawyers in Germany and occupied territories employed individual efforts in secret to push back against the Nazi regime. These findings also uncovered the complexities of resistance and protest of anti-semitism, yet also challenged the assumption that resistance was clandestine. In turn, my research found that anti-Nazi lawyers made public protests to the Nazi regime, which often resulted in punishment. The legal apparatuses they used show that the forms of resistance taken on by anti-Nazi lawyers' reflect an earnest commitment to agency, justice, and morality. The legal profession, in turn, bestowed a powerful intellectual foundation to lawyers who resisted the Nazi regime.

Introduction

Hitler's Third Reich, a military dictatorship, first came to power in 1933 by disenfranchising political and legal opponents. Ultimately, the National Socialist Party sought to cleanse the Aryan race of Jews, Romanis, homosexuals, and people with disabilities, resulting in mass destruction and genocide. In occupied territories, the Nazis sped up persecution to further gain control and purify their regime. However, the devastation ordained by Hitler did not go unmatched. Persecuted Jews stood strong in the face of adversity, and their agents fought fearlessly on their behalf. More specifically, anti-Nazi lawyers mobilized throughout Europe to

counteract the implacable persecution of Jews. Despite the threat of facing persecution themselves, these lawyers bravely sacrificed their lives for those oppressed. The forms of resistance employed by anti-Nazi lawyers ranged from issuing complaints with the S.S. Stormtroopers, to courtroom confrontations with Hitler, to falsifying official racial lists under the Nuremberg Laws. Through a closer look at anti-Nazi lawyers Michael Siegel, Hans Litten, and Hans Calmeyer, unique forms of resistance resurface from the historical archive.

The Legal Profession Post-WWI

The aftermath of the First World War left many nations in social and economic turmoil. Germany was severely afflicted after the First World War, suffering from loss of land, demilitarization, and war reparations. Restoring effective international relations became crucial after 1918, as "the implications of sociological jurisprudence for international law were magnified by the effects of the First World War and the creation of the League of Nations."[1] Founded after the Paris Peace Conference in 1919, the League of Nations sought to pacify disputes between countries in an effort to avoid future war. Although Germany would later withdraw in 1933, its participation in the League of Nations helped stabilize their diplomatic relations with other countries. The First World War most importantly tested the field of international law. Legal doctrine as a whole became undermined when "belligerents had violated international law with impunity, by invading neutral countries… States seemed to do what they wanted, and their behaviour was not tamed by international law, be it in the form of custom or codified conventions."[2] Hence, law became ineffective at deterring international warfare. At this scale, legal doctrine and the legal profession had to drastically adapt; "the war and its aftermath affected a profound realignment," where law was only as effective as its implementation and collective adherence.[3] However, in the 1920s,

[1] Katharina Rietzler, *Fortunes of a Profession: American Foundations and International Law* (2014), 1910–1939, p. 10.
[2] Ibid., p. 10.
[3] Ibid., p. 10.

countries began to restore themselves, enacting civil codes and rebuilding the economy through stabilization of the professional workplace.

A closer look at Germany shows that the legal profession was refined and improved under the Weimar Republic following the First World War. For example, the Codes of Criminal and Civil Procedure "rationalized court structures, reformed legal procedures, and gave rise to a free legal profession."[4] The Weimar Republic, which lasted from 1918 to 1933, bore fruitful opportunities to all, and Jews were particularly able to make a place for themselves in the judiciary. Moreover, Jewish lawyers "gained public prominence and professional influence," working alongside German counterparts for the benefit of the entire legal profession.[5] As Jews and Christians practiced together in the 1920s, they established a mutual respect for each other. Lawyers from every nationality and background worked symbiotically for the love of law and politics in the Weimar Republic, where discourse encouraged social progression. In a traveling exhibition by the German Federal Bar and the Leo Baeck Institute, contributory author Simone Ladwig-Winters explained how "the structure of the legal profession was not homogenous" in the 1920s, made up of both political leftist lawyers and more moderately situated lawyers.[6] In turn, the legal profession in Germany after WWI was prosperous for lawyers of all nationalities and cultural backgrounds, as well-educated individuals sought to promote their definition of justice through political and legal initiatives. Most importantly, the legal profession under the Weimar Republic welcomed diverse perspectives, sparking thoughtful public discourse.

However, this freedom of the 1920s came to a halt when the National Socialist Party came to power to disenfranchise civil rights, political opposition, and legal proceedings. German author and lawyer, Max Hachenburg, wrote in his 1927 autobiography warning lawyers to avoid

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[4] Alan E. Steinweis and Robert D. Rachlin, *The Law in Nazi Germany Ideology; Opportunism, and the Perversion of Justice* (2013), p. 106.
[5] Ibid., p. 107.
[6] Simone Ladwig-Winters, *The Fate of Jewish Lawyers in Germany After 1933: An Exhibition of the German Federal Bar* (2005).

anti-semitism, as it was on the rise.[7] This warning, which preceded Hitler's election in 1933, foreshadowed the astringent Nazi idelogy that would dictate the next decade. The Nazi regime, as it prominently rose through the National Socialist Party under Hitler's authoritarian power, eroded the foundations implemented by the Weimar Republic after the First World War. The Nazi regime effectively reversed Jewish freedom, especially in the legal field where opposition was most likely harbored. In addition, Nazis disenfranchised attorneys who were not Jewish but affiliated with the Jewish Resistance. The impending dissolution of the legal profession in Germany, and its later effects in Nazi occupied territories, would drastically change the fate of the legal profession across Europe.

Hitler's Third Reich & Occupied Territories

As the Third Reich began with the denouncement of the Weimar Republic and Adolf Hitler's appointment as Chancellor, Germany entered the beginning stages of a complete dictatorship based upon National Socialism. The National Socialist Party founded itself on beliefs of extreme nationalism and racial purity, whereby both tenets governed Germany's dialogue, thus demolishing any opposition in its path. The Nazis achieved unity through these ideas by rejecting any "degenerate" group that was not a blond-haired, blue-eyed Aryan. The Reichstag fire on February 27, 1933 marked a significant turning point in the rise of Nazism. This fire granted Hitler emergency powers, consolidating authoritative rule over Germany. Douglas G. Morris, contributory author to *The Law in Nazi German Ideology; Opportunism, and the Perversion of Justice*, characterized this abrupt transition to represent a "prerogative state" under which "citizens enjoyed no legal protection."[8] On the night of the Reichstag fire, Nazi's rounded up 4,000 lawyers and political opponents and shipped them to concentration camps. These victims represented the Nazis first explicit example of persecution, as Hitler sought to eliminate those with the prominence and power from standing in his way. The deportations that

[7] Steinweis and Rachlin, *The Law in Nazi Germany Ideology,* p. 118.
[8] Steinweis and Rachlin, *The Law in Nazi Germany Ideology,* p. 108.

followed on the night of the 1933 Reichstag fire stripped leftist lawyers of their right to oppose Hitler's rising inimical dictatorship.

As Jewish and anti-Nazi lawyers became disenfranchised, legal representation for persecuted Jews disintegrated in following years. German law––a driving force in the persecution of the Jews––acted as a double edged sword, where Hitler's subordinating decrees reduced anti-Nazi lawyers' legal power to fight for their client's civil rights. In all, "uprooting Jewish lawyers and disentangling them from the German legal system took 5 years."[9] But this disenfranchisement did not only extend to Jewish lawyers; any attorney who opposed the Nazis faced torment and castigation. Even lawyers of German descent experienced persecution if their views fell at variance with Nazism.

While Germany first experienced radical changes under the Nazi regime, occupied territories swiftly followed. From 1938 to 1945, Germany invaded and occupied over twenty countries, expanding the breadth of Nazi-occupied Europe. German annexation of Austria occured on March 11-13, 1938, symbolizing Hitler's beginning steps in growing Nazi hegemony. On September 1, 1939 Hitler invaded Poland, marking the start of the Second World War. These two territories experienced heightened persecution as Hitler made up for lost time in implementing anti-semitic measures. Invasion of other territories came sequentially, such as the occupation of The Netherlands on May 10, 1940. At this time, The Netherlands served as the home of many German Jews who fled Nazi persecution in the mid 1930s. German occupation devastated the livelihood of these refugees, as their emigration to The Netherlands no longer provided shelter from persecution. Author of *Visions of Empire in the Nazi-Occupied Netherlands*, Jennifer Foray, explains this obstruction of normalcy; "Invaded and defeated by foreign powers, their legitimate political leaders removed or otherwise absent, individuals and communities turned inward, seeking protection and comfort in familiar places and ideas."[10] This acknowledgement about the German occupation of The

[9] Steinweis and Rachlin, *The Law in Nazi Germany Ideology,* p. 107.
[10] Jennifer Foray, *Visions of Empire in the Nazi-Occupied Netherlands* (2011), p. 13.

Netherlands corroborates the sentiments of many European countries post Nazi invasion––agency on behalf of brave community figures, notably anti-Nazi lawyers, helped persecuted Jews and fearful citizens survive.

Anti-Nazi Lawyers & Forms of Resistance

As the Nazi regime dominated Europe, lawyers became marginalized to Hitler's snowballing persecutorial machine. This process first began when anti-Nazi lawyers were stopped from practicing in court, and then prevented from obtaining or renewing their Bar license. Later, attorneys were stripped of their titles, undermining their professional careers to which they devoted their entire lives. Nevertheless, anti-Nazi lawyers did not let this deprivation of freedom prevent them from resistance. Many attorneys, in both Germany and occupied territories, bravely participated in the Jewish Resistance through their own forms of protest. Understanding the progression of persecution and disenfranchisement of anti-Nazi lawyers first requires understanding the agency and heriosm of these lawyers, who risked their lives to stand up against Hitler's robust regime.

Despite Hitler's anti-semitic intiatives and persecutory measures, Jews did not idly await their fate but rather vehemently fought back against their Nazi oppressors. Anti-Nazi lawyers supported Jews in this fight, using advocacy to catalyze meaningful change. Specifically, Leon Kawer, a Jewish survivor who lived in occupied France, explained in an interview by the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive how the Jewish Resistance "started slowly," but eventually people learned effective ways to help their "Jewish communities and the Jewish population."[11] Kawer, who was part of an underground resistance group saw that many simply "did what they could."[12] This brave public resistance, despite severe existential consequences, allowed agents to impact the lives of Jews across Europe. Further, resistance through agency allowed Jews to re-assert their humanity; in various forms of protest, Jews and their advocates resisted

[11] Leon Kawer, Interview 28758. Segment #107. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation (1997), Minute 17:15.
[12] Ibid., Minute 18:04.

Nazi terror both socially and legally, uniting under a common cause. Although anti-Nazi lawyers' rights to practice law had been stripped from them, they found other ways to combat Jewish persecution. This push back took form in issuing complaints with the police headquarters, brave face-to-face courtroom confrontations with Hitler, and falsifying official racial lists as seen through the following three attorneys. Across Europe, anti-Nazi lawyers, Michael Siegel, Hans Litten, and Hans Calmeyer, participiated in an impassioned fight versus anti-semitism.

Hans Litten

Hans Litten, a German lawyer, represented Jewish workers who were disenfranchised by the Nazis between 1929 and 1932. These trials were political in nature, as the National Socialists attempted to strip Jews of their rights in the workplace before Hitler's official rise to power. Litten took a fierce stance against the Nazis in his most famously known 1931 trial. Author Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, in her biography on Hans Litten, specifies this fateful event; "Serving as a prosecutor in the ensuing trial, Litten tried to establish that the Nazi Party had employed terrorist tactics in a planned, methodical way. He succeeded in calling Hitler as a witness and… forced the future dictator to distance himself publicly from both his own party publications and his propaganda strategist."[13] Schüler-Springorum further defines this distancing to mean the preservation of "a semblance of legality."[14] Hence, Litten fought for justice through legal proceedings against the leader of the Nazi regime. Yet in perilous effect, Hitler became infuriated with Litten and sought retribution. On the night of the Reichstag fire in 1933, SA Stormtroopers arrested Hans Litten along with many other lawyers and politicians. He was immediately deported and spent his last five years in concentration camps. Before looking at the end of Litten's life, however, it is imperative to examine the years leading up to his heroic confrontation with Hitler.

[13] Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, *Hans Litten 1903–2003: The Public Use of a Biography* (2003), p. 208.
[14] Ibid., p. 208.

Prior to Litten's professional career as a lawyer, he was involved in a Jewish leftist youth group called *Schwarzer Haufen*. Although Litten himself was not Jewish, neither was *Schwarzer Haufen*; rather, the group "grounded their sense of Jewishness on an idea of inner experience."[15] Gisela Konopka, a Jewish survivor, explained her participation in *Schwarzer Haufen* alongside Hans Litten in an interview by the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive. She noted, "There were very wonderful people in it… [like] Hans Litten who later has been known all over the world as the first lawyer who asked Hitler to testify and therefore was tortured in the worst way… and killed."[16] Konopka's testimony elucidates the price that Litten paid for his resistance to the Nazis and his denouncement of Hitler. Litten's advocacy for Jews dated back to his membership in *Schwarzer Haufen*, where he fiercely battled the oppression of others. Stefanie Schüler-Springorum summarizes Litten's agency through the years; "Litten transferred his early political activity to his professional life… neither his dedication as a lawyer, nor the solidarity he showed his fellow prisoners, nor the spiritual counterworld he would create to sustain him in the camps, can be understood without taking into account his years in the youth movement."[17] In short, Litten's time in *Schwarzer Haufen* inculcated him with the bravery and fortitude needed to protest Nazi terrorism in the crucial years leading up the demagogic rise of Hitler.

Although Litten's form of resistance took place in a courtroom, the obstruction of law occurred when "the Nazis bypassed the courts and rules and simply arrested Litten and others" on the night of the Reichstag fire.[18] Litten spent five dreadful years in concentration camps, and after suffering severe physical and psychological mistreatment, he took his own life. The story of Hans Litten represents the apex of human agency, as he fearlessly pushed back against the Nazis by calling *Der Fuehrer* to the stand. The

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[15] Ibid., p. 217.
[16] Gisela Konopka, Interview 9156. Segment #25. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation (1996), Minute 23:30.
[17] Stefanie Schüler-Springorum, *Hans Litten,* p. 218.
[18] Steinweis and Rachlin, *The Law in Nazi Germany Ideology,* p. 109.

example of Hans Litten stands out singularly for his heroic, yet perilous, challenge to Nazi hegemony.

Michael Siegel

Dr. Michael Siegel was a Jewish attorney who resided in Munich, Germany. On March 10, 1933, just shortly after the Reichstag fire, Siegel filed a complaint to the Munich Police Headquarters about the unjust arrest of his client, Max Uhlfelder. Uhlfelder, a Jewish man who owned a large department store in Munich, was arrested without any warrant or reason. The police force in Munich had recently been replaced with Nazis, who were overlooked by SS commander Heindrich Himmler. Thus, the new Nazi Stormtroopers worked to implement anti-semitic measures in the streets of Germany. Momentarily after Siegel's complaint at the headquarters, he was directed to a back room where Nazi Stormtroopers brutally beat him, "knocking out some of his teeth, perforating one of his ear drums, and cutting the legs of his pants. The SA then hung a board around Dr. Siegel's neck and paraded him barefoot through the streets of Munich."[19]

Many infamous photographs were taken of Siegel on March 10, 1933, as the Nazis publicly humiliated Siegel for his resistance to his client's arrest. The story of Siegel's protest and subsequent Nazi punishment made global news, indicating the international media's receptiveness to Hitler's nascent domination. In a newspaper article by the Washington Post, dated March 23, 1933, Siegel's photograph carrying the board through the streets of Munich is pasted under the title "A Brand of Hitler 'Humane Justice.'" The Washington Post article reads, "this Jewish resident of Munich, Germany was forced to walk barefoot through the streets under guard of Nazi soldiers with a sign reading 'I will never again complain to the police.' The Nazis regard this as an act of 'humane justice.'[20] This article on Seigel only acknowledged him as a "Jewish resident of Munich" rather than a Jewish attorney. Despite the fact that his title as a lawyer went unrecognized, his protest did not. The newspaper also pointed out a glaring

[19] Eric Schmalz, "The Story of Dr. Michael Siegel," (2017)
[20] "A Brand of Hitler 'Humane Justice.'" *Washington Times* (1933)

difference between Siegel's definition of justice and the Nazi's definition of justice. The Nazis called their treatment of Siegel "an act of humane justice," and conversely, Siegel saw this brutalization as an obstruction of justice. Evidently, the ideological definition of justice is subjective; the social climate of the 1930s provided the lens to view the Nazi torturing of Seigel as morally justifiable.

Dr. Seigel remained living in Munich until 1940, whereafter he escaped Nazi persecution by emigrating to Peru. Siegel will always be known as the Jewish lawyer who courageously "lodged a protest over the treatment of one of his clients who had been taken into custody" at his own expense.[21] The act of filing the complaint underscores the public nature of Nazi opposition in spite of personal jeopardy. More broadly, the story of Dr. Michael Siegel signifies how the Nazi's notion of justice was a product of its time. Through a closer look at Dr. Siegel, historical perspective is gained on the courageous individual efforts made by anti-Nazi lawyers to protect fellow Jews from persecution.

Hans Calmeyer

Originally from Osnabrück, Germany, Dr. Hans Calmeyer was a German lawyer and member of the German administration in Amsterdam during the Nazi occupation of The Netherlands. Calmeyer was also a member of the Federation of National Socialist German Lawyers. Interestingly, Calmeyer participated as a soldier and a part of the intelligence unit in the German invasion of The Netherlands on May 10, 1940. Beginning in January of 1941, the Nuremberg Laws required Jews in Holland with at least one Jewish grandparent to register as a Jew. At the same time, Calmeyer worked in the Reich's Commissioners Office, handling Jewish affairs in The Netherlands. In turn, "Hans Clameyer was the final authority to decide whether someone was a Jew or not."[22] Despite his

[21] Steinweis and Rachlin, *The Law in Nazi Germany Ideology,* p. 104.
[22] Jacob Van Proosdij, Interview 45079. Segment #27. *Visual History Archive*, USC Shoah Foundation (1998), Minute 26:00.

connection to the Nazi regime, Calmeyer used his position of authority to resist the deportations of Jews to deathcamps––a rarity among opposers.

Dr. Calmeyer saved the lives of approximately 3,000 Dutch Jews by "downgrading" their racial status. Once Jews made a petition to his department to change their status, he did all he could to falsify the Jewish list while remaining unnoticed by SS officials. For example, Calmeyer changed the status of full Jews to half-Jews, half-Jews to quarter-Jews, and quarter Jews to non-Jews. This list later came to be known as "Calmeyer's List." Not only did this form of resistance by Calmeyer prevent thousands of Dutch Jews from facing deportation, but also helped them escape strenuous forced labor.

In an interview contained by the USC Shoah Foundation's Visual History Archive, Jewish survivor Jacob Van Proosdij explained his relationship with Hans Calmeyer in falsifying the final list of Jews in The Netherlands. Van Proosdij first detailed how Calmeyer "was an anti-Nazi… the SS was rounding up the Jews and trying to persecute them as much as they could… but if Calmeyer decided someone was not a Jew they couldn't touch him anymore."[23] This excerpt from Van Proosdij's interview underscores the impact that Calmeyer had on the Jewish community, making the final decision on who the Nazis could send to concentration camps. Although Calmeyer could not save every Jew and still remain unseen, he did all he could to help Jews escape deportation under the noses of the SS. Van Proosdij further detailed that he acted as a counterpart to Calmeyer's forgery of the Jewish list; "I went to Calmeyer and [he] asked if I was prepared to do it," as in shorten the list of Jewish names, and "I said, 'Yes I wouldn't mind assisting professionally… I am against the persecution of the Jews.'"[24] With help from Van Proosdij and others who opposed anti-semitism, Calmeyer saved thousands of Dutch Jews from persecution and forced labor, all while evading Nazi supervision.

Similar to Michael Siegel and Hans Litten, Hans Calmeyer put his life at stake to undermine the mistreatment of Jews. Despite Nazi pressure,

[23] Ibid., Minute 26:10.
[24] Ibid., Minute 26:15.

Calmeyer continued his work of resistance by using his powerful positon in the Reich's Commissioners Office to save Jewish lives. On March 4, 1992 Yad Vashem, Israel's official memorial to the remembrance of the Holocaust, recognized Hans Calmeyer as "Righteous Among the Nations."[25] Calmeyer, a paragon of Nazi resistance, is still remembered for his heroism.

Conclusion

This essay began with the central question of how anti-Nazi lawyers, in both Germany and occupied territories, employed their own forms of resistance to combat anti-semitism and the persecution of Jews. The research has shown that anti-Nazi lawyers, namely Michael Siegel, Hans Litten, and Hans Calmeyer, employed unique forms of resistance given their skills of advocacy and agency that they learned through their legal careers. German lawyer, Hans Litten, used his resistance tactics learned in *Schwarzer Haufen* to defend the rights of Jewish workers in the Weimar Republic. More profoundly, Litten subpoenaed Hitler as a witness in a 1931 trial regarding the unjust terror tactics used by the Nazis, ultimately leading to Litten's deportation to the concentration camps. Jewish lawyer, Michael Siegel, bravely protested the unauthorized arrest of his Jewish client in 1933, filing a complaint at the Munich Police Headquarters. Consequently, he was seized by SS Stormtroopers, brutally beaten, and then forced to parade through the streets of Munich in an act of humiliation by the Nazis. German lawyer and head of the Reich Commissioner's Office, Hans Calmeyer, used his authority to falsify Jewish racial statuses in the Netherlands in 1941. These forgeries, later known as "Calmeyer's List," saved upward of 3,000 Dutch Jews from deportation, forced labor, and death. While each of these attorneys faced different fates, their stories follow a thematic trend of agency, valor, and intolerance for the persecution of Jews. The threat of death to anti-Nazi lawyers accentuates their bravery and sacrifice, as they risked their lives for the existence of others.

Many attorneys, although their legal professions had been disenfranchised, utilized their legal skills to advocate for civil rights against

[25] Yad Vashem, *The World Holocaust Remembrance Center*.

Nazi persecution. In this way, lawyers' resistance was related to broader Jewish Resistance, and the coupling of these forces effectively counteracted Nazi terror. Surprisingly in many instances, these resistance measures were overt and confrontational despite existential threats, reflecting a resolute commitment to the common good. Anti-Nazi attorneys' unique forms of resistance, made in the face of glaring adversity, represent the apex of agency; these scattered points of light illuminate virtue in an otherwise dark period of humanity.

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Mexican Secularization

And its Effects on Indigenous Californians

By: Frank Cullison ‘21

Historians often credit the collapse of the Spanish mission system in California exclusively to the actions of Mexican officials and a landed elite who cheated indigenous tribes out of their promised tracts of lands during the mission secularization period in the 1830s and 1840s. By doing this, historians fail to entertain the possibility that Mexico's indigenous peoples played an active role in the system's downfall, instead assigning them the role of a passive bystander. For example, according to Andrew F. Rolle, during secularization, "the mission Indians stood apathetically by as deeply confused, helpless witnesses."[1] Similarly, most historians argue that it was secularization that forced the mission Indians, also called neophytes,[2] to leave the missions, with one claiming that secularization "scattered the partly civilized neophytes like sheep without a shepherd."[3]

By considering the neophytes little more than mere compliant observers, historians marginalize the role that indigenous people of California have played in the historical process. Through an analysis of original mission documents, this paper challenges that view by demonstrating that throughout the evolution of the mission system, indigenous people used their agency to fight the varying forms of injustice they faced. During the Catholic Church's control of the missions, neophytes fought their forced incarceration through acts of escape. Then, during the secularization process, rather than being forced to leave the missions, many neophytes withdrew willingly. Only a few years later, after secularization's promises of freedom and prosperity failed to materialize, indigenous people successfully challenged the paternalism of Rancheros, Mexico's new class of landed gentry. Rather than being resubjugated, they learned to unite and employ the methods that their newly gained civil rights afforded them.

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[1] Andrew F. Rolle, *California. A History. (*New York: Thomas Y. Crowell Company, Inc, 1963), 158.
[2] The Franciscan missionaries called the Indians neophytes, which indicated that they were new converts to Catholicism.
[3] Robert Glass Cleland, *The Cattle on a Thousand Hills: Southern California, 1850-1870*. (San Marino: The Huntington Library, 1941), 22-23.

Methodology

An examination of the University of Southern California's Special Collection #374 gives us insight into natives' active role during this period. This collection includes twenty-one documents, inventories, account books along with annual reports from the years 1791-1846. The majority of the documents come from five of the missions: Santa Cruz (eight documents), San Buenaventura (four documents), and one document each from San Gabriel Arcangel, Santa Clara, and Santa Ines. While numerous documents refer to Native Americans as Indios, one document refers specifically to Coras, Yuma, and Apache tribes. The collection contains many signatures of figures that played leading roles in the history of the California missions, including Andrés Pico, Estevan Tapis, Thomas de la Pena, and Pablo Vicente de Sola; people charged with conducting inventories of the missions, such as Juan Manso; and lessees or purchasers of the missions, including Narciso Botello and José Arnaz.

Through these documents, we can ascertain the wealth, agriculture, and the overall economy of Alta California over this period. The primary focus of this paper is based on the material from Box 1, Folders 11 and 12, which include an 1845 Inventory of Mission San Buenaventura dated July 15, 1845. This document was created as part of a survey performed to sell the mission and indicates a change in the social order, and represents the end of the mission system in California, which resulted in revolutionary changes in the economic and social structure of California. By analyzing this document, we learn who the commissioners of the missions were and the significant role they played in the secularization of the missions. However, first, it will be helpful to understand the events that led up to the production of this document in 1845.

Spanish Colonization and the Mission System

Spain's management of Alta California in 1769 followed the traditional form of Spanish colonization in the New World by utilizing both the military and religious orders of the Catholic Church to secure its

conquests.[4] Their colonial plan called for the subjugation of tribes through an acculturation and Christianization program which quickly converted and assimilated indigenous peoples into colonial society as peasants. In California, the religious conversions were carried out by the Franciscan order, who eventually set up 21 missions along the coast of Alta California. The Spanish crown held titles to the missions and their pasture lands since they were regarded as only temporary establishments, to be eventually turned into pueblos.[5] Military authorities ensured the safety of the missionaries. They provided the necessary compulsion to force natives to give up their independence and freedom in order to live in the missions, where the average population of neophytes ranged between five hundred and six hundred persons and sometimes ranged between one thousand and two thousand.[6]

The Spanish justified the mission system on the idea that the natives were inferiors who needed to be "civilized" and brought to salvation. Around 1825, Fr. Geronimo Boscana, a Franciscan missionary attached to Mission San Juan Capistrano, wrote the following: "The Indians of California may be compared to a species of monkey, for naught do they express interest, except in imitating the actions of others, and particularly in copying the ways of the 'razon' or white men, whom they respect as being much superior to themselves."[7] His words reflected his belief that the neophytes were unable to reason or to care for themselves rationally. This disparaging and condescending attitude towards the indigenous population is also evident in a report by an American visitor to California in 1851 who, regarding the local natives, argued that, "the extreme

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[4] Herbert E. Bolton, "Mission as a Frontier Institution," and Robert Ricard, *T Spiritual Conquest of Mexico: An Essay on the Apostolate and Evangelizing Methods the Mendicant Orders in New Spain; 1523-I572,* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press), 1966.
[5] George W. Beattie, Mission Ranchos, and Mexican Grants. *San Bernardino County Historical Society,* Vol. 2, 1942, 2-4.
[6] Sherburne F. Cook, The Conflict between the California Indian and White Civilization: 1, The Indian Versus the Spanish Mission. *lbero-Americana,* no. 21. (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1943), 84-87 .
[7] Geronimo Boscana, *Chinigchinich: A Historical Account of the Origin, Customs, and Traditions of the Indians at the Missionary Establishment of St. Juan Capistrano, Alta California Called the Acagchemem Nation,* 1846, 335-336.

indolence of their nature, the squalid condition in which they live, the pusillanimity of their sports, and the general imbecility of their intellects, render them rather objects of contempt than admiration."[8] Moreover, in 1930, California mission historian, Zephyrin Engelhardt wrote that "all accounts agree in representing the natives of California as among the most stupid, brutish, filthy, lazy and improvident of all the aborigines of America."[9]

Through the process of missionization, the Franciscans established a strict feudalistic regime that sought to control every aspect of the daily lives of the neophytes. Once the natives were baptized, they became unpaid laborers, bound to the mission and unable to leave.[10] This involuntary labor was essential to the mission's operation. In addition to planting and harvesting crops, neophytes produced a variety of necessary mission supplies, such as bricks, clothing, shoes, candles, and pottery. They also cared for the mission's herds of horses, sheep, mules, and cattle and performed other needed tasks such as carpentry, blacksmithing, tanning, and spinning.[11]

The conditions the neophytes lived and worked under at the missions were often harsh; hard work and efficiency were essential to the missionaries. One visitor to Mission San Luis Rey remarked that the work overseers, "are very rigid in exacting the performances of the allotted tasks, applying the rod to those who fell short of the portion of labor assigned them."[12] Regarding the severe conditions that the mission fathers compelled the neophytes to work under, noted historian Theodore Hittell states: "[They] not only compelled them to almost incessant labors but failed to furnish them with sufficient food to sustain them in working condition and at the same time for the most trivial offenses they

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[8] Jack Forbes, *The Indian in America's past. (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, Inc, 1964, 16.*
[9] Zephyrin Engelhardt, *The Missions and Missionaries of California,* Vol. II, Upper California, Pt. 1. (Santa Barbara: Mission Santa Barbara, 1930), 245.
[10] Sherburne F. Cook, *The Conflict Between the California Indian and White Civilization*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1976), 1-194.
[11] Zephyrin Engelhardt, *The Missions and Missionaries of California* 261-262.
[12] James C. Pattie, *The Personal Narrative of James* C. *Pattie of Kentucky,* (Chicago: The Lakeside Press,1930), 347-348.

handcuffed, imprisoned and unmercifully beat them. When…they attempted to regain their lost freedom by flight; they were hunted down and punished with tenfold rigor."[13]

Indigenous Resistance and Secularization

The brutal conditions of missions led many neophytes to escape their captivity and regain their independence. In his investigation of two hundred desertions from mission San Francisco, the seventh Governor of California, Diego de Borica found that mission priests often treated the neophytes with cruelty and even brutality. In one letter, he outlines the four critical issues regarding the state of the missions and its neophytes: loss of freedom, hard labor, filthy living conditions, and dreadful living quarters.[14] The harsh treatment observed by Governor de Borica is unmistakably echoed in a 1797 document from Mission San Francisco which gives the testimony of neophytes who escaped in 1797 and were later apprehended. On their return, the padres asked each to state why he ran away. Some of the answers recorded in the mission's annals include:

> Flogged for leaving without permission. Also, he ran away because he was hungry.
>
> He had run away previously and had been flogged three times.
>
> He was hungry. He had left previously and when he returned voluntarily, he was given twenty-five lashes.
>
> He was frightened at seeing how his friends were always being flogged.
>
> When he wept over the death of his wife and children, he was ordered whipped five times by Father Antonio Danti.
>
> He was put in the stocks while sick.
>
> He was hit with a club.
>
> His mother, two brothers, and three nephews died, all of hunger, and he ran away so that he would not also die.

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[13] T. H. Hittell, *History of California* 4 vols. (San Francisco: Pacific Press Publishing House an Occidental Publishing Company, 1885), vol 1, 563.

[14] Robert F. Heizer, *The Other Californians* (Berkeley: University of California Press 1971), 6-7.

> His wife sinned with a rancher, and the priest beat him for not taking care of her.
> When his son was sick, they would give the boy no food, and he died of hunger.[15]

Evidence clearly shows that neophyte discontent with mission life prevailed from the very beginning of the system, often resulting in desertion. In 1779, a missionary admitted that even the natives who received medical care from the mission often ran away. He stated, "The majority of our neophytes have not yet acquired much love for our way of life, and they see and meet their pagan relatives in the forest, fat and robust and enjoying complete liberty."[16] In 1819 a friar bemoaned that "the spirit of insubordination, which is rampant in the world at large, has reached the Christian Indians. A considerable number have withdrawn from the mild rule of the friars."[17] According to historian Sherburne Cook, of the over 81,000 natives who were baptized by 1831, nearly 3500, or one out of twenty-four, had successfully escaped from the missions. Moreover, from 1831 to 1834, some 2000 more neophytes "illegally" withdrew from the missions.[18] This high desertion rate shows that even before the Mexican Secularization Act of 1833, the Mission System was already in decline as neophytes actively rejected their incarceration.

After the Mexican War for Independence ended in 1821, the new government realized that indigenous peoples would only become useful citizens after being released from their servile position in society.[19] Following this realization, in August 1833, the Mexican government passed a law which secularized all the missions of Alta and Baja California. It required the missionaries to surrender all secular control

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[15] Sherburne F. Cook, *The Conflict between the California Indians and White Civilization*. 3 vols. (Berkeley: University of California Press,1943), vol 1, 70-71.
[16] Florian F. Guest, The Indian Policy Under Fermin Francisco de Lasuen, California's Second Father President. *California Historical Society Quarterly*, Vol. 45, no. 3, 1966, 195-224.
[17] Zephyrin Engelhardt, *The Missions and Missionaries of California* 33-34
[18] Sherburne F. Cook, *The Conflict between the California Indians and White Civilization, 59*.
[19] Alan C. Hutchinson, The Mexican Government and the Mission Indians of Upper California , 1825-1835, *The Americas,* Vol. 2l, no.4, 1965, 340.

over the neophytes and to discharge their religious duties until replaced by parish priests. After the missions were converted into pueblos, the government would distribute the former mission lands among the neophytes. Each adult male or family head over twenty years of age would receive thirty-three acres of land. The neophytes would also receive half the missions' livestock, tools, and seeds, but governor appointees would administer the surplus lands, cattle, and other property. According to the decree, the government could also force the neophytes to work in the vineyards, orchards, and fields that remained undistributed. Furthermore, natives could not sell or dispose of their property.[20]

Once freed from their servitude, most of the neophytes had no desire to maintain contact with the missions. Rather than being dispossessed, they chose to abandon the missions and disobey the civil administrators. For example, in 1834, the newly appointed civil administrator of Mission San Luis Rey complained of neophyte disobedience: “These Indians will do absolutely no work nor obey my orders…For they declare they are a free nation. In order to enjoy their obstinacy better, they have fled from their houses and abandoned their aged parents, who alone are now at this ex-Mission.”[21] Their newly won freedom was so important to these neophytes that they made a conscious choice to give up their homes and material benefits in order to maintain it.

Some neophytes were indeed cheated out of their promised lands and driven from the missions. Ex-neophyte Lorenzo Asisara, a member of the Costanoan tribe born at Mission Santa Cruz in 1820 who witnessed the mission’s secularization process, described the inspections and late-night raids of storerooms as the church and secular authorities battled over the mission's resources. Lorenzo remembers Padre Antonio Real bribing him with a box of beads, to keep silent. He asked the priest,

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[20] Alan C. Hutchinson, *Frontier Settlement in Mexican California. The Hijar-Padres Colony and its Origins, 1769-1835*, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1969), 255-260.
[21] Zephyrin Engelhardt, *San Luis Rey Mission*. (San Francisco: The James H. Barry Company, 1921) 96-97.

"Father, how can you want this, that my father should receive only one box of beads when all of the interest of the mission belongs to the community?" Lorenzo also explained that Don Ignacio del Valle, the mission commissioner, distributed all the mission's goods to the indigenous peoples except for the money, which he believed the padre and the commissioner had stolen. Despite over fourteen years of service at the mission, Lorenzo received no land under secularization and spent the rest of his life working as a ranch hand in and around Santa Cruz.[22]

Contrary to established opinion, however, most neophytes were not forced to leave the missions. Instead, they withdrew willingly. This post-secularization withdrawal was simply an acceleration of what had been happening throughout the mission period. Before secularization, escape was usually a matter of individual initiative. After secularization, the neophytes could withdraw as a group with little fear of capture and punishment. Between 1834 and 1843, reports estimate that the neophyte mission population declined from over 30,000 to under 5,000.[23]

The collapse of the mission system introduced a new social order based on the authority of the rancheros, a wealthy landowning elite class that benefited from the redistribution of land that took place during the period of mission secularization. Although the land was to be divided up and distributed to the former mission neophytes, eight million prime acres were carved up and given as permanent land grants to more than eight hundred Hispanic Californians. They divided the land so quickly that between 1841 and 1844, thirty new ranchos appeared in the Los Angeles district alone. Land in parcels up to 50,000 acres could easily be obtained by those with the right connections or with a record of civil or military service. Some families obtained several significant adjoining parcels and thus prevailed over 300,000 acres or more. By 1846, according to a list compiled by Thomas Oliver Larkin, forty-six wealthy,

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[22] Edward D. Castillo, An Indian Account of the Decline and Collapse of Mexico's Hegemony over the Missionized Indians of California, *American Indian Quarterly*, Vol. 13, No. 4, Special Issue: The California Indians (Autumn, 1989), 391-408.

[23] William C. Jones, *Report on the Subject of Land Titles in California*. Sen. Ex. Doc. no. 18, 31st Cong., 1st Sess, Washington D.C., 1850.

prominent men ruled California. They were mostly newly rich self-made landowners who had inherited little wealth from their fathers.[24]

One of those who benefitted the most from the land redistribution was Governor Pio Pico. Born at Mission San Gabriel, Pico was a first-generation Californio rancher and politician. Although the Spanish and Mexican governments had only issued four land grants of over 100,000 acres from 1784 to 1846, they granted two of them to Pico and his family, including one for 133,440 acres granted by Governor Juan Alvarado in 1841. Later, Governor Alvarado received land grants of almost 100,000 acres from four other governors, including one from Pio Pico for 30,000 acres in 1846.[25] By the time of California annexation by the U.S., he had become one of the richest men in Alta California, owning Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores (now part of Camp Pendleton), and several other ranchos for a total of over 500,000 acres.

The July 15, 1845 Inventory of Mission San Buenaventura in the USC Special Collection #374 is significant in that it represents the final transformation to the new Rancho system. In 1845 Governor Pio Pico declared that all the missions would be either sold or leased by the following year.[26] The inventory document for Mission San Buenaventura was the final inventory taken before the mission was rented and finally sold to Don Jose Arnaz. The signatures on the inventory are of the commissioners Juan Manso and General Andrés Pico, the younger brother of Governor Pico, who that same year granted his brother Andrés and his associate Juan Manso a nine-year lease for the Mission San Fernando Rey de España lands, which encompassed nearly the entire San Fernando Valley. He ran cattle on the ranch and used the mission complex as his home. In 1845 and 1846, the government sold the remaining missions at auction, and Governor Pico gave out almost 2.5 million acres in land

[24] Thomas Oliver Larkin, "Notes on the Personal Character of the Principal Men," *The Larkin Papers, 1845-1846*, IV (Berkeley and Los Angeles, 1953), 322.
[25] Larkin, "Notes on the Personal Character of the Principal Men," 45-47.
[26] Collection of California Missions.

grants.[27]

The Luiseños of Ex-Mission San Luis Rey Unite

The land grants and political favors given to Pio Pico and his family illustrate the rampant corruption and cronyism of the Rancho system. Besides receiving valuable land grants, the Pico family benefited greatly from secularization in a manner that brought them into direct conflict with the emancipated neophytes. In 1830, Governor Jose Maria de Echeandia issued his secularization plan, which distributed confiscated mission land to ex-neophytes and created new indigenous pueblos. The plan also called for the creation of positions to administer the remaining land and property that would be leftover. It entrusted to these government-appointed officials the control of each mission's land and its indigenous population.[28] Because of the enormous land base that the administrators would be in charge of, many elite Rancheros sought to receive these appointments, and when the government finally started to enforce the secularization laws, in 1835, Pio Pico was named comisionado of Mission San Luis Rey. Situated just north of San Diego and covering almost 950,400 acres, it was California's largest mission. This dominant new position put Pico in a situation to become one of California's wealthiest citizens.[29]

One of the pressing issues Comisionado Pico faced in his new position was how to force the natives to work again for an establishment that sought to re-enslave them. To do so, he utilized the new bureaucracy that the secularization laws had created, especially the new position of "Encargado de Justicia." This official was in charge of administering justice in the areas surrounding the missions, working with military officials to punish those who committed petty crimes.[30] However, the new statute was vague about

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[27] Carlos Manuel Salomon, *PIO PICO The Last Governor of Mexican California,* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2010), 91-92.
[28] Jose Maria de Echeandia, *Ley sobre administración de misiones*, 6 January, 1831, Departmental Records, CA 49:2, 66-78.
[29] Salomon, 51.
[30] Jose Maria de Echeandia, *Reglamento para los encargados de justiciar y de la policia de las misiones del Departamento de San Diego*, 29 January 1833, State Papers: Missions and Colonization, BANC MSS C-A 53, Tomo II, 112-115.

what constituted a crime, which gave officials broad latitude interpreting and enforcing the law, and meant that it was now possible to punish indigenous peoples for refusing to work for the administrator. Surprisingly, in 1836, in addition to his role as Comisionado, the government also appointed Pio Pico as Encargado de Justicia. Therefore, he now had the authority he needed to force the ex-neophytes back to work at the mission.[31]

The mission's indigenous population, the Luiseños, distrusted the new secularization laws, which exploited them by forcing them back to work without pay at the mission as they transitioned to emancipated citizens. They despised Pico and looked for ways to rebel against his authority. Rather than ensure their transition into Mexican society as the law required, they realized Pico's primary aim was to efficiently operate the mission as a money-making business enterprise; this goal became evident by his petitioning Governor Figueroa to be allowed "to govern the Indians the same as they had been governed before by the padres."[32] Regarding Pico's treatment of indigenous peoples, Luiseño neophyte Julio Cesar recalled that Pico made them hold their hats in hand when he passed by, and that "of all the despotic administrators, none abused them more than Pico."[33]

From 1835 until 1840, Pio Pico and the other Californios in southern California faced increased indigenous resistance to policies intended to manage them. Forcing the natives to work, denying their promised rights and freedom, treating them harshly, and making himself wealthier by using ex-neophyte land in Temecula to pasture his vast herds, led to rebellious Luiseño protests at Mission San Luis Rey and Temecula.

At first, the Luiseños sought to utilize the legal system to protect their rights, as can be seen by their organized protests against Pico and other mission administrators. Although it was more common to use legal

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[31] Pio Pico to Santiago Arguello, 24 January 1836, in Hayes, *Missions of Alta California*, BHC, BANC MSS C-C 21, vol. 1, 293.
[32] Pio Pico, *Narracion Historica*, MS, Octubre 24, 1877, 89.
[33] Julio Cesar, *Cosas de Indios de California*, BL, UCB, 1878.

means to seek justice in other parts of Latin America, it was rare in California. After the missions were secularized in the 1830s, however, some indigenous communities began appealing to the secular authorities for relief.[34] Although the Luiseños filed multiple legal complaints about their treatment at ex-mission San Luis Rey, Pio Pico was able to use his position as the Encargado de Justicia to obstruct their work of organizing petitions and punish them for it.

Rather than give up and become discouraged by Pico's actions, the Luiseños did not acquiesce to his demands, and as complaints against him continued to mount, they became increasingly sophisticated in their legal strategies.[35] For example, in 1836, they formed a coalition to drive Pico out of the area and selected Pablo Apis from Temecula to represent them. Apis was a well-educated Luiseño who possessed the leadership qualities they needed. In June, Apis petitioned the alcalde of San Diego and cited Pico for the mistreatment of the workers and misuse of mission property.[36] Learning of the protest, Pico reported it to the San Diego Presidio and requested military assistance. Hearing that Apis was traveling to meet the new alcalde, Santiago Arguello, to address the Luiseños complaints, Pico ordered the presidio comandante to arrest him, accusing him of being the ringleader of the protest.[37] What started as a legal negotiation nearly turned into a riot due to Pico's underestimation of the Luiseños as they defended their rights. According to Pico, "nearly one thousand Luiseños, many of them armed, had gathered in front of his quarters, demanding their leader's release."[38] Knowing that their actions would provoke a military response, they bravely resisted in a showdown that lasted all night and resulted in the unconditional release of Apis. Fearing for his life, Pico gave into the Luiseño demand.[39] Later, Pico had Apis arrested, and to eliminate him as a threat, had him forcefully enlisted into a military company at

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[34] Salomon, 57-58.
[35] Ibid., 59.
[36] Pico, *Historical Narrative*, 91.
[37] Salomon, 59.
[38] Pico, *Historical Narrative*, 91-93.
[39] Ibid.

Monterey. In order to prevent further uprisings and to secure his control over San Luis Rey, Pico took the initiative to have the military arrest more natives.[40]

Rather than silence the Luiseños, the arrest and removal of Apis strengthened their resolve to remove Pico. They continued to protest his administration of the mission without fear of reprisal, and less than a month after Apis's arrest, they organized again and petitioned the government to depose Pico as administrator.[41] Despite indigenous complaints, Governor Mariano Chico refused to have Pico removed. The Luiseños kept up their defiance, and the historical records of this period document the increasing relevance of their resistance.[42] In 1839 Pico wrote to William Hartnell, the inspector general of the missions, asking for his help with returning fugitive natives to San Luis Rey.[43] When Hartnell interviewed the Luiseños, he learned about their many complaints against Pico and recommended to Governor Alvarado that Pico be discharged.[44] Pico finally left the mission in 1840 but fought against his dismissal until the end. After years of non-stop resistance, in the end, the Luiseños successfully won their battle against Pico. Moreover, perhaps as a sign of respect for his old Luiseño foe, in 1845, Governor Pio Pico granted 2,233 acres in Temecula to Pablo Apis.[45]

As we have seen, the indigenous peoples of Alta California under the mission system frequently shaped their own history. Through desertion and resistance, they challenged those who enslaved them throughout the mission era into the secularization period. This active resistance demonstrates the significant role the neophytes played in the breakdown of the Spanish mission system in California. Far from being passive observers of their own destruction, the neophytes were active agents in the historical

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[40] Salomon, 60.
[41] Nicolas Gutierrez to Alcalde Constitutional de San Diego, 11 July 1836.
[42] Salomon, 64.
[43] Susanna Bryant Dakin, *The Lives of William Hartnell*, Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1949.
[44] Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California: The List of Authorities Quoted*. The History Co., 1884, vol 4, 58.
[45] Robert G. Cowan, *Ranchos of California: a List of Spanish Concessions, 1775-1822, and Mexican Grants, 1822-1846* (Los Angeles: Published for the Historical Society of Southern California, 1978).

process and are worthy of being recognized as such. Those who advocated secularization believed that the promise of freedom and private ownership of land would culturally transform the indigenous population into good Mexican citizens.

Nevertheless, in many cases, indigenous peoples simply wanted to be left alone. Secularization failed them from the standpoint that few natives received the land and possessions the government had promised them, and fewer yet were able to keep them for any significant amount of time. By utilizing their newly acquired rights after emancipation, Pablo Apis, along with his Luiseño followers, successfully challenged those who had supported indigenous emancipation from the friars but saw no harm in profiting personally by exploiting their land and free labor. By uniting and developing increasingly sophisticated methods of opposing the landed elite, the Luiseños did transform culturally, but not in an expected way. The idea of real liberty, not emancipation, gave the Luiseños the power to resist exploitation and to stand up to the richest and most powerful man in Alta California and ultimately prevail in defending their personal freedom and land rights.[46]

[46] Steven W. Hackel, *Children of Coyote, Missionaries of Saint Francis : Indian-Spanish Relations in Colonial California, 1769-1850*. Published for the Omohundro Institute of Early American History and Culture, (Williamsburg, Virginia, University of North Carolina Press, 2005), 377-380.

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3

Jewish Resistance to the Holocaust

In Northern Greece from 1941 to 1944

By: Jenny Cheung ‘21

Northern Greece, the region that stretches from Florina and Kozani in the West to Thrace in the East, was occupied by the Germans and Bulgarians from 1941 to 1944 over the course of the Second World War. The Jews in northern Greece suffered the highest death rate compared to other parts of Greece, with only 5% in Thessaloniki surviving the war.[1] Previous research on this topic has emphasized obstacles such as language barriers, unfortunate timing,[2] Christian collaborators,[3] and lack of places for hiding as the main factors that limited the Jewish community's ability to resist Nazi occupation.[4] However, primary sources from the USC Shoah Foundation, Yad Vashem World Holocaust Remembrance Center, and United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, show that, when it comes to self-preservation and individual acts of resistance, the way people chose to resist was largely based on what they imagined the Nazis to be like, rather than the obstacles they faced. Therefore, instead of focusing on the obstacles that hindered resistance, this paper will analyze how Jews in northern Greece perceived the Nazis, which in turn influenced their decisions about whether to resist and how to resist.

Furthermore, despite the size of this region, almost all of the research conducted about the persecution of Jews in northern Greece during the Holocaust has largely focused on one city – Thessaloniki. Home to 50,000 out of Greece's 60,000-70,000 Jews, it is no surprise that historians have chosen to focus their research on this area.[5] However, this approach can be problematic since Thessaloniki was not completely isolated throughout the entire course of the war, which means that events from other parts of northern Greece that indirectly impacted Thessaloniki's Jews, or the other way around, have largely been overlooked. Therefore, this paper will also incorporate the experiences of Jews from different cities of northern Greece

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[1] Mazower, Mark. *Inside Hitler's Greece*. (New Haven, Connecticut: Yale University Press), 1993, 244.
[2] Levine, Melammed Renee. An Ode to Salonika: The Ladino Verses of Bouena Sarfatty. (Indiana University Press, 2013), 185-186.
[3] Apostolou, A. "'The Exception of Salonika': Bystanders and Collaborators in Northern Greece." *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 14, no. 2 (2000): 165-96. doi:10.1093/hgs/14.2.165.
[4] Mazower, Inside Hitler's Greece, 258.
[5] Ibid., 256.

to offer a more well-rounded approach to the topic as well as highlight any trends or important differences that may contribute to academic discussion.

Thessaloniki

On April 9th , 1941, Thessaloniki became the first Greek city seized by Nazi forces.[6] According to Bouena Sarfatty, a Jewish survivor from Thessaloniki, discussions about anti-Semitic policies implemented by the Nazi party in Germany started circulating within the Jewish community in Thessaloniki during Passover that year. As a result, many Jewish business owners responded to the arrival of the Germans by closing down their shops and staying at home.[7] They kept their shops closed for many days after the Germans arrived until they were ordered by Nazi authorities to reopen.[8] Although 95 percent of Thessaloniki's Jews ended up perishing during the Holocaust, many of them had heard about other anti-Semitic policies, such as the Nuremberg laws, in other parts of Europe.[9] Therefore, this initial act of self-preservation shows that they had initially viewed the Nazis as a threat, however, the events that followed would create a false sense of safety among the Jewish population of Thessaloniki and northern Greece, which ultimately led to the perishing of tens of thousands.

Unlike in other parts of Europe, although the Nazis looted Jewish property and implemented many anti-Semitic laws, they did not begin to deport Jews in Greece until two years into the occupation, which caused many to think that they would not be deported.[10] Between May to

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[6] Chandrinos, Iason, and Anna Maria Droumpouki. "The German Occupation and the Holocaust in Greece: A Survey." Chapter. In *The Holocaust in Greece*, edited by Giorgos Antoniou and A. Dirk Moses. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018. doi:10.1017/9781108565776.003), 17.
[7] Levine, *An Ode to Salonika: The Ladino Verses of Bouena Sarfatty,* 183.
[8] Dordanas, Stratos N. "The Jewish Community of Thessaloniki and the Christian Collaborators: 'Those That Are Leaving and What They Are Leaving Behind.'" Chapter. In *The Holocaust in Greece*, edited by Giorgos Antoniou and A. Dirk Moses. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018, doi:10.1017/9781108565776.011), 209.
[9] Matsas, Michael. *The Illusion of Safety: The Story of the Greek Jews during World War II*. (New York, NY: Pella Pub., 1997), 29.
[10] Matsas, Michael. *The Illusion of Safety: The Story of the Greek Jews during World War II*. (New York, NY: Pella Pub., 1997), 33.

November of 1941, 30 German officers and academics raided Jewish homes, synagogues, hospitals, and associations for Jewish archives, precious synagogue ornaments, and manuscripts. These valuables were then sent to Frankfurt to an institute that was being built to "educate" the Germans about the Jews. Alfred Rosenberg, Germany's chief of ideologue, was in charge of creating this new institute, and by 1943, 10,000 out of 500,000 volumes in this museum would be from Greece.[11] However, in addition to confiscating valuables, German soldiers also stole from houses of Jewish families and took whatever they wanted, especially food. As a result, widespread starvation and unemployment ensued since the German soldiers took nearly everything from them.[12]

In 1942, General von Krenzski, the German commander of northern Greece, wanted to mobilize Thessaloniki's Jews for forced labor. He ordered all male Jews between the ages of 18 and 45 to gather at Liberty Square in order to register and be recruited for forced labor. That day, 10,000 Jews stood in the scorching heat for hours, without water or hats, and were forced to do physical exercises while German soldiers and bystanders took pictures and laughed at them. Those who collapsed were beaten and doused with cold water while others were harassed by German shepherds.[13] In February 1943, all Jews were forced to wear the yellow star in order to identify themselves and were also expelled from all vocational organizations such as labor unions.[14] However, although some individuals resisted against these anti-Semitic orders, they were not fully aware of the persecution that laid ahead since the Germans justified the Black Sabbath events by saying that they had to recruit workers for building infrastructure.[15]

According to the oral testimony of Abraham Simantov, he did not attend the registration event at Liberty Square because his Greek Orthodox

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[11] Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece,* 237-238.
[12] Levine, *An Ode to Salonika: The Ladino Verses of Bouena Sarfatty,* 183.
[13] Mazower, *Inside Hitler's Greece,* 239.
[14] Algava, Andreas. *600 Days in Hiding*. Edited by Daniel Levine. 1st ed. (Bellingham, Washington: For Passion Publishing Company, 2018), 167-172.
[15] Ibid., 157.

friend, a lawyer by the name of Spiliakos, warned him against the dangers of the Germans. However, the Nazis ordered the Jews to register a second time after the initial registration because they claimed they had not been able to get everyone's names down. Although Simantov defied Nazi orders the first time, he had heard from those who attended the first registration that latecomers were severely beaten. Therefore, he thought that the Nazis would enforce a much harsher punishment on someone who did not show up at all. As a result, when the Jews were ordered to register the second time, he neglected Spiliakos' warning, registered, and was mobilized for forced labor at Thessaloniki's military airport.[16]

According to the testimony of Aaron Abraham, although he was over the age of 18 at the time, he refused to register at Liberty Square because he disagreed with the order. He also refused to wear the yellow star or abide by the curfew that the Germans imposed since he figured that the Nazis could not identify Jewish individuals based on physical appearance and would not be able to identify him as a Jew if he chose not to wear one. Before deportations started in 1943, he made a successful escape to the mountains with the help of the police chief of Thessaloniki. The chief gave him fake identification papers which changed his name to Nicholas Kariolopolis in order to identify him as Orthodox Christian rather than Jewish.[17] However, he was forced to return to Thessaloniki from the mountains in order to be with his family and was eventually deported in spring of 1943.

When the deportations from Thessaloniki to Auschwitz began in March of 1943, the Germans told all the Jews that they were going to work in Poland where they would live in a thriving new town reserved exclusively for Jews.[18] Thessaloniki's chief rabbi, Rabbi Koretz, backed up their statement and reassured the Jewish population that there were jobs and houses available for them in Poland, which caused many people to be

[16] Simantov, Abraham. vha.usc.edu, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, https://vhaonline.usc.edu/viewingPage?testimonyID=4292&segmentNumber=43
[17] Abraham, Aaron. vha.usc.edu, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, https://vhaonline.usc.edu/viewingPage?testimonyID=54761&segmentNumber=9
[18] Algava, *600 Days in Hiding*, 184-185.

unaware of the dangers that laid ahead.[19] Thessaloniki's Jews responded to the deportations in many different ways. Depending on their perception of the Nazis and their level of understanding about what was going on, some chose to go into hiding while others chose to resist through bureaucratic means, and some barely resisted at all.

Prior to the deportations of the Jews, Bouena Sarfatty, a Jewish woman from Thessaloniki who was a volunteer for the Red Cross, foresaw the possibility of deportations. In response, she and a few other Jewish women created a committee to help rescue Jewish babies by hiding them in monasteries and convents. They approached Rabbi Koretz with their proposal and asked for his support; however, he disagreed with their plan and denounced them to Jewish collaborators. Even though he refused to help, the women still continued with the project, but made sure to work more discreetly in order to avoid getting caught.[20] Since Sarfatty was very involved in efforts to help preserve the Jewish community of Thessaloniki, she had a deeper understanding about German atrocities and their intentions. Through volunteering at a soup kitchen to feed Jewish children and smuggling Jewish forced laborers out of the Nazi labor camps, she had witnessed German atrocities with her own eyes.[21] Although it is unclear whether or not she knew that the deported Jews would be exterminated, it is clear through her willingness to risk her life to hide babies from the Nazis that she perceived them as a group with bad intentions and, therefore, worked actively to combat them.

Also determined to combat the deportations was Yomtov Yacoel, a Jewish lawyer who was originally born in Trikala in Central Greece but moved to Thessaloniki to practice law in 1923.[22] One day after the Germans announced that the first group of Jews had departed Thessaloniki for Poland, he created a document titled the "Plan for the Settlement of the

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[19] Levine, *An Ode to Salonika: The Ladino Verses of Bouena Sarfatty,* 194.
[20] Ibid., 196.
[21] Ibid., 183-186.
[22] Saltiel, Leon. "Two Friends in Axis-Occupied Greece: The Rescue Efforts of Yomtov Yacoel and Asher Moisis." *Journal of Genocide Research* 21, no. 3 (June 28, 2019), doi:10.1080/14623528.2019.1636563, 343.

Jewish Problem of Thessaloniki." The goal of this document was to halt the deportations by offering other alternatives the Germans could use to solve the "Jewish problem."[23] In his proposal, he suggested that one-third of the city's Jews could be deported to Poland, another third could be sent to Greek islands that the Italians controlled, and the rest would be Jewish workers working for the military who would be allowed to remain in Thessaloniki with their families. He also agreed to allocate the homes and assets of Jews who have been deported to benefit the Greek Christian refugees who had fled from the Bulgarian-zone to Thessaloniki, and offered to have the Jewish community finance the transfer of the Jews to the Italian-zone.[24] Unfortunately, this proposal, as well as Yacoel's efforts of reaching out to prominent political and religious leaders in northern Greece for help, did not help prevent the deportation of 46,091 Jews from Thessaloniki.[25]

In contrast to Sarfatty and Yacoel, Elie Sides and his family did not seem to know much about the intentions of the Germans or about what laid ahead in Poland. The content in the last letter that Elie Sides wrote to his daughter Lora and son-in-law Robert, who were in Athens in the spring of 1943, suggests that he had genuinely thought that the Germans were sending the Jews to work in Poland. In the letter, he asks Robert for the contact information of acquaintances in Krakow so that he could have them ready by the time they arrived, and he also asks him to recommend him and his family to his acquaintances. The fact that Elie felt the need to make business connections in order to have a support network when he arrived shows that he genuinely believed the Jews were only going to be sent to work in Poland.[26]

Elie's younger daughter Rita was engaged to a Spanish citizen. Since Spain was a neutral country at the time, Jews in Greece who were also Spanish citizens would not be persecuted or deported to concentration

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[23] Ibid., 348-349.
[24] Ibid., 349.
[25] Ibid., 349.
[26] "The Last Letter from Elie Sides." Yadvashem.org, Yad Vashem, www.yadvashem.org/yv/en/exhibitions/last-letters/1943/sides.asp.

camps. Rita's only hope of being spared from the deportations was if she could claim Spanish citizenship through her fiancée Danny, but since he was not in Thessaloniki, Elie also asked Robert to contact Danny immediately and have him arrange for Rita to be saved through the Spanish embassy. He concluded the letter with his belief that he is experienced enough to handle this "hard life" of being deported but hopes that Rita could be spared from it and writes that he would turn to prayer for strength. However, other than trying to save Rita through Danny's citizenship status, there was no mention in the letter that they had attempted to go into hiding or to escape even though they were an upper-middle class family that most likely could have afforded to. Tragically, Elie, his wife, and Rita perished at Auschwitz, as Danny was unable to reach Rita in time .[27]

Didymoteicho

The town of Didymoteicho, located in the easternmost part of northern Greece, was home to 740 Jews in 1928.[28] According to the manuscript of a book that Dr. Marco Nahon, a Jewish survivor from Didymoteicho, wrote about his life during the Holocaust, a "heavy atmosphere of anxiety covered the town" when Germany declared war on Greece on April 6, 1941. Overnight, most of the town's officials fled across the border to Turkey, and by April 10th, there were no authorities left in Didymoteicho. The Christian, Muslim, and Jewish populations all did the same, with many Jews fleeing to Istanbul since most of them had relatives there. However, Turkish authorities redirected these refugees to the island of Mytilene, where the Germans landed soon afterwards. Given the irony of the situation, many of the Jews simply returned to Didymoteicho.[29] Those who fled to Palestine or other parts of the Middle East, however, were able to survive. Rabbi Alkabes and his family, for example, fled to Palestine instead of Turkey since he anticipated Turkey's rejection of the refugees.[30]

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[27] Ibid.
[28] "Metropolitan of Didymoteicho." Jewishmuseum.gr. April 23, 2020. Accessed August 23, 2020.
[29] Nahon, Marco, *Birkenau - The Camp of Death,* 1. Yad Vashem.
[30] Metropolitan of Didymoteicho.

Those who did not were left to barricade themselves inside their houses in Didymoteicho due to fear of the Bulgarian robbers in nearby villages since all of the authorities left.[31]

In analyzing the responses of the Greek population of Didymoteicho, and the Jewish population more specifically, it is clear that nearly everyone there found the idea of being at war with the Germans terrifying. The speed at which the majority of the townspeople had fled shows how concerning they found the situation. This point is further emphasized by how the Germans had not even arrived at Didymoteicho when everyone started to flee. Perhaps through hearing about the war and anti-Semitic persecution in the rest of Europe, the Greek Jews perceived the Nazis to be life-threatening, so they left as quickly as possible. However, somewhere between the feigned politeness of the invaders and occasional friendships that developed between the Jews and the Nazis, the former began to lower their guard. Through this case study, we can observe that the Jews of Didymoteicho initially viewed the war as a terrifying force, but the way that they perceived the Germans and the war soon underwent a significant shift.

Nahon was warned on at least four occasions about the deportations. Mr. Payanastassiou, a professor at the Academy of German studies, informed him that the Germans were planning on "Konzentration Lagers, "[32] but since Nahon did not know what this term meant, he did not think much about the conversation.[33] Then, in spring of 1943, when the deportations of Jews to Poland first started in Thessaloniki, a friend from Thessaloniki told Nahon to leave Greece immediately. Yet he refused to immigrate because he believed that even if he was sent to Germany to work, since the war would most likely be over in a year or two, he would only have to work for a maximum of two years, which was not worth the hassle of immigrating.[34] Later, he received a third warning from Marco Raphael Behar, a friend of his who heard from Mr. Mandjaris, the customs director at Didymoteicho who lived in the same house as a Gestapo officer, that the

[31] Nahon, *Birkenau - The Camp of Death,* 1.
[32] German for Nazi Concentration Camp.
[33] Ibid., 5.
[34] Ibid., 6.

deported Jews were sent to be exterminated, but this still did not scare him into fleeing. This time, he dismissed Behar's warning because he did not think that it was possible to kill an entire population for no reason. In his mind, if the Germans were to kill the Jews anyways, it would not make sense for them to put in all the effort to transport them to Poland just to kill them, as it would make more sense to just kill them in Greece.[35]

These perspectives were not unique to Nahon. An interesting phenomenon that had emerged among the Jews of Didymoteicho during this time was that they began to make excuses to justify what they heard about German atrocities. Even though the Nazi soldiers usually kept operations regarding the deportations highly secretive, Herr Von Salomon of the Gestapo leaked details about the deportations to David Toraboulous, a Jew in Didymoteicho. Salomon had become close friends with Toraboulous, who was fluent in both French and German, after arriving in the Greek town. The two had such a close relationship that when it was almost time for the Jews of Didymoteicho to be deported, Salomon told him ahead of time. He described the hardest part of the deportations to be the transportation process because even though the conditions at the concentration camps would be difficult, life at the camps would still be "bearable." Upon hearing this, Toraboulous immediately informed other Jews, including Nahon, about the conversation. However, his warning was met with indifference as people once again made up excuses about why what he said could not be true.[36]

The confusing and contradictory nature of news about the deportations in Thessaloniki also did not help. Since transports for Auschwitz from Thessaloniki would go on for a few days before stopping and then continuing again, those in Didymoteicho heard on some days that transports were going on regularly and on other days that they completely stopped.[37] Given the distance between Thessaloniki and Didymoteicho, it is not surprising that such inconsistent information undermined the

[35] Ibid., 6.
[36] Ibid., 6.
[37] Ibid., 6-7.

seriousness of the issue and made news about the deportations seem like rumors. Some Jews thought that only those in Thessaloniki would be deported, while others thought that the Germans would not harm citizens of Didymoteicho as they thought that Didymoteicho would remain a free zone since it was in the protectorate of Ebro. There were even some who thought that rumors about deportations were started by the Germans themselves who wanted to reduce Jewish morale during the war. Therefore, some Jews viewed not falling for these "rumors" as a way to defend themselves and to resist against German occupation.[38]

Two months after the deportations from Thessaloniki started, the chief commander of the Gestapo ordered the Jewish Community Council of Didymoteicho to convene at its headquarters on May 4th, 1943. The commander expressed the need for all Jewish men over the age of 15 to be present at the synagogue within half an hour. He also told the Jews not to be afraid because they only wanted to do a few things and it would not take very long. In fact, they should not even bother closing their shops early because they would be returning very soon. Always polite, the Nazis made sure that the Jews did not suspect a thing while they arrived at the synagogue. However, once everyone was present, the doors slammed shut and the commander's demeanor changed completely. He shouted that all of them were now prisoners and anyone who tried to escape would be shot, ordering everyone to write a note to tell their wives to bring all their valuables and necessary items to the synagogue because they were going on a long trip and would need these items.[39] At the end of the day, 740 Jews from Didymoteicho gathered at the synagogue and were later met with Jews from the nearby region of Nea-Orestias.[40] On May 5, they departed for Thessaloniki where they would stay for 2 days at the ghettos before being transferred to Auschwitz on May 10th .[41]

Through this case study, we can observe that the Jews of Didymoteicho initially viewed the war as a terrifying force, but they soon

[38] Ibid., 8.
[39] Ibid., 9.
[40] Ibid., 10.
[41] Metropolitan of Didymoteicho.

started coming up with reasons to "justify" the rumors they heard. Those who thought that only Jews in Thessaloniki would be deported, as well as those who thought that Didymoteicho would remain a free zone, perceived the war as something that was going on in a faraway place and they would somehow be protected from it. It was as if they saw the war as something that would not affect them, so they lost the sense of urgency that initially fueled them to flee before the occupation began. For those who did not resist because they did not think that it was possible to kill an entire population for no reason at all, they thought that they would just be sent to Poland to work a normal job, a misleading perspective which caused them to ignore the dangers in front of them.

It is possible that the Jews "justified" the rumors they heard in an attempt to comfort themselves during an unpredictable time of war, or perhaps their attempts at justification could be attributed to a disconnect between what they heard and what they were witnessing. As seen by Toraboulous' friendship with Gestapo officer Salomon, there were friendly interactions between the Germans and the Jews in Didymoteicho. The Germans were also very polite with the Greeks, both Christians and Jews alike, which helped them gain the people's trust. To the Jews of Didymoteicho who lived relatively free from anti-Semitic persecution by the Germans during 1941-1942, the rumors about the deportations contradicted what they saw with their own eyes, so they did not believe them. Since the Germans were also friendly with them, the idea that they would suddenly be deported for no reason understandably seemed unfathomable. In observing what happened at the synagogue right before the Jews were deported, it is also clear that the Germans intentionally created a false sense of security so the Jews would not try to resist, which made it easier for them to facilitate the deportation process.

Veria

Located in Central Macedonia and home to 600 Jews prior to the start of the war, many of the Jews in Veria perceived the Nazis and the war with greater skepticism in comparison to the Jews of Didymoteicho

throughout the course of the war. 152 of Veria's Jews survived due to acts of self-preservation and resistance, and even though this translated into a survival rate of around 25 percent, it was much higher than that of other cities in northern Greece.[42] Similar to the situation in Didymoteicho, there were occasions where there were friendly relations between the Greek Jews and the German soldiers. The Jews and Germans chatted and were not separated from each other. In fact, they even had a football match.[43] Just like the rest of northern Greece, although there were anti-Semitic policies against the Jews, no Jews were deported from 1941 to 1942. As a result, many had a false sense of safety. However, the way Veria's chief rabbi resisted against the Nazis helped save the lives of many.

Tales about anti-Semitic persecution in Thessaloniki where Germans seized Jewish homes to live in, as well as forced Veria's Jewish community to pay their party bills from local taverns, all made the chief rabbi of Veria, Rabbi Stroumsa, wonder whether it was time to go into hiding.[44] Unsure about what to do, he contacted the chief rabbi of Thessaloniki, Rabbi Koretz, for advice. Koretz replied saying that there were houses and jobs in Poland ready for the Greek Jews who would be deported, and that everything would be alright so he should simply accept the deportations.[45] Fortunately, Stroumsa did not believe Koretz, and decided to consult Veria's chief of police, G. Stavridis, for a second opinion. Stavridis told him not to trust Koretz or the Germans and to flee to the mountains immediately.[46] He also persuaded him to set an example by fleeing to the mountains so that other Jews would follow.[47]

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[42] Antoniou, Giorgos. "Bystanders, Rescuers, and Collaborators: A Microhistory of Christian–Jewish Relations, 1943–1944." Chapter. In *The Holocaust in Greece*, edited by Giorgos Antoniou and A. Dirk Moses. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2018), 137-138.
[43] Ibid., 139.
[44] Ibid., 138-139.
[45] Ringelheim, Joan. "Oral History Interview with Michael Naoum Matsas." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 4 Oct. 1999, collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn507296. Accessed 23 Aug. 2020.
[46] Ibid.
[47] Antoniou, "Bystanders, Rescuers, and Collaborators: A Microhistory of Christian–Jewish Relations, 1943–1944," 141.

Shortly afterwards, the rabbi put his 85-year-old mother on a donkey and they set off for the remote mountain villages.[48] This set an example for 155 more of Veria's Jews to follow his footsteps and escape to the mountains, where 152 of them survived the war. However, not everyone followed his example and viewed the Nazis with the same level of skepticism.[49] According to a manuscript of a book written by Anneta Yaffe, a Jewish survivor from Veria, 48 hours before the Germans were about to round up the Jews in Veria, her husband's family decided to escape to the mountains. Her sister also managed to escape, but there were many others, such as her mother, who believed the Nazi's lies about there being jobs and houses in Germany.

Instead of escaping with her daughters, Anneta's mother packed her bags and prepared toasted bread and some other food for the trip to Germany. Anneta's brothers also packed their tools for the trip, thinking that they would come in handy once they started working there.[50] This shows that even though Anneta's mother and brothers could have gone into hiding, they decided not to because they did not perceive the Nazis with the same level of skepticism as Rabbi Stroumsa did. However, the situation was actually much more complicated because the Germans threatened to kill anyone who tried to escape. Rabbi Koretz also had a lot of influence in Veria, so many families listened to his calls for compliance with German orders. Furthermore, based on Jewish teachings and traditions, families had to stay together, and the only event in which one would leave their families is if the daughter got married and joined her husband's family.[51] Therefore, in addition to not perceiving the Nazis with a high level of skepticism, these factors could have all contributed to their decision of not resisting against the Nazis' orders.

For those who did not manage to escape, shortly after the deportations from Thessaloniki started, the Nazis sealed off the Jewish

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[48] Ringelheim, Joan. "Oral History Interview with Michael Naoum Matsas."
[49] Antoniou, "Bystanders, Rescuers, and Collaborators: A Microhistory of Christian–Jewish Relations, 1943–1944," 141.
[50] Ibid., 16.
[51] Ibid., 16.

district of Barbouta in Veria and deported the Jews to Auschwitz on May 1, 1943, none of whom ever returned.[52] Despite all this, it is clear that Stroumsa's leadership had a powerful influence in shaping the way Veria's Jews perceived the Nazis. The way he viewed German intentions towards the Jews with great skepticism can be seen by how he asked for a second opinion after speaking to Koretz, which caused the outcome of his leadership to be very different from that of Koretz's. It is also important to point out that Veria and Thessaloniki had very close relations and Rabbi Koretz had a very strong influence over Veria, so what Stroumsa achieved was no easy feat.[53] Ultimately, his ability to see through the lies of the Nazis allowed him to engage in acts of resistance and self-preservation that not only saved him and his family, but also many members of Veria's Jewish community.

Kavala and Drama

In Kavala and Drama, Greek cities located in eastern Macedonia, the efforts of self-preservation and resistance of the people against the threat of Bulgarian occupation also revealed how they perceived the Germans and progression of the war. According to the testimony of Nick Levi who was living in Kavala when the war started, the people in his city "knew everything" that was going on in Europe and the Middle East through free newspapers, the radio, and contacts with the outside world. In 1933, when Hitler rose to power, the people of Kavala were very against his fascist dictatorship since they had a Communist mayor, and they were also very worried about the fate of the Jews in Germany after the Kristallnacht in 1938. This instance showed that Jews in northern Greece did know about what was going on in the outside world from the news and media. Since Nick and his family anticipated that Germany would invade Greece as well, they applied to immigrate to the United States. However, by the time their visa was approved in 1939, World War II had started and they could not

[52] Antoniou, "Bystanders, Rescuers, and Collaborators: A Microhistory of Christian–Jewish Relations, 1943–1944," 141.
[53] Yaffe, Anneta, and Julie Larido. "Anneta's Story : [Julie Larido]," United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 2003, 16.

travel anymore. Since they assumed that France and Britain would be able to defeat the Nazis, they did not try to leave Greece again.[54]

Others in Kavala responded similarly when the occupation began in 1941. Although not everyone had the means to immigrate to the US, many families went from Kavala to other parts of Greece when it became clear that the area would be occupied by the Bulgarians. Since many in Kavala had either experienced or heard about Bulgarian atrocities in Greece during World War I, many of them fled from the Bulgarian zone. Since Nick and his family could not immigrate to the US, after hearing from their neighbors about Bulgarian atrocities, they decided to flee to Thessaloniki. Thessaloniki was already occupied by the Germans at that time, so having known about German anti-Semitic policies in the rest of Europe, the Levis did not think that life under the Germans would necessarily be better, but they thought that they would be better protected there because it was a much bigger city compared to Kavala's population of 50,000 Greeks.[55] Here, it sounds like even though they knew about German atrocities, one could not help but wonder whether they really knew the full extent of Nazi anti-Semitism. In perceiving the power of the Nazis as something that they could hide from through being in a larger city, the Levis underestimated the amount of danger they would soon find themselves in, and this underestimation hindered the family's ability to escape elsewhere where they could have been saved.

In the nearby city of Drama, the Greeks were also terrified of living in the Bulgarian zone. Alegre Tevet, a Jewish woman who lived in Drama, recalled that her mother remembered Bulgarian atrocities from the first world war, so their family moved to Thessaloniki in 1942. However, their decision was also partially fueled by how they did not know about Hitler's atrocities.[56] This unexpectedness and underestimating of the Nazis' ability

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[54] Rubin, Amy. "Oral History Interview with Nick Levi." United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, 22 Mar. 2007, collections.ushmm.org/search/catalog/irn518937. Accessed 23 Aug. 2020.
[55] Ibid.
[56] Tevet, Alegre. vha.usc.edu, USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archive, https://vha.usc.edu/viewingPage?testimonyID=28687&segmentNumber=3

to exterminate large populations also caused many Jews from Drama who ended up fleeing to Thessaloniki to have placed themselves in a position of danger, and as a result they were unable to resist or escape effectively in order to survive.

However, the situation of those who have fled from the Bulgarian zone to the German zone is unique and the outcome of the attempts of self-preservation or resistance cannot completely be attributed to a lack of a complete picture of the German atrocities in Nazi-Europe. Since World War I only happened shortly before the Second World War, many memories of Bulgarian atrocities committed against the Greeks during the First World War were still fresh in people's minds. Bulgarian atrocities most likely became the standard for which all other threats were measured against. Combining the short amount of time one had to escape and how horrendous Bulgarian atrocities were during the First World War, it is possible that the people in Drama and Kavala could have simply resorted to thinking about which zone would be worse. In making this comparison, it is probable that they would rather live in the German-zone because even though they had heard about German anti-Semitism in other parts of Nazi Europe, it was not something that they had personally experienced; so to a certain extent, it represented the unknown. This being said, there could have been a hope that life in the German zone would be better. In comparing a situation with an ambiguous outcome to one that had already been proven to be terrible, many Jews may have thought that they would be better off in the German zone. Therefore, they might not have felt the same sense of desperation about avoiding the German zone that they did about avoiding the Bulgarian zone.

Conclusion

This paper by no means represents the experiences and resistance efforts of all the Jews in northern Greece. However, through looking at the example of Thessaloniki, Veria, and Didymoteicho, it is clear that the Nazis feigned friendliness to create a false sense of safety and discourage resistance. This resulted in a dramatic decrease in the amount of resistance

from the beginning of the occupation to the end as the Jews lowered their guard. In Kavala and Drama, the disparity in the level of knowledge that people had about Nazi anti-Semitism in other parts of Europe also caused many to be unaware of the dangers of living in the German zone, which also lowered the need that people felt to resist. Finally, during the occupation, the Nazis managed to convince many of the Jews that they would simply be sent to Poland to work. Since this type of rhetoric was backed up by the chief rabbi of Thessaloniki, many Jews ended up not resisting the deportations. However, the extent to which the lack of resistance was caused by the belief that they were actually going to Poland to work, or whether it was due to fear of reprisals, remains a topic that could benefit from further research.

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To the Edge of Settlement

The Porvenir Massacre as a Case Study of Frontier Vigilantism

By: Christopher Aranda ‘22

Less than a mile from the United States–Mexico border, a solitary black plaque stands in remembrance of the massacre that took place in Porvenir, Texas on January 28, 1918.[1] In the early morning hours, the Texas Rangers Company B entered the village of Porvenir, which was largely populated by Mexican immigrants, and ordered all inhabitants out of their homes; the ten Rangers were assisted by the Eighth U.S. Army Cavalry members and four local Anglo-American ranchers. While the Cavalry members kept watch on the women and little children, the Rangers and ranchmen marched fifteen males (ethnic Mexicans) to a nearby hill and killed them all at point-blank range.

The Porvenir Massacre is a case study of dual purpose. The massacre is emblematic of both the Anglo-American state-sanctioned violence of the American Southwest and the Mexican-American resistance of the early 20th century. The research is dynamic and demands a greater understanding of the violence perpetrated against Mexican-American communities in Texas, Utah, Nevada, and California. Moreover, the research undertaken and presented effectively demonstrates that violence against Mexican-Americans was both state-sanctioned and condemned by the state. The violence inflicted upon Porvenir inhabitants is an example of frontier vigilantism of the American Southwest. Furthermore, those affected by the Porvenir Massacre were not passive spectators to such violence rather they were active resistors.

This resistance takes extraordinary form due to it being acts of non-violent, political retribution. The Texas State House of Representatives and Mexican diplomatic networks were used as a means of active and long-lasting resistance. This unique resistance was relied upon in the aftermath of the Porvenir Massacre. Additionally, the last facet of resistance was not individualistic but collective. As shall be discussed, the group tasks initiated by Mexican-American communities in Southwestern Texas, along

[1] Minsker, Justin "Remembering the Porvenir Massacre," The Texas Historical Commission, January 25, 2019,

with the Mexican Revolution of 1910, bred a collective identity within those communities. Such collective identity was further used as a form of resistance by the Porvenir survivors regarding the burials of the murdered.

An explanatory overview of U.S.-Mexican relations in the early 20th century will establish the historical context of this paper. With historical context laid, the chronology of events that took place in Porvenir during the winter of 1918 will be reviewed. In regards to the aftermath of the events, an analysis of the nonviolent resistance utilized by the Porvenir Massacre survivors will follow. The presentation and rebuttal of frontier vigilantism theories will be discussed, which will elucidate the similar violence found in other Southwestern communities. Additionally, memory and familial history will be ever-present within the spirit of this research and, appropriately, concludes the research.

On the U.S.–Mexican Relations Prior To 1918

In 1910, Francisco Madero challenged the thirty-six-year dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, commonly called the *Porfiriato*. While the *Porfiriato* ushered stability into the Mexican nation and along the Texas-Mexico border, the government was tilted in favor of the rich and political elite. As a result, the chasm between the poor working class and Mexican society's upper echelon grew. Madero called for the reinstitution of constitutional rights and swiftly gained office. Soon after the election, Madero was assassinated and replaced with General Victoriano Huerta, a dictatorial strongman. The Huerta dictatorship drew opposition for its conservative policies that were seen to resemble that of Díaz. Most importantly, the Huerta government was unable to gain American recognition. Venustiano Carranza ousted Huerta and became President of Mexico in 1917. Soon, Carranza would be challenged by mercenary forces led by Pancho Villa and Emiliano Zapata.[2] These revolutionary conditions created two main effects along the Rio Grande basin and the American Southwest as a whole.

[2] Hart, John Mason "The Mexican Revolution," in *The Oxford History of Mexico*, ed. Michael Meyer, William Beezley, (New York, NY: Oxford University Press), 409-437.

The most tangible effect was Villa and Zapata's mercenary tactics which typically spilled over into Texas territory. An inhabitant of a Texas frontier town, W.B. Hinkly, articulated, "while Díaz was in power in Mexico everything was very peaceful along the [border]...we had no trouble with stealing, but ever since the revolution started...we have had a good deal of stealing and bandit trouble."[3] These disturbances within Texas certainly frightened Anglo settlers. Coupled with a weak central Mexican government to quell the skirmishes, these events heightened Anglo fear and feelings of resentment toward Mexican settlers or Tejanos.[4] Determined by State Department officials as a local issue, requests for federal troops were denied. Experiencing all-around low points, the Texas Rangers were reinvigorated when tasked with patrolling and controlling the border.[5] The renewal of the Texas Rangers was a welcomed state policy. Multiple Anglo residents described the Rangers as "a godsend to our Valley...They are courageous. They will fight buzzsaws."[6]

Image 1. Texas Rangers patrolling the U.S.-Mexico Border during World War I. Courtesy of The Texas Rangers Hall of Fame and Museum, Waco.

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[3] United States Congress. Senate. Committee On Foreign Relations. Investigation of Mexican affairs. Preliminary report and hearings of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, pursuant to S. res. 106, directing the Committee on Foreign Relations to investigate the matter of outrages on citizens of the United States in Mexico. Washington, Govt. Off, 1920, p. 1181.

[4] Swanson, Doug J., *Cult of Glory: The Bold and Brutal History of the Texas Rangers*, (New York, NY: Viking Press, 2020), 250.

[5] Ibid, 249.

[6] "Proceedings of the Joint Committee of the Senate and the House in the Investigation of the Texas State Ranger Force" UTRGV Digital Library, University of Texas - Rio Grande Valley.

The second effect was more abstract, yet of no smaller significance. The Mexican Revolution of 1910–1920 was a national movement that sought equality and recognition for all its citizens. Similar to its American counterpart, the Mexican Revolution had international ripple effects. Sentiments of individual autonomy and liberty influenced the Mexicans in Texas to assert their rights to be respected and strive to prosper, albeit living in a strange land.

Arguably, these nationalist feelings of Mexicanism were planted before the Madero–Díaz conflict. The Mexican settlers of southwestern Texas were more likely to see themselves as Mexican rather than American. Being long-standing targets of prejudice, Mexican settlers saw themselves as embodying the revolution's conceptions of freedom.[7] Furthermore, most Mexicans lived and worked with other Mexicans almost exclusively. Working together on cattle ranches or mines in Texas cultivated camaraderie and a shared sense of culture.[8] Consequently, the divide between Anglos and Mexicans in the frontier towns of Texas was outrightly made, contributing to a shared mistrust of the other.

Extending this racial conflict, World War I began July 28 of 1914; during the height of the Mexican Revolution. Seeing American sympathies aligned with the allies, the German government saw an opportunity to sow discord between Mexico and the United States. In German eyes, Mexico could be a base for espionage, and the Mexican nation could be utilized to deplete Allied resources. Acting quickly, German military agents became the main instigators of hatred between the Mexican and Anglo settlers of Texas.[9] Additionally, the Zimmerman Telegram, a German promise of Mexican conquest in the Southwest, further cemented concerns of German-Mexican collaboration.

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[7] Ibid, 24.

[8] Carrigan, William, and Webb, Clive "*Muertos Por Unos Desconocidos*: Mob Violence Against Blacks and Mexicans," *Beyond Black And White: Race, Ethnicity, and Gender in the U.S. South and Southwest*, ed. Stephanie Cole and Alison M. Parker (Texas, U.S.: Texas A&M University Press), 44.

[9] United States Congress. Senate. Committee On Foreign Relations. Investigation of Mexican affairs. Preliminary report and hearings of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, pursuant to S. res. 106, directing the Committee on Foreign Relations to investigate the matter of outrages on citizens of the United States in Mexico. Washington, Govt. Print. Off, 1920. 1223-1225.

Already disconcerted with a Mexican presence and growing Mexican nationalism, the discovery of the Plan of San Diego affirmed the fear and prejudice held by Anglo residents of Texas. This plot outlined the goal of seizing the Southwest region of the United States by Mexican revolutionaries. The Plan of San Diego of 1915 called for the "liberty of the individuals of the black race and its independence of Yankee tyranny which has held us in iniquitous slavery since the remote times."[10] It further outlined the use of an army to wrestle Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Colorado, and California from U.S. control. The most radical aspect of the Plan was the call for the killing of every Anglo male over the age of sixteen. Mexican nationals who were self-proclaimed revolutionaries carried out multiple raids which provoked the Texas Rangers to gather in force. The noted historian at the time, Walter Noble Burns, declared the attacks to be caused by "the hatred for gringos that burns undyingly in the Mexican people. [This hatred] is bred to the bone in almost every man, woman, and child in Mexico."[11] The attitude espoused by Burns is telling of the paranoia and fear possessed by the Anglo population. Anglo-Americans posited to deport the Mexicans en masse and to put Tejanos into camps. Although such a scheme was never implemented, the Texas Rangers would act as constant reminders of Anglo antipathy.

The Happenings of Porvenir, Texas on January 28, 1918

In the early morning hours of January 28, 1918, Texas Rangers Company B and eight members of the U.S. Cavalry Regiment along with four local ranchmen––Buck Poole, John Poole, Tom Snyder, and Raymond Fitzgerald––entered the tiny village of Porvenir.[12] Situated in the Big Bend area of the Chihuahuan desert, Porvenir was inhabited by poor Mexican farmers and laborers whose sympathies went to Mexico more than Texas. Raymond Fitzgerald, owner of a local ranch and one of the ranchmen who

[10] "Plan of San Diego", *Digital History*.
[11] Swanson, Doug J., *Cult of Glory: The Bold and Brutal History of the Texas Rangers*, (New York, NY: Viking Press, 2020), 250.
[12] Martinez, Monica Muñoz "Denial of Justice," *The Injustice Never Leaves You*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018), 121.

participated in the massacre, would later testify that the Porvenir citizens were not held in high esteem and believed to be allied with Mexican revolutionaries. “Their standing as thieves, informers, spies, and murderers has been well known for two or three years. They used this El Porvenir ranch as headquarters but stayed in Mexico during the day.”[13]

The Brite Ranch Raid precipitated the Porvenir Massacre. On Christmas Day 1917, a Mexican raiding party surrounded the ranch located in Presidio County, approximately three hours away from Porvenir. The Mexican raiders stole supplies from the ranch, including ammunition, before hanging the postman and riding back into Mexico.[14] The Texas Rangers received a report that the Mexicans in Porvenir wore shoes that were taken during the Brite Ranch Raid. Saddled with this information, Texas Rangers Company B arrived at Porvenir at two o’clock in the morning on January 28, 1918.[15]

Led by Ranger Captain James Monroe Fox, the authorities were directed by Fox to wake the residents and gather them outside. Cavalry Private Robert Keil, who would later write a firsthand account of his experience at Porvenir, attempted to reassure the residents that no harm would occur and that they should not be afraid. Owing to the effects of the Mexican Revolution, the Texas Rangers established their name to be provocative of terror; consequently, Keil would later admit that his attempt at consolation was futile. Keil endorsed the view that Porvenir was evidence of the terror that gripped frontier towns.[16] Fifteen men and boys were separated from the rest of the village “without having been given time to

[13] Statement by Raymond Fitzgerald, January 28, 1918. Adjutant General’s Papers. Quoted in Looney, Wesley Hall, “The Texas Rangers in a Turbulent Era,” Masters Thesis in History, Texas Tech University, May 1971, 24.
[14] United States Congress. Senate. Committee On Foreign Relations. Investigation of Mexican affairs. Preliminary report and hearings of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, pursuant to S. res. 106, directing the Committee on Foreign Relations to investigate the matter of outrages on citizens of the United States in Mexico. Washington, Govt. Print. Off, 1920.
[15] Martinez, Monica Muñoz “Denial of Justice,” *The Injustice Never Leaves You*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018), 132.
[16] Keil, Robert, *Bosque Benito: Violent Times Along The Borderlands During the Mexican Revolution* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 30-32.

dress, and were led away to the edge of settlement."[17] Ordering the federal soldiers to guard the village, Captain Fox and the Texas Rangers marched the fifteen males to a bluff and summarily executed them. As the Rangers rode away, the U.S. Cavalry soldiers approached the bluff. Keil described the scene as "a mass of bodies…we smelled the nauseating sweetish smell of blood and we saw the most hellish sight that any of us had ever witnessed. An older man had his face blown off. The professionals had done their work well."[18]

Image 2. Captain James M. Fox (far left) was the massacre's ringleader. He voluntarily retired and rejoined the Rangers a few years after the massacre. This picture was taken after a Ranger raid in Brownsville, TX. Courtesy of the Center For American History, University of Texas At Austin.

Harry Warren, a local schoolteacher who had married the daughter of one of the victims, recorded the survivor's statements. Warren noted that the survivors included women, children, elderly men, and two pregnant women. Through his notebook entries, Warren reflected on the devastation by describing "the quiet village of Porvenir with its peaceful farms was no more! The Rangers and the four cowmen made 42 orphans that night."[19]

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[17] Black, James S. *El Paso Morning Times* (El Paso, Tex.), Vol. 38TH YEAR, Ed. 1, Friday, February 9, 1918, newspaper, February 8, 1918; El Paso, Texas.
[18] Keil, Robert, *Bosque Benito: Violent Times Along The Borderlands During the Mexican Revolution* (College Station: Texas A&M University Press, 2004), 30-32.
[19] *Harry Warren's Porvenir Notebook* 1918, (2019, February) Retrieved from The Bullock Texas State History Museum.

Image 4. The schoolteacher of Porvenir, Harry Warren, who recorded the names of the victims, survivor's accounts, and his own reflections on the event. Much of the foundational research on Porvenir is due to Mr. Warren. Image 5. Excerpt of Henry Warren's notebook in which he lists the names of women and children left behind by the victims.

Resistance After Porvenir

Inadvertently or not, previous scholarship has blurred the lines between the Mexican revolutionaries and peaceful Tejanos caught in the middle of the border conflicts of 1910-1920. Often this idea assists with conjuring Mexican-Americans as gun-slinging Villaistas and Zapatistas. The fact remains that the violent raids which occurred in the borderlands were initiated by Mexican nationals acting on behalf of the revolution.[20] Quiet border towns such as Porvenir were essentially used as scapegoats by the Texas Rangers of the time as a consequence of a high Mexican population who sympathized with revolutionary ideals. Nevertheless, these frontier towns were not passive to such violence; instead, they took on active resistance. This resistance was not typified by Porvenir violently, but symbolically, politically, and diplomatically.

The main form of resistance to the massacre was the reassertion of Mexican identity. This is evident in the actions taken by the survivors of

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[20] United States Congress. Senate. Committee On Foreign Relations. Investigation of Mexican affairs. Preliminary report and hearings of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, pursuant to S. res. 106, directing the Committee on Foreign Relations to investigate the matter of outrages on citizens of the United States in Mexico. Washington, Govt. Print. Off, 1920, p. 1226-1229.

Porvenir concerning the burials of the victims. As they abandoned their homes and crossed into Mexico to resettle near the border, the families' resentment towards Anglo society increased.[21] The burial arrangements of the victims was an example of the resistance against "policing" efforts. All fifteen bodies were taken from the bluff despite their decrepit condition, and transported to Mexico where they were buried. This action is quiet and subtle, yet is a resounding message of defiance. By retrieving the bodies and burying them in Mexico, the citizens of Porvenir denied control of the Mexican body by Anglo soil. Before, the Texas Rangers had complete control over the lives of the Tejanos as a result of the fearsome reputation they constructed. Alternatively, the control of the corpse would now belong to the Mexican community instead of the Rangers. Such resistance was typical of Mexican-Americans in the American Southwest. A mass exodus of Mexican-Americans from the Texas borderlands was a common technique used by Tejanos. At least half of Mexican-American families in frontier towns abandoned the rural areas after incidents of vigilantism.[22] Some may view this exodus as a forced fleeing from violence; regardless, it was still given a defiant meaning. To bury the body in Mexican soil was an exercise to assert one's identity and reject land that had never produced familial or national sentiments.

The emergence of the Mexican identity in death was not an isolated event specific to the Porvenir survivors alone. It was, rather, an occurrence that was highlighted in Mexican deaths throughout the American West. This most prominently happened in 1920s Los Angeles. In the death notices or "*defunciones*" section of *La Opinión*, a reassertion and reclamation of Mexican identity appeared in almost every death notice of the late 1920s. In most of the death notices dating from 1926-1927, the deceased would often be called "*compatriota*."[23] Furthermore, the notice would write where in

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[21]Monica Muñoz Martinez, "Porvenir Massacre," *Handbook of Texas Online,*

[22] United States Congress. Senate. Committee On Foreign Relations. Investigation of Mexican affairs. Preliminary report and hearings of the Committee on Foreign Relations, United States Senate, pursuant to S. res. 106, directing the Committee on Foreign Relations to investigate the matter of outrages on citizens of the United States in Mexico. Washington, Govt. Print. Off, 1920, p. 1181-1184.

[23] "Sentida muerte de un compatriota en Walsenburg, Colo." *La Opinión*, July 12, 1927, p 4.

Mexico the deceased had been born.[24] The death notice of María Jesús Marrón on August 29, 1927 is demonstrative of these two concepts. In Marrón's death notice, her Mexican identity was affirmed when it reported that Marrón had been born in the San Gabriel Mission in 1827 "when Mexican Independence was still fresh," making her a compatriot in the eyes of the Mexican community.[25] The death notices also show a similar disillusionment with Anglo-American culture that the Porvenir residents possessed. This is shown in the January 4, 1927 death notice of Jesús D. Molina, whose lengthy obituary details his life's exploits. One of these exploits was when Señor Molina was cast as a colonel in an unnamed American film detailing the Battle of San Jacinto of the Texas Revolution. Instead of surrendering to American forces, Molina had rallied other Mexican actors to partake in historical revisionism and win the Battle of San Jacinto.[26] Molina's death served to display his Mexican identity through his patriotism to Mexican land and country.

Although the Texas courts refused to prosecute the Rangers, the families continued to seek redress for the massacre through legislative and diplomatic avenues. The State Department at Washington ordered an investigation, at the behest of Mexican ambassador Ignacio Bonillas, of the killings. The director of the investigation, First Lieutenant Patrick Kelly, pointed out that the fifteen Mexicans were killed in cold blood.[27] This investigation into the Texas Rangers allowed for multiple witnesses to testify against the tip that Porvenir harbored supplies from the Brite Ranch raid. It was found that the Porvenir victims utilized none of the property taken from Brite Ranch. Representative José T. Canales of the Texas State House launched his own legislative investigation into the Texas Rangers in 1919 and was applauded by groups who represented the families such as Virginia Yeager. Yeager wrote to Canales that she was satisfied Canales was

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[24] This happens in multiple notices, almost in every single one in the summer of 1927. See *La Opinión*, June 28, July 13, July 22, August 3, and August 6, 1927, p. 4-5.
[25] "Una Mexicana Murió A Los Cien Años." *La Opinión*, August 29, 1927, p. 4.
[26] "Murió D. Jesús Molina." *La Opinión*, January 4, 1927.
[27] Proceedings of the Joint Committee of the Senate and the House in the Investigation of the Texas State Ranger Force," p. 145-146. UTRGV Digital Library, University of Texas - Rio Grande Valley.

bringing "into notice the injustice done by that lawless band of highwaymen known as the Rangers."[28]

The investigation was a crushing blow for the Texas Rangers. The Governor of Texas, William Pettus Hobby, disbanded Company B of the Texas Rangers and pressured Captain J.M. Fox to resign.[29] Despite these actions taken, not a single Texas Ranger nor any of the local ranch hands that participated in the massacre were prosecuted. This inaction led to Mexican resistance extending to the Mexican government. Mexico's Ambassador to the United States, Ignacio Bonillas, wrote to the Secretary of State Robert Lansing. Bonillas expressed his optimism that in the course of the judicial investigation, "there may result not only the resignation of the Captain of the Rangers, J.M. Fox, but the punishment which he and others who are found guilty because this is demanded by justice and of the State of Texas."[30]

The survivors' navigation of the court system and legislative tribunals demonstrate a sophisticated form of resistance separate from a narrative of violent resistance. Sentiments of Mexican nationalism contributed to instability on the border, while Mexican identity served as their means of non-violent resistance. Because state authorities carried out the masacre, resistance to these authorities was exhibited through repeated calls for state condemnation. The very fact that a marginalized population would discover avenues of resistance whilst retaining a certain degree of dignity and self-identity is truly an extraordinary act of history and an integral part of resistance theory.

On Vigilantism and Frontier Violence

The Porvenir Massacre typifies diplomatic and political resistance while exemplifying the attitudes towards vigilantism and violence against Mexican-Americans in the American Southwest. Frontier vigilantism was most prevalent in the desert because it was an isolated region, denoting a

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[28] Ibid, 145-146
[29] *Handbook of Texas Online,* Monica Muñoz Martinez, "Porvenir Massacre."
[30] Bonillas, Ignacio, Mexican Ambassador, to Robert Lansing Secretary of State, July 19, 1918, Annex 97-A, Docket 561, Mexican Claims.

strong solitary feeling. The isolation of the landscape causes the frontier to lag from proper legal and governmental institutions. Having to confront the prospect of an absent legal authority, frontiersmen were forced to take the law into their own hands.[31] Accordingly, many condoned frontier vigilantism or "Texas justice" as a necessary evil. This extralegal violence has been seen as an essential function and expectation of the frontier, within the Western historian's perspective, to lasso and tame the hostile environment of the American West. The historian Richard Maxwell Brown, a well–versed apologist for this interpretive model, has posited that vigilante justice "was a positive facet of the American experience. Many a new frontier community gained order and stability as a result of vigilantism."[32] According to Brown's view, and others like his, the institution of iron-fisted authority was legitimized by the stability it accomplished.

The contention that vigilantism is justified is an academic fallacy. As explained by American historians William D. Carrigan and Clive Webb, the socially constructive model of vigilantism legitimizes the actions of lawbreakers.[33] When one acts in the belief that vigilantism is permissible, the implicit presumption then exists that vigilantes are virtuous, and their victims are guilty. Proponents of such a theory, fundamentally, expel the assumption of innocence before being proven guilty.

Furthermore, vigilantism is directly contrary to the justice upheld within a court of law. Passionately argued by Ida B. Wells in the *London Daily Chronicle* of 1894, by refusing a trial to the accused, vigilante mobs exposed themselves to being an uncivilized people:

> Make your laws as terrible as you like; devise what tortures you choose; go back to the most barbarous methods of the most barbarous ages; and then my case is just as strong. Prove your man

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[31] Carrigan, William D., and Webb, Clive "The Lynching of Persons of Mexican Origin or Descent in the United States, 1848 to 1928" *Journal of Social History*, Winter 2003, Vol. 37, No. 2, 415.
[32] Brown, Richard Maxwell, *Strain of Violence: Historical Studies of American Violence and Vigilantism* (New York, 1975), 96-97.
[33] Carrigan, William D., and Webb, Clive "The Lynching of Persons of Mexican Origin or Descent in the United States, 1848 to 1928" *Journal of Social History*, Winter 2003, Vol. 37, No. 2, 415.

> guilty, first; hang him, shoot him, pour coal oil over him and roast him, IF you have concluded that civilization demands this; but be sure the man has committed the crime first.[34]

It was in the view of Wells, as well as Carrigan and Webb, that the replacement of legal remedies with vigilantism in these societies considered them "barbarous" with a false sense of justice. This disconnection from justice has not only been shared amongst historians and anti-lynch advocates, but by the lynch mobs themselves.

A month after the Porvenir massacre, in the *El Paso Morning Times*, the divorce of the law from vigilantism was made starkly apparent. The newspaper's Editorial Board called the Porvenir victims "bandits" and "peons" whose killings were justified by the Texas Rangers for it was in the goal of controlling the border.[35] The disregard of the legal processes existed in June of 1874 concerning the California lynching of Jésus Romo. The *Los Angeles Star* lauded the decision to lynch Romo and dispense with court formalities by declaring Romo to be "a hardened and blood stained desperado, who deserved richly the fate which overtook him."[36] Even after the firm establishment of the legal procedure, vigilante committees continued frontier violence.[37] In Silver City, Nevada of 1877, the *Lyon County Times* wrote that after occurrences of banditry, five Mexicans were arrested and jailed by legal authorities. At night "[The accused] were taken out by a party of citizens and hanged. This affair will do more to deter the lawless–most of whom are Greasers–than any number of sentences to prison life, even with the death penalty."[38]

Vigilantes maintain a nonchalant attitude towards both legal procedures and the violence they ensue. In 1915, *The San Antonio Express* wrote, "the findings of dead bodies of Mexicans, suspected of being

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[34] Wells, Ida B. *London Daily Chronicle*, 28 April 1894, p. 3. [Box 10], Special Collections Research Center, University of Chicago Library.
[35] Black, James S., *El Paso Morning Times* (El Paso, Tex.), Vol. 38TH YEAR, Ed. 1, Friday, February 8, 1918, newspaper, February 8, 1918; El Paso, Texas.
[36] *Los Angeles Star*, June 13, 1874, p. 1.
[37] Caughey, John W.,"Their Majesties the Mob: Vigilantes Past and Present," *Pacific Historical Review* XXVI (1957): p. 222.
[38] *Lyon County Times*, December 29, 1877, p. 2.

connected to troubles, has reached a point where it creates little or no interest."[39] Similarly, an editorial published in the *El Paso Herald* voiced dissatisfaction at the slow rate that Mexicans were being killed: "[Mexicans] are killing and plundering. There is some satisfaction in killing them afterward, but the death of half a hundred of the worthless brutes does not compensate for the murder of a single American."[40] This attitude towards the extralegal violence was made apparent to political figures as early as the late 1800s. Testifying to Congress in 1875, the U.S. Consul in Matamoros, Thomas Wilson, announced that, "when an aggression is made upon a Mexican it is not much minded. For instance, when it is known that a Mexican has been hung or killed there is seldom any fuss made about it."[41]

Many have not understood nor *viewed* "Texas justice" through the lens of vigilantism. "Texas justice" has been delegated to a shelf of admiration through its portrayal in multiple mediums of media, ranging from its comedic depictions within shows such as *The Office* and *Spongebob Squarepants* to its heroic mythicism enshrined within the movie *Hell or High Water* and the Western novel *Lonesome Dove*. Although these portraits may not have the explicit purpose to be taken seriously, they have, nonetheless, helped legitimize "Texas justice" as a parochial system of law while dissociating vigilantism from that form of justice. The "Texas justice" exercised upon the inhabitants of Porvenir in 1918 was not justice; rather it was an example of violence quintessential of frontier towns.

Conclusion

It is either apt or horribly prescient that *porvenir* means future. The small village's only claim to its future is that black plaque that stands as simultaneous defiance and defeat to the events that occurred 102 years ago. The events of Porvenir and its aftermath are typical of frontier vigilantism against Mexican-Americans. The Chihuahuan desert and the American

[39] *San Antonio Express* (San Antonio, TX), Vol. 50, No. 258, Ed. 1 Wednesday, September 15, 1915, newspaper, San Antonio, Texas.
[40] Slater, H.D. *El Paso Herald* (El Paso Tex.) Ed. 1, Monday, April 8, 1918, newspaper.
[41] "The Texas Border Troubles," Misc. Doc. No. 64, *House Reports*, 45th Congress, 2nd Session, 1878, 285.

Southwest can certainly be delineated as a powder keg of racial and political relations in the late and early 19th and 20th centuries, respectively. This hotbed of conflict was due to the Mexican Revolution and its ideals that caused Mexican settlers to assert their own claim to the land. These sentiments of individual autonomy could be seen as a consistent means of resistance to Anglo aggression along the Texas-Mexico border. Coupled with this resistance was a diplomatic, legislative resistance that was persistent in its unrelenting pursuit to achieve accountability, if not legal justice.

However, legal justice was often not achieved because of the existence of vigilantism. Intense extrajudicial violence was seen as a recourse to actual legal remedies. As a result, vigilantism became an exercise to settle racial and regional vendettas. The policing of the frontier was a reconquest of Southwest territory. Perceiving the Mexican foothold in Texas as unjust and the federal government as passive observers, Anglo settlers reestablished the Texas Rangers as noble knights charged with protecting Texan fertility.

Unbeknownst to the Porvenir survivors, the massacre and other incidents of extralegal violence would become demonstrative of specific abstract concepts, which are memory and familial histories. The memory of Porvenir affects the descendants of the victims just as much as the survivors. At the 100th commemoration of the massacre, one of the victim's descendants, Brandi Tobar, sang, "Porvenir, where 15 men died in cold blood. Porvenir, a village of hope and dust." Another descendant, Amanda Shields, described the massacre as a "heavy burden of my family's for a long time."[42] Memory serves a dual purpose to the descendants of the victims––a remembrance of the injustice and knowledge of no justice. As a result, memory has inhibited closure for these families.

The Texas Rangers' actions in the early 20th century lead to more questions about policing, immigration, and regional versus national identity. An analytical discourse on whether or not these actions were a

[42] Mekelburg, Madlin, "Porvenir Massacre on Texas Border Haunts Descendants 100 Years Later," *El Paso Times*, Jan. 26, 2018,

historical convention or consistency might demand further research. The need for an analysis of border policing is a result of the Texas Rangers' actions and other extralegal authorities that caused the generational recognition that can only assuage the pain for a small length of time. The effects of vigilantism are wounds of progeny that are constantly ripped open and analyzed. Thus, the wounds can never heal, but repeatedly scar.

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5

An Interview with Dr. Aro Velmet

By: Mallory Novicoff ‘22

In 2019, I took “History of Modern Europe” with Dr. Aro Velmet. Right away, as we discussed topics varying from the French Revolution to the nuances of the Soviet Union, I was struck by his brilliance and deep understanding of Europe’s diverse cultures. Now, with the opportunity to interview Professor Velmet for *The Scroll*, I looked forward to learning more about his path from Estonia to USC and his inspiration for pursuing a career in academia. We sat down to talk on a cool September afternoon. Professor Velmet was enthusiastic and excited to share, beginning with some insight into the influence of his background on his studies: “I am originally from Estonia and I grew up there in a moment in time where the Soviet Union collapsed and Estonia became independent. I had this narrative that Estonians were slaves or serfs … and after 700 years of struggle were finally freed in 1917. Then I went to college, and realized how problematic that narrative was, and how it was writing out of history a lot of people who had other thoughts…and that there were a lot of conflicts that were not being talked about.” Listening to him speak, I strongly connected with his note about the discomfort of learning the truth about your home country’s flaws.

We then went on to chat about how he came to study history in the United States. He initially attended the University of Tartu in Estonia, before transferring to the University of Pennsylvania after being inspired by a friend to apply to colleges in America. At first, Professor Velmet studied science before a class on African history convinced him to switch to history. “I was a physics and maths major in my first years of college. I was just solving problem sets and doing differential equations. You solve an equation and it has one solution. It’s not like you can solve it in two different ways and then argue about which solution is more persuasive. So that's really what drew me to the discipline, precisely the sense of puzzlement.”

According to Professor Velmet, the field of history has a tangible impact on how societal narratives are constructed. In order to make sure these narratives are accurate and inclusive, he called for a close examination of their veracity, saying: “I think we are living through a time

where we are really starting to see the stakes of understanding history. If there is some kind of historical injustice that the modern world is built upon, then we need to start talking about things like reparations. It is important to interrogate those narratives to see whether they stand up to scrutiny or whether they are based on faulty interpretations that will hold us back."

From this, I asked him whether any specific faculty members inspired his approach to history. He described the influence of professors he studied with at New York University during his graduate studies. "I worked with a historian, Frederick Cooper, who specialized in African history, and Herrick Chapman, who is a French historian, and found their work tremendously exciting. Fred's work in particular because he has a very sharp eye towards thinking critically about the tools that historians use, thinking about what we do when we deploy concepts such as identity, or globalization, or modernity. That kind of sharpness of thinking was what really attracted me. That's the kind of advisor you want, one who is at one time generous but also will pick your work apart then make it sharper." His response provided information helpful to many pursuing further academia: find advisors who inspire you, are willing to help you, but are willing to critique you when necessary.

Professor Velmet did not initially plan on doing his graduate studies at NYU, however. "I was going to go to the University of Chicago since it has a reputation of being one of the best history departments in the country. I realized that what is important in this line of work is not so much the institution or the reputation, but it is: do you have people that you get along with? Do you have people that you feel an intellectual affinity towards? That is something that I felt at NYU. The people I was going to work with thought about history the same way that I did, they were generous and professional and not hyper-competitive. We operated in the spirit of collaboration and understanding that academia is great but not your entire life. In a place like New York, people have things going on besides academic work. That is something I really valued." As someone interested in

graduate-level study, I appreciated his advice about taking a holistic approach when choosing your Ph.D. program.

With this, I inquired about his transition from graduate school to a professorship, asking whether there was a moment that solidified his career goals. He responded insightfully, saying "The real turning point is getting a job as a professor because those opportunities don't come around very often. A part of me always realized that I needed to be realistic about my career prospects … to not put all of my eggs into one basket. So that's why I still edit a cultural magazine that's based in Estonia. I knew that I had to diversify a little bit. There's this saying in the corporate world, where you have to change jobs every five years. That is essentially what you do in academia. You reinvent yourself as it comes to the end of a project, and you come up with a new project. You get to define the research project that interests you, that is relevant to the scholarly community and to the world, so it never gets boring."

After forty minutes of conversation, we began to wrap up the interview. I concluded by asking Professor Velmet about his favorite part of being a professor. To this, he smiled and shared: "It's the students, the teaching, having these conversations. It's something that I learn so much from every time I develop a course. I get new ideas from the students, and seeing peoples' minds expand and being in this relationship of dialogue is really inspiring. Here, in this time where it's hard to be hopeful about things, it really is a source of hope. It also is a lot more fun sometimes than sitting and writing a book where you don't really know who's going to read it, what kind of an impact it is going to make…" I smiled back in response, appreciating his genuine answer. During the interview, it became clear that a good professor is one who truly loves what they do. One who seeks to make an impact in academic discourse *and* the classroom. One who not only teaches their students, but also learns from them.

Throughout his academic journey, Professor Velmet has exemplified all three of these qualities. On behalf of *The Scroll,* I would like to thank him for agreeing to speak with me and share his experience as a student and a professor. His story can hopefully inspire history students who are

unsure what their future may bring, showing them that it is okay to not immediately know what you want to do. The most important thing to know is that whatever you do end up doing, make sure it is something that sparks your curiosity and continuously provides joy.

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