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## Editor's Note

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The study of history provides an unparalleled opportunity to gaze into another world, one that is simultaneously alien and intimately familiar to us—the past. Primary sources offer a narrow but unfiltered glimpse into this world and are the vehicle through which original historical research is conducted. The authors you are about to read have built upon the foundation of their primary sources to produce insightful works of history which bring to light the struggles, triumphs, and hardships of people from across times and cultures. Each student featured in this edition of *The Forum* spent arduous hours combing through archives to find their primary source, after which the weeks and months of equally arduous work began. Even more time, energy, and effort was spent writing and refining these articles for your enjoyment. The dedication and care put into this edition, both by its authors and editorial team, has resulted in a collection of works that faithfully elucidate the lived experiences which together constitute history. This journal would not be possible, however, without the phenomenal faculty of the Cal Poly History Department. These professors offer unique courses grounded in their own research expertise that not only educate us but grant us the tools to further educate ourselves. As a result, students are able to make meaningfully important contributions to their chosen field. Our professors have also helped their students throughout the *Forum's* editorial process, allowing them to truly shine. For this, I would like to thank all the individuals in the History Department. I would especially like to thank our faculty advisor, Dr. Lewis Call, and department administrative staff Denna Zamarron and Celine Realica. They have always provided unparalleled support to the journal and have been a lifeline for me personally over the past year. Finally, I gratefully send an extra special thank you to each and every one of the talented editors whom it was my privilege to work with on this edition. I relied on these ten editors' expertise, discretion, and judgement to select works for final publication and provide constructive comments to every submission. The extreme care they brought to their work alongside their effort and determination is instrumental to the journal's success. I hope you all greatly enjoy this year's edition of *The Forum*, Volume 15.

Nishanth Narayan

Executive Editor, *The Forum*

## Articles

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### **Author Biography**

*Morgan Vonder Haar*

Morgan is a fourth-year History major, with minors in Religious Studies and Women and Gender Studies. Her research interest includes contemporary feminist movements, California history, and abolition studies. In her free time, Morgan enjoys practicing tarot, spending time with friends, writing, and taking care of her plants. After graduation, she will be attending law school at University of San Francisco.

## Wave Feminism and the Shaping of Tarot

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*Morgan Vonder Haar*

### **Introduction**

Tarot cards have been firmly enshrined in the Western World as devices for fortune-telling and divination, garnering a legacy of fascination for the curious minded. Today, a standard tarot deck contains seventy-eight cards which are split into two categories, the Major Arcana and the Minor Arcana. The first twenty-two cards are considered to be the Major Arcana, painted with fantastical figures, symbols and allegorical images. Labeled numbers zero through twenty-one, the cards depict a journey through the world, with archetypes representing grand cosmic templates and patterns that yield counsel to those that seek their wisdom. The Minor Arcana contains the remaining fifty-six cards which, in modern decks, are usually painted with symbols and are split into four categories: the Suit of Batons or Wands, the Suit of Cups, the Suit of Swords and the Suit of Coins.<sup>1</sup> The Major and Minor Arcana work together in order to convey to the querent the situations, problems, and solutions which affect their past, present or future circumstances. The meaning of each card is solely dependent on one's teachings or inner spiritual guidance through the interpretation of the card's symbolism. The images picked for each tarot card reading are laid down and 'selected' by the soul, offering an infinite number of combinations.

Tarot is a tool for spiritual and religious practices that has morphed depending on the group utilizing it. This essay defines spirituality as a part of the world's religions, referring "to personal and group practices and experiences, exercises, and faith in relation to the divine, sacred transcendent, or

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<sup>1</sup> Alfred Douglas, *The Tarot: The Origins, Meanings, and Uses of Cards* (New York: Penguin Books Inc., 1972).

ultimate meaning.”<sup>2</sup> Spirituality is considered to be a movement rather than a set belief system. In regard to religious feminism, spirituality is concerned with empowerment, nature, a revisionary view of the world and an emphasis on female images of the divine.<sup>3</sup> Spirituality has many different sects, occultism being one of them. This essay examines the prominent women who shaped feminist occultism through their contributions to tarot, as well explores the impacts of how the practice of tarot within religious feminism has been a tool used to subvert traditional gender conventions. Occultism is recognized as “the human desire to access hidden knowledge or principles” that are inaccessible through traditional religion and science, acting as a branch of spirituality within the Western world.<sup>4</sup> Religious feminist movements throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries have had different goals and ideologies, which will be discussed throughout this paper in regard to the practice of tarot. The first religious feminist movement worked to establish men and women as equal authorities of spirituality, allowing for collaborative study, which ultimately created a traditional wealth of knowledge for future movements. The mid-late twentieth-century movements focused on elevating the voices of women to create practices that represent their experiences. This essay will argue that tarot allowed women during Second Wave Train Feminism to reclaim spiritual separatism and directly react against masculine archetypes and expectations from traditional occult scholarship to create a new version of tarot that encompasses women’s religious experiences and identities.

The experiences of women and spirituality have been infected with gender inequality, which has created space for the rise of religious feminism. Religious feminism has shaped “new narratives, images, rituals, prayers, and practices that validate women’s religious identities and experiences,” that deserve to be recognized within historical scholarship and as a part of the Wave Feminist movements.<sup>5</sup> Wave Feminism, originally conceptualized by Martha Lear in 1968, captures the forward and backward movement of women’s activism in the United States to gain social and political change. This essay will use Wave Feminism to discuss feminist movements in the Western, English-speaking countries of England and the United States with

regard to tarot. First Wave Feminism takes place from 1848 to 1920, underscoring the suffrage movement and newly found economic independence. Second Wave Feminism during the 1960s and 70s moved to gain greater access to employment, reproductive rights and equal status amongst men.<sup>6</sup> Third Wave Feminism began in the 1990s, working within and against social systems in hopes to reform its foundations, including Women of Color and non-binary gender identities.<sup>7</sup> Fourth Wave Feminism is the continuation of Third Wave ideologies, starting around 2011, through the power of the Internet and social media which created an easier spread of feminist values.<sup>8</sup> Wave Feminism has been criticized as being reductive to only White women’s experiences and activism within the nineteenth and twentieth century, but has been a great framework to teach feminism in United States history due to its ability to compress it into easily understood blocks. The consequence of this framework is the notion that feminist activism only occurs in dramatic waves, with periods of nothingness in between. In reality, women’s movements and activism are hardly stagnant and continue to persevere within and outside of Wave Feminism. Feminism encompasses both collective and individual action, with the “belief that women and men are inherently of equal worth...with the understanding that gender always intersects with other social hierarchies.”<sup>9</sup>

With this flaw in traditional scholarship of Wave Feminism, this paper will examine religious feminism and tarot as a part of a Wave Train.<sup>10</sup> Waves in the ocean are frequent, one after another in a train, and within feminist activism there are a multitude of groups striving for different goals. Rather than considering First Wave Feminism as one wave, this paper will examine it as a Wave Train, with religious feminist work as one of those waves. This framework persists through Second, Third and Fourth Wave Feminism. Tarot is then considered to be one wave within this wave train in regard to its position within feminist epistemology. The people working with feminist ideologies and tarot are not monolithic, which allows tarot to act as its own wave within the wave train. Scholar Dorothy Sue Cobble agrees that “out on the sea of women’s reform, there is little still water in sight,” as women’s movements continue to liberate those under oppressive circumstances.<sup>11</sup>

2 Dawn Llewellyn, *Reading, Feminism, and Spirituality*, (New York, New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2015), 23.

3 Llewellyn, *Reading, Feminism, and Spirituality*, 23.

4 Kevin Todd McLaren, “Pharaonic Occultism: The Relationship of Esotericism and Egyptology, 1875-1930,” (master’s thesis, California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo, 2016), 12.

5 Llewellyn, *Reading, Feminism, and Spirituality*, 10.

6 Rory Dicker, *A History of U.S. Feminisms*, (Berkeley, California: Seal Press, 2016), 5-6.

7 Dicker, *A History of U.S. Feminisms*, 109.

8 Dicker, *A History of U.S. Feminisms*, 141.

9 Kathleen A. Laughlin, et al, “Is it Time to Jump Ship? Historians Rethink the Waves Metaphor,” *Feminist Formations* 22, no. 1 (2010) 78.

10 Laughlin, “Is it Time to Jump Ship? Historians Rethink the Waves Metaphor,” 79.

11 Laughlin, “Is it Time to Jump Ship? Historians Rethink the Waves Metaphor,” 87.

The Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and the women associated with the organization set up the First Wave of spiritual feminism, allowing tarot to be shaped by their artwork and philosophies. This secret society authorized the equal status and involvement of female members, unlike many other parallel societies at the time, which provided the necessary elements for tarot to grow as a spiritual device. Although the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was not the utmost feminist society, it created the foundation for women to permeate spiritual circles. Tarot within the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn was cultivated by women during First Wave Train Feminism, creating opportunities for equal status, political power, recognition and independence from traditional society.

The shaping of tarot was spearheaded by British figures such as Pamela Colman Smith, Frieda Harris and Madeline Montalban, many of whom had familial or academic ties to the United States. However, tarot existed and spread throughout the United States through female mystics such as Madame Marcia Champney. Tarot thrived for female spiritualists and mediums throughout the First Wave Train, offering women an avenue in which to explore their spiritual beliefs and social dynamics on their own terms, but it was met with some resistance from other social and political movements. While the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn and other parallel societies participated in a relatively closed spiritual practice, many mediums and spiritualists worked alone.

The women within and adjacent to the Hermetic Order of the Golden Dawn created an extensive foundation for future generations of women to explore and excel in the utilization of tarot. Each of the aforementioned women promoted the benefits of being involved in counter-cultural religion, creating an atmosphere that ultimately inspired others to pick up the cards and connect with the spiritual world. Pamela Colman Smith and Lady Frieda Harris created two of the most well-known tarot decks, both of which are still in print in the twenty-first century, initially modeled off of Moina Mathers'. Florence Farr and Madeline Montalban created occultist education available for the women and the public, using tarot as a way to expand gender dynamics within the First Wave Train. Their roles in the physical creation of tarot elevated their own spiritual practice and bridged the work of their colleagues with their artistic and literary abilities. Although these women spent their occultist careers in the United Kingdom, their influence was felt in the United States, permeating mediumship and divination practices throughout the country. Their work and scholarship were the foundation for the First Wave of tarot and allowed women like Madame Marcia Champney to gain power through her psychic abilities.

## Tarot In The Second Wave Train

Women during the mid-late twentieth century were propelled by the foundation provided by First Wave Train Feminism which granted women, usually British White women, the opportunity to have acknowledgment and opportunities within occultism and counter-cultural spiritual movements. However, the movement towards a more equal status within spirituality was a continued goal for activists in Second Wave Train Feminism in the United States, moving away from the First Wave's British figures. This Second Wave shaped tarot through reactions against masculine archetypes and expectations from traditional religious society that did not promote the needs of women. Instead of creating inclusive tarot decks in regard to gender, race and sexuality, many feminist activists worked to obtain spiritual separatism to protect their journey to enlightenment and women's religious history outside Abrahamic religions. This was in reaction to "the propaganda of misogynistic texts" of previous occult scholarship, which "resulted in the removal of female leadership and power...by portraying the female body...as contaminating and evil."<sup>12</sup> The Second Wave worked to reclaim the female image and move away from the civilized obedience expected of women. This section will discuss the influence of spiritual collectives Billie Potts and Jean Freer and tarot's introduction into popular culture.

While the First Wave of tarot was brought about through an emboldened interest in historical occult practices, like Egyptology and astrology, it was brought to an end quite quickly, only to be revived again in the 1960s. The World Wars and the Great Depression in the twentieth century as well as governmental backlash brought significant changes to tarot, turning people's focus away from the spiritual and towards survival.<sup>13</sup> Another surge in tarot and occultism arose again in popularity during the 1960s and 1970s, which was shaped by social and cultural changes including the "human potential movement, the feminist movement, the rise of ecological awareness, and the turn to nonwestern religions."<sup>14</sup> A growth in spiritual expansion was met by eager young people, creating New Age and Neopagan religious movements, directly rooted in Victorian occultism as seen within the Golden Dawn. These interests convened around people, books, institutes, and/or communes, some of which lasted while others lost momentum. Emerging from this counter-culture came a "loosely connected network of individuals and

<sup>12</sup> Lisa Regina Skura, "The Female Image on the Sola Busca Tarot," (PhD. diss., Pacifica Graduate Institute, 2021), 7.

<sup>13</sup> Sarah M. Pike, *New Age and Neopagan Religions in America*, (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), 68.

<sup>14</sup> Pike, *New Age and Neopagan Religions in America*, 67.

communities that proceeded to grow into a more mainstream movement.”<sup>15</sup> Tarot and the occult were at the forefront of these movements, providing the idea that salvation was possible through the discovery of a divine inner self. The New Age and Neopagan movements allowed for a personalized religious experience that rejected standard, institutionalized religion.

Tarot and subsequently the occult acted as a perfect forum for feminists to rebel against conservative society, allowing feminists “to reassert meaningful community in ecstasy in a rationalistic, hyper-organized world.”<sup>16</sup> These spiritual communities aimed to change the imbalances brought by traditional religions and rigid gender roles. They were influenced by two historical movements—feminism and sexual liberation. Gender and sexuality offered an avenue of healing and transformation through expression, as these religious movements embraced the masculine and feminine.<sup>17</sup> New Age and Neopagan movements promoted women to take on leadership positions within these circles that otherwise weren’t allowed in Christianity or Judaism, whose practices often oppressed women through patriarchal language. In response, tarot and spirituality were reshaped through herstory, the feminist critique of traditional history, reviving goddess-worshipping matriarchies to explore their divine inner self.<sup>18</sup> These counter-cultural religious movements set the framework through which to view this wave of tarot, moving occultism under the umbrella of divine femininity, ruled by ancient goddesses and practiced by feminists and others outcast by traditional society.

In Second Wave Train Feminism, the call to celebrate and worship goddesses was at the core of feminist spirituality, its origins coming from Zsuzsanna Budapest. She was a Hungarian exile who founded the Susan B. Anthony Coven in 1971 Los Angeles. Aware of her long familial traditions with herbalism and witchcraft, Budapest brought this with her to the United States, creating a feminist form of Wicca, “Wimmins Religion.”<sup>19</sup> Budapest’s claim to celebrate an ancient goddess came from an idea that the goddess’s existence was destroyed from history by the hands of men. This informed her decision to call “for women-only covens and rituals because [Budapest] believed women needed a spirituality to call their own and

15 Pike, *New Age and Neopagan Religions in America*, 68.

16 Pike, *New Age and Neopagan Religions in America*, 76.

17 Pike, *New Age and Neopagan Religions in America*, 115.

18 Pike, *New Age and Neopagan Religions in America*, 118.

19 Diamond, “Jeane F. Diamond’s Life Story.”

one that allowed them direct access to their creator and source of spiritual power.”<sup>20</sup> Lisa Kröger and Melanie R. Anderson critiqued Budapest for her narrow ideas about gender that specifically excluded individuals that were not sexed female at birth, not allowing them to partake in women-centered religious organizations or practices.<sup>21</sup> Although Budapest has been criticized for anti-trans rhetoric and practices, believing that women are only encompassed by their assigned sex at birth, her ideas allowed for the restoration of a matriarchal way of living that was central to the transformation of tarot in the Second Wave.



**Figure 1:** Billie Potts in Southern Oregon, 1979. Photographed by Ruth Mountaingrove, University of Oregon Libraries.

Billie Luisi-Potts, like many other women throughout history, is a relatively unknown American feminist activist. Her work in tarot, herbalism, and historical scholarship has gone relatively unnoticed by those who have not stumbled upon her work or met her in East Coast feminist circles. Her early life consisted of reshaping tarot through *A New Women’s Tarot* in 1977 and then *The Amazon Tarot* deck in

20 Freer, *A New Feminist Tarot*, 15.

21 Freer, *A New Feminist Tarot*, 17.





**Figure 2:** A mix of cards from the Amazon (Elf and Dragons Press, 1979) and New Amazon (Hecuba's Daughters, 1984) Tarot decks, created by Billie Potts, Susan Weed and River Nightwomoon in collaboration with Lizzie Brown, Tee Corinne, Liza Cowan, Alix Dobkin, M.L. George, Noel Giordano, Prairie Jackson, Ruth Mountaingrove, Carol Newhouse, Airstream Nightwomoon, Pat Swart, and Hawk Wood.

1979, both published by Elf and Dragons Press in New York. Schooled in Crowley's system of tarot, Potts executed the first attempt to visually reclaim tarot.<sup>22</sup> Outside of her influence in feminist tarot, she has written books on herbalism, pottery, and famous women throughout United States history. She became the longest-serving Executive Director of the National Women's Hall of Fame in Seneca Falls, New York.<sup>23</sup> Despite her very influential life within spiritual commu-

nities and intersectional feminism, not much is publicly available about her life. A New Women's Tarot was attributed to Luisi-Potts as well as women in the Catskill Mountains of New York State who, from context, can be assumed to be other feminist spiritualists. Potts is an American-Ashkenazic Jew, an identity that has been central in creating a life as a lesbian separatist. Potts' lesbian separatism is "womon-identification" with lesbians as her priority and works to minimize the energy given to men and their systems. Separatism defines and builds individual and group identity while ensuring the survival of minority groups.<sup>24</sup> Potts' work with tarot was directly impacted by her identity as a Jewish-American and lesbian, promoting her collaborative and transformative tarot, The Amazon Tarot deck.

The pamphlet entitled *A New Women's Tarot* produced by Billie Potts is a representation of the changing spiritual, political and social needs of women during Second Wave Train Feminism through the reshaping of tarot cards. *A New Women's Tarot* is an information pamphlet used to prompt feminist esoteric practices and a fusion of intersectional identities. Its main purpose is to center women in the reinterpretation of tarot, changing male titles and imagery to recreate the reality of womanhood. Rather than prompt its use to a wide audience or occultist groups, it is meant to be useful to women already practicing tarot or those interested in this type of practice. Specifically, this source targets those who are unsatisfied with the available current decks like Rider-Waite or Thoth, because of their White, Christianized illustrations and sexist creators, making it hard for women to fully relate to male titles and situations found in these decks.<sup>25</sup> Its creation was meant to build on *Witch's Tarot*, created by Ellen Cannon Reed as a pagan-friendly deck and guide. Though, ultimately, this pamphlet was bought/sold to fundraise for the creation of Potts' own feminist tarot deck which, in turn, addressed the spiritual needs of women, amplified the influence of the ancient goddess, and incorporated astrology, numerology, and herbalism. Potts claimed that "women coming to the use of the Tarot have a veritable mountain of sexism and sexist interpretation to overcome," but, when recreated, feminist tarot will be more approachable and relatable.<sup>26</sup>

The goddess-inspired tarot guide and the subsequent deck are meant to be relevant to practicing women, using their experiences, realities, and histories at the forefront of the cards' meanings and illustrations. This pamphlet recognizes previous feelings of powerlessness, not having a proper spiritual

<sup>22</sup> Jean Freer, *A New Feminist Tarot*, (London, U.K.: Lamia Publications, 1987), 19.

<sup>23</sup> "Wise Woman Billie Luisi Potts Bio," *Flashsilvermoon*, Feb. 2010 <http://flashsilvermoon.com/2010/blog/wise-womans-festival/wise-woman-billie-luisi-potts-bio>.

<sup>24</sup> Billie Luisi Potts, "Owning Jewish Separatism and Lesbian Separatism," *For Lesbians Only: A Separatist Anthology* (London, U.K.: Onlywomen Press, 1988) 149.

<sup>25</sup> Billie Potts, *A New Women's Tarot*, (Woodstock, New York: Elf and Dragons Press, 1977), 5.

<sup>26</sup> Potts, *A New Women's Tarot*, 5.

'gift' or teacher within feminist esoteric communities, and calls for the need to reclaim their spiritual power. There is an inherent desire to have women turn to tarot rather than turn away because of the popular patriarchal decks. Tarot is a counter-cultural religious experience and requires radical reinterpretation. The deck is an important spiritual tool and discipline that must be repossessed by women because, "they are not a product of religious revelation in the conventional sense, but expressions of feeling, intuition, dream work and the working toward discovery of spiritual herstory that we are all engaged in."<sup>27</sup> *A New Women's Tarot* reshapes the use and understanding of tarot with feminist spirituality, situating itself during the height of Second Wave Train Feminism. It highlights the growing religious independence of women as well as the growing feminine scholarship and influence over tarot and esoteric circles. The shift from a more traditional tarot to one solely influenced by women amplifies the reasons and wants for changes that center women's narratives in spirituality. Spiritualist women want more representation and domination over the religious tools they use, unmuddled by Christianity, sexism, and unattainable forms of occultist power as seen within the influence of the men.

Jean Freer, otherwise known as Jeane Diamond, is another feminist tarot practitioner that, while she is relatively unknown in her New Age works, is nonetheless a representative of the Second Wave. Freer spent her youth in California, attending the University of California, Berkeley, initially working with anti-war protesters in the 1960s. Soon after her education, Freer moved to London where she became a feminist, "searching for equal rights of wymn, [where she] explored the realms of religion and spirituality, becoming a Wiccan priestess in the Dianic tradition."<sup>28</sup> Unlike Billie Potts, who was schooled in Crowley's occultist system, Freer worked alongside Zsuzsanna Budapest and other feminist icons to lead public rituals as well as train others. She was initiated in the Susan B. Anthony Coven in 1973, giving Freer the authority to establish herself as spiritual leader, committed to teaching women how to organize their energy. This spiritual background gave Freer the ability to begin cementing herself as a knowledgeable tarot diviner in 1979, practicing in a shop at Glastonbury High Street.<sup>29</sup> Here, Freer developed her abilities and began developing *A New Feminist Tarot*, inspired by Billie Potts and other feminist New Agers.

<sup>27</sup> Potts, *A New Women's Tarot*, 3.

<sup>28</sup> Jeane F. Diamond, "Jeane F. Diamond's Life Story," *Free Spiritual Counselling*, date accessed Feb. 27 2023, <https://freer.org/biography/>.

<sup>29</sup> Diamond, "Jeane F. Diamond's Life Story."

The tarot guide, *A New Feminist Tarot*, worked with the feminist principles and goals of the Second Wave Train which established a need to reclaim the Western occult tradition. While this work offers only a feminist framework around tarot rather than a new deck, it is meant to guide feminist New Agers to combine women's values with spirituality. *A New Feminist Tarot* begins by criticizing Aleister Crowley as "a renowned misogynist committed to sex magic. He changed the Strength card in the tarot deck to Lust, and glorified women only in her aspect of the sacred whore."<sup>30</sup> Outraged by the traditional occult scholarship introduced by the Golden Dawn, Freer maintains that tarot should and can be used to take back personal power and implement positive change to the feminist community. Tarot, rather than being caged by the patriarchy, can be reclaimed to meet the needs of women to achieve healing on a larger scale. Freer and her associates believe that tarot is a useful tool in reclaiming and developing psychic powers. By using tarot decks, it reflects "an oral tradition of womyn-loving times which is being reclaimed and brought up to date by womyn returning to goddess," leading to spiritual regeneration.<sup>31</sup> No longer is tarot used to establish enlightenment within secret societies, as it was developed in the First Wave. The Second Wave of tarot brought forth the goals of revitalizing the intuition and powers of new generations, calling onto the past for strength in the ancient goddess. Women were to no longer be silenced by the dominant masculine culture that decided the future of occult tradition. Jean Freer, as well as Billie Potts, recognized the separate needs of women and Queer folx and created literature to rally behind. Although the two came from two separate schools of spiritual tradition, their works paralleled each other, associating pagan goddesses with the cards and removing major male archetypes from the Major Arcana. While Freer advocated for decks without the Minor Arcana kings for lesbians, she did understand the value of retaining them. Men continue to persist in society, and their presence in the lives of women could not be overlooked. Despite this, the feminist analysis of tarot offered by Freer created a space solely for women in the New Age.

Not only did tarot penetrate the feminist movement through covert action, but its perception in popular culture and media helped transform tarot into an inherently feminine spiritual tool. Len Lakofka is not a user or practitioner of tarot, but was an American writer of material for the role-playing game *Dungeons and Dragons*. He was an influential figure in the game's development and was intimately involved in the creation of game guides. The "Notes on Women and

<sup>30</sup> Freer, *A New Feminist Tarot*, 15.

<sup>31</sup> Freer, *A New Feminist Tarot*, 17.

Magic—Bringing the Distaff Gamer into D & D” is a result of his work, focusing on the aspects of female character integration of the game, including the use of magic and tarot cards. Women and their female characters could participate in the fighter, magic user, thief and cleric classes. It is unclear whether women could play as a male character or were solely restricted to a female character and vice versa. However, the language used by Lakofka suggests that women were meant to play as female characters as a way to introduce women into this previously male-exclusive fantasy game. Compared to male counterparts, women were the only users that needed beauty as an aspect of their character and were the only ones who could partake in “tarot readings” within the game. This source offers perspectives on women within the White gaming world while also depicting the incorporation of tarot with a complete misunderstanding of its proper use. In this source, tarot is only used for yes/no questions which must be exact and precise, and the answers can only be Yes, Probably Yes, Probably No and No. Tarot outside of Dungeons and Dragons is not meant to give definite answers, but is a reflection of the external and internal circumstances of the reader and querent.<sup>32</sup> Although not particularly useful in understanding tarot, it offers a great view into how men and gaming culture interpreted women and spiritual practices in the midst of Second Wave Train Feminism. Tarot’s inclusion in *Dungeons and Dragons* creates the image that the decks have not only seeped its way into New Age and Neopagan spiritual practices but have also entered popular culture. The game, during the height of its popularity, was seen to be a “boys’ game,” that, although not explicitly, excluded women and girls from playing.<sup>33</sup> However the entrance of female characters, even with the binary notions of gender and sex, highlights the changing attitudes towards women and their engagement with the occult. Tarot in the Second Wave was morphed into a tool for women to explore their spirituality, which, in turn, was reflected in popular culture. Rather than women permeating male spaces to access tarot, the cards became a point of access to attract women into those spaces.

The Second Wave acts as a huge turning point for tarot and feminist action, as the counter-cultural religious movements turned their focus onto prevailing women’s lives. Tarot, from this point on, acts as a tool widely seen in the media with women. This wave established tarot as being further associated with women and

female spaces, as it attempted to remove predominantly male scholarship from the core of its creation. Billie Potts and Jean Freer offer a window into this discourse, fully participating in religious feminism to reflect their lifestyles and promote healing within their communities. Their scholarship and printed works center the female body and experiences, calling upon pagan religions from a pre-Christianized society to gain authority in spirituality in the Second Wave. Although their work is incredibly important to tarot’s history, the anti-trans rhetoric and binary perspectives of gender which specifically barred trans folk for entering their religious separatist spaces or partaking in their rituals create a need for another wave of tarot as well as another Wave Train Feminism to reshape the cards into a more inclusive tool of divination.

## Conclusion

Contemporary tarot has been built upon the pervasive work of its foremothers during the First and Second Wave, engaging with diviners depending on their needs interpersonally and privately. Tarot has engaged with feminist movements throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, resulting in the creation of new decks and scholarship. Its influence has become incredibly accessible and important to new generations in the Third and Fourth Wave Train.

It is worth acknowledging that scholarship and archived works focus mostly on cisgender, White women despite many scholars working to remove tarot’s direct association with male, occult organizations. White women have historically been allowed more acknowledgment within history because of their proximity to White men and have had a great ability to interact with counter-cultural religions with less backlash due to this association. Undoubtedly, White women have had the opportunity to be more public-facing with regard to spirituality and other feminist movements because of systematic oppression faced by People of Color and Queer identities.

The Second Wave of tarot was integral to religious feminism, reacting against the sexist attitudes of earlier occultism; however, the focus on binary gender dynamics led to a non-inclusive atmosphere. The preference of cisgender women and overt exclusion of trans women and non-binary folks acted directly against the push toward goals of equality within religious feminism. As a result, Third and Fourth Wave feminists pushed for a new tarot, one that works with growing feminist epistemology in order to center the experiences and needs of the wider population. Feminist epistemology “studies the ways in which gender does and ought to influence our conceptions of knowledge, knowers, and prac-

<sup>32</sup> Len Lakofka, “Notes on Women and Magic - Bringing the Distaff Gamer into D & D,” *The Dragon* 1, no. 3 (1976) 8.

<sup>33</sup> Kröger, *Toil and Trouble: A Women’s History of the Occult*, 190.

tices of inquiry and justification.”<sup>34</sup> This feminist theory identifies that the practice of knowledge disadvantages women and other subordinated groups, and as such strives to reform them. The Third and Fourth wave of tarot presents new decks and scholarship that highlight their interests, cognitive styles and theories without reproducing social hierarchies. In distancing themselves from abstract academic feminists and separatist women’s culture, this new shaping of tarot focused on the inclusion of multiple identities and experiences that differ from cis-gender, White lifestyles.

Feminists during the Third and Fourth Wave work to connect tarot to a stronger movement for gender, racial and economic justice. Different from the First and Second Wave, this movement focuses on the commitment to multiplicity, encompassing a large range of concerns such as the environment, economic welfare, carceral inequality as well as representation in popular culture.<sup>35</sup> Not only is this wave reacting against past movements, but it is embracing an anti-positivist approach to life. Positivism is a philosophical system that promotes an understanding that all knowledge is scientifically justifiable.<sup>36</sup> Tarot works to understand experiences of the past, present and future through mysticism and intuition rather than with science, understanding the world through stars, symbols and mythology. Feminist epistemology allowed for the creation and perseverance of Third Wave ideology within tarot, ultimately shaping it anew once again.

As a reaction to this patriarchal tarot and its history, Wave feminists have actively shaped tarot in a way that could not be ignored. The First Wave feminists physically created the decks, though were not properly acknowledged for their contributions to the scholarship. Their creative works and subsequent knowledge around tarot did play into the patriarchal occultist arena, having misogyny woven in, especially with these hierarchical secret societies. Despite this, their presence in the work is undeniable and foundational for tarot. The Second Wave feminists worked in direct reaction to tarot’s previous scholarship around its domination of nature and women. No longer are women considered passive guides of tarot, but they have established themselves as the creators of a new tarot. Their work comes from religions that celebrate the female divine and pagan goddesses. Second

Wave feminists, while centering female narratives, disregarded Queer and racial identities, creating harmful rhetoric around tarot. This leads to the responses of the Third Wave feminists, whose goals come from creating a community to transcend capitalist, colonialist society through rejecting scholarship that is not representative. In tandem with the Third Wave, the Fourth Wave Feminists use the Internet and social media to spread feminist theory and rhetoric to a wider audience. Social media like YouTube, Instagram, Facebook and TikTok give feminist tarot practitioners a space to safely discuss their counter-cultural religious practices as well as create a large community for People of Color and Queer folx. The access to information and community surrounding tarot is shaped, not by hierarchies and hidden knowledge of the past, but by diversity and acceptance propelled by the social zeitgeist of the twenty-first century.

It is worth acknowledging the lack of scholarship around Queer and non-white identities when focusing on the development of tarot. As the scholarship for tarot continues to grow, it is pivotal to appreciate and recognize expanding the identities around its creation. While this essay focuses on the pervasive work of women, there are Queer and non-White people that need to be further examined in regard to their impact around tarot, especially within the later Wave Trains movements. Contemporary culture continues to promote inclusive and representative tarot, and historical scholarship needs to reflect those attitudes. Generation Z and the Internet are changing the ways in which historians can document and explore popular culture. In doing so, there can be scholarship that acknowledges and highlights the work of women, the LGBTQ+ community and non-White identities. Preserving the work of these communities will create a fuller picture of tarot as a divination practice and those who partake in it.

As tarot continues to transform through its users, it is important to acknowledge those who have had a fundamental hand in its shaping. Tarot continues to gain popularity for its beautiful artwork and as an avenue for spiritual healing, which makes the cards and their history worth preserving and documenting. The examination of the querent’s life through the cards, the opportunity for community building, and the possibility to connect with the past and ancestors are just some of the few benefits of using tarot. Tarot has given women and Queer people a space for spiritual authority and clarity, bringing internal reflection for entire communities. Its popularity has allowed people to build and shape tarot into a practice that offers a path of resistance against social norms.

34 Elizabeth Anderson, “Feminist Epistemology and Philosophy of Science,” Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy, Aug. 9, 2020, date accessed Feb. 27 2023, <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/feminism-epistemology/>.

35 Dicker, *A History of U.S. Feminisms*, 127.

36 Olúfemi Taiwò, “Being-in-the-Room Privilege: Elite Capture and Epistemic Difference,” *The Philosopher* (2022), <https://www.thephilosopher1923.org/post/being-in-the-room-privilege-elite-capture-and-epistemic-deference>.

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## A Troubled Marriage: Colonial Imposition of the Catholic Church in Mexico

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*Christian Rivas*

Since the beginning of the Colonial Era in Latin America, the Catholic Church has imposed itself upon the region politically, economically, and socially. As a result, the domineering presence of the Catholic Church and its related branches—not excluding the notorious Holy Office of the Inquisition—disrupted Indigenous society through violence and conversion. However, Latin Americans—and more specifically, Mexicans—formed a pernicious relationship with the Catholic Church which fomented bloody anti-secularization conflicts like the Reform War and the Cristero Rebellion. In other words, an institution that once excommunicated, executed, and manipulated Indigenous Mexicans, became the leading institution for Mexican resistance.

To this day, the Catholic Church remains a unifying figurehead for Mexico, with its imagery present on nearly every street corner. As recently as a decade ago, more than three-quarters of the Mexican population identified themselves as Catholic.<sup>1</sup>

Considering the long and complex relationship that Mexican people originally held with the Church, their willingness to put their lives at risk in defense of Catholicism brings into question the ecclesiastical role that created this dynamic. The Catholic Church played an important—though often deleterious—part in the development of the socioeconomic and political sphere of the nation. Mexico's allegiance to the Church can be attributed to the imposition of Catholic and Spanish

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<sup>1</sup> Juan Carlos Donoso, "On Religion, Mexicans Are More Catholic and Often More Traditional than Mexican Americans," Pew Research Center (Pew Research Center, May 31, 2020), <https://www.pewresearch.org/fact-tank/2014/12/08/on-religion-mexicans-are-more-catholic-and-often-more-traditional-than-mexican-americans/>.

tradition, often adopted as a means of persistence and survival by Indigenous people. Social and educational programs that preached Catholicism and taught Spanish, the Church's focus on building trust by converting Indigenous nobility, and overseeing the adoption of Hispanic names resulted in the permanence of the faith in Mexico. In the pre-Hispanic Valley of Mexico, powerful Indigenous empires conquering neighboring communities was commonplace. The practices that took hold during this time—including ritual assimilation following a conquest—were major factors in the early acceptance of Catholicism in the region of modern-day Mexico. For instance, paying tribute to the conquerors' deities was the norm, which neighbors of the Mexica (Aztec) people were familiarized with as they were immersed into the various traditions of the empire.<sup>2</sup> Even so, the introduction of Catholicism into Latin America was met with Indigenous resistance on several occasions, which often resulted in the deaths of colonizers preaching their mendicant orders.<sup>3</sup> Still, these orders continued to pursue a "spiritual conquest" and convert as many people as possible.<sup>4</sup> One of the methods seen throughout the early stages of this evangelization of the Americas involved building a community tied together by faith from the top-down. Mendicant orders—like the Franciscans and Augustinians—utilized the preexisting social hierarchies of the Nahuatl populations (Nahuatl-speaking Indigenous groups) to their advantage by coercing the Tlatoani—the head of Nahuatl communities—to convert, thereby encouraging their people to follow suit.<sup>5</sup>

By making use of this top-down conversion tactic, conquistadors and mendicant priests alike could exploit the influence of the Tlatoanis and create figureheads for their communities to look to as models of piety. The Franciscans, in particular, achieved this through focused baptismal efforts. While eager to baptize as many people as possible, the order was aware of the difficulty to individually convince—or coerce—an entire Indigenous community to concede to the Catholic faith through the ritual. As a result, the Franciscans focused the baptisms on the

<sup>2</sup> The Mexica people would have their conquered subjects pay tributes to the Aztec deities; in some cases, the Mexica would adopt some deities from these conquered polities into their own religion; Pohl John M. D. and Martin Windrow, "Policy in Victory," in *Aztec, Mixtec and Zapotec Armies* (London: Osprey, 2003), 14-16.

<sup>3</sup> Cameron D. Jones, "Rebellion, Religion and Reform," in *In Service of Two Masters: The Missionaries of Ocopa, Indigenous Resistance, and Spanish Governance in Bourbon Peru* (California: Stanford University Press, 2018), 55-88, 55-61.

<sup>4</sup> Robert Ricard, "The Catechism," in *The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico: An Essay on the Apostolate and the Evangelizing Methods of the Mendicant Orders in New Spain: 1523-1572* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1982), 96-108.

<sup>5</sup> Sarah Cline, "The Spiritual Conquest Reexamined: Baptism and Christian Marriage in Early Sixteenth-Century Mexico," *Hispanic American Historical Review* 73, no. 3 (January 1993), 453-80.

districts where the Tlatoani and other political leaders resided. Doing so allowed the rest of the community to look to the elite who underwent the ritual of their conquerors and feel more inclined to accept their new faith shortly thereafter.<sup>6</sup> For example, Hernan Cortes—the conquistador who led the expedition against the Aztec empire—used baptisms to cement alliances and spread Catholicism to the leaders of Tlaxcala. Acting in confirmation of their alliance, the Tlaxcala elder Xicotencatl—after agreeing to work together against the Aztec Empire—was baptized alongside his daughter.<sup>7</sup> Through this process, the various Catholic orders sent to the New World created an attachment to the Church that began with elites in conquered communities, and thus, made Catholicism more approachable than if they had attempted more forceful conversions.

As these conversions laid the foundations for Indigenous Catholic communities, attachment steadily grew as the Church continually and consistently introduced more of their traditions and staked their claim in the Americas. Not long after, the Hispanicization of names gradually invaded Indigenous spaces, replacing Nahuatl names with more Church-affiliated ones.<sup>8</sup> A notable example of this practice is the case of Cuauhtlatoatzin—a peasant from Cuauhtitlán, near present-day Mexico City—who was baptized and given the name Juan Diego. He spiritually galvanized his community following his baptism, claiming to have had a divine encounter with a dark-skinned Virgin Mary: The Virgin of Guadalupe, who remains at the forefront of Mexican Catholicism to this day.<sup>9</sup> In another instance, the aforementioned Tlaxcala elder and his daughter were also subjects of this process; Xicotencatl became Don Lorenzo de Vargas, and his daughter subsequently adopted the name Doña Luisa.<sup>10</sup> This practice detached the indigeneity of these communities and reinforced dependence on the Church as generations began to pass Hispanic names onto their children rather than Nahuatl names.

As Indigenous names slowly phased out of Mexican society, there also existed the presence of the Church through social means—namely ecclesiastical education—which led the people of present-day Mexico to embrace Catholicism.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

<sup>7</sup> His daughter was also gifted to one of Cortes's men not long after their meeting; it was not uncommon for Indigenous women from elite families to be gifted to Spaniards following their baptisms; Bernal Diaz del Castillo, Garcia Genaro, and Alfred Percival Maudslay, *The Conquest of New Spain* (New York: Penguin Books, 1967), 121-22, 308.

<sup>8</sup> LaVerne Harrell Clark, "The Spiritual Conquest of Mexico by Robert Ricard," *Western American Literature* 2, no. 1 (1967): 69-70.

<sup>9</sup> Timothy Matovina, "The Origins of the Guadalupe Tradition in Mexico," *The Catholic Historical Review* 100, no. 2 (2014), 243-270.

<sup>10</sup> Diaz del Castillo, 121-122, 308

The education of the Indigenous population through doctrinas—Indigenous parishes typically placing emphasis on religious instruction—taught the native non-Christians about the faith.<sup>11</sup> Although Spanish was not initially taught in these parishes as means of disenfranchising the Indigenous population, by the 18th century Indigenous people were beginning to learn Spanish in doctrinas. This provided a further step toward assimilation as those who could interpret Spanish were afforded more opportunities for social mobility—often working as scribes or translators.<sup>12</sup> In this sense, attachment to the Church granted some Indigenous people fluidity within the social hierarchies of the *casta*—a racial caste system imposed by the Spanish. However, while an education may have granted families opportunity to ascend the hierarchy—as succeeding generations assimilated—doing so involuntarily perpetuated the replacement of Indigenous tradition with Spanish and Catholic traditions.

Though hierarchical ascension took generations, the adoption of Catholic tradition implicated anyone who adhered to the faith as a “traitor” to their people, as they chose a path of assimilation. This landed Indigenous Mexicans who chose to follow Spanish tradition in a state of *nepantla*, a Nahuatl concept of in-between-ness or transition of identities.<sup>13</sup> Riding the line between indigeneity and Hispanicism, Nahuas with this positionality were renowned by Spaniards for their so-called civility—espousing Spanish tradition while unintentionally subduing their unasimilated counterparts.<sup>14</sup> In the years following the Mexican War for Independence from the Spanish crown (1810–1821), a similar concept befell the Indigenous Maya people in Yucatan. After refusing to assimilate under Spanish rule, thousands rebelled against the Mestizo and Creole upper classes who encroached on Indigenous land and mistreated Maya workers on haciendas. The uprising led to the

11 Roco Cortés. “The Colegio Imperial De Santa Cruz De Tlatelolco and Its Aftermath: Nahuatl Intellectuals and the Spiritual Conquest of Mexico.” *A Companion to Latin American Literature and Culture*, n.d., 86–105.

12 The Spanish purposely did not teach the Indigenous populations Spanish until the 18th century, aiming to disenfranchise them and strip them of popular power this way; a notable example of an Indigenous person who learned Spanish and benefitted from their status as a chronicler was Felipe Guaman Poma de Ayala from Peru—who denounced the ill treatment of Indigenous people through his work; Ricard, 39–60; Cline, 453–80.

13 Kenneth J. Andrien, *The Human Tradition in Colonial Latin America* (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2013), 152–171; The use of *nepantla* when reflecting on identities was popularized by the Chicano movement in the United States, to describe a feeling of being in-between Mexican and American identity; Charles Scott and Nancy Tuana, “Nepantla: Writing (from) the in-Between,” *The Journal of Speculative Philosophy* 31, no. 1 (2017), 1–15.

14 Laura E. Matthew, “Particularly Ladinos Language, Ladinization, & Mexicano Identity,” essay, in *Memories of Conquest: Becoming Mexicano in Colonial Guatemala* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2018), 231–68.

creation of an autonomous Maya state of Chan Santa Cruz, which Mexican forces recaptured just over three decades after its inception. The Maya Caste War encapsulated the feelings of discontent and mistrust of Indigenous communities towards the Catholic Faith. Thus, blurred lines between social advancement and social rejection from Indigenous spaces were further reinforced, once again complicating the ever-nuanced Mexican-Catholic relations. Unfortunately for the Maya, Mexican people continued conversions and baptisms by the thousands every day—even as far back as 1524.<sup>15</sup> This rapid conversion meant that eventually Catholicism would surpass other faiths in Mexico by the sheer size of its following.

The Church and its relationship with poverty also made Catholicism more appealing to the Indigenous communities. For instance, in the early stages of the Colonial Era, some Indigenous converts appreciated the vows of poverty that many mendicant orders undertook, believing that missionaries were more receptive to the needs of the impoverished communities they served; though, colonial elites’ understanding of the tribulations common folk faced had always lacked.<sup>16</sup> Alongside this, the Church provided social services to the communities where they resided. For example, the Franciscan and Augustinian orders founded several hospitals throughout modern-day Mexico. Friars like Pedro de Gante—one of the first established Franciscan missionaries in the New World—had hospitals built as tools for conversion, though some primarily wanted to stop the decimation of the “epidemic-prone” Indigenous populations.<sup>17</sup> Other services provided by the Catholic Church ranged anywhere from offering work and housing to education which made poor Indigenous populations more attuned to what the Church offered for their communities.

Importantly, operations created by the government to eliminate poverty or foster education unassociated with the Church tended to fail. One case was that of a poor house in Mexico City, just a few decades prior to independence. The poor house intended to educate orphaned and poor youths and put them to work. However, the Catholic Church’s vision—for beggars to receive aid and charity from those who wanted to go to heaven—was so embedded in the culture of Mexican poverty

15 Father Gante made mention of upwards of 10,000 people a day getting baptized in the New World; he and two other religious were among the first Friars to establish themselves in New Spain, though they met their demise not long after; Hubert Howe Bancroft, *Volume X History of Mexico Vol. II 1521–1600* (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft and Company, Publishers, 1883), 170; Ricard, 2–14

16 Cline, 453–80

17 Ricard, 157–162



that the poor house eventually just acted as a shelter for orphans.<sup>18</sup> Thus, the ecclesiastical role in impoverished communities was all but certain, as even without direct intervention through social programs, the culture surrounding social welfare and charity was influenced by the Church.<sup>19</sup>

Moving toward the end of the Colonial Era in 1821, with independence achieved, marked a watershed moment in the history of Mexican relations with the Church. Despite the independence movement stemming from Enlightenment ideals, the aftermath proved conservative as it upheld many institutions from the Spanish Colonial Era, including the Catholic Church. Despite the Church's wrongdoings and at times malevolent presence in Indigenous spaces, the institution was cemented as a staple of Mexican society. The Mexican elite readily accepted independence because of its maintenance of clerical privileges, allowing the Church to continue to establish and ally itself with marginalized communities to gain popular power. Conservative Mexican elites used this to their political advantage by siding with the Church and garnering support from the religious lower classes.

By the mid-19th century, more liberal policies centering on land reform and secularization began to take shape in Mexico, but they vied with conservative elites that sought to maintain clerical and fiscal power. These reforms challenged the Church indirectly by limiting the privileges of the clergy; they also directly challenged the institution as the passing of the *Ley Lerdo* (Lerdo Law) and *Ley Juárez* (Juárez Law) meant that the Church had to sell any land not used explicitly for religious purposes.<sup>20</sup> These laws also targeted *ejidos*—communal Indigenous land—thereby creating a shared ecclesiastical and Indigenous discontent with liberal reforms. Not long after the passage of these laws, a more liberal constitution drafted in 1857 limited the power of the Church and separated it from the state. Almost immediately, higher class conservative holdouts declared the constitution null and civil war broke out. The Catholic Church and conservatives—with added support from Indigenous groups stripped of their land by secular reform—banded together against liberal forces whose influence in the Mexican political sphere was at its peak since independence. This three-year conflict, known as The Reform War (1858-1861), marked one of the first times that Mexican people fought in the thousands to uphold the Church's power.

18 Silvia Marina Arrom, "The Experiment in Practice," in *Containing the Poor: The Mexico City Poor House, 1774-1871* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2000), 76-119.

19 Marjorie Becker, *Setting the Virgin on Fire: Lazaro Cardenas, Michoacan Peasants, and the Redemption of the Mexican Revolution* (Berkeley: Los Angeles, 1995), 4-11.

20 Miguel Lerdo de Tejada, *Ley Lerdo* (1856); Benito Juárez, *Ley Juárez* (1855)

Although the civil war resulted in liberal triumph, Benito Juárez—the succeeding Mexican president—was unable to implement many of the reforms promised by the liberal constitution before the French began their imperial ventures in Mexico.<sup>21</sup> The aforementioned conflict brought about the conditions necessary for the French to come into power and form the Second Mexican Empire. As new wave of conservatism befell the region, the Catholic Church remained a staple of society after the failures of the liberal administration. For decades—even following the fall of the Second Mexican Empire in 1867—the Church continued to freely exercise its power and continue to garner the attachment of the common Mexican people through work, housing, and education. Consequently, a sense of proto-nationalism was brewing in Mexico at the turn of the 20th century and people began recognizing their Catholic faith as a factor that united them as Mexicans. With the erasure of their Indigenous roots and the cruelty through which the Church established itself in motion for centuries, Catholicism became an easy commonality. Regardless of hierarchical divisions separating the common and elite, Mexico was becoming unequivocally Catholic as religion and nationality began to go hand in hand.

However, threats to the Church's power became increasingly prevalent especially as the Mexican Revolution ushered in a new wave of radical, secular thinkers in Mexico who fought for labor rights, gender equality, and promotion of literacy. The 1917 constitution, drafted at the end of the revolution, outlined Mexico as a secular state with secular education and freedom of religion. But it was not until President Plutarco Elías Calles came into power in 1924 that the secularization of Mexico truly began to take shape, much to the dismay of the major Catholic centers—like those in the state of Jalisco.<sup>22</sup> Mexican peasants were pitted against one another as they were forced to decide between accepting governmental land reforms—which granted them land in some cases—or protecting their faith which the government persecuted harshly.<sup>23</sup> The divisions created between the proletarian class were apparent, but many chose to fight for the Catholic Church as their faith was the foundation of their communities. Many attended Catholic schools and practiced the rites and rituals of Catholicism on a weekly basis—traditions founded centuries beforehand during the Spanish Colonial Era. This relationship with the Church enticed common Mexican

21 D. M. Coerver, "From Confrontation to Conciliation: Church-State Relations in Mexico, 1867-1884," *Journal of Church and State* 32, no. 1 (January 1990), 65-80.

22 Julia G. Young, "Cristero Diaspora: Mexican Immigrants, the U.S. Catholic Church, and Mexico's Cristero War, 1926-29," *The Catholic Historical Review* 98, no. 2 (2012), 272-300.

23 Reynaldo Mendoza, *¡Viva Cristo Rey!*, 1974, 313-323.

folk to fight for the Church and end its persecution by the Calles administration. It is estimated that tens of thousands of Cristeros gave their lives for the Catholic cause. Although the Cristero Rebellion ended in compromise which left anti-clerical laws in the constitution but offered Catholics a milder enforcement of these laws, it simultaneously strengthened the Catholic Church's place in Mexico as many Cristeros were martyred and the cause gained sympathy from Catholics from around the world.<sup>24</sup> Now, millions of Mexicans were behind the Catholic Church, fully prepared to fight and die for it.

In more recent history, the popular power of the Church has hardly faltered, especially in the conscience of the working lower classes. Throughout the 1960s and 70s, a paradigm of ecclesiastical liberation for the working poor permeated throughout Latin America. Liberation Theology spoke on the destitute nature of poverty and marginalization in Latin America and the fundamental choice to achieve social justice and freedom from oppression through one's Faith.<sup>25</sup> In addition to Faith-based social justice, the Mexican population continually stood up for the Catholic Church en masse, even at the risk of opposing Mexican cartels. This was evident in 1993, when a cartel-related shooting led to the death of Mexican cardinal Juan Jesus Posadas Ocampo.<sup>26</sup> Despite fears of violence or retaliation, thousands of Mexicans took to the street and stood in support of the Catholic Church and against cartel violence running the country.

Since its introduction, the Catholic Church's dominant hold in Mexico shaped the development of the nation. From their politics to their wars, the Church imposed itself as a defender of every kind of person—the clergy, elite, conservatives, peasants, and Indigenous communities. Though its intent was undoubtedly deleterious and patronizing, the Catholic Church fostered tight-knit communities during the Colonial Era and established institutions and traditions which became a unifying standard in Mexican society. The Church cemented its place within Mexican nationalism and, despite all its colonial wrongdoings, was at the heart of the fight against secularization. An institution which erased generations before them became the reason they took up arms. An institution which stood for the subjugation and obliteration of the

first societies that called Mexico home, became an untouchable characteristic of what it meant to be Mexican in later centuries—and even to this day.

<sup>24</sup> They could also make movies about it for Mexican parents to show to their impressionable young children. I certainly cannot blame my mom though, *For Greater Glory* was an interesting flick, after all.

<sup>25</sup> Mario I. Aguilar, "Liberation Theology," *Christian Theologies of the Sacraments*, 2017, 2-11.

<sup>26</sup> Jennifer M. Hazen, Dennis Rodgers, and Gareth Jones, "12 'Hecho En México': Gangs, Identities, and the Politics of Public Security," in *Global Gangs: Street Violence across the World* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014), 266.

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Joe Payne graduated from Cal Poly's History program with top honors in 2023, submitting the following piece on the Chumash War for his senior project. An award-winning journalist and former newspaper editor from Santa Maria, California, Payne is passionate about local history, communicating complex stories, and studying rebellions and counter-revolutions. A first-generation college graduate, he will continue his studies at Cal Poly in the History Department's Masters' program in Fall of 2023.

## The Chumash War: Contested Memories of Forced Labor, Rebellion, and Counter-Revolution in the California Missions

Joseph Payne

*A Senior Project presented to the Faculty of the History Department*

*California Polytechnic State University — San Luis Obispo*

*In Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree*

*Bachelor of Liberal Arts*

### Introduction:

The grounds at La Purisima Mission State Historic Park stand almost a world apart from modernity, ensconced by hedgerows and trees that block out all sight and sound of the parking lot, visitor center, and a nearby highway. The bleat of goats and burros punctuate the pastoral stillness, while the mission's salmon-hued bell tower looms silently over visitors. The sprawling buildings and grounds present an idyllic recreation of Mission La Purisima de Concepción, a feat accomplished thanks to the New Deal fervor for historic preservation that brought the Civilian Conservation Corps there in the 1930s to transform a rubble heap into the largest historic preservation site in state history.<sup>1</sup> Generations of California grade school students visit each year as part of the state curriculum's focus on California history.<sup>2</sup> Until very recently, fourth grade students in the state,

<sup>1</sup> "La Purisima Mission: CCC Historical Restoration and Reconstruction," California Department of Parks and Recreation. Retrieved March 24, 2022: [https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page\\_id=24893](https://www.parks.ca.gov/?page_id=24893)

<sup>2</sup> California Department of Education, "Chapter 7: Grade Four—California: A Changing State," 2016 *History-Social Science Framework*, 67-94 (Sacramento; California Department of Education, 2017).

this author included, were tasked with studying and reproducing in model form a specific California mission, the ubiquitous “mission project.” Other outmoded events at the mission included “Mission Life Days,” which saw reenactors perform various tasks present in early 19th century frontier life, like loom weaving or candlestick making, often performing “in character” as the Indigenous Chumash who were forced to live and labor at La Purísima. The site offers no mention or visible clue that the Mission La Purísima was at one time the battleground in the largest Indigenous uprising during the mission era. While the visitor center provides important information and interpretation regarding the Chumash and their pre-contact lifeways including acknowledgement of the system of forced labor that existed in the California missions, possibly the most significant event that occurred there is largely ignored; The Chumash War of 1824 ended at La Purísima, where hundreds of Chumash exchanged musket fire with a battalion of Mexican soldiers, firing bullets and arrows from the mission building they fortified during a month-long occupation.<sup>3</sup> Any sign or visual clue of this battle has been figuratively and literally painted over.

In February 1824, the Chumash at Missions Santa Inés, Santa Barbara, and La Purísima de Concepción overthrew their captors and absconded from the former two missions while holding the latter for weeks. Referred to as the “Chumash Revolt,”<sup>4</sup> the “Chumash Rebellion,”<sup>5</sup> and most recently the “Chumash War”<sup>6</sup> by scholars, the conflict was the largest insurrection organized

3 James A. Sandos, “LEVANTAMIENTO!: The 1824 Chumash Uprising Reconsidered,” *Southern California Quarterly* 67, no. 2 (1985): 109-33.

4 Thomas Blackburn, “The Chumash Revolt of 1824: A Native Account,” *The Journal of California Anthropology* 2, no. 2 (1975): 223-27; Hubert H. Bancroft, *History of California II*, (San Francisco: A.L. Bancroft and Co., 1885); Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz, “The End of the 1824 Chumash Revolt in Alta California: Father Vicente Sarria’s Account,” *The Americas* 53, no. 2 (1996): 273-83; Gary B. Coombs, “With What God Will Provide: A Reexamination of the Chumash Revolt of 1824,” *Noticias* 126, no. 2 (1989): 21-29; Maynard Geiger, “Fray Antonio Ripoll’s Description of the Chumash Revolt at Santa Barbara in 1824,” *Southern California Quarterly* 52, no. 4 (December, 1970): 345-364; Travis Hudson, “The Chumash Revolt of 1824: Another Native Account From the Notes of John P. Harrington,” *Journal of California and Great Basin Anthropology* 2, no. 1 (1980): 123-126; Dee Travis Hudson, “Chumash Canoes of Mission Santa Barbara: The Revolt of 1824,” *The Journal of California Anthropology* 3, no. 2 (Winter, 1976): 4-15; John R. Johnson, “Indian History in the Santa Barbara Back Country,” *Los Padres Notes* vol. 3 (1984): 1-24; Gary E. Stickel and Adrienne E. Cooper, “The Chumash Revolt of 1824: a case for the archeological application of feedback theory,” *Archaeological Survey and Annual Report*, University of California at Los Angeles, 5-21.

5 S.F. Cook, “Expeditions to the Interior of California: Central Valley, 1820-1840,” *Anthropological Records* 20, no. 5 (1962): 152-157; Sandos, “LEVANTAMIENTO!: The 1824 Chumash Uprising Reconsidered,” 1985.

6 Lisbeth Haas, *Saints and Citizens: Indigenous Histories of Colonial Missions and Mexican California* (University of California Press, 2014), 116-139.

against the mission system and its colonial pattern of forced labor, incarceration, and religious conversion. The events before, during, and after the Chumash War illustrate the complicated dynamics between different groups of Indigenous Chumash and nearby tribal groups, the Spanish padres and their complex of colonial institutions along the coast, and the newly formed government of Mexico that struggled to maintain control of Alta California in an age of explosive political upheaval.<sup>7</sup> La Purísima Mission State Historic Park serves as a standing example of the erasure of the Chumash, the Indigenous Californians, and those who lived at the Missions, both in their mortal lives but also in the collective memory of Californians and the historical literature itself. This silencing of the Chumash began long before the rebellion, but was active during and just after the conflict, continuing in seeming perpetuity in the historic record and retelling of those bloody weeks in 1824.

In this paper I argue that the Chumash War was a revolutionary assertion of autonomy and human rights by the Indigenous Chumash of these missions, and, furthermore, that Spanish colonialism and institutional Catholicism not only worked to subjugate and erase Chumash peoples and their culture as a *modus operandi*, but also sought to control the narrative surrounding the historic conflict in the immediate aftermath and in perpetuity. Despite the blame that the Spanish mission leaders cast on the new Mexican government and its soldiers in instigating the conflict, the Franciscan missionaries worked in coordination with the Mexican military in the violent quelling of the rebellion at La Purísima and the eventual return of hundreds of Chumash back to all three missions, an effective counter-revolution that preserved the status quo of forced labor in Alta California less than a decade before Mexico would secularize and end the Mission system. The deemphasis of the motivations and demands of the Chumash during the Chumash War in early accounts, scholarship, and interpretation along with the broad silencing of Chumash voices and the favorable portrayal of Mission leadership all converge in the preservation of the cultural hegemony of religious colonial institutions in California and the United States more broadly.

### Chumash Life Before Colonial Rule:

Marketed today as “California’s Riviera” and home to some of the most affluent and powerful human beings alive, the Santa Barbara coastline and channel is a landscape remarkable for its beauty, friendly climate, and abun-

7 Haas, *Saints and Citizens*, 116-139.

dant wildlife. Dozens of Chumash villages lined the Central Coast of California from present-day Ventura through Santa Barbara, the Channel Islands, and areas as far north as San Luis Obispo. The Santa Barbara Channel and its islands were the locus for a complex maritime culture that thrived for thousands of years.<sup>8</sup> The earliest dated remains from the Channel Islands date as far back as 11,000 to 13,000 years ago, among the earliest known fossilized evidence of human beings in the Americas. Despite the region's regular cycles of drought and heavy El Niño rain seasons, the Chumash created a stable living environment for themselves based on material cultural practices that proved effective across millennia.<sup>9</sup>

Chumash villages and camps were most often situated near sources of fresh water, rivers and streams, that emptied into the ocean. The Santa Barbara Channel provided an ample supply of seafood, the primary means of survival for generations of Chumash across thousands of years. With the aid of oak plank canoes,<sup>10</sup> the Chumash would catch and transport massive fish and marine mammals for food and other uses. Even without embarking to sea, they could easily collect mollusks and crustaceans along the shore in tide pools and other inlets. The surrounding oak woodlands constantly littered the forest floor with another Chumash staple, acorns, which they used stone tools to mash and prepare.<sup>11</sup> The environment also provided the necessary reeds and grasses to help roof their dwelling huts, sweat lodges, and intricate basketry. The thick asphaltum that would bubble up along the coast of the channel proved useful as well for lining baskets and plank canoes, preventing leaks and aiding in the movement of people and goods from village to village. Plenty of the scholarship regarding the Chumash relies on physical archeological evidence, offering a forensics-based insight into their lifeways. Works by Anderson and Olson—*The Chumash Indians of Southern California* and *Chumash Prehistory*, respectively—are early examples of this academic mode, focused on the material realities presented by various forms of physical evidence. Cataloging the materials and tools left behind by thousands

8 Eugene Newton Anderson, *The Chumash Indians of Southern California* (Banning California: Malki Museum Press, 1968); Lynn H. Gamble, *The Chumash World at European Contact: Power, Trade, and Feasting Among Complex Hunter-Gatherers* (University of California Press, 2008); Johnson, "Indian History in the Santa Barbara Back Country"; Douglas J. Kennett, *The Island Chumash: Behavioral Ecology of a Maritime Society* (University of California Press, 2005); Ronald L. Olson, *Chumash Prehistory* (New York: Kraus, 1965).

9 Deana Dartt-Newton and Jon M. Erlandson, "Little Choice for the Chumash: Colonialism, Cattle, and Coercion in Mission Period California," *American Indian Quarterly* 30, no. 3/4 (2006): 416–30.

10 Hudson, "Chumash Canoes of Mission Santa Bárbara," 4–15.

11 Ronald L. Olson, *Chumash Prehistory* (New York: Kraus, 1965).

of years of habitation gives scholars a more objective insight into the Chumash that is thankfully less biased than later colonial accounts of their lifeways.

This mass of physical evidence shows that, before European contact, the Chumash enjoyed an abundant environment along the coast, among the Channel Islands, and across the foothills and inland valleys wreathed by oak-lined mountain ranges. They created a variety of tools made of stone, shells, and bone. Archeologists helped discover and document mortars and pestles, flint points, fishhooks, bead ornaments, metates, and mullers.<sup>12</sup> Even the Chumash villages found farther inland show evidence of seafood consumption and use of shell tools, proving regular travel and exchange between different villages throughout the Central Coast. There also exists evidence of games and musical instruments, revealing shared experiences of gambling, singing, dancing, and other merriments.<sup>13</sup> The buried remains of Chumash found on the islands and along the mainland show a culture that interred their people with care, adorning them with finery and goods such as the shell beads used as currency. Some gravesites show evidence of the movement and management of remains by the Chumash themselves, making room for new graves or consolidating others. Leaders of villages could even be buried inside their plank canoes, a remarkable practice considering how important these boats were for Chumash economies, but illustrative of the veneration the Chumash practiced for their leaders.<sup>14</sup>

In *The Chumash World at European Contact: Power, Trade, and Feasting Among Complex Hunter-Gatherers*, Lynn H. Gamble relies on this depth of archeological evidence, largely the heaping middens of shellfish and other maritime goods, to illustrate the culture of abundance that characterized the Chumash.<sup>15</sup> Gamble explores the ecology and geography that allowed the Chumash to establish and maintain dense village networks, but also the ingenuity and wisdom of fire-and-stick cultivation and other methods of land management that made those population numbers manageable.<sup>16</sup> And of course, the maritime expertise of the Chumash and their plank canoes looms large in the literature, exploring how the Chumash maintained linguistic and cultural connections across hundreds of miles of land and sea. Adding ethnography and biological anthropology along with early accounts of the Chumash, Gamble fleshes out the complex material culture and social stratigraphy of the Chumash. The accounts of early Spanish explorers, whose

12 Olson, *Chumash Prehistory*, 7.

13 Gamble, *Chumash World at European Contact*, 56.

14 Gamble, *Chumash World at European Contact*, 2.

15 Gamble, *Chumash World at European Contact*, 6–9.

16 Gamble, *Chumash World at European Contact*, 32–33.

journeys predate the Mission period by more than a century, tell of a sophisticated culture that thrived with an ample food supply, trade networks, and power structure.<sup>17</sup> Villages often had more than one leader, though one man would serve as chief among them, and they even enjoyed power sharing and decision-making with other nearby Chumash villages.<sup>18</sup>

While they are necessarily biased, the accounts of Chumash social and cultural practices from Spanish explorers and missionaries should be brought into the conversation, but carefully. Important information about Chumash culture comes to us only through the point of view of Christian settler-colonial missionaries and their reactions to common Indigenous lifeways, as Dartt-Newton and Erlandson detail in the article titled “Little Choice for the Chumash,” where they tease out the religious, European, and colonial sensibilities at work in these accounts.<sup>19</sup> The familial configurations of the Chumash at contact mortified the missionaries, as monogamy and marriage were nonexistent between Chumash men and women and childrearing was a collective endeavor rather than a paternalistic ownership over the young, a fact that would continue to bother the padres in the aftermath of the Chumash War.<sup>20</sup> The fact that the Chumash wore very little clothing in response to the temperate climate was an uncomfortable truth as well for Catholic missionaries, who were quick to characterize the Chumash as “savages” and “heathens” in need of the faith and propriety.<sup>21</sup>

One of the great repositories of information regarding Chumash culture comes from the Chumash themselves, that is, those who remained in the early 20th Century to be interviewed by ethnographer John P. Harrington, whose notes provide several oral history narratives vital to scholarship regarding the Chumash. In *December's Child: A Book of Chumash Oral Narratives*, editor and considerable scholar of Chumash culture Thomas C. Blackburn offers an analysis of the Chumash worldview and mythology, but also a look at the material culture that is present within these oral history narratives. Through these oral histories we learn some of what the Chumash knew and felt for themselves, within their context. Blackburn explained that, for the Chumash, “Daily life is normally village life, and the villages—with their gaming fields, cemeteries, shrines, work areas, houses, and temescals—are those familiar to the story-

17 Gamble, *Chumash World at European Contact*, 1-3.

18 Gamble, *Chumash World at European Contact*, 9-11.

19 Dartt-Newton and Erlandson, “Little Choice for the Chumash,” 416-30.

20 Cook, “Expeditions to the Interior of California,” 153.

21 Engelhardt, *Mission Santa Barbara* (San Francisco, CA: James H. Barry Company, 1923).

teller and his audience.”<sup>22</sup> Furthermore, Blackburn argues that the oral history accounts provide much more than just the archeological record could supply, writing that “data on containers, foods and food preparation, structures, dress, ritual gear, and games, for example, would probably fall under the heading of significant additions to present knowledge of Chumash culture.”<sup>23</sup> These interviews from Harrington’s notes will also prove invaluable in contextualizing the Chumash War as well, as they show attitudes toward conflict and power passed down through generations of Chumash ancestors.

### Missionization, Displacement, and Population Loss:

Much as it did for all Native Americans, European contact changed everything for the Chumash. Early contacts with explorers provide a brief snapshot of the Chumash living in abundance, literally sharing more food with Father Juan Crespí and his expedition than they could manage.<sup>24</sup> But once the Spanish arrived to colonize, both with often-militarized settlers and the Franciscan missionaries led by Junípero Serra, the Chumash faced an ongoing, slow-rolling crisis. Populations perished dramatically from diseases, whole villages were destroyed or displaced by colonists, and forced resettlement and labor fueled the mission system in Alta <sup>25</sup>

The most acute and deadly factor were diseases brought by Spanish explorers and settlers, which decimated the Chumash population across decades. More Spanish settlers arrived with cattle, ready to set up homesteads as Chumash villages collapsed, displacing Chumash settlements further by compromising subsistence foods and water supplies. Once the missions were founded in the late 1700s and early 1800s, Spanish missionaries were actively recruiting or forcibly removing the Chumash from their villages to live and labor on the missions.

One point of contention within the pre-rebellion scholarly literature focuses on the question: Why did the Chumash villages collapse and significant numbers of Chumash arrive to the missions in the late 1700s and early 1800s? Population loss from disease was the most obvious causal factor even in the earliest literature, though scholars had to rely on broad estimates of pre-contact and post-contact population numbers. Some researchers argued that, based off climatological influences and lack of available food because of drought, the Chumash pragmatically abandoned their

22 Thomas C. Blackburn, *December's Child: A Book of Chumash Oral Narratives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1975), 48.

23 Blackburn, *December's Child*, 48.

24 Gamble, *Chumash World at European Contact*, 1.

25 Dartt-Newton and Erlandson, “Little Choice for the Chumash,” 416-30.

homes for the missions. Others argued that these outside pressures were eclipsed by the more direct outcome of forced relocation to the missions by colonists.

In 1994, Larson, Johnson, and Michaelsen published “Missionization among the Coastal Chumash of Central California: A Study of Risk Minimization Strategies,” which made a climatological argument as a material basis to spur this migration to the missions. The authors argued that the Chumash moved to the missions “based on a desire to minimize risk” and that the missions were viewed as “an acceptable alternative” because of years of drought and irregular climate. The impetus of this work seems influenced by the larger trend in the 1990s of the newer form of macrohistory based on scientific data. One of the sources for the study was “high-resolution dendrochronological and marine sedimentary records.”<sup>26</sup> There’s an obvious danger here in attempting to naturalize the forced migration of Chumash into a plantation system or ignoring the massive disruption that diseases brought by Europeans wrought on their populations, and appropriately, this article did see some pushback. In a refutation of Larson, Johnson, and Michaelsen’s article, Dartt-Newton and Erlandson cast doubts on the argument that environmental conditions such as drought or an El Niño year would lead to a “pragmatic” decision by Chumash to leave their villages for the missions. Essentially, the Chumash had lived through periods of drought for thousands of years and had adopted several sophisticated coping and subsistence strategies to mitigate the climatological pressures. Dartt-Newton and Erlandson explored the conditions that more likely led the Chumash to arrive at the missions in the numbers they did, arguing that ranching practices of the Spanish, disease, and a declaration by the Mission authorities that all natives must live on Mission grounds were more acute causal factors.<sup>27</sup>

One limitation to understanding how many Chumash perished from communicable diseases introduced by Europeans is the lack of accurate population numbers before Missionization. Archeologists can confirm from the middens and burial grounds that tens of thousands of Chumash lived in numerous villages that house up to 200 or more at a time, but these are rough estimates.<sup>28</sup> The ledgers of the Missions themselves, presented by Engelhardt in his books, show that hundreds of Chumash were born each year and hundreds perished as well. From the book on La Purísima, we see that during the earliest years during which the mission

26 Daniel O. Larson, John R. Johnson, and Joel C. Michaelsen, “Missionization Among the Coastal Chumash of Central California: A Study of Risk Minimization Strategies,” *American Anthropologist* 96, no. 2 (1994), 263-64.

27 Dartt-Newton and Erlandson, “Little Choice for the Chumash,” 416-30

28 Gamble, *Chumash World at European Contact*, 65-112.

officials began recording the number of Chumash who lived on the mission, hundreds of Chumash were recorded as dying each year.<sup>29</sup> As the number of baptisms began to rise and more Chumash lived at the mission, more died there as well. For example, in 1800 there were 420 documented deaths of “Indians.” In 1805 that number was 800. The very next year saw 1,020 deaths of Indigenous mission residents.<sup>30</sup> Clearly, those who stayed away from the missions while it was still their choice to do so, were avoiding loci of disease and death.<sup>31</sup>

The overemphasis of material conditions in a land of abundance tends to ignore the cultural and epistemological character of the Chumash, their system of cosmological belief, spiritualism, family, hierarchy, village organization, commerce, shell-based currency, and maritime tradition—all patronizingly dismissed as “sophisticated” in early scholarship—and the resiliency of this congruence.<sup>32</sup> An exploration of the Chumash culture in crisis from disease and displacement shows both pragmatism but also a shrinking number of options for a decimated population. At the missions, the Chumash would labor at agricultural cultivation and cattle ranching while a dynamic fission of Chumash spirituality with Catholic belief systems would take place.<sup>33</sup> This helps explain why the Chumash exhibited a familiarity with the Franciscans, according to scholars like Dartt-Newton and Erlandson,<sup>34</sup> in contrast to their outright hostility toward Mexican authorities throughout the conflict. There is also a dominating sense that Catholic beliefs had already permeated most areas of Chumash life and, while this did have important influence in the outcomes of the conflict, Indigenous Chumash lifeways and belief systems were never eradicated, even from those who lived on the missions.<sup>35</sup>

### Approaching Rebellion:

The Chumash War has been likened to a Rashomon situation,<sup>36</sup> with differing accounts of the conflict from each party involved: the Spanish priests, the

29 Engelhardt, *Mission La Purísima*, 129.

30 Engelhardt, *Mission La Purísima*, 129.

31 Larson, Johnson, and Michaelsen, “Missionization Among the Coastal Chumash,” 278.

32 Gamble, *Chumash World at European Contact*, 1-9.

33 Haas, *Saints and Citizens*, 13-49.

34 Dartt-Newton and Erlandson, “Little Choice for the Chumash,” (2006), 416-30.

35 Kaitlin M. Brown, Mirirose Meyer, Elena Hancock, Nicolasa Sandoval, and Glenn J. Farris, “Status and Social Stratification at Mission La Purísima Concepción: An Intra-Site Investigation of Residential Spaces Within the Chumash Rancheria’ Amuwu,” *International Journal of Historical Archeology* (2022).

36 Joe Payne, “Hidden history: The Chumash rebellion of 1824 illustrates the changing conversation surrounding life at California’s missions,” in *Santa Maria Sun* 19, no. 2 (March 16, 2016).



Mexican Military and government officials, and the Chumash. The Indigenous Mission residents were caught in the middle of a massive political conflict between the Spanish colonial establishment and the burgeoning secular state of Mexico that would end the mission system by 1834. The Franciscan mission leaders cast blame on the Mexican soldiers who relied on the missions for food and housing while exacting corporal punishment on the Chumash. The Mexican authorities would blame mission leaders and the Chumash for the perceived mismanagement of resources. The voices of the Spanish and Mexicans are over-represented in the scholarship, whereas the Chumash are under-represented. As any post-colonial student knows, our historic understanding of Indigenous history is forever distorted and influenced by ethnocentrism and the colonial ideologies that sought to oppress them. So much of our understanding of the Chumash before and after the conflict in 1824 is filtered through the accounts of Spanish missionaries, settlers, and government officials of Spain and later Mexico,<sup>37</sup> if not completely erased by disease, displacement, and the genocide that followed the mission period.

Early scholars were less cognizant of these biases, and happily present accounts of the Chumash almost entirely from the point of view of Spanish missionaries. Others were smattering in their praise for missionaries, framing the conflict as one between the Chumash and the Mexican military rather than the Chumash and the larger mission system as it was, essentially taking Spanish sources such as Fray Ripoll at their word, ignoring the larger political conflict between the Chumash, the Missions, and a burgeoning nation of Mexico. The Mexican War for Independence and the bill of rights, or Plan de Iguala of 1821, represented new attempts to write constitutions that gave suffrage and citizenship to the Indigenous.<sup>38</sup> The secularization that accompanied radical liberal republicanism freed Indigenous and Black laborers from indentured servitude and other forms of bondage or coerced labor across formerly Spanish colonial territories like Alta California with the exception, however, of those held at the missions. The Chumash were not ignorant of the new rights afforded to Indigenous peoples in Mexico who were outside the Mission system. Toiling to feed both the mission leaders and the new Mexican military with the bitter knowing that that other Indigenous peoples were cultivating their own lands was a major motivator for the Chumash to attempt an insurrection, according to the examination by Haas.

37 Haas, *Saints and Citizens*, 116-139.

38 Haas, *Saints and Citizens*, 116-139.

The disagreements and politics surrounding the antecedent factors to the conflict, how it proceeded, and what was done in the aftermath play out not just in the translations of primary sources, but in the very historiography itself. The noted lack of historians who frame the Chumash War as a revolution against the Mission system and its combination of Christianization, forced labor, and incarceration only until recently illustrate this bias. Another scholarly account by Gary Coombs sought to naturalize the Chumash War, much like their forced resettlement on the missions, by pointing to years of drought in the lead up to the conflict.<sup>39</sup> The Chumash were tasked with growing and harvesting the food that the missions produced, which fed the padres, Mexican military, and settlers before the Indigenous peoples who cultivated the goods.<sup>40</sup> Coombs' exploration of the drought conditions before the war skates over the new political realities churning all around the Chumash, namely the new language of revolution and emancipation. While the effects of drought and population loss should be considered as material realities that affected the Chumash, the social realities of the Missions and the new hope glimpsed by the new Plan de Iguala should be considered in the forefront as well.

It must also be acknowledged that many early to mid-20th century historians of the Missions were themselves ecclesiastical scholars. This helps us understand a major division in much of the early scholarship of the Chumash War characterized by who is centered in the recounting of the 1824 uprising: the Spanish missionaries, the Mexican Military, or the Chumash? Most of the scholarship begins with the Missions, both in the accounts of its priestly class but also records held by the institution that span years or decades. Every post-war scholar makes references to the books of Zephyrin Engelhardt, the historian and Catholic Church archivist who penned books on Franciscan colonization, missionization, and the missions from an undoubtedly biased, pro-church perspective. Engelhardt's language and descriptions lack the cultural awareness and public relations savvy of post-War scholars, referring to the Chumash as loyal children at best and savage animals at worst. Engelhardt also places the blame for the conflict on the Mexican Military quite loudly and without any finesse, ham-handedly attempting to absolve the priestly class of responsibility while ignoring the obvious pressures the Chumash faced at the hands of priests themselves and the Mission system.<sup>41</sup>

39 Coombs, "With What God Will Provide."

40 Zephyrin Engelhardt, *Mission Santa Inés Virgen Y Martir and its Ecclesiastical Seminary*, (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Mission, 1932), 30-35.

41 Manuel P. Servin, "The Secularization of the California Missions: A Reappraisal," *Southern California Quarterly* 47, no. 2 (1965), 133-49.

Even despite these clear biases, much can be learned from Engelhardt's stark accounts along with what is left to be seen between the lines, helping tell the story of the world that surrounded the Chumash before they rose up and took arms against their captors.

For example, the chapter from Engelhardt's book on Mission La Purísima that precedes the chapter about the war explains the catastrophic earthquake and climactic event that destroyed the original mission in 1812. The massive earthquake toppled most of the adobe buildings which were even further marred by massive rains and flooding. The entire mission, its grounds and sanctuary, were decimated. This leveling would have been traumatic for anyone who had a sense of home at the Missions, like the Franciscans, but greater suffering would come with the work that followed the devastation. Within the next few years, the Chumash would build an entirely new mission at the current State Historic Park site, including the main sanctuary, living quarters, and workshop that shared a thick adobe wall hundreds of feet long along with other buildings. In each year following the earthquake, more than a thousand Chumash were recorded as dying in the mission ledger.<sup>42</sup> In this section of his book, Engelhardt's bias comes through clearly as he takes much more time and space explaining the new buildings and their respective accoutrement in these years than the names or actions of the Chumash who constructed the new mission complex.

The tone-deaf paternalism from Engelhardt is on full display in a passage relating this time, in which just paragraphs later he would go on to blame the "Hidalgo Revolt" and the "Mexican turmoil" for hardships at the new Mission:<sup>43</sup>

*To begin with, the terrified neophytes had to be gathered together at the new site. It speaks volumes for the kindly and paternal management of the missionaries that they seem to have experienced no difficulties whatever in returning the neophytes to their care. Like so many confiding children, the neophytes seem to have reappeared at the bare call of the Fathers, as they felt that their spiritual and temporal wellbeing was secure in the hands of the two priests, and that the Mission was their real and only home. At all events, there is no evidence that the aid of the soldiers*

42 Engelhardt, *Mission La Purísima*, 129.

43 Engelhardt, *Mission La Purísima*, 38.

*was required. The Indians assisted in erecting the necessary buildings, and then with their happy families occupied their new quarters as though nothing had happened.*

Engelhardt's description of these events represents an astounding attempt to smooth over the years of hard labor the Chumash endured in reconstructing Mission La Purísima. Furthermore, this paternalistic bias should be understood across Engelhardt's work, which has been foundational to mission scholarship.

The telling in Hubert Bancroft's *History of California* is more skeptical of the church. An academic historian outside the Catholic Church, Bancroft utilized many more sources from Mexican government officials to soldiers and even explorers. Just the inclusion of sourcing outside the church offers a more expansive view of the conditions surrounding the Chumash War. Bancroft acknowledges a Russian voyager named Kotzebue who condemned the Spaniards and the Mission system who believed that "the padres had no good quality but hospitality. The neophytes were simply slaves, captured in their homes by the lasso."<sup>44</sup> This scholarship was met with outright hostility by Engelhardt, who viewed the acknowledgement of such views as tantamount to anti-Catholic prejudice according to Manuel P. Servín in "California Missions: A Reappraisal." Servín posited in 1965 that historians avoided criticism of the Franciscans and the Mission system, fearful of the label "bigot," and "content to present a sketchy, pro-Franciscan view" when relating the secularization of the Missions.<sup>45</sup> In this way, it can be argued that early Franciscan scholars were essentially continuing a spin campaign that began in 1824, maintaining the narrative that the problem was never truly between the Chumash and the padres and the mission system, but the new secular government of Mexico.

Later accounts from the Spanish church leaders, such as Maynard Geiger's 1970 article "Fray Antonio Ripoll's Description of the Chumash Revolt at Santa Barbara in 1824," show some of the slanted bias on the part of the scholars who provided translations of personal accounts from Spanish sources.<sup>46</sup> Geiger was not shy to frame the actions of Father Ripoll as those of a "devoted missionary with a tender love for his Indians," before his lengthy translation.<sup>47</sup> Geiger was another parochial scholar whose work was necessarily shaped by the biases of his parent institution. The translation of Ripoll's account is filled with the pater-

44 Bancroft, *History of California*, 524.

45 Servín, "The Secularization of the California Missions: A Reappraisal," 133.

46 Geiger, "Fray Antonio Ripoll's Description of the Chumash Revolt," 346.

47 Geiger, "Fray Antonio Ripoll's Description of the Chumash Revolt," 346.

nalism and dominance of the Catholic mode of thought regarding Indigenous peoples, though not as openly bigoted as pre-War historians such as Engelhardt.

The only contemporary Chumash accounts come filtered through the interrogations that occurred after the rebellion was put down, which are shared in S.F. Cook's "Expeditions to the Interior of California Central Valley, 1820-1840." These only tell of how the runaway Chumash behaved while away from the missions with allied Yokut at Buena Vista Lake near modern-day Bakersfield before they were returned to the Missions. These short interrogations show that the Chumash immediately returned to their traditional lifeways once out from under the supervision of the padres, enjoying long stretches of the day in sweat lodges, gambling sessions, and non-monogamous sexual liaisons, no longer observing the interpersonal restrictions that come with Catholicism.<sup>48</sup> Other scholarship shows how quickly the Chumash returned to their pre-colonial lifeways during the Chumash War, whether it was taking to the wilderness, defying Christian marriages, or utilizing their plank canoes to escape to the old Chumash home of the Channel Islands.<sup>49</sup>

Of the few Chumash accounts of the insurrection that do exist, they are essentially passed down, or once removed, by those who grew up hearing the story from those who lived it and then retold their recollections to ethnographer John Harrington. Harrington's recordings are invaluable oral history narratives from the early 20th century, including numerous recorded hours of some of the last native speakers of Chumash languages. From the oral history accounts of Harrington, Thomas Blackburn provided a scant yet much-needed translation in 1975, "The Chumash Revolt of 1824: A Native Account." Blackburn thankfully expresses the stifling layers of bias at work against even understanding the lives of the Chumash from a historical perspective, saying the documentation and evidence available "are limited, sparse," and "systematically biased." Even the source of the account that Blackburn was able to uncover from the notes of John P. Harrington, he admits, "did not personally participate in the 1824 revolt, but she had numerous opportunities as a girl to hear about it from those who did."<sup>50</sup> The only other oral history narrative so far recovered that tells of the rebellion was found by Travis Hudson and shared in the article, "The Chumash Revolt of 1824: Another Native Account from the Notes of John P. Harrington." While these oral history narratives certainly

<sup>48</sup> Cook, "Expeditions to the Interior of California," 153.

<sup>49</sup> Hudson, "Chumash Canoes," 4-15.

<sup>50</sup> Blackburn, "Chumash Revolt of 1824: A Native Account," 223.

exist within the paradigms of oppressive colonial power structures—the history was not the primary motivator for Harrington, an ethnographer most interested in documenting languages—the fact that there are only two known accounts by Chumash people from nearly a century after the war speaks to the outcome of Spain and later the United States' colonial project; that's all there is left, a couple of short explanations that focus on various types of minutia and motivations, hardly the detailed firsthand accounts of the war available from the Spanish and Mexican primary source material. That kind of widespread silencing of generations of Indigenous peoples, whether perishing under the mission system or from widespread epidemics or genocide itself, stands in bleak contrast to the reams of history that centers the Spanish and the missionaries or even Mexican settlers and officials all pointing fingers at one another.

A much more sensitive study of a Spanish-centered account comes from Beebe and Senkewicz in 1996 with the article and translation, "The End of the 1824 Chumash Revolt in Alta California Father Vicente Sarria's Account." This article shows the progress made in the two decades since Geiger, sitting with and exploring how colonial power dynamics meant a silencing and dehumanizing of the Chumash. They explore the hegemonic influence of Catholicism and Christian mysticism in Chumash life and their relationships with the Spanish church fathers. Beebe and Senkewicz even give the Chumash credit for "an impressive mixture of organizational precision and operational flexibility" during the uprising, a welcome understatement considering some of the other more paternalistic accounts.<sup>51</sup>

### Accounts of Conflict:

Much of the formative scholarship on the Chumash uprising presents the timeline of the conflict, with some limited accounts added to the record along the way. While considering the bias inherent in relying mostly on the accounts of Spanish missionaries, a picture of the antecedent factors and procession of the conflict are available in detail through available sources. There is a wealth of information about the procession of the conflict from Spanish sources, but Chumash accounts tend to relate the story through geography, tales of supernatural abilities, and remembrances of loss and suffering. The padres tend to valorize and sterilize their own actions, careful to pass blame onto the Mexican Revolution

<sup>51</sup> Rose Marie Beebe and Robert M. Senkewicz, "The End of the 1824 Chumash Revolt in Alta California: Father Vicente Sarria's Account," *The Americas*, vol. 53, no. 2 (October, 1996): 273-283.

and state authorities whereas Mexican accounts will celebrate military victories, depict the padres indifferently, and offer cold accounts of executions in the aftermath of the war.

Sandos offers a comprehensive account, for the time, in the 1985 journal article “LEVANTAMIENTO!: The 1824 Chumash Uprising Reconsidered,” which attempts to marry the limited Indigenous accounts with Spanish accounts supplemented by mission records, such as confessions and other question and answer forms employed by the missionaries.<sup>52</sup> Sandos’ 1985 article should serve as a serious benchmark in the scholarship in its effort to aggregate and synthesize information about the Chumash’s culture, how it threatened Catholic rules and sentiments, and how decisions by colonial authorities exacerbated conflicts between the Chumash and their rulers. Sandos also sat with the complexity and messiness of the conflict. The Chumash targeted secular and religious authorities, being both friendly and negotiating with missionaries while also lashing out violently at passersby out of paranoia. Mexican authorities responded in kind, needlessly killing innocent Chumash impulsively as well during the conflict.<sup>53</sup> Padres like Ripoll would lament the violence of the Mexican Military in those cases, though not in the quashing of the rebellion at La Purísima or the military-backed expedition to return the Chumash to the Missions.

Sandos gives a necessary agency to the Chumash, genuinely gleaned from contemporary accounts, that agree the Chumash planned an uprising for months. The war was kickstarted early, however, since the rebellion began after an act of violence against a Chumash man, a visitor to the prison of Mission Santa Inés to see a family member held there according to accounts by Ripoll and others. The visitor was denied visitation of the prisoner, and after arguing to see their relative, was subsequently beaten by a Mexican soldier and prison guard who would later serve as a scapegoat for the padres.<sup>54</sup> According to the oral history accounts from the two Chumash interviewed by Harrington, the Chumash had planned and prepared for the uprising for some time, possibly months, after rumors circulated that the Mexican soldiers and perhaps even the Franciscans were conspiring to commit mass murder against the neophytes. The catalyst for the powder-keg situation—the beating by the prison guard—speaks to the carceral nature of the Missions.<sup>55</sup> Even if the

<sup>52</sup> Sandos, “LEVANTAMIENTO!,” 109–33.

<sup>53</sup> Geiger, “Fray Antonio Ripoll’s Description of the Chumash Revolt.”

<sup>54</sup> Sandos, “LEVANTAMIENTO!,” 123.

<sup>55</sup> Benjamin Madley, “California’s First Mass Incarceration System: Franciscan Missions, California Indians, and Penal Servitude, 1769–1836,” *Pacific Historical Review* 88, no. 1 (2019), 14–47.

Chumash were preparing for a perceived genocidal plot against them, that understanding was punctuated by the very real and continual violence and restrictions that characterized the Mission system.<sup>56</sup> The fact that the Chumash were prepared for revolution and war, not just at Mission Santa Inés, but also at Santa Barbara and La Purísima, speaks to the lie that their conflict was with Mexican authorities alone, but also the overarching colonial superstructure of the Missions.

In retaliation for the beating, the sources agree, the mission’s Chumash ambushed the Mexican authorities with bows and arrows. The soldiers responded with gunfire as the priest of Santa Inés fled the grounds while the Chumash set fire to the mission. A handful of Chumash would perish just in this skirmish. Simultaneously, word went out to both Mission Santa Barbara and Mission La Purísima Concepción, where organized overthrows commenced. The Santa Barbara Chumash overtook the mission quickly and were successful in a skirmish against the Mexican soldiers from the presidio in Santa Barbara. Missionaries and Mexican military men would return to recover the mission by the next day, but the Chumash had already left. Most fled Santa Barbara up and over the mountains, no doubt with a smoldering Santa Inés in sight. Many hundreds from Santa Barbara headed Northwest out toward Buena Vista Lake, in Yokuts territory, far away from the violence and instability in the constellation of the three overthrown missions, though the journey was fraught with its own perils for the old and sick who died during the journey. The rest were bound for La Purísima, to join in the effort to claim and hold the Mission constructed just more than a decade before by Chumash hands. This depiction certainly displays an early example of revisionism that celebrates the rebellion of the Chumash, even if it is through a largely Spanish lens. Also, the sense of place that the Chumash exhibited, both in fleeing into the wilderness to return to their remembered ways of life, and the insistence on holding La Purísima, the only full mission complex that most could remember taking part in building, speaks to the agency of the radicalized Chumash.

The Chumash Rebellion gets its own chapter in the book *Saints and Citizens: Indigenous Histories of Colonial Missions and Mexican California* by Lisbeth Haas, titled “‘All of the Horses Are in the Possession of the Indians’: The Chumash War.” In that chapter, Haas also makes the argument that the Chumash were emboldened to rebel in hopes for liberal rights, citing the Spanish Constitution of 1812, the Plan de Igual of 1821, and the promise of legal citizenship for the Indige-

<sup>56</sup> Servin, “The Secularization of the California Mission: A Reappraisal.”

nous alongside Spaniards and natural-born Mexicans.<sup>57</sup> Haas also does a thorough job in depicting the two parties of Chumash post-revolt: those who journeyed far to Yokut territory and those who stayed to fight at La Purísima, framing the coming battle at the mission not as one of just defiance, but also of desperation, in that many Chumash at La Purísima would not leave behind elders or children who could not survive the long trek.<sup>58</sup> Considering the hardships faced by those who did flee, their worries were not unjustified. Either way, that desperation doesn't downplay this interpretation of the Chumash War as a revolutionary moment in the Mission era, which itself was part of a larger century-wide movement for emancipatory revolutionary liberalism.<sup>59</sup>

Hass's telling, like others, can't help but wax heroic about the hundreds of La Purísima inhabitants who overtook the Mexican soldiers and the Spanish missionaries, gaining control of the arms supply, which included rifles and other weapons. The Mission Santa Inés Chumash arrived at Purísima with more weapons, including small cannons, sometimes referred to as "swivel guns," which served as symbols of hope and later harbingers of defeat.<sup>60</sup> Hundreds of Chumash occupied Mission La Purísima for several weeks on end, holding a missionary and several soldiers and their families for days before releasing some. The sight would have been truly radical, with Chumash preparing the grounds for a battle, cutting slits for rifles and archers in the walls of the mission itself.<sup>61</sup> The battle exceeded two hours but ended after significant losses for the Chumash, including the fatal backfiring of the swivel guns and the wounding of many others from the military response, which included "109 soldiers with artillery, infantry, cavalry, and a cannon" against the "four hundred men who fought within the mission."<sup>62</sup>

As many as nine of the Chumash insurrectionists received death sentences that were carried out just days after the battle. Some of these executions were for the killings of the travelers near Purísima during the early days of the uprising, but the performance of executions following an uprising can not be misunderstood as a potent counter-revolutionary tactic. More still were sentenced to hard labor and sent to missions elsewhere in Alta California, removing the leaders of the war from their communities and families. Later accounts by contemporaries that were ver-

57 Haas, *Saints and Citizens*, 117-121.

58 Haas, *Saints and Citizens*, 121.

59 Paul Ortiz, *An African American and Latinx History of the United States* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2018), 42-55.

60 Haas, *Saints and Citizens*, 117-121.

61 Bancroft, *History of California*.

62 Haas, *Saints and Citizens*, 122.

ified by scholars tell of one leader of the Chumash uprising named Pacomio who was sentenced to hard labor for his role in the uprising and was later known in the Monterey area for his craftsmanship, songs, and political activities, including his participation as a member of town council.<sup>63</sup> Thankfully, Hass connects this radical militancy to the slave revolts and rebellions of the Age of Revolution typified by the Haitian Revolution and other conflicts by modern scholars.<sup>64</sup> This is the framing that should inform future work on the Chumash War, as the political nature of the conflict is undeniable.

While the Chumash at La Purísima were put down, the matter of the hundreds of Chumash that had fled to Yokuts territory was still unacceptable to mission authorities whose counter-revolution was still incomplete and, consequently, the Mexican military, which relied on food and other goods produced at the missions. So much of the early ecclesiastic blame passed onto the Mexican authorities for the uprising is cast in a new light when considering their collaboration with the new nation's military to violently put down or return the Chumash back to the mission. They needed the aid of the military just to locate the runaway Chumash, let alone return them to the missions. Mexican state authorities and Spanish mission authorities visited several tribes in the surrounding areas, interrogating natives across a few months.<sup>65</sup> Eventually, Chumash from all three missions were found near Buena Vista Lake and confronted in June, months after the battle at La Purísima in March. The Spanish padres were obsessed with the specter of a widespread overthrow of the mission system to the point of rampant paranoia, believing that Mission Buenaventura may have been the next target.<sup>66</sup> In this way, many of the Spanish-centered narratives do themselves at least one justification in giving a highly detailed account of the aftermath and reconciliation with the Chumash who were returned to the missions and the deep-seated fear of widespread rebellion from their "neophytes" across Alta California.

The return of the Chumash was an essential re-establishment of order and preservation of the exploitative labor system of the missions, a saving face for the flaunted power structures of the Spanish and Mexican authorities as well as a counter-revolutionary act to discipline the Indigenous subjects of the mission system. The Spanish friars and the Mexican Military were both beneficiaries of

63 "Pacomio's Chumash Dancing Songs," *Bulletin of the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History* 134 (December 1989), 1.

64 Ortiz, *An African American and Latinx History of the United States*, 42-55.

65 Cook, "Expeditions to the Interior of California," 152-53.

66 Sandos, "LEVANTAMIENTO!"

this counter-revolution, as one mission leader reported to another that, “if the Indians flee to the pagans, all will perish, troops and settlers, because if the soldier must eat, he must have it from the labor of the Indian.”<sup>67</sup> The account we have of this period from Father Sarria and Father Ripoll show the personal and spiritual connection the missionaries still managed to cultivate with the Chumash, weaving in mercy and atonement into their justification for a resettlement back into the Mission system. This is where the Spanish-dominated outlook is useful to scholars, helping to illustrate how language, tradition, and beliefs have justified oppressive systems across time and in acute moments of crisis, and specifically how the preeminence of Catholic ideology reinforced and maintained those hierarchical relationships.

### Hegemonic Colonialism, Christianity in the Chumash Context:

The Italian Communist and post-Marx theorist Antonio Gramsci (1891-1937) left an indelible mark on historiography with his framing and argument surrounding “cultural hegemony,” that the capital class and the state work in harmony to fashion the consent of the proletarian class through myriad cultural and state institutions.<sup>68</sup> This framework is important in conceptualizing the dynamics between the missionized Chumash and their captors. According to Gramsci, an institution like the church, for example, may exalt certain “virtues” such as military service to the nation, hard work, and the “traditional” monogamous family. That outlook, which institutions like the church inculcate proletarian subjects into, services not just the immediate interests of the bourgeoisie directly in pliable laborers, but ultimately saps revolutionary energy and input from the laboring class by preempting their discontent with theories of obedience and servitude.<sup>69</sup> Gramsci relates that these institutions are part of an overall societal structure, that the outcome of these institutional entrenchments is an ideological “superstructure,” or an overlording outlook that dominates all societal and cultural discourse—cultural hegemony.<sup>70</sup>

Gramsci, like Marx before him, is engaging in the methodology of dialectical materialism: attempting to explain history and political machinations consid-

67 Zephyrin Engelhardt, *Mission Santa Inés Virgen Y Martir and its Ecclesiastical Seminary* (Santa Barbara: Santa Barbara Mission, 1932), 30-35.

68 David Forgacs, ed., *The Antonio Gramsci Reader: Selected Writings 1916-1935* (New York: New York University Press, 2000), 189-192.

69 Forgacs, *Gramsci Reader*, 191.

70 Forgacs, *Gramsci Reader*, 190-191.

ering the material means and environment that influence economic systems and the ideas that are the outcome of that material reality. This is why the theory of cultural hegemony was such a breakthrough among Marxist thinking—it brought idealism and ideological superstructure into historical materialism. Cultural hegemony explains why workers adopt the ideology of the capital class, but it also points out that workers are existing in a paradigm that is created and enforced not just by capitalists, but the petit bourgeoisie, and proletarians themselves. Therefore, the imagination of the proletariat is limited or encased by the ideological superstructure that permeates institutions, which in turn help reinforce hegemony.<sup>71</sup> Gramsci detailed this further in his idea of “false consciousness,” or how workers adopt the ideological beliefs of the capitalist class, taking on a consciousness not of their own or in their own interests.

The idea of false consciousness, paired with cultural hegemony, revolutionized the way historians, scholars, and Marxists viewed the world. It could also help in the way we view the power dynamics present in the intersectional colonial relationship of the Chumash to the Catholic mission system and its leadership along with the militarized state government of Mexico. How did the Chumash’s lifetimes within the Missions and their inculcation into Catholicism as “neophytes” color their reactions to the worsening conditions at the Missions before the rebellion? The cultural hegemony of the Franciscans did not work to prevent a violent uprising, but it did serve as a tool in completing a successful counter-revolution against those who fought and fled the missions, though that hegemony would eventually fade with secularization.<sup>72</sup> Could it be that the Franciscan ideology that enforced labor and obedience was dispelled, even if only temporarily, by the specter of liberal republicanism that characterized revolution and new government of Mexico? The realities of the new Mexican government’s interest in preserving the Mission system, at least for the time being, in concert with the Franciscans would be clearly communicated to the Chumash down the barrels of rifles, dispelling any revolutionary hopes for the Chumash and their way of life.

Some of Gramsci’s first subjects in his exploration of the idea of cultural hegemony were the church and ecclesiastical leadership. As an Italian, Gramsci was operating intimately within a society steeped in the culture and traditions of the Catholic Church, an expert institution at implanting “false consciousness” into the

71 Forgacs, *Gramsci Reader*, 190-194.

72 Edward D. Castillo, “An Indian Account of the Decline and Collapse of Mexico’s Hegemony over the Missionized Indians of California,” *American Indian Quarterly* 13, no. 4 (1988): 391-408.

minds of its targeted subjects and bending their wills to the constricts of the church. It must be remembered that, in the context of the 1824 Chumash War, the missions were characterized by a large majority of Chumash dominated both physically and ideologically by a minority of Spanish padres, but also abused more outright and physically by Mexican Military forces preceding the war. Spanish missionaries such as Father Ripoll placed the responsibility for inciting the uprising on the Mexican soldiers, clearly displacing any blame that could focus on the Mission's oppressive system of plantation labor, and instead placing it at the feet of a few unruly actors. The self-preservation on display by the Mission fathers shows not just a willingness to defend their personal actions, but also the Missions and Catholic Church as institutions. Further scholarship, however, has argued that the Missions across Alta California functioned increasingly as carceral institutions, limiting the movements and social lives of Indigenous laborers, using jailing and corporal punishment in conjunction with Catholic ideas of atonement, purity, and chastity to enforce these brutal and restrictive methods.<sup>73</sup> Though Mexico would secularize the Missions within a decade of the Chumash War, many if not most of the Mexican military authorities were Spaniards by birth or descent and practicing Catholics.

Future scholarship should consider the hegemonic influence of the Catholic doctrine of original sin, confession, and other traditions that had become enculturated among the Chumash, and how the very reconciliation and return of Chumash to the Missions post-war shows the incredible potency of a hegemonic ideology like the Catholic doctrine, which includes ideas like forgiveness, mercy, and absolution. An exploration of the cultural hegemony present in the lives of the Chumash, and present in their decision-making both during and after the rebellion, is a blind spot that exists in the literature that deserves more exploration. Discussions of the Chumash's quest for liberal rights in an Age of Revolution should be weighed with an honest portrayal of the Chumash's fusion of traditional folk beliefs with Catholic dogma and mysticism,<sup>74</sup> which necessarily colored the close and familiar relationships that had developed with Mission fathers. Furthermore, the construction of these three missions embedded Catholicism and Catholic hierarchy into the very landscape of the Chumash, ensnaring the sense of place and home that had sustained the Chumash for millennia with the Missions and Catholicism itself. When mission leaders such as Fray Ripoll and Sarria

appealed to the Chumash to return to the missions across a few meetings in June of 1824 near Buena Vista Lake, they appealed to the Chumash peoples' sense of home and belonging on the Central Coast, but also their very real religious affinities. According to one of the Mexican military men along for this journey, Fray Sarria said to the Chumash, "Come along, come along, for we have to sing the Corpus tomorrow,"<sup>75</sup> appealing to the religious rituals to which the Chumash had become accustomed.

One of the clear outcomes of the focus on the Spanish padres such as Ripoll and Sarria is either a near or blatant acceptance of their framing of Mexican military members as aggressors towards the Chumash and themselves as merciful, loving, and giving lords over the freedom and futures of their beloved "neophytes." Because of this rhetorical tool employed to explain away their responsibility in fomenting the conflict, the priests get to depict themselves as merciful peacemakers when, in reality, they traveled hundreds of miles to relocate the Chumash back to the missions and the system of forced labor, all while backed by military force. These mission fathers, according to their own accounts, were able to convince most of the Chumash to return of their own will in appealing to their religious convictions and their sense of loss over their known home. Yet, according to an account by the soldier Gonzales, those negotiations were punctuated by moments like when Captain Portilla approached the conference of mission and Chumash leaders with impatience, declaring "Carrajos! For three days I have been standing here in the heat and the cold—if they don't surrender today, before dawn tomorrow I will start shooting them."<sup>76</sup> In his translations of the reports regarding the return of the Chumash, Cook also notes how, despite the rosy accounts from Fray Ripoll and other Franciscans, that not all the Chumash who fled missions Santa Barbara, Inés, and La Purísima were returned, with potentially hundreds remaining unaccounted for.

This ability of Christianity to act as a bridge between colonizer and colonized, even amidst a militarized effort to compel these peoples to return to an oppressive system after successfully fleeing and overthrowing it, illustrates the potent cultural hegemony exerted on the Chumash by the colonial superstructure. Self-reinforcing ideological frameworks like monotheistic religion, specifically Catholicism, rely on influential iconography, the sense of the sacred within the church itself, and all the rituals repeated and intertwined with different stages of life. Franciscan leaders also appealed to the sense of place the Chumash held

<sup>73</sup> Madley, "California's First Mass Incarceration System," 14-16.

<sup>74</sup> Robert F. Heizer, "A California Messianic Movement of 1801 among the Chumash," *American Anthropologist* 43 (1941): 128-29.

<sup>75</sup> Cook, "Expeditions to the Interior of California," 155-57.

<sup>76</sup> Cook, "Expeditions to the Interior of California," 157.

for their coastal home alongside the liturgical rites and rituals of mission life. These are undeniably powerful influences that help shape an entire worldview and an individual's sense of self within it. This may, in some way, explain why many Chumash were inspired to hold Mission La Purísima, identifying with the sanctuary and its hallowed grounds because of, beyond personal connections and sense of ownership, spiritual ones as well. According to some accounts by Franciscans, so still dubious in their focus, there were Chumash at Mission Santa Inés who rescued vestments and other iconography from the sanctuary as the mission buildings burned. Though even scholars who have explored Christianization of the Chumash, such as Sandos, but also Robert F. Heizer in "A California Messianic Movement of 1801 among the Chumash," argue that the Chumash's Christian beliefs were an adaptation to their own forms of mysticism, they also provided important narratives of hope for escaping bondage.<sup>77</sup>

Furthermore, there is also present in the scholarship an overriding influence of the Catholic paradigm, a kind of cultural hegemony that is exerted on the academic process itself. It's present in the centering of Ripoll and Sarria in the accounts and in so much of the scholarship. It's also present in the example from Geiger depicting the padres as "loving" and their motivations pure, living in and reinforcing the paternalistic cultural hegemony emanating from the Catholic Church. Those examples and others show how the historiography itself is colored by this hegemonic influence. The mass silencing of the Chumash and their stories at the hands of Spanish colonizers is one aspect of a deep oppression measured in silence. Another means of oppression is the spotlight on the narratives of the padres over the Chumash, a second silencing at the hands of a generation of historians influenced by the centuries-old institution that touts so much hegemonic power. This hegemony is also present in the physical location of so much of the documentation relating to this time, at Mission Santa Barbara's archives, which is under the control of the church and ecclesiastic archivists. In fact, the Santa Barbara Mission archive was unavailable during the time of this research project due to a vacancy in the archivist position.

The insidiousness of cultural hegemony under colonization shows how a colonizing power can nearly eradicate entire cultures of people and, under that massive sense of shock and displacement within the colonized population, fill the vacuum with their own hegemonic narrative, in this case monotheistic Catholicism, which preached obedience and hard labor as virtues. This both entrenched

the oppression of the Indigenous populations by inculcating them into an ideology of service and obedience while providing the colonizing power, the Spanish padres, a narrative that paints them as soul-saving heroes of evangelism, not the leaders of plantations formed by stolen Indigenous labor on stolen land. Much in the same way that the proletarian laborer might celebrate a billionaire capitalist as a "job creator," the Chumash very well may have viewed the Spanish Padres as the powerful spiritual emissaries they claimed to be, and that the "mercy" they would receive in returning to the missions might save their souls. Perhaps, the cultural hegemony of Catholicism colored the internal deliberations of every Chumash who faced return after raising arms against their colonial captors, and though they fought, fled, and bled for their freedom, were willing to acquiesce and compromise that freedom for the familiar and the promise of other-worldly salvation.

### Conclusion:

The Chumash War remains an underexplored flashpoint in California history and the history of the Mission system of Alta California for myriad reasons, which include a lack of contemporary documentation relating the motivations of the Chumash as well as a broader silencing of Indigenous voices in state and colonial Spanish and U.S. history. For the hegemonic centers of power present at the time, the Catholic Missionaries and the Mexican Government, the impetus to ignore the grievances of Chumash and enact a counter-revolution couldn't be clearer—both institutions depended directly on the forced labor and production of the Chumash at Missions Santa Barbara, Inés, and La Purísima. In the broader historiographic literature, however, the need to downplay the Chumash desire for freedom from the yolk of European colonialism and focus instead on natural phenomena, inter-personal conflicts, and narratives from biased primary sources such as Franciscan missionaries belies the larger cultural hegemony of a settler-colonial project. Ignoring the political realities of the Chumash War in the scholarship has served as detriment to the collective memory of the Mission era, which has only begun to be remedied by the most recent scholarship. A new study of the Chumash War that centers the Chumash and places their actions within the context of a century of emancipatory revolution and anti-colonial struggle is a necessary and forthcoming step in the scholarship, especially considering the prominence of the Mission era in California state history, from the elementary school curriculum and beyond.

<sup>77</sup> Heizer, "A California Messianic Movement of 1801 Among the Chumash," 128.



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## Budynok Slovo and The Executed Renaissance

*Ayn Duringer*

### Introduction

On March 8th, 2022 a series of Russian artillery bombardments over the Kharkiv Region in Ukraine damaged a monument of local significance, Budynok Slovo ('Slovo House'), located at #9 Culture St., in the central city of Kharkiv.<sup>1</sup>



**Figure 1:** Slovo House in 2021 (left) and after shelling in March 2022 (right) (Source: EU-EEAS Strategic Communications)<sup>2</sup>

After its completion on Christmas day of December 1929, Budynok Slovo became home to sixty-six members of the Ukrainian literary elite, as well as their families. The building was composed of spacious three-to-five room apartments,

<sup>1</sup> Strategic Communications, "The Word is Adamant: the Struggle for Existence of Ukrainian Literature," European Union External Action Initiative, April 18, 2022. [https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/artvswar-word-adamant-struggle-existence-ukrainian-literature\\_\\_en](https://www.eeas.europa.eu/eeas/artvswar-word-adamant-struggle-existence-ukrainian-literature__en) (accessed December 1, 2022).

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

built five stories high using imported materials, designed according to the most fashionable Soviet avant-garde, and constructed to resemble the Cyrillic letter “C” (or, in English, “S” for ‘Slovo’). Complete with a kindergarten on the bottom floor and a solarium on the roof, the ‘budynok’ functioned as a gated community with access reserved only for its elite residents and their guests. It soon grew into a luxurious paradise, a cultural hub, and a sanctuary for Kharkiv’s most talented authors, poets, and dramatists.<sup>3</sup>

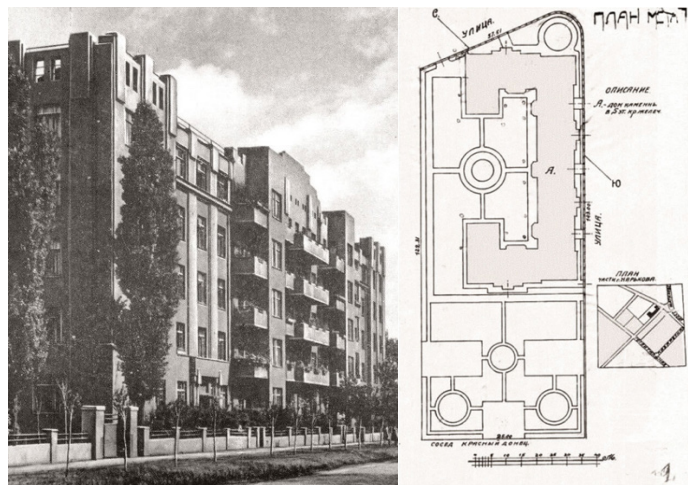


Figure 2: Slovo House photograph and floor plan at Completion in 1929 (Source: proslovo.com)

In the later months of 1930, however, the writers’ sanctuary transformed into their cage. Intrusions (by members of the State Political Administration (GPU), Kharkiv’s Central Committee (CC CP(b)U), and the Department of Internal Affairs (NKVD)) into the work, lives, and property of the Slovo House writers became commonplace during the Counter-Ukrainization movement between 1930-1935. As they walked home, Slova’ny began to take notice of strangers following closely behind them. From their windows, they saw strangers smoking cigarettes for hours under their balconies. The same strangers were soon seen in the corridors, freely going in and out of residential apartments while occupants were away. In contrast to the carefree, extravagant atmosphere of Budynok Slovo’s early days, the writers’ house had now become a place festering with paranoia.<sup>4</sup>

3 Olga Bertelson, “Spatial Dimensions of Soviet Repressions in the 1930s: The House of Writers (Kharkiv, Ukraine)” (Thesis for doctorate of philosophy, University of Nottingham, July 2013), 55-66, [https://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/13390/1/SPATIAL\\_DIMENSIONS\\_OF\\_SOVIET\\_REPRESSIONS\\_IN\\_THE\\_1930s.pdf](https://eprints.nottingham.ac.uk/13390/1/SPATIAL_DIMENSIONS_OF_SOVIET_REPRESSIONS_IN_THE_1930s.pdf).

4 Bertelson, “Spatial Dimensions,” 119.

The first arrest (that of Galina Orlivna) occurred on January 20th, 1931.<sup>5</sup> By 1935, the GPU had detained residents from forty of the house’s sixty-six apartments. Many of them were arrested, executed, sent to labor camps, or simply disappeared— this generation of Ukrainian writers became known as the Executed Renaissance.<sup>6</sup>

Historiography relating to the Executed Renaissance and Budynok Slovo is scarce, particularly in the English-speaking world. The most comprehensive collection containing the works and professional biographies of early twentieth century Ukrainian writers is Yuriy Lavrinenko’s famed anthology *The Executed Renaissance, 1917-1934*. Lavrinenko’s essay “Literature in Liminal Spaces” and his contemporary Czeslaw Milosz’s novel *The Captive Mind* provide further analysis into the impact of Soviet repression on writers’ creativity and freedom of expression. These works have been hugely influential in shaping the modern perception of nationalist and Neo-Classical thought in Soviet republics during the early decades of the Soviet Union. In recent years, Lavrinenko and Milosz’s conclusions have received increased scrutiny from historians wishing to reevaluate the ‘Executed Renaissance Paradigm,’ namely Halyna Hryn and Pawel Krupa. An authoritative resource on the architectural background and the daily lives of Budynok Slovo’s residents (as well as the source of much of the history related above) is Olga Bergelson’s “Spatial Dimensions of Soviet Repressions in the 1930s: The House of Writers (Kharkiv, Ukraine).” In *Literary Purges in Soviet Ukraine (1930s): A Bio-Bibliography*, George Luckyj thoroughly explores the impacts of arrests, interrogations, and book banning on intellectual trends among early Soviet writers in Ukraine. In *Literary Politics in Soviet Ukraine, 1917-1934*, Luckyj provides an extensive number of translations of printed literary pamphlets, as well as Central Committee speeches and Literary Discussions held between 1920 and 1930 in Kharkiv and Kiev. Thus far, historiography relating to the Executed Renaissance has made the government regulation of early Soviet Ukrainian literary movements its focus, primarily examining the psychological and professional impacts of these repressions on members of the Ukrainian literary intelligentsia and Budynok Slovo.

It is the aim of this essay to add to this historiography by answering: Why did Soviet authorities in Ukraine begin repressing the intellectual ideas expressed by the Slova’ny authors?

5 Leonid Aleksandrov. *Archives of the Executed Renaissance* (Kiev: Smoloskyp, 2010), 13-146.

6 George Luckyj. *Literary Politics in the Soviet Ukraine 1917-1934* (New York Chichester, West Sussex: Columbia University Press, 1956), 173-203.

In order to get at this question, it is necessary to trace which ideas were targeted. In the first two sections of this essay, I discuss the growing influence of Neo-Classicism in Ukrainian literary circles (1923-1926), arguing that adoption of these ideas by two prominent Slova authors (Mykola Zerov and Mykola Khvylovyi) stemmed from their desire to redefine the national identity of the newly created Ukrainian Soviet Republic. In the third and final section of the essay, I discuss the opposition mounted (between 1926 and 1928) by other authors and academics, Ukrainian Central Committee members, and Moscow Communist Party officials against the Neo-Classical theories promoted by Zerov and Khvylovyi. While Neo-Classicalists believed that Ukrainian literature could flourish by developing a literary tradition aligned toward Europe's and stylistically independent of Russia's, their opposition (largely Socialist Realists) strongly disagreed. I argue that, seeing the proliferation of Western European and Byzantine literary works and techniques in Ukraine as tantamount to a revival of the class-based bourgeois ideals so recently eradicated by the 1917 Revolution and Russian Civil War, many of Ukraine's government officials and literary elites began to fervently oppose Zerov and Khvylovyi's ideas. This conflict over the course of Ukraine's literature, and, by extension, its national identity, became the reason for the GPU's suspicion and subsequent repression of the Slova authors.

### Mykola Zerov: Reevaluating Ukrainian Literary Tradition

Mykola Zerov (a Kyivian poet, literary critic, and professor of philology at the Kyiv Institute for Public Education) endorsed Neo-Classicism and looked to revive Ukraine's forgotten ties to European (particularly ancient Greek and Roman) literary tradition. For Zerov, reevaluating Ukrainian literary tradition in terms of its European influence was equivalent to a revival of Ukraine's true heritage; he believed that the Ukrainian literary tradition could flower by looking to Europe. Though these were not wholly atypical views during the Ukrainization movement of the 1920's, by 1925, Zerov's Neo-Classical attitudes spread from small-circulation literary pamphlets and closed-door discussions to journals and periodicals for the mass consumer; it was then that these beliefs began to acquire unfavorable attention from leaders of the Soviet Communist Party.

In his poem "Kyiv from the Left Bank," Zerov illustrated the permanence of European influence on Ukraine's cultural history by examining St. Sophia's Cathedral, an architectural monument built by the Byzantines early in the eleventh

century.<sup>7</sup> In 1923, at the time of this poem's publication, St. Sophia's Cathedral had narrowly escaped complete demolition. The Red Army's victories during the Siege of Perekop in November of 1920 (a decisive battle during the Russian Civil War in Crimea) prompted the Soviet urban planning commission to seek suitable grounds within the city of Kyiv for the development of a commemorative park to be named 'Heroes of Perekop.' St. Sophia's Cathedral was the first site chosen; however, due to fervent protests from Kyiv's citizens and members of the Institute of Material Culture, the project was abandoned.<sup>8</sup> Though it escaped demolition, the cathedral was soon closed to religious services and its twenty tower bells removed. In his 1923 poem, Zerov addresses St. Sophia's bell tower directly, writing,

*"Your glory days have waned, your pride diminished,  
and the hundred echoes of your tower bells  
cannot dissolve the evil charms and spells  
that took your blossoming statehood and your glory."*<sup>9</sup>

Zerov saw the 1920s as a period of nation building—culturally and politically. While he supported the Soviet Communist Party's political restructuring of the Ukrainian territory into a Soviet Republic, cultural reforms were, for Zerov, a separate matter. Located in the very heart of Kyiv, for Zerov, St. Sophia's Cathedral once epitomized pride and glory for Ukrainian cultural history. The Party's endeavor to replace the cathedral with the 'Heroes of Perekop' park signaled early attempts to fashion a new, unified Soviet identity. The ease with which this cultural monument was nearly torn down indicated to Zerov that its "glory days ha[d] waned."

<sup>10</sup>Though Zerov bitterly lamented this decline (as seen in his own words quoted above), he also saw it as an opportunity to reassess Ukraine's cultural history. To the chagrin of his many Party colleagues, Zerov identified the predominating forces of Ukrainian artistic heritage in the European Mediterranean rather than in the Northern Rus. The genesis of these views, so characteristic of much of his later work, can be seen in the following excerpt of his 1923 poem,

<sup>7</sup> Yuriy Lavrinenko, *The Executed Renaissance, 1917-1934* (Paris: Kultura, 1959), 130-131.

<sup>8</sup> Lavrinenko, *The Executed Renaissance*, 122-124.

<sup>9</sup> Original text: Давно в минулім дні твоєї слави, / І плаче дзвонів стоголоса мідь, / Що вже не вернеться щаслива мить / Твого буяння, цвіту і держави

<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

*"But, even you poor pilgrim, standing here upon the  
Dnieper's bank,  
Can look upon the stone chimaeras, the Baroque,  
Upon Schedel's white-columned marvel:  
Its spirit still lives on, its strength sustained  
Within this green hill that's for the moment languid,  
Piercing the azure sky with its jutting golden spires."*<sup>11</sup>

Though originally constructed in 1018, due to a number of robberies, partial destructions, and repairs, by the 1920's the cathedral's architectural framework most closely resembled Ukrainian Baroque—a polychromatic style rich with floral ornaments and stucco decoration adapted from late-sixteenth century Italian architecture.<sup>12</sup> Zerov's mentions of stone chimaeras, white columns, the Baroque style, and Johann Gottfried Schedel (the German architect and designer of St. Sophia's bell tower) all highlight these European stylistic influences.

In contrast to its first stanza, the final lines of Zerov's poem illustrate predominantly hopeful motifs, betraying a sequence of thought characteristic of Zerov's work: the tone of the poem's first lines is one of dissatisfaction with present events and mourning for the past; the poem's middle charts a search for identity rooted in a return to one's cultural origins (symbolized by the emphasis of the cathedral's architectural foundations); lastly, the final stanza consists of a hopeful message that the 'glory days' aren't gone but simply slumbering. For Zerov, this method of 'returning to the sources' in order to develop a distinctly Ukrainian cultural identity required identifying whom or what was responsible for creating Ukraine's greatest cultural emblems such as St. Sophia's Cathedral.

In a series of pamphlets published in 1926, Zerov appealed to Kharkiv's literary intelligencia, saying, "we must not avoid ancient or even feudal Europe."<sup>13</sup> Zerov's words were published in a cycle titled *Ad Fontes*, making clear the changes he wished to elicit in post-revolutionary Ukrainian literature. The title itself (*Ad Fontes*), when translated from its original Latin, means "To the Sources." These 'sources' which Zerov sought to reintegrate into Ukrainian literary tradition were

influential ancient Greek and Roman works such as those of Euripides, Virgil, Ovid, or Sophocles. Continuing his appeal, Zerov wrote, "perhaps it is better for a proletarian to become infected with the class determinants of a Western European bourgeois, than with the lukewarmness of a repentant Russian patrician."<sup>14</sup> By advocating for greater recognition of the European literary canon, Zerov sought to 1) obtain resources for and increase access to translations of Western literature, 2) clarify the origins and influences of Ukrainian literary heritage, and 3) develop higher educational standards within Ukraine.<sup>15</sup> It is his second goal which eventually made him a target of the GPU, and which will now be examined more closely.

Zerov further addressed the question of where the root influences of Ukrainian literary tradition truly lie, arguing that, "Whether we like it or not, from the times of Kulish, Drahomanov, Franko, Lesia Ukrainka, Kotsiubyns'kyi, and Kobylans'ka—European forms and themes have penetrated our literature and stayed there."<sup>16</sup> Each of the names mentioned above by Zerov belonged to noteworthy Ukrainian literary figures. Panteleimon Kulish (1819-1897), for instance, was a prominent writer, critic, and translator from the Chernigov Governorate (an ethnically Ukrainian territory which, during his lifetime, belonged to the Russian Empire). At a time during which the Russian Empire sought to repress the teaching of Ukrainian language and history, Kulish published prolifically on these topics, ultimately becoming the first person to translate the Bible into the modern Ukrainian language.<sup>17</sup> The last name on Zerov's list, Olha Kobylans'ka (1863-1942), belonged to a Ukrainian writer known for drawing influence from French novelist George Sand and German philologist Friedrich Nietzsche.<sup>18</sup>

By emphasizing this list of authors, Zerov delineated the Ukrainian literary heritage as separate from that of the Russian. Zerov did not claim that prolific nineteenth century Russian writers such as Pushkin, Tolstoy, or Dostoyevsky exhibited no influence on Ukrainian literature. However, he believed that, while Russian literature entered its Golden Age in the nineteenth century, concurrently, authors such as Kulish and Kobylans'ka propelled Ukrainian literature into an era altogether different and distinct in its inclination toward the west.

11 Original text: Але, мандрівне, тут на пісках стань, / Глянь на химери барокових бань, / На Шеделя білоколонне диво: / Живе життя, і силу ще таїть / Оця гора зелена і дрімлива, / Ця золотом цвяхована блакить

12 Cyril Mango, review of *The Cathedral of St. Sophia in Kiev*, by Olexa Powstenko, *The Art Bulletin* 38, no. 4 (December 1956), 253-255. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/3047673>.

13 Luckyj. *Literary Politics*, 100.

14 *Ibid.*, 100.

15 *Ibid.*, 101.

16 *Ibid.*, 101.

17 Taras Koznarsky, "Ukrainian Literary Scholarship in Ukraine Since Independence," *Canadian Slavonic Papers* 54, no. 1-2 (March-June 2012), 167-184. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/41710578>.

18 Marko Pavlyshyn, "Diary, Autobiography and Autobiographical Fiction: Reading Ol'ha Kobylans'ka," *New Zealand Slavonic Journal*, 2000, 43-58. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40912273>.

For Zerov, Europe's influence was already deeply embedded in Ukraine's artistic heritage, making further stylistic orientation toward the west the best strategy for the development of Ukraine's literary tradition. While this remained a well-reasoned approach in academic circles, many members of the Kharkiv Communist Writers' Union and Ukrainian Soviet party leaders grew suspicious of the line which Zerov claimed to draw, separating his beliefs regarding culture from Soviet politics. Party officials increasingly likened Neo-Classicists such as Zerov with nationalists. Meanwhile, widened readership and reprints not only in Kharkiv but across Ukraine as well as other republics brought increased scrutiny upon Zerov's *Ad Fontes* and his early works.

### Mykola Khvyly'ovyi: Europe or Pros'vita?

Mykola Khvyly'ovyi, a Kharkivian writer and literary journal editor, began his career as a polemist by publishing *Kamo Hriadeshy* (Wither Are You Going?) in 1925. In this essay, Khvyly'ovyi asked whether Ukrainian literature ought to emulate Europe's classical literary canon (the ancient Greeks, the Romans, the Italian Renaissance) or *Pros'vita* (Russian folk culture and Soviet Realism). Without mincing words, Khvyly'ovyi argued that Ukrainian literary trends ought to "run away from Moscow as fast as possible."<sup>19</sup> Khvyly'ovyi was quickly labeled a nationalist sympathizer by columnists and critics affiliated with the Communist Party. At the height of the Ukrainization Movement in Kharkiv, many artists and writers became outspoken nationalists; however, for Khvyly'ovyi (a devout communist), this label brought increased scrutiny and suspicion from Party affiliates.

Khvyly'ovyi first experimented with addressing the issue of Ukrainian cultural autonomy in his 1923 short story "Redaktor Kark." This short story became the origin point for two reoccurring themes present in his later polemic essays and pamphlets: 1) establishing a Ukrainian literary tradition free of Russian influence is crucial if Ukraine is to retain its own culture and 2) in order to sustain this autonomous culture Ukrainian artists must look to Western European literary techniques and styles.<sup>20</sup> The story, related in a stream of consciousness style, follows its main character, Kark, through a series of mundane meetings and conversations that exacerbate his growing disillusionment with post-revolutionary bureaucracy, culminating in his suicide.

<sup>19</sup> Luckyj, *Literary Politics*, 97.

<sup>20</sup> Virginia Bennett, "Mykola Khvyly'ovyi's 'Redaktor Kark'—A Fictional Antecedent to His Pamphlets," *The Slavic and East European Journal* 31, no. 2 (Summer 1987), 158-170. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/308024>.

Through Kark's dialogue with minor characters, Khvyly'ovyi indicated that the russification of Ukraine during the Czarist period had, in his contemporary revolutionary times, created new problems of national identity for the Ukrainian people. One of Kark's first encounters is with Shkytz, a member of the Central Committee of the Socialist-Revolutionaries. Shkytz remarks that, "France—that's a nation. We, we are nothing but a place name, and that place is a backwater"<sup>21</sup> Kark's minimal engagement with this monologue implies his disdain for Shkytz's hypocrisy. Though he is a high-placed officer of Ukraine's post-revolutionary government, Shkytz displays little faith in the nation he purports to lead, instead regarding it as a cultural backwater. Even his name, Shkytz (Ukrainian: Шкыць), can be translated into English as 'sketch' or 'outline,' stipulating that Shkytz himself is a caricature of the post-revolutionary bureaucrat. Later in the story, Kark listens to the political musings of a local wrestler, the man says revolutionaries ought to "throw the "R" [the 'R' standing for 'Russia'] out of RCC, and the "U" [the 'U' standing for 'Ukraine'] out of CP(b)U, and create a united CC."<sup>22</sup> The wrestler's words, typifying the opinions of rural Ukrainian laborers, illustrate a sense of resignation or complacency toward homogenization with Russia on the part of the masses. In this way, Khvyly'ovyi indicated that Ukraine's crisis of cultural identity pervaded both the governing bodies and the governed.

By using a metaphor about nightingales to define the artistic obligations of Ukrainian writers, Khvyly'ovyi touched upon the first of the two major themes that would preoccupy his literary career: the importance of establishing a Ukrainian literary tradition free of Russian influence. Khvyly'ovyi wrote, "Listen closely, each nightingale sings in its own way. Each tune among them is unique, some Mozarts, others Beethovens or Lysenkos. Simply repeating others' tunes is not to sing, not to create—it is but imitation."<sup>23</sup> Here Khvyly'ovyi indirectly chastises Ukrainian writers for imitating Russian literary styles rather than developing their own. For Khvyly'ovyi, the primary obligation of an artist is to experiment; only through experimentation can Ukrainian literature develop an identity distinct from that of the Russian. This sentiment is evident in Khvyly'ovyi's own work: "Redaktor Kark" is replete with unconventional, at times disorienting narrative styles such as metalepsis (breaking the fourth wall), stream of consciousness, and alternating narrators.

<sup>21</sup> Lavrinenko, *Executed Renaissance*, 410.

<sup>22</sup> *Ibid.*, 413.

<sup>23</sup> *Ibid.*, 409.

Khvył'ovyi's second theme (that to sustain an autonomous culture, Ukrainian artists must look to Western Europe) is represented by a long-forgotten Byzantine statue that catches Kark's eye. Standing in his apartment, Kark "glanced for a moment at the statuette by the door—a bust of some Roman general. He'd brought it home from his editorial office: a true antique. Kark gazed at the statuette with renewed interest. His office once housed a great seventeenth century newspaper. Its circulation spanned all of Ukraine...well, only the statuette remains."<sup>24</sup> Khvył'ovyi's words imply that the statue had remained in the editorial office since the 1600s; during this century, regarded as the peak of Ukrainian Baroque, Ukraine was more strongly tied with Western Europe than with Russia. Though the Russian Empire's nineteenth century policies of russification targeted these ties, Kark's observation that "the statuette remains" hints that, however faintly, Ukraine's cultural identity remains tethered to Europe. Kark's "renewed interest" in the statuette implies that, according to Khvył'ovyi, it is the artist's obligation to explore those latent ties.

Khvył'ovyi saw the Soviet political climate of the 1920s as a cultural crossroads at which Ukraine must choose between the European and the Russian artistic styles. In his work *Kamo Hriadeshy*, Khvył'ovyi recognized alignment with Europe as an essential element of the 1917 revolution's most successful endeavors. For instance, he found merit in comparing Lenin with Peter the Great, according to him, "both belonged to the same ideal type of man given to us [Soviet republics] by Europe."<sup>25</sup> He believed that, by orienting itself toward 'the force of psychological Europe,' Ukraine would improve upon the Russian Empire's literary golden age of the nineteenth century.

Khvył'ovyi used the term 'psychological Europe' to distinguish European cultural (artistic or philological) pursuits from their political policies. He advocated that this force would "lead [Ukraine's] young art onto the broad and happy path to the world goal."<sup>26</sup> For Khvył'ovyi, this 'world goal' was to create a Ukrainian literary heritage worthy of international renown. He believed that, by following this ideal, he and his fellow artists-communists "shall climb the Helicon and place there the beacon of a Renaissance."<sup>27</sup> Khvył'ovyi's words reveal that he was foremost concerned with the construction of a new Ukrainian cultural identity, one whose literary tradition was rooted in European (particularly classical Greek and Roman) motifs. This is especially evident by his reference to

<sup>24</sup> Ibid., 410.

<sup>25</sup> Luckyj, *Literary Politics*, 94.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., 97.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid., 95.

Mount Helicon (known in Greek myths as a site sacred to the Muses) together with his characterization of Ukraine's artists as the 'beacon'—the source, the beginning—of a new Renaissance.

In the years following the 1917 revolution, Khvył'ovyi welcomed Ukraine's transition into a Soviet Republic, wrote favorably about Leninist political reforms, exhibited his support by becoming a member of the Communist Party as well as a local official of the Bohudinov VChK, and (after moving to Kharkiv) formed VAPLITE, an organization for proletarian writers. In a pamphlet issued by VAPLITE in 1926, Khvył'ovyi wrote, "one must not confuse our political union with [a union of] literature."<sup>28</sup> Though he enthusiastically promoted the incorporation of Soviet policies in Ukraine, Khvył'ovyi felt quite strongly that Ukrainian "poetry must run away as fast as possible from Russian literature and its styles [...] if we try to feed our young art with it, we shall impede its development."<sup>29</sup> Like Zerov, he argued that Ukrainian cultural pursuits be treated as separate from Soviet politics.

Similar to Zerov, Khvył'ovyi maintained that Ukraine owed its literary heritage not to ideologies born in the Russian Empire or Soviet Union but rather to ones developed in Europe. Referring to the influences of Karl Marx's theories on Leninist civic policies and Socialist Realism, Khvył'ovyi wrote, "Proletarian ideas did not reach us through Muscovite art."<sup>30</sup> Unlike Zerov, whose promotion of Neo-Classicism was restricted to making changes within Ukraine, Khvył'ovyi's views held international ramifications. For Khvył'ovyi, these views held deep implications for the cultural identity he wished to forge in the newly created Soviet Republic of Ukraine. Writing for VAPLITE, Khvył'ovyi asserted that "we, a young nation, can better apprehend these [Western European] ideas and recreate them in proper images," thus "from Ukraine [these ideas] must spread to all parts of the world."<sup>31</sup> These theories made Khvył'ovyi all the more threatening in the eyes of Party leaders.

### Intra-Party Conflicts: A Prelude to Counter-Ukrainization

By 1925, opposition was forming against the intellectual unification with Europe proposed by both Zerov and Khvył'ovyi. The two sides soon began participating in ideological debates over the cultural role of literature in Ukraine. The debates were curated by leading academic institutions and publishing houses such

<sup>28</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>29</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>30</sup> Ibid., 96.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid., 97.



as the Kharkiv Institute of Public Education and the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences. These literary discussions quickly grew contentious; Zerov and Khvyl'ovyi's opponents resorted to attacking the authors' loyalty to the Party, their political motives, and their character. Why then, while Zerov and Khvyl'ovyi remained so hopeful in building a distinction between Ukrainian culture and Soviet politics, did their contemporaries so strenuously oppose it?

Both sides held conflicting visions for the development of Ukraine's cultural identity. Zerov, Khvyl'ovyi, and their opponents recognized that Ukraine's transformation into a Soviet republic made redefining elements of its culture (such as language and literature) necessary. However, where Zerov and Khvyl'ovyi looked to revive Ukraine's cultural origins (particularly those that connected it to Europe), their opponents advocated for Realism; these academics believed that the content, style, and structure of both prose and poetry must reflect the life of a proletarian. They distrusted the distinction between politics and culture drawn by both Zerov and Khvyl'ovyi; they called it a façade, a ploy to steep Ukrainian literature in bourgeois ideals. In their eyes, the stylistic flourishes of Zerov's "Kyiv from the Left Bank," the experimental prose structure of Khvyl'ovyi's "Redaktor Kark," and the Western allusions present in both threatened to reintroduce into Ukraine a class struggle reminiscent of its days under the Russian Empire. For instance, during a discussion hosted by the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences on May 24th, 1925, Zerov and Khvyl'ovyi's vision for Ukrainian literature was critiqued as "bourgeois, philistine, and hostile to the goals of Communism."

Proponents of this critique believed that only by cutting all ties to its European cultural roots and by embracing purely Soviet culture could Ukrainians develop a literary tradition free of oppressive influences. One of these proponents, Andrii Khvyliia (as director of Ukraine's Communist Party Press Section), argued vocally against popularizing Western literary techniques in Ukrainian literature. At a public discussion in 1926, he asserted that "the literary front is the most sensitive of all; it reflects all contemporary moods, all political tendencies."<sup>32</sup> Khvyliia and other opponents of Zerov and Khvyl'ovyi opposed the idea of developing distinctions between Soviet politics and literary culture because, in their eyes, in order to redefine Ukrainian cultural identity without impeding the Soviet vision, the two must be inextricably linked.

These academic discussions among the Ukrainian literary intelligencia soon led to the political repression of Zerov, Khvyl'ovyi, and their ideological

<sup>32</sup> Ibid., 103.

allies. By 1926, transcripts from these discussions and pamphlets distributed by both sides had reached Moscow, attracted the attention of Josef Stalin, and prompted him to communicate directly with Kaganovich of the CC CP(b)U. In a letter sent to Kaganovich on April 26th, 1926, Stalin expressed concerns over the upsurge of aggressive Ukrainization. Citing Zerov and Khvyl'ovyi's distinction between culture and politics as "ridiculous and non-Marxist," Stalin asserted that "only by fighting the extremism of Khvyl'ovyi can we retain control over this new movement for Ukraine's culture [...] only in the fight against such extremes can the rising Ukrainian culture and Ukrainian public be turned into a Soviet culture and public."<sup>33</sup> Thus, Zerov and Khvyl'ovyi's ideas were termed 'aggressive Ukrainization.' As a result, threatened by the potential policy ramifications of promoting closer orientation to European literature in Ukraine, between 1926 and 1927, the CC CP(b)U began censoring the publication of Neo-Classist views.

By the end of 1926, the attention given by Moscow to this literary schism between Socialist Realists and Neo-Classists prompted Kharkiv's Bolshevik Communist Party to declare Neo-Classist ideas anti-proletarian; this was among the first of a series of political repressions targeting writers who shared Zerov and Khvyl'ovyi's sentiments. In June of 1927, a plenum called by the CC CP(b)U prohibited the publication of Neo-Classist literature and criticism. As a result, literary journals such as Khvyl'ovyi's VAPLITE were forced to either halt publications or shift toward publishing works of Socialist Realism. Zerov, as a career academic and university professor, was obliged to switch from creating original work to translating foreign literature. Between 1927 and 1928, in response to the Party's criticism of Neo-Classicism and Khvyl'ovyi-ism (a pejorative that had gained popularity as a reference to the division of politics and literature promoted by Khvyl'ovyi in VAPLITE's polemic essays), Khvyl'ovyi issued public retractions and began using Socialist Realist structural styles in his literary publications.<sup>34</sup> Though, by the end of 1928, Ukrainian Neo-Classists were forced into either silence or conformism, extensive proliferation of Zerov and Khvyl'ovyi's views had sparked suspicions among the Party leadership, setting the groundwork for further intrusions by the CC CP(b)U and NKVD into the authors' lives and their home, Budynok Slovo.

<sup>33</sup> J. Stalin, "Letter to L.M. Kaganovich, Secretary of the Central Committee, Concerning Ukraine," April 26, 1926, РГАСПИ. Ф. 558. Оп. 1. Д. 2774. (Фотокопия с подлинника).

<sup>34</sup> Ukrainian Central Committee, "Resolution on the Nationalist Attitudes of T. Shuisky," 16 May 1927, РГАСПИ. Ф. 82. Оп. 2. Д. 154. Л. 167-178. Копия. Машинопись.

## Conclusion

Ultimately, in answer to the question, 'Why did Soviet authorities in Ukraine begin repressing the intellectual ideas expressed by the Slova authors?' it can be concluded that Communist Party authorities feared that the cultural nationalism would grow into a broader desire for political autonomy. Having recently mounted a revolution and fought a civil war, central governing agencies, at best, elicited tenuous loyalty from their constituents. In their eyes, Zerov and Khvylovyi's literary pursuits only further isolated the Ukrainian SSR's public, both culturally and politically, from the central apparatus in Moscow.

While this essay has aimed to highlight some of the key motivating factors for the repression of Kharkivian authors during the 1920s, this is not an exhaustive study. Of the more than sixty individuals residing in Budynok Slovo in the 1920s and 1930s, this essay has merely examined the ideological platforms of two. In order to fully understand the reasons behind the censorship and arrests of Slova authors and for the broader Counter-Ukrainization Movement, more research must be conducted into the lives and works of Budynok Slovo's other residents.

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## The Plight of Soviet Jews

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Zachary Claar

Anti-Semitism has deep roots in Russia dating back to the Soviet Union, despite the fact that the early Soviet government took steps to fight it. This hatred and discrimination towards the Jewish population has its roots in the Tsarist government that was continued by the Soviet Union, especially in the aftermath of World War II and the creation of the State of Israel in 1948. Despite the Soviet Union being the second country to recognize Israel, Israel was viewed by Soviet leaders as a capitalist and bourgeois state that was too closely aligned with the West.<sup>1</sup> This, along with events such as the Doctor's Plot of 1953, allowed for feelings of anti-Semitism and anti-Zionism to rise in the U.S.S.R. This heavily affected Soviet policy, resulting in disastrous consequences for the Soviet Jewish population. In this period, the Refuseniks also emerged. The Refuseniks were Soviet Jews who had been refused permission to emigrate to Israel. This essay will focus on the story of Soviet Jewry, with special attention given to Refusenik scientists and argues that despite any speeches or documents that Soviet leaders used to appeal to the Jewish community, the Soviet government continued their anti-semitic policies and refused to allow Soviet Jews to leave. The U.S.S.R. started as a safe haven for Jews during a time of rising anti-Semitism throughout the world, but the nation would quickly change and allow for anti-Semitism to survive in Russia, especially at the government level. It also led to worse relations between countries such as Israel and the U.S.S.R. Foreign attention (especially in the United States and Israel) on the plight of the Refuseniks is also a major part of the Refuseniks' story, although this did not always improve the Refuseniks' situation.

Before the establishment of the Soviet Union, Russian Jews were treated horrifically by the Tsar's regime. Pogroms targeting the Jews began in 1881, shortly after

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<sup>1</sup> F. F., "The U.S.S.R., the Soviet Jews, and Israel," *The World Today* 14, no. 12 (1958): 519.

Tsar Alexander II's assassination, for which the Jews were blamed.<sup>2</sup> These pogroms continued throughout Tsar Nicholas II's reign and, while there was no official policy ordering or endorsing the pogroms, Tsar Nicholas and his government put Russian Jews in a position of danger. Discrimination throughout the Russian legal code was common and Jews had severe travel restrictions, which helped foster anti-semitic sentiment among the Russian people. Despite this discrimination, the Tsar argued that the Jews were responsible for all their own struggles, an idea that only helped anti-Semitism rise further. Local officials also heavily participated in the pogroms and other attacks on the Russian Jews, although it is unknown if they did it out of loyalty to the Tsar, their own anti-semitic feelings, or a combination of the two.<sup>3</sup> Even without an official policy endorsing pogroms from the Tsar's government, his unwillingness to condemn the pogroms, combined with his own anti-Semitism, helped establish anti-Semitism in Russia, a feeling that continued throughout the establishment of the Soviet Union.

Despite the harsh treatment toward Soviet Jewry after Joseph Stalin's death, Soviet Jews were actually treated relatively well during the early years of the U.S.S.R when compared to their treatment under the Tsar. The early Soviet government pursued several avenues in order to distinguish themselves from the Tsar. One of the ways in which this was pursued was by distancing themselves from his anti-Semitism. Soviet leaders believed that if they portrayed the Jews as being able to advance towards modernity, then other Soviet groups would be willing to follow. This involved attacking stereotypes of the Jews such as how they were disloyal or an elite class who preyed on the peasantry.<sup>4</sup> Thus, the image of a new Jew was created, one who was pursuing collective avenues such as farming. With a ban on private trading in 1923, Soviet leaders believed that this new focus on agriculture would help ensure the Jews survival. The Soviets also created an autonomous region for the Jews named Birobidzhan; located just north of Manchuria, Soviet Jews began moving to the region in 1930. The community was to be dedicated to agriculture and, marking the beginning of a trend of American focus on the plight of Soviet Jews, was endorsed by an American commission composed of agricultural and engineering experts.<sup>5</sup> Amid increasing anti-Semitism

2 Pogroms were organized attacks and genocides against the Russian Jewish population throughout the late 19<sup>th</sup> century and early 20<sup>th</sup> century.

3 Shlomo Lambroza, "The Tsarist Government and the Pogroms of 1903-06," *Modern Judaism* 7, no. 3 (1987): 293-294.

4 Jonathan Dekel-Chan, "'New' Jews of the Agricultural Kind: A Case of Soviet Interwar Propaganda," *The Russian Review* 66, no. 3 (2007): 430-431.

5 "Soviet Government Plans to Build Jewish Republic," *The Wisconsin Jewish Chronicle*, October 11, 1929.

in countries such as Germany, this plan was also heavily praised in the United States for its complete emancipation of Soviet Jews.<sup>6</sup>

Despite the fact that Soviet Jews were treated well in the nation's infancy, this trend quickly changed and, by the end of his life, Joseph Stalin pursued several anti-semitic policies. Stalin did not support Zionism, but in 1945 he did not oppose the idea that a Jewish state could be established in Palestine. After the end of World War I, the British Empire and France divided the Middle East between themselves under the Sykes-Picot Agreement. Due to this agreement, the British Mandate for Palestine was established, which included modern-day Israel. After the end of World War II, the British Empire was on the decline and allowed for the United Nations to take the lead on the issue of Palestine. The U.N. recommended that the land be divided up into an Arab state and a Jewish state. The General Assembly approved this plan by a 33-13 vote with ten abstentions.<sup>7</sup> During this time, the Soviets wanted to increase their influence in the Middle East, but they felt that they could not rely on the support of the Arab countries. Instead, they believed that the Jews would be a viable alternative and that Jews throughout the world might think more fondly of the Soviet Union if they supported the United Nations partition plan. To strike this balance, the term Zionism was completely ignored by Soviet leaders in their attempt to appease the Jews. Nonetheless, Soviet-Israeli relations were strong between 1947 and June 1948.<sup>8</sup> However, relations soon soured and Stalin targeted Soviet Jews until the end of his life.

When the first Prime Minister of Israel, David Ben-Gurion, refused to include a left-wing party named Mapam in his governing coalition, the Soviets denounced Israel as "bourgeois, nationalistic, and leaning toward the West."<sup>9</sup> Another area of conflict between the Israelis and Soviets was regarding the issue of immigration. Long before the Refuseniks were denied permission to immigrate, the Kremlin believed that Israel was encouraging Soviet citizens to renounce their citizenship, something which Israel denied. To calm tensions, Israel promised to be neutral in foreign affairs, but this was antithetical to Zionism. Meanwhile, the Soviets required

6 "Soviet Union Sets Aside Area for Jews," *The Pittsburgh Press*, June 11, 1934.

7 Victor Kattan and Richard Falk, "The Partition of Palestine," in *From Coexistence to Conquest: International Law and the Origins of the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1891-1949* (London, U.K.: Pluto Press, 2009), 146-151.

8 Benjamin Pinkus and Jonathan Frankel, *The Soviet Government and the Jews, 1948-1967: A Documented Study*, ed. Jonathan Frankel, (Cambridge, U.K.: Cambridge University Press, 1984), 232-234.

9 Joseph Heller, "The Soviet Union and Israel: From the Gromyko Declaration to the Death of Stalin (1947-53)," in *The United States, the Soviet Union and the Arab-Israeli Conflict, 1948-67: Superpower Rivalry*, (Manchester, U.K.: Manchester University Press, 2010), 10.

that all Soviet Jews who wanted to emigrate would have to renounce their Soviet citizenship and the Supreme Soviet would consider each case individually.<sup>10</sup> This marked the start of Soviet refusal to allow Soviet Jews to emigrate.

Outside of worsening relations with Israel, anti-Semitism in Soviet policy was also on the rise. Soviet Jews welcomed the establishment of Israel, with over 50,000 of them celebrating Rosh Hashanah by enthusiastically welcoming Israeli Ambassador to the U.S.S.R. Golda Meir at the entrance to a synagogue in Moscow. This infuriated Stalin and other Soviet leaders and heavily contributed to the Doctor's Plot in 1953. In January of that year, state newspaper Pravda published a report in which mainly Jewish doctors were accused of betraying the Soviet Union by working with Zionist organizations and Israel. Both the article and Jewish support for the establishment of Israel led to mass arrests of Jewish leaders. According to Il'a Ehrenberg, a plan for the deportation of the Jewish population to the far eastern regions of the Soviet Union was also created.<sup>11</sup> Furthermore, the U.S.S.R. severed diplomatic relations with Israel in February. This cut in ties was most likely in preparation for a more aggressive action against Israel and a nation-wide persecution of Jews. However, Stalin died in March 1953 and the plan disappeared with him.<sup>12</sup>

Soviet anti-semitic policy was directly backed by each leader's own personal anti-semitic feelings and these feelings heavily influenced the mistreatment of the Refuseniks. At the Yalta Conference, U.S. President Franklin D. Roosevelt asked Stalin if he supported Zionism; Stalin responded by declaring the Jews to be, "middle-men, profiteers, and parasites."<sup>13</sup> These ideas continued with his successors. Like Stalin, Nikitja Khrushchev also believed that the Jews were treasonous and dangerous, which meant that they were a security risk for the Soviet Union.<sup>14</sup> This idea harkens back to an old anti-semitic belief in which anti-semites argue that Jews' connection to Israel is greater than their connection to another country.<sup>15</sup> This trope was applied to Refusenik scientists who attempted to immigrate to Israel even after Khrushchev took control of the Communist Party. The Soviets

<sup>10</sup> Heller, 11.

<sup>11</sup> Bozena Szaynok, "The Anti-Jewish Policy of the USSR in the Last Decade of Stalin's Rule and its Impact on the East European Countries with Special Reference to Poland," *Russian History* 29, no. 2 (2002): 305.

<sup>12</sup> Szaynok, 303-305.

<sup>13</sup> Heller, 6.

<sup>14</sup> Simon Redlich, "Khrushchev and the Jews," *Jewish Social Studies* 34, no. 4 (1972): 345.

<sup>15</sup> World Jewish Congress, "Anti-Semitism Defined: Allegations of Dual Loyalty," World Jewish Congress, February 23, 2022, <https://www.worldjewishcongress.org/en/news/defining-anti-Semitism-dual-loyalty>. The trope has been prevalent for over one thousand years as anti-semites throughout history have tried to cast Jews as a political other.

officially declared that these scientists knew too much sensitive information even though the actual reason was that they were pursuing anti-semitic policies.

A further example of Soviet leaders' anti-Semitism can be found in how they discussed the Holocaust. Despite Stalin's death anti-Semitism did not see a decrease. Any previous discussion of the Holocaust by Soviet leaders was instead replaced with silence. This policy continued during the first years of Khrushchev's tenure until 1957 when some publications on the genocide were released. The Diary of Anne Frank was translated into Russian in 1960 and more articles on both the Holocaust and Jewish resistance were published. Interest in the genocide, in both the Soviet Union and the rest of the world, exploded after Adolf Eichmann was captured by Israel in 1961, an operation that the Soviets sympathized with. Eichmann was a high-ranking officer in the Nazi S.S. and was one of the main architects of the Holocaust, which he never denied.<sup>16</sup> He had managed to escape to Argentina after the war. Had Eichmann been captured by the Allies he would have been tried at Nuremberg with other Nazi war criminals. After Khrushchev's ouster, there was no significant change in the publication of Holocaust literature. However, Soviet leaders still made no attempt to placate the demands of Jewish activists who wanted the government to provide even more information on the Holocaust and failed to honor and uphold the memory of those who had been murdered.<sup>17</sup>

Despite the blatant anti-Semitism of Soviet leaders and the wider Soviet population, Soviet Jews did not abandon their religion. This was especially true for a number of the Refuseniks. The Soviets attempted to instill a culture of fear upon the Jewish population by continuously monitoring their activities. Soviet Jews were afraid of Jewish informants to the secret police who would observe and report the behavior of their fellow Jews in synagogues and in other public spaces. Holocaust survivor Elie Wiesel noticed this culture of fear. On a trip to the Soviet Union, he recounts how Jews in cities such as Kiev and Moscow warned him that some Jews who were "immersed in prayer [were] pointed out as a fake ... worshipping not the God of Israel but his enemies."<sup>18</sup> Soviet Jews distrusted each other in fear that they could be reported to the secret police. Despite this fear, Soviet Jews still found an

<sup>16</sup> Valerie Hartouni, *Visualizing Atrocity: Arendt, Evil, and the Optics of Thoughtlessness*, (New York: New York University Press, 2012), 23. Eichmann claimed that he was only a midlevel bureaucrat who held no anti-semitic feelings. Instead, he was just following orders in the hopes that he would be promoted.

<sup>17</sup> Pinkus, 424-428.

<sup>18</sup> Elie Wiesel, *The Jews of Silence: A Personal Report on Soviet Jewry*, (New York: Knopf Doubleday Publishing Group, 2011), 16.

avenue to resist and continue openly practicing their religion. Wiesel tells the story of Jews in Georgia who were informed that their synagogue was to be turned into a new Komsomol club. These Georgian Jews were so desperate to continue using their synagogue that they offered to raise the funds for the new building, but the Soviets refused. Still not deterred, the Jews resisted by blocking the street to the synagogue. Men, women, and children participated and the demolition crews were forced to leave.<sup>19</sup> The synagogue was saved due to their bravery.

Soviet Jews resisted anti-semitic policies and sentiments in the U.S.S.R. by supporting the state of Israel and seeking to learn more about Jewish populations throughout the world. Israel's surprise victory in the Six Day War in 1967 resulted in a major increase in Jewish nationalism. This victory changed the way that Soviet Jews viewed themselves. While previous generations of Soviet Jews had focused on studying the U.S.S.R. when they wanted to learn about their state's history, this generation now began to focus on Israel. Israel represented the struggle for repatriation and more Soviet Jews decided that they needed to flee to Israel as soon as possible. Soviet Jews such as Leon Uris were already writing samizdats (writings that were banned by the U.S.S.R.) that attempted to create more Zionists in the Jewish community. This new Jewish identity was not well received by Soviet leaders since it went directly against the Soviet ideal of unity and loyalty to the Soviet state.<sup>20</sup> Soviet Jews were usually unable to support Israel's victory publicly and the war led to even more discrimination in both Soviet policy and mindset.

As the Soviets had supported the Arab countries in the Six Day War, they attempted to portray Israel and its supporters as aggressors. In the Soviet satellite state of Poland, where it was believed that all Polish Jews supported Israel and that the Zionists were aggressors, Jews were removed from the communist party and were also fired from their jobs. As was the case with the Refuseniks, Jewish scientists and those in the arts were heavily targeted, with many being fired and even arrested. In 1968, the Polish communist party condemned anti-Semitism and the arrests. While anti-Semitism did somewhat decrease in Poland, the party never acknowledged their own anti-Semitism. The party's statement had just been a gesture toward the Jewish community. As a result, thousands of Polish Jews fled the country and only around 5,000 remained as of 2002.<sup>21</sup>

<sup>19</sup> Wiesel, 99-100.

<sup>20</sup> Yuli Kosharovskiy and Stefani Hoffman, "We Are Jews Again": *Jewish Activism in the Soviet Union*, ed. Ann Komaromi, (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 2017), 7-8.

<sup>21</sup> Heiko Haumann, "The Jews in the Russian Revolution and in the Soviet Union," *In A History of East European Jews*, NED-New edition, (Vienna: Central European University Press, 2002), 240-241.

There were Soviet Jews who, after being granted exit visas, decided not to immigrate to Israel and instead fled to other countries, such as the United States. This was the case for several different reasons. Many Jews in the Soviet Union married a person from another faith (or an atheist), and they were afraid that this could lead to discrimination in Israel. Additionally, the Israeli economy could not easily handle large numbers of immigrants arriving in such a small country. There were also other places in the world with growing Jewish centers and communities outside of Israel that attracted Soviet Jews, especially those who were less religious.<sup>22</sup> Other reasons that Jews wanted to immigrate to countries other than Israel stemmed from Soviet policy and the Cold War. Some Soviet Jews feared that another war between Israel and its neighbors was likely, especially after the Yom Kippur War in 1973. Also, after centuries of attacks on Judaism from the Soviet government and forced assimilation, Jewish education was not widely available in the U.S.S.R. The Soviet Union also continuously attacked Israel and Zionism. This was because the Soviets supported Israel's Arab neighbors throughout the Cold War while the United States supported Israel. Constant Soviet attacks on the Jewish State led to some Soviet Jews to not have a desire to move to the country.<sup>23</sup>

Anti-Semitism among Soviet leaders and the larger Soviet population did not stop with the ousting of Nikita Khrushchev. While an article in Pravda in 1965 condemned anti-Semitism (three years before the Polish condemnation) which remained Soviet policy throughout Leonid Brezhnev's tenure, Soviet Jews were, in practice, still heavily discriminated against. Soviet leaders also made sure to anger Soviet Jews who supported Israel. In 1981, Brezhnev gave a speech in which he said that the Communist Party of the Soviet Union will always fight against ideas that are antithetical to socialism, such as anti-Semitism and Zionism. Continuing the trend of making slight overtures to the Jewish community while continuing anti-semitic policies, Mikhail Gorbachev argued that Soviet Jews were disproportionately represented in education professions. However, he did nothing to change this and even ignored that Soviet Jews were forced to refrain from supporting Israel publicly and that there were quotas in place to limit the number of Jews who could receive mathematical or scientific training.<sup>24</sup>

There was also a large amount of foreign attention, especially from Israel and the United States, on the plight of the Refuseniks and Soviet Jews as a whole. The

<sup>22</sup> Robert O. Freedman, *Soviet Jewry in the Decisive Decade, 1971-80*, (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1984), 90.

<sup>23</sup> Freedman, 23-24.

<sup>24</sup> Robert B. Cullen, "Soviet Jewry," *Foreign Affairs* 65, no. 2 (1986): 255-266.

Committee of Concerned Scientists (CCS) wanted to promote international cooperation between scientists and was very concerned about Refusenik scientists. Their Soviet Jewish colleagues, including pro-Israel physician Alexander Voronel who participated in a hunger strike protesting against Soviet policy towards the Refuseniks, were prevented from attending an international conference in Moscow.<sup>25</sup> Voronel was also arrested by plainclothes police officers in Moscow. Countries such as the United States believed that these officers were a part of the KGB.<sup>26</sup> In protest to the conference, the scientists began informal meetings called Sunday Seminars at Voronel's home; the resulting international pressure aided Refusenik attempts to leave the country. After another shutdown by the Soviet government of a Moscow science conference led by Voronel, he was able to obtain an exit visa so he and his wife could flee to Israel. Once he arrived in Tel Aviv, he declared the seminars a success since the KGB had been fearing the scientists rather than the scientists fearing the KGB.<sup>27</sup>

A less successful attempt to assist the Refuseniks was with the passage of the Jackson-Vanik Amendment in 1975. It was proposed to Congress by Senator Henry Jackson and Representative Charles Vanik. The amendment prevented communist countries from obtaining Most-Favored-Nation status in trade with the U.S. if they discriminated in emigration.<sup>28</sup> The amendment only served to anger Soviet leaders and, between 1975-1977, they reduced emigration. The major peak in emigration for Soviet Jews to go to Israel and other countries came from 1978-1980. This is when the SALT II Treaty was being discussed and, in an attempt to curry favor with the West, the Soviet Union allowed over 50,000 Soviet Jews to leave. However, those numbers fell sharply between 1981-1985 with only 896 Jews who were permission to emigrate in 1984, a historic low.<sup>29</sup>

American media, Soviet Jews who had previously left the country, and Jews throughout the world also paid very close attention to the plight of the Refuseniks. In Santa Ana, California, 150 people (including local religious leaders) attended a rally in support of the Refuseniks. They held up signs reading "Free Soviet Jews"

25 Elisabetta Vezzosi, "The Committee of Concerned Scientists and the Helsinki Final Act: 'Refusenik' Scientists, Détente and Human Rights," In *The CSCE and the End of the Cold War: Diplomacy, Societies and Human Rights, 1972-1990*, ed. Nicolas Badalassi and Sarah B. Snyder, 1st ed., (Oxford, NY: Berghahn Books, 2019), 123.

26 Deborah Shapley, "Scientists Plan Protest during Nixon Summit in Moscow," *Science* 184, no. 4144 (1974): 1356.

27 Vezzosi, 123-124.

28 David P. Forsythe, "Human Rights in U.S. Foreign Policy: Retrospect and Prospect," *Political Science Quarterly* 105, no. 3 (1990): 446.

29 Cullen, 260.

and sang songs in Hebrew to put pressure on the Soviet government.<sup>30</sup> While it was not a huge rally, it was still evident of the support for the Refuseniks worldwide. American attorneys and activists also traveled to the Soviet Union to assist the Refuseniks. Bernard Kramer was one of these attorneys and he found that Soviet Jews continued to face discrimination on a daily basis despite Soviet leaders' condemnations of anti-Semitism. All Soviet citizens were required to carry a passport and had to present it when seeking a job. For the Jewish population, it said that the passport carrier was Jewish, meaning that the passport was an easy way for Jews to be discriminated against. Kramer also estimated that, unlike the United States where there is a healthy representation of Jews in academia, in the Soviet Union, Jews made up less than one percent of a university's faculty and student body combined.<sup>31</sup> This is evident of Soviet attempts to continue purging the Refuseniks who had been members of the intelligentsia solely because they were Soviet Jews who wanted to flee to Israel.

One Refusenik who had to consistently deal with this anti-Semitism and discrimination throughout his life was Soviet Jewish scientist Andrei Sakharov. In 1972, he married Elena Bonner who was from an Armenian-Jewish family. Although the two of them were not very religious, they were ethnically Jewish.<sup>32</sup> The couple were also leading figures in the human rights movement in the Soviet Union, which led to discrimination against Sakharov. Sakharov began to worry that Soviet authorities were trying to make him a Soviet man once again (even though he still lived in the U.S.S.R.) and that they viewed his wife as an international agent of Zionism.<sup>33</sup> Despite all of this, Sakharov was extremely important to the Soviet Union since he helped provide the country with thermonuclear bombs, something that was incredibly valuable during the Cold War. However, in 1980 Andrei Sakharov was arrested and exiled to Gorky. The official reason for his arrest was that he was divulging state secrets to the United States and other countries. However, it was believed by Sakharov's colleagues and supporters that Sakharov and his wife's support for human rights were the true reasons for his expulsion.<sup>34</sup> Due to

30 Leonel Sanchez, "Orange County Digest: 150 Attend Rally for Refuseniks," *Los Angeles Times*, February 27, 1987. <http://ezproxy.lib.calpoly.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/orange-county-digest/docview/810069116/se-2>.

31 Vicki Quade, "Pro Bono, Pro Freedom: Lawyers Doing Good," *Human Rights* 17, no. 1 (1990): 36.

32 G. E. Gorelik and Antonina W. Bouis, *The World of Andrei Sakharov: a Russian Physicist's Path to Freedom*, (Oxford, U.K.: Oxford University Press, 2005), 324-325.

33 Gorelik, 330.

34 Craig R. Whitney, "Moscow complains Sakharov 'Blabbed' About Vital Secrets: Asserts Dissident Leader Ignored Warnings and was Therefore Ordered Out of Capital Telegram from Sakharov's Wife Soviet Asserts Sakharov 'Blabbed' About State Secrets 'Sakharov Repeatedly Blabbed'," *New York Times*, January 24, 1980. <http://ezproxy.lib.calpoly.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/moscow-complains-sakharov-blabbed-about-vital/docview/121361291/se-2>.



his importance to Soviet physics and nuclear research, his human rights work was allowed to go unchecked for several years, but the Soviets eventually began cracking down on these scientists, especially after the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan began (which was something Sakharov opposed). He was arrested during an American Physical Society meeting, leading to increased foreign attention and protest for his release.<sup>35</sup> This follows the theme of foreign support in the United States and Israel for the Refuseniks and dissident scientists.

Another Refusenik scientist who was arrested by the Soviet Union in 1980 was Viktor Brailovsky. Brailovsky was a cyberneticist who had been consistently denied permission to emigrate with his family to Israel for over eight years. As a result of this discrimination, he published a samizdat detailing the terrible conditions that Soviet Jews were experiencing in their daily lives. His long support for Jewish rights attracted Soviet government attention and his samizdat infuriated the Soviets. As a result, Brailovsky was arrested during an international conference in Madrid, the same way Sakharov's expulsion occurred during an international conference in Chicago. Soviet authorities refused to tell his wife where they were taking her husband, further angering foreign supporters of the Refuseniks.<sup>36</sup> American scientists continuously lobbied for foreign support and attention to be paid to their Soviet colleagues and wrote articles in support of them. The CCS called for even more attention and support for the Refuseniks as they argued that the situation was worsening. At the conference in Madrid, American scientists harshly criticized Soviet policy towards the Refuseniks and they cited twenty-three scientists' persecutions as evidence. Both Brailovsky and Sakharov were on this list.<sup>37</sup> Again, there was heavy foreign support and activism in support of the Refuseniks as they were facing continuous discrimination from the Soviet government.

These two cases present a very obvious trend among the Refuseniks, especially those who were scientists. In addition to anti-Semitism, Cold War rhetoric and fears also played a role in the Soviet government denying the right to emigrate to Israel or the United States to Soviet Jews. In 1979, a high number of exit visas were granted by the Soviets to Soviet Jews to leave the Soviet Union. However, in the first half of 1980 only 56.8% of the exit visas issued in the first half of 1979 were granted. For the second half of 1980, only 23.9% of the number of

<sup>35</sup> "Sakharov: Internal Exile," *Science News* 117, no. 5 (1980): 67.

<sup>36</sup> "Russ Arrests Major Jewish Activist," *The Salt Lake Tribune* (Salt Lake City, Utah), November 14, 1980.

<sup>37</sup> Tineke Boddé, "Oppression of Scientists Intensifies," *BioScience* 31, no. 9 (1981): 633-634.

exit visas that were granted in the second half of 1979 were granted.<sup>38</sup> In 1979, the SALT II treaty was still being negotiated between the United States and the Soviet Union. The Soviets saw an opportunity to continue improving relations with the US by granting these visas. However, SALT II was blocked by Congress. This, coupled with the Soviet Invasion of Afghanistan, crippled Soviet-American and Soviet-Israeli relations and could be viewed as a reason for the steep decline in the granting of exit visas.<sup>39</sup>

The story of the Refuseniks and Soviet Jews as a whole is not a positive one. Anti-Semitism has always had a home in Russia and it may never go away. Even though the fall of the U.S.S.R. somewhat improved life for the Jewish population, anti-Semitism still runs rampant throughout the country. Discussing Russia's current war with Ukraine, Russian Foreign Minister Sergey Lavrov argued that just because Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky is Jewish, does not mean that Ukraine has no Nazi elements. He further stated that the worst anti-semites are Jewish people themselves. Israel immediately condemned the remark and in a statement after a phone call between Israeli Prime Minister Naftali Bennett and Russian President Vladimir Putin, Israel said that Putin had apologized. However, the Russian statement made no mention of the apology.<sup>40</sup> This proves that anti-Semitism is still extremely prevalent in Russian society and can explode whenever the Russian government wants it to.

Despite the change in leadership between the Tsar and the Soviet Union, the situation regarding the Soviet Jews did not truly change, with the exception of the pre-World War II creation of Birobidzhan. However, Soviet leaders' anti-Semitism continued to affect Soviet policy, even if they attempted to make gestures of support to the Jewish population. The Refuseniks and other Soviet Jews were heavily discriminated against for no other reason other than the fact that they were Jewish. The Soviet Union's treatment of its Jewish population has helped harm Russia's relations with both the United States and Israel. Russian Jews continue to live in a culture of fear and worry. It was not and still is not safe to be a Jew in Russia.

<sup>38</sup> Freedman, 19.

<sup>39</sup> Freedman, 19.

<sup>40</sup> Joseph Krauss, "Israel Says Putin Apologized over His FM's Holocaust Remarks," AP NEWS, May 5, 2022, <https://apnews.com/article/russia-ukraine-putin-israel-racial-injustice-race-and-ethnicity-5ec7023af0ed2f0ff97292fa019fb680>.

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### Author Biography

*Sarah McCandless*

Sarah McCandless has been an editor of the forum for 3 years and just graduated in the class of 2023 with a history major and political science minor. In the future she plans to attend law school in hopes of becoming a civil rights lawyer. She loves going to the beach and hiking in San Luis Obispo in her free time.

## The Imperialist Pursuit: Effects of Natural Resource Extraction in Bougainville Papua New Guinea

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*Sarah McCandless*

Natural resource extraction has been at the heart of industrialization, development, and the modern economy since deposits of raw materials were first discovered. Non-renewable materials are not only vital to modern-day life, as they are used to produce a multitude of commodities, but they are also integral to advancing civilizations and economies. The actual process of resource extraction, however, does quite the opposite. As natural resources became a core element of manufacturing and production, world powers and large corporations looked to extract and exploit resources in countries other than their own. When copper deposits were found in the 1960s on Bougainville, an island off Papua New Guinea, the open-cut Panguna Copper Mine was promptly established by the Australian mining company, Conzinc Riotinto Australia (CRA) under the Mining Act of 1967 Bougainville Copper Agreement.<sup>1 2</sup> Little did CRA and its subsidiary Bougainville Copper Limited (BCL) know, the mine would have irrevocable consequences for this island nation and its people. This paper argues that the Panguna Mine fueled the unrest in Bougainville that led to the violent conflict known as the Bougainville Crisis by irreversibly contaminating the environment, creating greater economic disparity between the inhabitants, and increasing social unrest on the island.

Current historiography and research regarding the Bougainville conflict focuses on the Panguna Mine as a contributing factor to the unrest but

<sup>1</sup> "Mining (Bougainville Copper Agreement) Act 1967." n.d. [www.paclii.org. http://www.paclii.org/pg/legis/consol\\_act/mcaa1967344/](http://www.paclii.org/pg/legis/consol_act/mcaa1967344/).

<sup>2</sup> Open-cut is the surface mining technique by which minerals are extracted from a large open pit in the ground.

disregards the fact that the conflict would not have happened without the consequences resulting from the CRA's capitalist drive for profit. To argue that the effects of the mine directly caused the civil war in Bougainville, I will use studies on the various consequences the mining operations had on the environment, the people, and the economy of Bougainville. I will also draw from interviews with locals, CRA company annual reports, films that have been created about this event, and newspaper articles ranging from 1970 to 1988. Primary sources on this topic are limited as they are physically difficult to access and are written in a different language due to the many dialects of the Austronesian language Halia which are spoken on the island. However, this paper explores this topic and evaluates the available sources despite this limitation.

Environmental degradation goes hand in hand with the mining industry as waterways are polluted, wildlife and their habitats are destroyed, and the landscape of the mining site is permanently scarred. These environmental effects were felt on the entirety of Bougainville Island. Every aspect of the mining project had a negative impact on the environment. To prepare the area for the mine and to access the ore deposits, 543 acres of rainforest were cleared by poisoning the trees and spraying undergrowth with herbicide. Overburden, the rock and soil that lays above the ore, was then removed by high pressurized hoses which produced eighteen million cubic meters of sediment.<sup>3</sup> Tailings, the waste that results from extracting copper ore, traveled from the east coast to the west coast of the island through the Kawerong-Jaba River system and out into the Empress Augusta Bay. The waste adversely affected the populations living downstream from the mine by obstructing water flows, creating large areas of swampland, and silting and widening streams.<sup>4</sup> During the seventeen years of the mine's operation, 556 million tons of waste material and 595 million tons of silt were generated. These deposits were stacked up along the riverbank or thrown directly into the river.<sup>5</sup> Tailings, as well as overburden from the mine, contained dangerous levels of mercury which poisoned schools of tuna fish migrating past the island. The destruction of land was detrimental for the locals as they relied on home gardens, as well as farming and fishing for their primary sources of food. These harmful methods of waste disposal resulted from the company's desire to

3 Donald Denoon, *Getting under the Skin: The Bougainville Copper Agreement and the Creation of the Panguna Mine* (Melbourne University Press, 2000).

4 Matthew G Allen, *Resource Extraction and Contentious States: Mining and the Politics of Scale in the Pacific Islands* (Palgrave Pivot, 2019).

5 Douglas Oliver, *Black Islanders: A Personal Perspective of Bougainville, 1937-1991* (Honolulu, HI: University of Hawaii Press, 1991).

maximize profits, its failure to implement any strategies to protect and conserve the environment, and its total disregard for the detrimental impact that the waste had on the island and its inhabitants.

The Panguna Mine, in addition to ruining the physical environment, exacerbated social tensions already present between the people of Bougainville. The mine ignited tensions between local and foreign workers, bringing about island-wide separatism. Prior to the arrival of CRA and BCL, Bougainvilleans had established social and economic systems derived from the cocoa cash crop that came to Bougainville in the 1960s. Cocoa cash cropping benefitted locals differently due to rainfall, soils, and access to land. The introduction of cash cropping caused a shift away from traditional gardening methods used by locals and the inter-generational cycle of land distribution that had been previously used for decades.<sup>6</sup> As a result, those who possessed less land at the introduction of the cocoa trade were at an economic disadvantage. Following the establishment of the mine, there was even less land available for use by locals for gardening or cash-cropping, furthering the economic disparity between islanders. Land was not only beneficial economically; it symbolized the connection the people of Bougainville had to their heritage and ancestors. In the film, *My Valley is Changing*, the narrator illustrates the attachment the locals felt towards their land, "It didn't surprise anyone that the Moroni's were angry over the land situation. It's not just a block of dirt to them, it's part of them, body and soul. Their whole social system is based on the land. The land is owned by the ancestors now dead, present occupiers have rights to use the land and to lease it, but not to destroy it."<sup>7</sup> Francis Ona, the leader of the Bougainville Revolutionary Army, a secessionist group formed during the Bougainville Crisis, shared this sentiment, "We Bougainvilleans, we rely on our land. Land is our lifeline, land is our mother, and it's our protection."<sup>8</sup> The importance of the land to the people of Bougainville heightened the damage caused by the Panguna Mine and fostered deep resentment among them for BCL and its exploitation of their land.

Bougainville's social disintegration also resulted from the diversity of those within Papua New Guinea. Bougainville was inhabited by various tribes who spoke different languages with different ancestral origins. Bougainvilleans, how-

6 Anthony J. Regan, "Causes and Course of the Bougainville Conflict." *The Journal of Pacific History* 33, no. 3 (1998): 269–85. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25169410>.

7 *My Valley is Changing*, directed by Lionel Hudson, (1970; Acton, Australian Capital Territory, Australia: National Film and Sound Archive, 1970). <https://video.alexanderstreet.com/watch/my-valley-is-changing>.

8 *Coconut revolution*, directed by Dom Rotheroe (2001; Surrey, United Kingdom: Journeyman Pictures, 2001). <https://www.filmsforaction.org/watch/coconut-revolution/>.

ever, linked themselves to one another and prided themselves on their distinctive black skin. This characteristic differentiated them from the rest of the population of Papua New Guinea whom they considered “red skins.”<sup>9</sup> This differentiation fostered hostility towards outside workers, while island tribes with different cultures and languages also had their own existing conflicts. Max Ogden discusses the intra-island issue, “At present the chief area of discontent appears to be disputes between workers from different tribes and clans. A Tolai, for example, may refuse to work under a Chimbu foreman, or a fight may break out between two different groups.”<sup>10</sup> This antagonism exacerbated the discontent with the mining operations and made for a hostile work environment. Not only was there conflict between locals, but also between White workers and Black workers. The main source of this conflict was wage disparity, but these two groups of workers were also treated differently. Ogden explains, “Initially on engagement, workers are put in segregated huts and then if the foreman recommends it, a Niuginian worker is examined by a psychiatrist and then may be “integrated” — i.e. he is allowed to live and eat in the integrated quarters. Naturally, the white workers don’t have to pass such tests to be classed as fit for integration.”<sup>11</sup> The inconsistency in the treatment of workers and wage disparity underpins colonial and imperialist attitudes toward colonized people.

The economic disparity created by the unequal distribution of profits generated by the mine continued to worsen socio-economic inequality in Bougainville. Under the Bougainville Copper Agreement, the act that established the mine, these profits were distributed in Kina, the national currency of Papua New Guinea, among various stakeholders including the PNG government, private investors, the North Solomons Provincial Government, and local landowners. From the years 1972 to 1989, funds were divided accordingly: 1,078 million Kina or 61.45% to the PNG Government, 577 million Kina or 32.90% to private shareholders, 75 million Kina or 4.28% to the North Solomons Provincial Government, and 24 million Kina or 1.37% to local landowners.<sup>12</sup> Although the PNG government received over more than half of the revenues, the local landowners whom the mine directly affected most, received nominal compensation. Greater compensation would have allowed civilians to invest in the community to rebuild their land and their livelihoods.

<sup>9</sup> Denoon, *Getting under the Skin*.

<sup>10</sup> Max Ogden, “Question Mark Over Bougainville Copper,” *The Sydney Tribune* October 3, 1979 <https://newspaperarchive.com/sydney-tribune-oct-03-1972-p-6/>

<sup>11</sup> Ogden, “Question Mark Over Bougainville Copper.”

<sup>12</sup> Anthony J. Regan, “Bougainville: Origins of the Conflict, and Debating the Future of Large-Scale Mining,” *In Large-Scale Mines and Local-Level Politics: Between New Caledonia and Papua New Guinea*, edited by Colin Filer and Pierre-Yves Le Meur, 12:353–414. ANU Press, 2017. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/j.ctt1x76gfk.19>.

Douglas Oliver, an anthropologist who lived and worked among the Siwai people of southern Bougainville, argued,

*The company was earning too much for itself and its corporate parents and private shareholders, and was not paying the emerging PNG nation a large enough share of its earnings. The company's 'misfortune' in having been so unexpectedly 'successful' was aggravated by the prejudice of some...that most multinational businesses were by their nature predatory and ruthless, especially that those 'preyed on' Third World societies.*<sup>13</sup>

Private shareholders and government investors were the ones who sponsored and backed this project, so BCL had to ensure its continued support through the generous distribution of revenues. As an attempt to include the islanders in the operation, BCL allowed them to purchase shares when the mine was first established. They made one million shares available to the people of Papua New Guinea at \$1.71 a share, but the company received applications for 3,300,000 shares.<sup>14</sup> The people of PNG thus had unequal access to revenue from the mine and were not fairly included in the opportunity to reap significant economic benefits from the start.

While it is easy to focus solely on the seemingly more consequential detrimental effects of the mine, it is also necessary to discuss the positive contribution that the Panguna Mine made on the island. The mine helped the economy of Papua New Guinea stimulate revenue, provide jobs and technical training, and encourage local businesses to prosper. Due to the profits that the mine produced, the government of Papua New Guinea received tax revenue, mineral royalties, and revenue from the PNG government shares it held in BCL. The job opportunities that the mining operations offered allowed Bougainvillians and people from the wider PNG area to receive education at the mine training college which BCL built in Panguna. A 1976 annual BCL report claimed, “through the mine training centre it provides a steady flow of Papua New Guineans who have been trained in a variety of technical skills. Considering the widely different background of the Company apprentices

<sup>13</sup> Oliver, *Black Islanders*.

<sup>14</sup> “Natives buy shares in island copper,” *The Albuquerque Tribune*, August 9, 1971. <https://newspaperarchive.com/albuquerque-tribune-aug-09-1971-p-36/> (Accessed March 2, 2022).

and trainees and their limited experience in an industrial situation, the training programme has been highly successful.”<sup>15</sup> It must be questioned, however, if these benefits are significant enough to negate the detrimental ramifications. It is also necessary to note that these benefits are perceived from a Western industrialized perspective without considering if they are beneficial from the islanders’ point of view. The jobs and skills that were provided for the people changed their societal structure and way of life. Before BCL came to Bougainville, the people were successfully living off the land in a symbiotic relationship with nature. Whether these newly acquired trade skills could really be utilized after the closure of the mine should also be questioned. Without this industry on the island, the industrial skills would no longer be useful, and it is unclear whether they would be successful in and satisfied with returning to their pre-mine way of life.

The social disintegration, environmental degradation, and economic disparity that BCL and the Panguna Mine brought to Bougainville and Papua New Guinea would ultimately lead to a bloody civil war in which Bougainville’s own government turned on its people. The Bougainville Revolutionary Army, BRA, led by Francis Ona, began to forge a separatist insurgency against the Papua New Guinea Defense Force to secede from the government that turned a blind eye to the damage committed against its own land and people. An eight-year conflict ensued, resulting in the loss of around 20,000 lives, the displacement of thousands more, and the subsequent closure of the controversial mine. Bougainville and the Panguna mine serve as a microcosm of the damage that the imperialist and capitalistic drive for profit cause. The disparity in the benefits reaped by BCL and its shareholders stands in stark contrast to the harm felt firsthand by civilians on Bougainville and demonstrates the broader theme of exploitation of a less developed nation by a larger world power and its corporations. Events like this make it clear that humans have lost sight of what is truly important in the world. The well-being of a society and the environment should be paramount over profit and success. Awareness of what happened in Bougainville and similar incidents can educate people about the harm that is imposed when humanity is not a priority.

<sup>15</sup> Bougainville Copper Limited. 1976 Annual Report, Frank Espie, D.C. Vernon. Papua New Guinea: South Pacific Post Pty. Ltd. 1976 [https://www.annualreports.com/HostedData/AnnualReportArchive/b/ASX\\_\\_BOC\\_\\_1976.pdf](https://www.annualreports.com/HostedData/AnnualReportArchive/b/ASX__BOC__1976.pdf) (Accessed February 20, 2022).

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### Author Biography

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Aidan Berman is a third-year History major. He wrote his article on the rise of sneaker culture across the United States as his HIST 303 paper. Some of his research interests include the history of fashion and consumerism in America throughout the 20th and 21st centuries. Aidan completed his bachelors in history at Cal Poly and is now preparing for law school.

## The Explosion of Sneaker Culture

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*Aidan Berman*

In 1985, Nike released the Air Jordan I, kickstarting an exponential growth in footwear sales and creating the sneaker subculture in the United States. Initially, buyers consisted of primarily urban male basketball fans, but quickly expanded to include suburban and older men captivated by the Air Jordan's popularity. After Nike's success in the mid-1980s, volatile trends drastically fluctuated the desirability and popularity of sneakers. Nike Foamposites, Reebok Questions, and Adidas Crazy Eights cemented their status as the "it" shoe one year and collected dust the next. However, multiple developments since 2008 marked massive changes in sneaker demand that solidified the reputation of the subculture among American men. First, the fourth iteration of basketball star Kobe Bryant's signature line with Nike, the Kobe IV, shattered the tension of using sneakers for either athletics or fashion. Sneaker designers Pharrell Williams, Kanye West, and Virgil Abloh incorporated Black masculinity into their designs, thus creating new standards in a community previously dominated by White designers. Regarding profitability, Nike posted positive revenue margins amidst a sharp economic downturn, showcasing male consumerism centered on footwear. By exploring race, gender, and economics, the rise of sneaker subculture can be explained by the explosion of multi-functional fashionable and athletic sneakers as well as the robust footwear market, whose sales increased despite the state of the economy.

"The Explosion of Sneaker Culture" encompasses history, race, gender, and economics to analyze how the American sneaker market increased in demand and value since 2008 despite a major economic crash. American newspaper articles, popular sneaker advertisements, and financial reports chronicled the sneaker phenomena sweeping the nation and illustrated the meteoric rise of the sneaker cultural phenomenon. Journalism between 2008 and 2019 further illustrated the "hype" behind the sneaker culture, and footwear companies

filled pop culture magazines with advertisements persuading readers to purchase the recently released and popular shoes.

At the beginning of 2008, the American economy displayed signs of instability, and consumerism plummeted as a result. As consumerism declined, banks issued loans to real estate purchasers, creating a massive housing bubble. In turn, these loans allowed consumers to purchase homes they could not afford, and consequently, banks repossessed thousands of homes when lenders defaulted on mortgages. Large banks then auctioned off houses under market value to recoup monetary value.<sup>1</sup> As a result, metropolitan areas experienced significant price declines, with homes in San Francisco and Miami decreasing in value by 30%. Low prices ravaged Southern California, with residential real estate in Los Angeles, Orange County, and San Diego decreasing over 25% from the previous year.<sup>2</sup> The United States government bailed out banks and prominent American corporations to revitalize the banks and halt further economic downturn. In January 2009, President Barack Obama passed a \$787 billion stimulus package to alleviate financial institutions, thus bestowing money to citizens in a tax return and creating new jobs. Consumerism again rose before the onset of the 2010s, and Americans finally felt financially secure after receiving economic stimulus payments and witnessing the economy restabilize itself.

Sneakers had already become traditional daily footwear for men in the 1980s. During this time, men predominantly wore sneakers for athletic purposes but they later rose in popularity and purchases increased drastically. Notably, the Air Jordan I, basketball legend Michael Jordan's initial signature shoe released in 1985, ignited a purchasing frenzy amongst Americans. Air Jordan I's colorful new look and Nike's presence on national television and in print advertising hooked basketball fans. Jordan quickly became a basketball titan as a twenty-two-year-old, an unprecedented feat.<sup>3</sup> Basketball icons like Jordan served as the leading ambassadors for athletic companies and wore the most popular shoes. The Black community quickly rallied around stars like Jordan, who positively highlighted Black culture. During the early 1990s, money flooded into basketball to popularize the sport beyond fringe communities, due to the booming economy.

1 "The Real Causes—and Casualties—of the Housing Crisis," Knowledge at Wharton, accessed April 14, 2022.

2 Peter Y. Hong, "REAL ESTATE; U.S. Home Prices Fall to '04 Level; Quarterly L.A.-Area Values are Down 27.6% from a Year Ago. Several Other Western Cities also are Hit Hard," *Los Angeles Times*, November 26, 2008.

3 Mary Flannery, "Sneakers: Putting On Airs," *Philadelphia Daily News*, April 3, 1985.

By the late 1990s, players including Ken Griffey Jr. and Deion Sanders, entered the fray of signature athletic footwear designed to the exact specifications of an athlete.<sup>4</sup> Youth and adults alike fixated on purchasing specific sneakers, queuing in line to buy a pair of their favorite player's shoes. Mass hysteria created a new side of the sneaker market where rare sneakers could resell for thousands of dollars. To an outsider, people who repeatedly purchased shoes well above retail price but rarely wore them were engaging in an expensive form of hoarding. However, the increased variety of sneaker styles and colorways that rapidly flooded the market had turned sneakers into a fashion statement and led consumers to expand their collections far beyond one pair.

As consumers increasingly purchased sneakers, whether for investment or fashion, partnerships between sneaker brands and pop culture formed in an attempt to capture a piece of the rapidly expanding sneaker market. For example, the legendary Allen Iverson and Jadakiss commercials in the early 2000s promoted Allen Iverson's signature sneakers. In the commercials, the rapper and the star NBA player switched roles. Iverson rapped while Jadakiss attempted a shot on the basket.<sup>5</sup> Reebok also partnered with musicians, chief among them Pharrell Williams, to unlock additional artistic creativity in their releases. In the 2000s, Pharrell created his clothing brand, Billionaire Boys Club, and experienced successful collaborations with Reebok in 2004. Reebok allowed Pharrell to redesign silhouettes, a newfound freedom in the sneaker industry.<sup>6</sup> Many athletes and celebrities utilized advertising of this kind to increase sales to the masses. As sneakers gained notoriety in pop culture, they also gained traction in the leisurewear market.

Gender roles in the United States also dramatically changed during the 21st century as men started to perform traditionally stereotypically feminine roles such as clothes shopping and stay-at-home parenting. In line with this trend, awareness of the sneaker fashion and leisurewear market also increased. Men meticulously selected their clothing and shoes, dressing to impress. Onlookers labeled the movement metrosexual, describing men interested in their appearance.<sup>7</sup> Men who shopped for themselves and carefully selected sought-out fashion items from brands, including Nike, Gucci, and North Face.

4 Brandon Edler, "The 90 Greatest Sneakers of the '90s," *Complex*, June 29, 2021.

5 "Reebok Reunites Allen Iverson and Jadakiss to Launch the Highly-Anticipated Answer 6," *PR Newswire*, October 17, 2002.

6 Ross Tucker, "Reebok, Pharrell Williams Part Ways: Women's Wear Daily," *Wwd* 189, no. 12, January 19, 2005.

7 David Coad. *The Metrosexual: Gender, Sexuality, and Sport*, (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2008).



If a man blended sportswear with high fashion in the 20th century, many presumed he was a homosexual. However, the trend of metrosexuality heightened self-awareness among straight men in their appearance while footwear in particular grew more critical as image became a larger focal point.<sup>8</sup> Manufacturers catered to metrosexual tastes, such as the popularity of extra-large pants, rushing to manufacture loose-fitting clothing for the masses.<sup>9</sup> In particular, Black men gained interest in metrosexual appearances as an extension of their pre-existing interest in fashion. Many Black celebrities embraced the trend, especially at the 2003 NBA Draft. Many sports fans considered this the best NBA draft class with some of the worst draft-night suits in history, as players in attendance sported pant legs that hung almost halfway to the floor.<sup>10</sup> Metrosexuals integrated sneakers into the outfit, a decision that resonated with men as a demographic. Athletic brands released silhouettes containing fancier materials, such as leather, to cater to these trends. Over time, the “metrosexual” label faded as mens’ desire for fashionable clothing became more mainstream.

In spite of these changes, the dichotomy between sneakers for fashion and athletic use prevailed throughout America before 2008. Consumers associated athletic pairs with masculinity and stylish pairs with femininity. Teenagers and young adults prized signature sneakers from idolized athletes such as Michael Jordan.<sup>11</sup> Jordan Brand attempted to create numerous hybrids of previous models to appeal to fashionable buyers but failed as male shoppers only desired signature models and colors.<sup>12</sup> Popular shoes often consisted of low-cut models, as numerous sports ditched low-tops that lacked ankle protection. During the 2000s, multiple sports brands including Nike, Puma, and Adidas, reintroduced old sporting models as fashionable trainers with ancient athletic technology.<sup>13</sup> Older trainers resonated with adults, as buyers enjoyed the nostalgic feeling of wearing a similar pair. Overall, companies attempted to hybridize fashion and athletic sneakers but faced limited

8 Daniela Petroff, “Metrosweat Discovers ‘Metrosexual’ for 2004: [Final Edition],” *Tribune*, January 17, 2004.

9 “Clothing Makers Create Baggier Pants to Follow Trends,” *Knight Ridder Tribune Business News*, July 9, 2004.

10 Leo Sepkowitz, “15 Years Ago, the NBA’s Best Draft Class Wore the Worst Suits of Their Lives,” *Bleacher Report*, June 27, 2018.

11 Tom Spears, “PUTTING on AIRS; Bubbled Runners a Must When it Comes to Fashions for Student Feet: [Final Edition],” *The Ottawa Citizen*, September 10, 1990.

12 Mark Alesia, “MJ’s Skills Take Center Stage at Fashion Show: [Cook Edition],” *Daily Herald*, September 10, 1997.

13 Edwina Ings-Chambers, “Art and Sole: Trainers Rise to the Occasion Trainers Are Finally a Fashion Icon, says Edwina Ings-Chambers - Beloved by Celebrities and Available in Multiple Styles, Colours and Materials: [LONDON 1ST EDITION],” *Financial Times*, April 30, 2005.

success as consumers opted to purchase either older sporting models deemed fashionable or new technologically-sound silhouettes.

The 2008 release of the Kobe IV, basketball star Kobe Bryant’s fourth signature shoe with Nike, blurred the lines between sneakers intended for either fashion or athletic uses. Massive fanfare centered around the shoe, as the sneaker arrived with glamorous adverts and many questions about the structure. For decades, consumers viewed low-top shoes as a fashion item and taboo for basketball wear, yet Kobe and his Nike team viewed the shoe as more dynamic, with the low-cut allowing players to move quicker.<sup>14</sup> With the Kobe IV signature sneaker, the design team ensured that the sneaker met his performance needs on the court. Kobe instructed Nike’s lead designer, Eric Avar, to focus on the calcaneus bone in one’s heel when designing the footwear, allowing Kobe to make sharper cuts and conserve energy.<sup>15</sup> The flywire ribbing around the foot was another feature that created added stability. Furthermore, the low-cut silhouette compared to the previous high-top models and leather upper of the sneaker made the Kobe IV a favorite of basketball players and a must-wear on fashionable formal occasions.<sup>16</sup> Finally, the Kobe IV’s new and improved design, both fashionable and athletic, increased functionality and led to significant popularity amongst American men.

Despite the Kobe IV being just a singular sneaker release, the launch of a versatile low-top shoe that people considered both fashionable and athletic, as well as its superior functionality, created headlines in the sneaker community. The Kobe IV ushered in a new wave of sneaker fashion, performance, and comfort. Due to the staggering influence of the Kobe IV and other models, men opted to wear sneakers to formal events instead of dress shoes. For instance, in 2009, Andy Samberg paired Reebok Pumps with a suit at the MTV Awards.<sup>17</sup> People now viewed athletic models as fashionable designer sneakers. Specifically, Nike, Adidas, and their subsidiary companies released numerous vaunted sneakers that became staples for this new wave of fashion, including Jordan, Kobe, and Yeezy models.<sup>18</sup> All of these models offered varying levels of athletic performance and

14 “Nike Zoom Kobe IV: Nike Unveils its Lightest and Strongest Basketball Shoe Ever,” *Business Wire*, December 11, 2008.

15 “Low-Tops, High-Risk? Lakers Superstar Bryant Bucks the Trend of Wearing High-Tops, Leaving Some to Wonder if He is Putting Too Much Pressure on His Ankles,” *Daily News*, December 17, 2008.

16 “Sports Apparel Brand Comes Out with Specialized Footwear,” *BusinessWorld*, January 26, 2009.

17 Jonathan Sawyer, “A Brief History of Celebrities Wearing Sneakers with Suits,” *Complex*, April 17, 2020.

18 Daniel Kang, “Best Sneakers of the Decade,” *University Wire*, September 23, 2020.

the Kobe IV in particular masterfully combined the dual functionality of athleticism and fashion.

Post 2008, the explosion of sneakers' financial profitability resulted in companies including Nike posting record profits, releases morphing into massive events, and the resale market soaring in popularity. The 2008 Housing Crisis significantly weakened the United States economy, with very few companies managing to post profit margins. Nevertheless, Nike recorded a successful fiscal year in 2009, posting revenue growth of 3% from \$18.6 billion to \$19.2 billion. Specifically, during that fiscal year, overall revenues in the United States increased 2% to \$6.5 billion while footwear revenues rose 5% to \$4.6 billion.<sup>19</sup> Nike and other footwear titans continued to experience exponential sales growth throughout the 2010s as the market for sneakers expanded dramatically. The success of large sneaker companies like Nike in the weak economy demonstrated the significance of the rise in demand for sneakers.

As sneaker sales extended nationwide, retail stores struggled to maintain stock of popular models, including the Nike silhouettes. Raffle systems arose to provide consumer equal opportunity to acquire coveted sneaker, but the chance-based system was far from a guarantee.

Some launches, like the Orlando launch of the Nike Galaxy Pack, utilized first come, first serve policies for the sought-after signature models of Kobe Bryant, LeBron James, Kevin Durant, and Penny Hardaway. In particular, buyers coveted the \$220 Hardaway Galaxy Foamposite for its glow in the dark design and procured high resale value. Due to human trampling at release processions, riot-clad police officers and deputies arrived on horseback and closed the shopping mall in 2012. In total, more than one hundred law-enforcement officers arrived to disperse crowds.<sup>20</sup> Companies shipped a limited number of pairs in releases, and stores only received a few dozen pairs each. Limited availability created mass hysteria among unsuccessful buyers, especially with the Air Jordan XI annual release. Even though Nike produced hundreds of thousands of Air Jordan XI yearly, they sold out within minutes and the resultant scramble for shoes enabled sky-high resale prices.<sup>21</sup> Increased demand led to supply chain issues, and stores could

19 "NIKE, Inc. Reports Fiscal 2009 Fourth Quarter and Full Year Results," Business Wire, June 24, 2009.

20 Susan Jacobson, "Frenzy Afoot in Fla. for NBA Nike Launch," The Daily Camera, February 24, 2012.

21 Rory Barrs, "Sneaker no Mics; the Regulated Supply of and Intense Demand for the Air Jordan 11 Retro Low Concord," National Post, May 24, 2014.

not control the purchasing frenzy or implement equitable sales systems, unfortunately caused violence at several locations. A push for more online sales and raffles ensued as a result of these difficulties, with proponents hoping to both curtail violent in-person frenzies and provide equitability in purchases for buyers.

Designers such as Kanye West desired to avoid Nike's limited sneaker releases that previously caused in-person chaos and violence. Therefore, he left Nike and joined Adidas in 2015. The initial collection utilized a high-top design similar to West's iconic Nike shoe.<sup>22</sup> Eventually, West designed the Yeezy Boost 350, a comfortable low-top knit sneaker that became an instant success with shoppers. West and Adidas launched multiple different silhouettes along with dozens of colorways for the Yeezy Boost 350 which would ultimately become the most popular model throughout their seven-year partnership. The Yeezy Boost 350 also captivated the comfort wear movement that gained popularity with men in the mid-2010s.<sup>23</sup> Therefore, the new Adidas partnership led to increased collaborative control for West, and an extremely successful, mutually profitable endeavor.

In 2016, Pharrell returned to the shoe scene to design a new line of products with Adidas titled Human Race, which included his view on the popular Adidas running model the NMD. The sneaker quickly ascended as one of the hottest shoes globally. Celebrity demand for the shoe caused resale values of the original releases to eclipse \$1,000.<sup>24</sup> Similarly, West's former creative director Virgil Abloh's popularity increased because of his personal fashion brand, Off-White. Off-White rose to prominence in the celebrity sphere due to their non-conventional designs including a pattern of white stripes and footwear adorned with printed writing and custom laundry tags.<sup>25</sup> Nike hired Abloh to work on a sneaker collaboration akin to his ex-employer, West. The result was "The Ten," a groundbreaking project wherein Abloh reimagined ten legendary Nike shoes, including the Air Jordan I and Air Force 1, in 2017 Abloh's collection ventured into new territory for Nike, as reconstructing a famous sneaker was previously off-limits. Still, Abloh completely revamped illus-

22 "Clothes to Help Life': Kanye West's Adidas Debut at New York Fashion Week," Telegraph. Co.Uk, February 13, 2015.

23 "Adidas and Kanye West make History with Transformative New Partnership: Adidas + KANYE WEST: The most Significant Partnership Ever Created between an Athletic Brand and a Non-Athlete," PR Newswire, June 29, 2016.

24 Matt Vitone, "Adidas Originals & Pharrell Williams Debut New Yellow Hu NMD," Sourcing Journal (Online), July 20, 2016.

25 "Virgil Abloh, Kanye West's Creative Director, Puts Street Wear in the Spotlight with His Off-White Line," New York Times, November 5, 2014.

trious models and infused the prototypes with new life. The collaboration rocked the sneaker world as people welcomed the new viewpoints on the classics and embraced old Nike silhouettes.<sup>26</sup> While developing redesigns in different colorways than “The Ten,” Abloh desired key Black sporting figures to headline his new releases. Michael Jordan approved various reconstructions of classic Jordan models like the Air Jordan I and II plus Jordan III, IV, and V. For the 2018 Off-White World Cup collection, Abloh recruited Kylian Mbappe, a budding soccer superstar, to serve as the youthful poster boy.<sup>27</sup> Abloh often recalled watching one of his biggest influences, Michael Jordan, in his prime. With his reconstruction of Jordan models, Abloh desired to spotlight the original prototype and used his creativity to persuade newer generations to enjoy Jordan’s greatness as a Black icon.<sup>28</sup>

As a result, sneakers with massive appeal, including Jordans and Kobes or limited runs such as Yeezy and Off-White collaborations, evolved into staples of the resale market. When popular silhouettes sold out rapidly, dedicated consumers ventured to the resale market to spend well over market value to secure their desired sneakers. By the end of 2018, reselling as a profession emerged and the sneaker resale market reached a valuation of over \$2 billion.<sup>29</sup>

Sneaker subculture exploded over the past fifteen years in popularity and profitability. First, a massive barrier between performance and fashion dissolved as a result of the unveiling of the Kobe IV. Before, men debated the primary use of sneakers as athletic or fashion wear, but the low top appealed to both categories with its new technology and sleek appearance. Black designers, the pallbearers of the sneaker movement, rose in prominence during the Obama Administration, showcasing and amalgamation of male and Black identities and representing their importance in fashion and the local community. To this end, Virgil Abloh included many famous Black athletes in his advertising campaigns. As popularity increased, the sneaker economy skyrocketed and a new highly profitable second-hand resale market emerged. Currently, the subculture of sneakers is still evolving along racial and financial lines among men.

<sup>26</sup> Jacob Gallagher, “Why Nike Chose Virgil Abloh to Rethink its Sneakers; the Sneaker Giant Isn’t the Only One Who’s Got the Enterprising Designer of Streetwear Line Off-White on Speed Dial. He’s also Collaborating with Ikea, John Mayer, Dave Chappelle and Sarah Jessica Parker,” *Wall Street Journal* (Online), September 6, 2017.

<sup>27</sup> Daniel Kang, “Virgil Abloh’s Off-White and Nike Bring the Heat,” *University Wire*, September 23, 2020.

<sup>28</sup> Darcel Rockett, “Embodying the City’s Connectivity: Meet the Local Artists Behind the New Jordan Chicago Collaborators’ Collection,” *Chicago Tribune*, February 16, 2020.

<sup>29</sup> Christopher Hall, “Here’s Why the Sneaker Resale Market was Recently Valued at Over \$2 Billion,” *Sourcing Journal* (Online), December 20, 2018.

New innovative designs constantly emerge as men from different ethnic backgrounds work together towards an inclusive community. As a result of this evolution, designers are veering towards more inclusive designs from all cultures, creating fashionable and athletic sneakers marketed to all.

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# Red Army Doctrine in WWI and WWII

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*Ethan Yoon*

## Author Biography

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## Introduction

Following the end of World War I and throughout the Great Patriotic War, Soviet military strategy was defined by production and employment of high quantities of military assets to smother the enemy. Soviet strategy prioritized military asset quantity whereas their enemies prioritized quality. Consequently, Soviet victory over their adversaries in both wars came at a bloody cost. In addition, High Red Army casualty rates during the first and second world wars were staggering in comparison with its allies', the a result of technological and logistical problems such as the absence of professional training and lack of proper equipment. Perhaps most characteristic of the Red Army was the tenacity with which its superiors expected its soldiers to fight. This wartime philosophy was critical to the success of the Red Army, but at the cost of millions of lives.

## World War I and the Origins of the Red Army

The assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand on June 28, 1914 marked the beginning of World War I and initiated the July Crisis. German leaders understood the implications of starting a conflict with Serbia, as the nation had Russian support. Additionally, the Franco-Russian Alliance of 1892 declared that France would assist Russia in a conflict with Germany or Austria-Hungary. France was also guaranteed support by Great Britain in the event of war. In response, Germany and Austria-Hungary cooperated to formulate the Schlieffen Plan, a contingency that in the case of war, German military forces would target France then divert their resources towards Russia following France's defeat. The Schlieffen Plan relied upon the slow deployment of Russian military resources during the attack on France, as the planners doubted that they could sustain a two-front war. On

July 23, 1914, Austria-Hungary sent Serbia an ultimatum that demanded full Serbian submission in shutting down anti-Austro-Hungarian organizations and activists and allowing an Austrian-led investigation on Serbian soil. On July 25, Serbia accepted Austria-Hungary's demands, except for the requests most intrusive to Serbia's sovereignty. However, Austria-Hungary required full submission to the ultimatum and subsequently declared war on Serbia on July 28. On July 30, Tsar Nicholas II of Russia agreed for the mobilization of his country's military. Germany demanded that Russia cease its mobilization, but the request was denied. At the same time, France began mobilizing its military, and after German troops crossed France's border on August 4, Britain declared war on Germany and Austria-Hungary. These events marked the beginning of World War I.<sup>1</sup>

Before World War I, the Russian Army, like its counterparts, relied heavily on conscripting young men during peacetime for a short period before placing them in reserves in case of war. As a result, the Russian Army's capacity grew significantly by calling on reservists. The Russian Army's fighting force was unique in that it possessed a large amount of cavalry and had the largest peacetime army, consisting of around 1.4 million men and 40,000 officers which increased to 4.5 million men and 80,000 officers by the start of the war.<sup>2</sup> The Russian Army's key unit, riflemen, were mainly conscripted from peasant populations. The largely illiterate and uneducated nature of Russian peasants put the Army at a disadvantage compared to its adversaries: new military technology of artillery, aircraft, and basic weaponry put a premium on the educated soldier, and as uneducated peasants went to war, they could not effectively utilize their weapon systems and suffered casualties in the millions. Alongside peasants, a smaller population of educated and literate conscripts contributed to the Russian infantry as well as foreign legions, most notably the Czechoslovak Legion which consisted of Czechs, Slovaks, exiles, and former prisoners of war. The Army was equipped with the venerable Mosin-Nagant rifle, Maxim gun, and 76mm field gun. Russia's slow industrialization at the time did not allow for mass-construction of weapons, and the Army largely had to work with the numbers they had similarly to the Soviets' experience in World War II, not having enough rifles for every soldier during the Battle of Stalingrad.<sup>3</sup>

1 "First World War," *The National Archives*, [https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/document\\_packs](https://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/pathways/firstworldwar/document_packs).

2 Ziemke, 30-35.

3 Davis Liddil, "'Stalingrad is Hell': Soviet Morale and the Battle of Stalingrad," University of Central Arkansas — UCA, 2015, <https://uca.edu/cahss/files/2020/07/2016-11-Liddil-stalingrad-is-hell.pdf>.

Russia's military doctrine in World War I pulled from its experience in the Russo-Japanese War, which consisted of large-scale operations utilizing combined arms warfare. During the Russo-Japanese War, Russia gained experience maneuvering large formations while in the presence of Japanese machine guns and artillery. Nevertheless, the Russians were not yet prepared for the destruction of the modern battlefield when entering World War I. As trench warfare led to stalemates, military planners needed to find innovative ways to break the enemy's line and advance forward. Artillery in conjunction with a mass frontal infantry assault became the Russian Army's primary method of attack. In combination with the 1912 field service manual and the 1914 "Instruction for Infantry Action in Battle," the Russian Army formulated a doctrine of suppressing or "fixing" an enemy in position with indirect artillery fire before following-up with an infantry attack that stormed the enemy's trench with bayonets then pursued them with cavalry.<sup>4</sup> Russia's approach differed from the Western Front armies in that its troops spread out farther over the battlefield rather than concentrating its fighting force in one area.<sup>5</sup> This approach would diminish the Red Army's ability to punch through the enemy's frontlines during World War I.

The Russian Army's use of combined arms tactics in the Battle of Galicia, which occurred on August 23, 1914, was one of the most important early victories of the war. Austro-Hungarian Chief of Staff, Conrad von Hötzendorf, planned to launch a major offensive into Russian territory in order to gain an early footing into Poland where he believed newly deployed units would be concentrated.<sup>6</sup> Simultaneously, Russia's commander of the Southwestern Front, Nikolai Ivanov, planned to attack Austro-Hungarian-occupied Galicia.<sup>7</sup> The collision of both armies in Galicia resulted in three bloody weeks of fighting. Ivanov employed the use of defensive artillery positions in combination with infantry divisions to launch frontal assaults on the enemy's front line. These attacks were successful in breaking the front, and cavalry units were used to further pursue the retreating Germans and harass supply lines.<sup>8</sup> However, the Russians' slow mobilization of their forces allowed the German and Austro-Hungarian forces to reconvene and launch successful attacks against Ivanov's units. The fighting quickly turned into a bloody slugging match as the open

4 *Manual of Tactics of Field Artillery*, Joint Publications Research Service, 1912, 101-102.

5 Ibid, 102.

6 N. Golovin, "The Great Battle of Galicia (1914): A Study in Strategy," *The Slavonic Review* 5, no. 13 (June 1926): 25-47, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/4202029>.

7 Ibid, 26.

8 Ibid, 34-38.

terrain allowed machine guns and artillery to decimate maneuvering forces. In the end, the Battle of Galicia resulted in a Russian victory, as they seized Galicia from the Central Powers and crippled their fighting capability. The use of combined arms warfare during the battle further emphasized the need to master the simultaneous use of machine guns, artillery, cavalry, and infantry. This experience in combined arms combat would allow for the extensive use of aircraft, armored vehicles, and infantry on the battlefield during World War II.

The Battle of Tannenberg was another influential battle early in the war that began on August 26, 1914, only a few days after the beginning of the Battle of Galicia. During Russia's advance into East Prussia, the Russian Army was divided into the First and Second Army. Led by Paul von Rennenkampf, the First Army advanced northeast while the Second Army, commanded by Alexander Samsonov, moved southwest. This separation meant both armies became unable to effectively communicate with and assist one another. This was disastrous when a surprise attack on Samsonov's forces by the German Eighth Army resulted in the complete encirclement of the Second Army. The Russian Second Army was decisively destroyed, having 92,000 of its soldiers captured and 78,000 killed; only 10,000 escaped.<sup>9</sup> In the northeast, the Germans defeated the First Army due to its inability to communicate with its counterpart and was consequently forced out of East Prussia. The Battle of Tannenberg was so catastrophic to the Russian Army that it would not launch another offensive into German territory for the rest of the war.<sup>10</sup> This battle revealed the necessity for unity in Soviet command. Under a singular commander, both the First and Second Army would have been consolidated into one division led by a single commander. The primary advantage of having unity of command is the ability to effectively and efficiently disseminate information to units within the division. Had these two divisions been combined, they could have assisted one another to defeat the German Eighth Army and potentially maintain its momentum throughout the war. The Soviets would experience a similar issue in the war with Finland during World War II.

Riding on the momentum gained from the Battle of Tannenberg and defeating the Russians in the Carpathians, the Germans launched the Gorlice-Tarnów Offensive to alleviate pressure caused by the fighting between the Austro-Hungarians and Russians. This offensive resulted in one of the most

<sup>9</sup> Mark Henniker, "The Battle of Tannenberg, 1914," *The Military Engineer* 50, no. 338 (November 1958): 442-449, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/44560758>.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, 338.

influential victories over Russia by the Central Powers. The German Eleventh Army, commanded by General August von Mackensen, launched the offensive because retaking Galicia could encircle the Russian Army and cut off their supply lines, forcing Russian retreat. This was evident in that the biggest contributor to the Russians' defeat was their lack of equipment and ammunition, specifically for their artillery along with Russian command's determination to hold the already conquered Galicia.<sup>11</sup> German infantry physician Bernard Bardach recounts his experiences during the Offensive and particularly the Russian's straining tenacity in holding the territory: "The Russians do not yield, and a violent artillery duel ensues, which lasts until dark, when the Russians finally retreat, leaving about eight hundred prisoners..."<sup>12</sup> The Russian failure during the Gorlice-Tarnów Offensive further crippled the Army's fighting capability while increasing the Central Powers' confidence in their ability to wage a war of attrition which would later influence that same strategy on the Western Front.

The 1916 Brusilov Offensive was perhaps the Russian Army's greatest employment of force during the war. Although experienced soldiers and leadership were in short supply at this point in the war, the Russian southwestern forces, under the command of Alexei Brusilov, would go on to severely damage the Austro-Hungarian forces and force them to rely on their German ally. Brusilov expertly employed the use of aircraft in his preparations to photograph the enemy lines and find weak points. During the battle, the Russians used artillery as a prelude for shock troops to advance to the front line and break through. In support of the frontal assault, cavalry units then conducted a flank to disrupt supply lines and communication while also cutting off the enemy's retreat. Although Brusilov's preparation and employment was successful, victory came at the expense of his soldiers who suffered around 1.5 million casualties.<sup>13</sup> Russia, despite crippling the Austro-Hungarian Army, could not sustain another offensive of a similar scale for the remainder of the war. The Brusilov Offensive also set a precedent for the use of artillery in doctrine for future battles during World War I and World War II.

<sup>11</sup> Paul Robinson, "The Battle of Gorlice-Tarnow, May-June 1915," *Grand Duke Nikolai Nikolaevich: Supreme Commander of the Russian Army*, Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2014, <https://doi.org.ezproxy.lib.calpoly.edu/10.1515/9781501757099>.

<sup>12</sup> Peter C. Appelbaum, "1915: Carpathians, Gorlice-Tarnów, Southern and Western Ukraine," In *Carnage and Care on the Eastern Front: The War Diaries of Bernhard Bardach, 1914-1918*, 1st ed., 52-106, Berghahn Books, 2018, <https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvw04j3g.11>.

<sup>13</sup> David R. Stone, "The Brusilov Offensive, 1916," in *The Russian Army in the Great War: The Eastern Front, 1914-1917*, Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2015, 233, [muse.jhu.edu/book/39893](https://muse.jhu.edu/book/39893).



### Interwar Years and the Great Patriotic War

The Revolution and Civil War prompted Soviet military leadership to begin analyzing the military doctrine used in World War I and adapting it to incorporate new military technology and weapon systems. Red Army doctrine during the interwar period (1918-1939) adapted to incorporate new military technology and focused on offensive capacities rather than defensive. Perhaps most important in implementing this doctrine were Soviet commanders. Chief of Operations V. K. Triandafillov analyzed the major operations of World War I and recognized mechanization and its relationship with mobility as a key factor in the offensive's success, specifically mechanized artillery, armor, and mobile infantry.<sup>14</sup> An armored unit, such as a tank, provided a means to break a stalemate between two forces as they were impervious to small arms fire and allowed infantry to advance, using it as mobile cover.<sup>15</sup> In 1936, Red Army commander and tactician, Mikhail Tukhachevsky, created the Provisional Field Regulation 36 (PU-36) in which he expanded on the concept of mechanized maneuver to include air assets. As aviation technology advanced, the threat of aircraft on the battlefield increased and was at the forefront of military planning.<sup>16</sup> In World War I, aircraft had been used to conduct aerial reconnaissance which provided Russia with the ability to better plan for offensive operations. As World War II approached, the Soviets continued to test and improve technology and doctrine that would later be known as Deep Battle. The Russian Deep Battle doctrine emphasized the destruction, suppression, and interruption of enemy forces both at the front line and into enemy territory. This doctrine was the basis for Red Army doctrine throughout World War II.

As Germany began its invasion of Poland in the fall of 1939, the Soviets began preparing for the possibility of a war with Germany. Due to Finland's proximity to Russia and its neutrality, Russia worried Finland could provide a forward base for the Nazis to use in an invasion.<sup>17</sup> The Soviets requested that Finland give up certain strategic areas, though the Finnish denied these requests. Thus, the Winter War began between the Soviets and Finnish in November 1939 and continued through March 1940. Although the Soviets possessed a greater capacity to support a

prolonged conflict than Finland, the Finnish were more prepared for conflict in the snow and cold. Since the Red Army had rapidly diverted resources to Finland, the Russians had little to no time to perform reconnaissance of the area of operations and had little knowledge of the terrain or Finnish defensive positions.

As the Winter War progressed, the Finnish began noticing patterns in the Soviet doctrine.<sup>18</sup> Artillery would fire for thirty minutes with the occasional air attack from Soviet aircraft. Using this knowledge, the Finnish would time their attacks to begin when the Soviet bombardments had ceased.<sup>19</sup> Soviet tanks were often rendered ineffective, as they were armored too lightly to withstand Finnish anti-tank weapons. Soviet combat engineers also had difficulty destroying Finnish tank traps. The Finnish terrain was furthermore unsuitable for armored combat: the roads were narrow and icy, and the surrounding areas were often heavily wooded, leaving tanks susceptible to ambush. Having experienced continual defeat, the Soviets reconsolidated their air force and army to create a concentrated assaulting force to punch through Finnish defenses which proved to be more effective in quelling Finnish resistance.<sup>20</sup> Eventually, the Finnish military had been exhausted of its resources and endurance and consequently signed the Treaty of Moscow in 1940 that ceded eleven percent of its territory to the Soviets.

Although Russia had won in Finland, the Red Army's performance was subpar, so reforms followed to address military weaknesses. Red Army training focused heavily on attacking static lines and defensive structures. On the contrary, German blitzkrieg doctrine utilized infantry in conjunction with armored vehicles to rapidly capture territory, shocking the enemy with speed.<sup>21</sup> During Russian training exercises, the cooperation between tanks, infantry, and aircraft remained unaccomplished. Meanwhile, Germany continued to expertly exercise mobility.

The Nazis launched Operation Barbarossa in June 1941 against the Soviet Union in an effort to capitalize on the success of its blitzkrieg through Western Europe. Operation Barbarossa was the largest Nazi invasion of the war, as it deployed between 80 and 100 Wehrmacht divisions across Eastern Europe.<sup>22</sup>

14 Amnon Sella, "Red Army Doctrine and Training on the Eve of the Second World War," *Soviet Studies* 27, no. 2 (1975): 246, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/150591>.

15 Ibid, 247.

16 Provisional Field Regulations for the Red Army (PU 36), Joint Publications Research Service, 1986.

17 Carl Van Dyke, "The Red Army Reforms Its Military Doctrine," In *The Soviet Invasion of Finland, 1939-40*, 117, Routledge, 1998.

18 Ibid, 119.

19 Ibid, 119.

20 Ibid, 119-120.

21 Thomas B. Gukeisen, *The Operational Art of Blitzkrieg: Its Strengths and Weaknesses in Systems Perspective*, (Fort Leavenworth, KS: School of Advanced Military Studies United States Army Command and General Staff College, 2005), 2, <https://apps.dtic.mil/sti/pdfs/ADA435929.pdf>.

22 David Stahel, *Operation Barbarossa and Germany's Defeat in the East*, New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009, ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/calpoly/detail.action?docID=1303580>.

Stalin did not believe that the Nazis would launch an invasion against the Soviet Union, thus, the operation took the Red Army by surprise which allowed the Wehrmacht to quickly gain territory.<sup>23</sup> Though the Nazis gained territory, Hitler's focus on Ukraine delayed the invasion of Moscow. This delay allowed the Red Army to consolidate its forces in preparation for the German offensive.<sup>24</sup> The Rasputitsa, a season which consists of rain and moist conditions due to thawing snow, had also arrived which made it difficult for German motorized vehicles and tanks to traverse the muddy roads.<sup>25</sup> The delay in the Wehrmacht's advance eventually led to the failure of Operation Barbarossa which marked a turning point in the war in favor of the Allies; battles like that at Stalingrad and Kursk are examples of decisive engagements in which the Germans were crippled. In addition to the delay, the Wehrmacht did not have enough resources to wage a war of attrition with the Soviets. Allied bombardments of German infrastructure and factories crippled the Nazis' ability to produce military assets like firearms, tanks, and aircraft resulting in the Soviets' war time production outstripping that of the Nazis. It was this numerical advantage, in terms of military assets, that allowed the Soviets to easily outnumber the Wehrmacht and stop the offensive.<sup>26</sup>

During the German invasion of Russia, Hitler recognized Stalingrad as a high value target due to its implications for propaganda in that it possessed Stalin's name. Upon learning of Hitler's intentions, Stalin called upon all Russians capable of fighting to take up arms in defense of the city. As German and Soviet forces clashed in a bloody battle in the urban streets of Stalingrad, casualties on both sides continued to rise. The Soviet economy and industry could not support the sheer number of soldiers the Red Army was putting into action and as a result were unable to adequately equip every soldier. This left some without weapons with which to fight.<sup>27</sup> The Red Army was clearly fighting a war of attrition in Stalingrad; they intended to exhaust and overwhelm the Wehrmacht. Here, Stalin gave his famous order, stating that any soldier who retreated or surrendered was subject to military trial or execution. This mentality, while costly, was effective in overwhelming German forces and starving them of supplies. William Hoffman, a German soldier in Stalingrad, described the conditions they endured towards the end of the battle,

*"The horses have already been eaten. I would eat a cat; they say its meat is also tasty. The soldiers look like corpses or lunatics, looking for something to put in their mouths. They no longer take cover from Russian shells; they haven't the strength to walk, run away and hide. A curse on this war!"*<sup>28</sup>

The defeat of the Germans at Stalingrad fueled the Soviets' morale and gave the impression that they could outlast the world's greatest invading force. The battle at Stalingrad marked the emergence of a fanatical approach to winning battles like the frontal charges experienced in World War I. Soviet soldiers were given no choice but to defend against the German onslaught or face death at the hands of their superiors.

In response to Nazi Germany's defeat at Stalingrad, Hitler launched Operation Citadel to recover in the Eastern Front. The Wehrmacht amassed a large group of infantry, aircraft, artillery, and tanks at the Kursk Bulge. Simultaneously, the Red Army preemptively assembled a formidable defending force of over a million soldiers, tanks, artillery, and aircraft. During the battle itself, Red Army tanks clashed with Wehrmacht tanks all along the Kursk Bulge.<sup>29</sup> As with infantry, the Soviets prioritized producing a greater number of tanks to overwhelm the Germans. The Soviet T-34 tanks proved to be a potent asset due to their sheer number in comparison to the Germans' Tiger and Panzer tanks. Germans employed new Panther tanks even without field testing, which were limited in number and prone to mechanical failure. Their advantage, however, was that Russian tank cannons were too weak to penetrate the Tiger and Panther's armor.<sup>30</sup> This forced Russian tank crews to engage in close combat with their German counterparts, becoming vulnerable to long-range attacks.<sup>31</sup>

Throughout Operation Citadel, Soviet tank divisions would engage German SS panzer, or tank, divisions in coordination with aircraft and artillery. This tactic proved to be useful, as the technologically superior German tanks were able to hold

<sup>23</sup> Ibid, 35.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid, 35-36.

<sup>25</sup> David M. Glantz, and Jonathan M. House, *When Titans Clashed: How the Red Army Stopped Hitler*,

Revised & Expanded ed., Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2015, 119, [muse.jhu.edu/book/42325](https://muse.jhu.edu/book/42325).

<sup>26</sup> Ibid, 325-345.

<sup>27</sup> Ibid, 35-36.

<sup>28</sup> Liddil, 215.

<sup>29</sup> Roman Toeppel, *Kursk 1943: The Greatest Battle of the Second World War*, Havertown: Helion & Company, Limited, 2018, ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/calpoly/reader.action?docID=5747224&pg=177>.

<sup>30</sup> Mary R. Habeck, *Storm of Steel: The Development of Armor Doctrine in Germany and the Soviet Union, 1919-1939*, Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2014, ProQuest Ebook Central, <https://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/calpoly/detail.action?docID=3138631>.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid, 54.

off Soviet armored charges but were ultimately destroyed by hidden Soviet anti-tank guns.<sup>32</sup> Although the Germans had inflicted losses on the Red Army during Operation Citadel, the Soviets were able to withstand the assault and keep their defensive line intact. As Allied forces landed in Sicily, Hitler was forced to abandon Operation Citadel, ending Germany's hopes of reaching Moscow.

The Red Army greatly enhanced its fighting capability after the Winter War, employing measures to overwhelm its enemy with sheer numbers but at the cost of its soldiers. This was especially true in the German invasion of Russia as the Red Army fought quality with quantity defend the motherland. The Deep Battle doctrine allowed for the Soviets to employ all aspects of their military to work in conjunction with one another towards a unified goal.

## Conclusion

Throughout the course of World War I and World War II, the Russian Army had adapted to the changing political and military battlefield. Changes to Red Army doctrine primarily arose from raw combat experience and the evolution of military technology. The Red Army heavily relied on outproducing its enemies in terms of infantry, tanks, and aircraft. A consequence of this strategy was that the assets produced were often technologically obsolete. From an operational standpoint, however, they were successful in their ability to smother and destroy the enemy in combat. Through this, Russia's military remained a potent adversary throughout the course of the early 20th Century.

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<sup>32</sup> Ibid, 247-287.

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## The Victims of Beauty: How Women Paid the Price of the Industrial Revolution, Science, and Hollywood

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*Emma Fay*

### Author Biography

*Emma Fay*

Emma is a third-year history major with a minor in Ethnicity, Public Policy, Science, and Technology, and a (soon to be) minor in Political Science. Her areas of interest include the Enlightenment, history of science, women's history, and beauty. After graduation, Emma hopes to continue her education and pursue the legal field. In her free time, she enjoys baking, reading, and water coloring.

The average white American woman in the 1920s started her morning by readying herself for the day. She pried open the medicine cabinet to grab the necessities and began her routine: prepping the skin by lightly patting on vanishing cream, adding a dusting of powder to even the complexion, and applying a liquid rouge with a dampened cotton ball for a flushed appearance.<sup>1</sup> Beauty resulted from these meticulous steps, though it was followed by the threats of blindness, lower limb paralysis, gum decay, tooth loss, and rash. Toxic heavy metals and irritants loomed in lavishly packaged jars, awaiting their next victim. The very products women used for beauty were the same ones listed on physicians' reports after their hospital stays. Why were harmful ingredients like radium, thallium, lead, and talc included in products that were applied directly onto people's skin in the pursuit of beauty? Moreover, why were women so eager to run to the shelves and salons to partake in new beauty trends when makeup application was viewed as distasteful just decades before? The answer is twofold. The Industrial Revolution led Americans to obsess over modernity and blindly trust in science. At the same time, Hollywood and the film industry's surge in popularity in the early 20th century changed the standards for beauty which created a new demand for cosmetics. By the 1920s and 1930s, these obsessions rapidly fueled the expansion of the unregulated cosmetic industry which poisoned unsuspecting women for decades before the federal government finally intervened through regulation in the late 1930s.

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<sup>1</sup> Dorothy Cocks, *The Etiquette of Beauty* (New York: George H. Doran Company, 1927), <https://hdl.handle.net/2027/coo.31924003464041>, 192.

My research draws from cosmetic advertisements and toiletry listings in American newspaper articles from the early 20th century to evaluate the ideal consumer and the aspirations behind their consumption. Opinion pieces and anonymous advice articles from newspapers and magazines help to illustrate the American perception of makeup usage in the 1920s. Scientific journals reveal the academic community's outlook on chemical ingredients in the early 20th century and the crazed atmosphere surrounding modernity and science. Medical journals and complaint letters highlight the real and dangerous risks and the fallout from cosmetic usage, though many health effects remained unreported. This essay explores the causal relationship that exists between the cosmetic industry and the development of industry regulations, which allows for a niche window with which to study the history of science and women's history.

Cosmetic advertisements did not always litter the pages of the local newspaper. The Victorian era of cosmetics included homemade, word-of-mouth recipes to cure ailments such as sunburns or blemishes.<sup>2</sup> As the listed ingredients in cosmetic recipes became more obscure, druggists and "patent cosmetic firms" took on the role of production.<sup>3</sup> Eventually, by the 19th century and into the 20th century, women across the United States adopted an entrepreneurial spirit and sold their own products out of parlors to their neighbors.

The United States economy waxed and waned in the early part of the 20th century—coinciding with the Industrial Revolution and the first World War—which ultimately changed consumption patterns for many Americans. The economy shifted its focus from small-scale agriculture to large-scale mechanized manufacturing during the Industrial Revolution. Rural agrarian societies transformed into bustling urban centers that greatly impacted the dynamics of class structure and consumption as gaps in wealth became more drastic. The demands of World War I muted the buzz of capitalism on everyday people as spending turned towards the war effort; the popularity of cosmetics, however, did not fizzle out. Although the United States faced recessions between 1910-1912, 1913-1914, and 1920-1921, the cosmetic industry expanded during these periods. Economic studies have revealed that cosmetics are a unique good in that their demand typically rises during times of

<sup>2</sup> "Cosmetics and Personal Care Products in the Medicine and Science Collections: Make-Up," Smithsonian Institution, <https://www.si.edu/spotlight/health-hygiene-and-beauty/make-up>.  
<sup>3</sup> Arts Revealed, and Universal Guide (New York: H. Dayton, 1860). [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8d/Arts\\_revealed%2C\\_and\\_universal\\_guide\\_%28IA\\_artsunivounse%29.pdf](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/8/8d/Arts_revealed%2C_and_universal_guide_%28IA_artsunivounse%29.pdf), 11.

recession: a phenomenon dubbed the lipstick effect.<sup>4</sup> Disillusioned from the hardships of war, women looked to small purchases like cosmetics to lift their spirits and subconsciously yearned to feel more attractive in hopes for attaining economic security through a partner.<sup>5</sup>

Society regularly writes off the use of cosmetics as a vain indulgence or an attempt at a false identity. Women are looked down upon if they cross the hazy line of "too much" or "not enough." In this convoluted world of judgement on a good that is already deemed frivolous, academics often purposefully glaze over the history and impact of cosmetics and land on weightier topics. The American beauty culture is therefore not a widely researched field of study. Much of the authorship comes after the second-wave feminism of the 1960s that stimulated women's history. Following generations contributed to the field, such as Kathy Peiss in her book *Hope in A Jar*. Out of this came research into cosmetic regulation, like Gwen Kay's *Dying to Be Beautiful: The Fight for Safe Cosmetics*, which highlighted the fight for legislation in the cosmetic industry.<sup>6</sup> Nonetheless, the industry during this transitional period between the 1920s and 1930s begs for further study. In this era, the cosmetics industry reflects both the evolution of women's autonomy and its shift from harmless adornment to dangerous beautification.

### Science and Modernity of Cosmetics

American citizens became dangerously trusting of science due to the Industrial Revolution and the cultural shift towards modernism, both of which allowed the cosmetic industry to expand its practices. In their race to embrace modernity, American citizens impulsively adopted new products that the contemporary industries invented for them, including cosmetics. Given the nature of the otherwise disillusioning post-war world, economic recession, and lack of workers' rights, the white American middle class needed an outlet to reinvigorate society at the beginning of the 20th century.

The 19th century connected the globe through developments in communication such as postal correspondence, publication, telephones, and telegraphs.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Sarah E. Hill et. al, "Boosting Beauty in an Economic Decline: Mating, Spending, and the Lipstick Effect," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 103, no. 2 (2012): 27, <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0028657>.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid.

<sup>6</sup> Gwen Kay, *Dying to Be Beautiful: The Fight for Safe Cosmetics* (Columbus: Ohio State University Press, 2005).

<sup>7</sup> William R. Everdell, *The First Moderns: Profiles in the Origins of Twentieth-Century Thought* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1997), 2.

This efficient communication significantly bolstered the global academic community, as scientists could now share new findings and work with one another without substantial delays. By the 20th century, scientific studies became transnational through these advancements that encouraged collaboration, credibility, and accessibility.<sup>8</sup> Additionally, as the media published articles exposing and updating new developments, everyday folk gained access to scientific discoveries.<sup>9</sup> Importantly, Americans became invested in the novelty surrounding advancements in chemistry.

In rebellion against Victorian repression, the Modernist movement attempted to set realistic expectations during the gloomy industrialized and disillusioned post-war world. Reassessing the world around them, modernists reacted to modernization by “simultaneously admiring the vitality and inventiveness of technological progress while decrying the dehumanization it [appeared] to bring in its wake.”<sup>10</sup> Though culture expressed itself through art, architecture, and philosophy, the moral values of Americans changed with the influence of this new movement. Within cosmetics, the Modernist mindset allowed consumers to be swept into blindly trusting its “science-based” claims.

The discovery of radium and its entrance to the market highlights how modernity and industrialization paved the way for potentially harmful ingredients in cosmetics. Physicist Wilhelm Rontgen discovered an unknown glowing form of radiation in the late 19th century. By 1896, Henri Becquerel determined the concept of radioactivity, and two years later, Marie Curie named the material radium.<sup>11</sup> Though the United States recognized radium relatively slowly, once it entered the media from international sources, its uses only grew.<sup>12</sup> Excitement around the light-emitting substance ran rampant through the scientific community; it changed their comprehension of elements and spurred outlandish theories of its relation to creating life.<sup>13</sup> As radium gained traction in the scientific investigation, entrepreneurs commodified the substance to take advantage of the frenzy. By the late 1910s, radium toothpaste, hair loss cream, soap, drinking water, pills, and facial cream hit the markets, promising

8 Ibid.

9 William Hale, “Has Radium Revealed the Secret Of Life?” *New York Times*, July 16, 1905, <http://ezproxy.lib.calpoly.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/has-radium-revealed-secret-life/docview/96496989/se-2?accountid=10362>.

10 Daniel Joseph Singal, “Towards a Definition of American Modernism,” *American Quarterly* 39, no. 1 (1987): 7–26. <https://doi.org/10.2307/2712627>.

11 Lucy Jane Santos, *Half Lives: The Unlikely History of Radium* (United States: Pegasus Books, 2021), 2.

12 Lawrence Badash, *Radioactivity in America: Growth and Decay of a Science* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1979), 17.

13 Hale, “Has Radium Revealed the Secret of Life?”

cures for such ailments as “diabetes, arthritis, gout, rheumatism, low vitality,” and even erectile dysfunction.<sup>14</sup> Advertising companies captured the novelty in their marketing ploys. In full-page advertisements, Radiator, a toilet requisite brand, boasted their range of products as the first to “embody actual radium.”<sup>15</sup> As radium proliferated through consumer products, the threats remained unknown for a decade.

The Industrial Revolution helped provide the capital required to mass-produce such a frenzy of consumable items. Discoveries in chemistry came out of the industrial emphasis on science and entrepreneurship. Simultaneously, the cosmetic industry expanded as mass production became available. As a result of the Industrial Revolution, by the 1900s, the market leaned towards patented manufactured cosmetics instead of local or privately-owned small brands.<sup>16</sup> These mass-marketed, mass-produced, name branded products with their familiar logos helped to reinforce the unsubstantiated belief in their inherent safety.

Consumption changed along with the market. By the end of the 19th century, women stepped into the public sphere in two ways: participating in new forms of consumption such as shopping and attending the theater, as well as stepping out of the domestic sphere into an increasingly urban workforce.<sup>17</sup> Because of the novelty of the public sphere, the use of cosmetics naturally increased with the broadened exposure to public life. New situations required women to make decisions about their appearance and gave them some control over how they were perceived. The clashing of industrialization with modernity led Americans, and specifically women, to consume cosmetic products at an unprecedented rate. The demand for these mass-produced products led manufacturers to include unknowingly dangerous ingredients whose after-effects would not be discovered until years later.

### Acceptance, Hollywood, and the Changing Beauty Standard

As mass production changed the cosmetic industry, the influence of Hollywood changed the standards for beauty. Beauty supplanted wholesomeness as

14 Kate Lister, “At Least Radium Suppositories Aren’t this Year’s Health Fad,” *I*, January 8, 2020, <http://ezproxy.lib.calpoly.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/newspapers/at-least-radium-suppositories-arent-this-years/docview/2334122262/se-2?accountid=10362>.

15 Radiator Toilet Requisites, “Radium and Beauty,” *New-York Tribune*, November 10, 1918, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83030214/1918-11-10/ed-1/seq-54/>, 12.

16 Toilet Goods Association, *Trademarks for Perfumes, Toilet Articles and Soaps* (New York: Associated Manufacturers of Toilet Articles, 1926), <https://catalog.hathitrust.org/Record/100959996/Home>. 9-11.

17 Peiss, *Hope in a Jar: Hope in a Jar: The Making of America’s Beauty Culture* (Pennsylvania: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2012), 7.

the key attribute of the cinema's starlets. Beauty was thus viewed as a requirement for the modern woman, which created a need that the cosmetic industry could fill. Styles changed from a subtle application to the more purposeful enhancement of features used in Hollywood's portrayal of makeup in the 1920s; this shift in style created a sudden boom in cosmetic demand. Through this, the use of toxic cosmetics passively increased, as brands produced harmful products without the knowledge of their toxicity until well after consumers began use.

While criticized by many during the early 20th century, the perceptions about makeup shifted by the 1920s to become more accepting of its usage. Until the 1920s, makeup was a taboo topic for women. Because the goal of makeup was to appear as natural, many still saw makeup as unacceptable. Despite the overall increase in access to makeup at the time, much of society still felt relatively apprehensive about its use. "Paint" was the term used to describe modern makeup up until the early 20th century; this highlights how makeup was viewed as suspicious and deceitful. For example, in the 1910s, many outwardly expressed their concern with cosmetic usage. Dr. Crumbine, the dean of medicine at the University of Kansas, addressed his perturbation that "paint" was unnatural and "destroying the complexions" of young women.<sup>18</sup> The fear of women using cosmetics to deceive men into attraction led to terminology like poison to be used in its critiques. Ironically, many of these critics were correct, as various cosmetic products ultimately contained ingredients that seriously harmed their users. As young women yearned for a cure to their insecurities, the discussion surrounding makeup was aggressively negative. Elizabeth Haiken, an author on cosmetic surgery, argues the Victorian cultural belief was that beauty came from "internal qualities" of health and mind, but "by 1921 most American women came to understand physical beauty as an external, independent, —and thus alterable—quality" in which the role of cosmetics came to play.<sup>19</sup> With increasing acceptance by the 1920s, the term "paint" switched to "makeup."<sup>20</sup> Critique articles on use of paint slowed by the end of the 1910s, and anonymous advice sections recommended various makeup tips instead of an outright ban.<sup>21</sup> Though hesitance lingered, the stigma around makeup relaxed by the 1920s.

18 "This Also Is Vanity," *The Lambertville Record*, February 14, 1913, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn84026089/1913-02-14/ed-1/seq-9/>, 10.

19 Elizabeth Haiken, *Venus Envy: A History of Cosmetic Surgery* (John Hopkins University Press, 1997).

20 Peiss, *Hope in a Jar*, 4.

21 Lois Seed, "Milady Beautiful," *Evening Star*, December 23, 1926, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1926-12-23/ed-1/seq-36/>, 36.

As the mindset around makeup switched, the beauty standard itself changed as well. Hollywood shifted the view of beauty from a nicety to a necessity.<sup>22</sup> Herds flocked to the theaters for an escape; thus, young actresses rose to stardom. Pictures of their beautiful faces were plastered across newspapers and magazines, and the actresses became the model for middle-class women.<sup>23</sup> Through developments such as photography and film, women gained access to "a continual comparison to a mass disseminated physical ideal."<sup>24</sup> In this way, Hollywood took on the job of marketing. Movie productions were silent films until 1929, so female actresses often applied more makeup to show emotion on screen.<sup>25</sup> Once seen as manipulative and threatening, the introduction of Hollywood screen makeup showed cosmetics in a new light. Women saw beautiful actresses on the big screen and wanted to look like them.<sup>26</sup> Advertising brands took hold of this urge and marketed cosmetics like mascara and how-to articles based on the industry's stars.<sup>27</sup> Maybelline used images of Photoplay names like Mildred Davis to endorse their products, stating "the most beautiful actresses of the screen" used Maybelline.<sup>28</sup> With the normalization of a more visible makeup look, the cosmetic industry boomed in the 1920s and 1930s. Classes on how to apply makeup for the movie screen spread across America. According to Virginia Bradford, a \$15 course was filled with many that appeared "ill able to afford the price" but were eager to learn the secrets of Hollywood in the hope to secure a spot in front of the cameras.<sup>29</sup> Cosmetics had found their time thanks to industrialization, relaxing morals, changing roles for women, and Hollywood.

### How Were They Harmful?

Why were some products forced off the market due to health concerns while others remain in the markets a hundred years later? From the 1920s through 1938, cosmetics were riddled with hazardous ingredients, while both the consumer and the

22 Kelsey D. Lamkin, "The Desperate Drive for Perfection: Changing Beauty Ideals and Women's Fashion in the 1920s," *Inquiries Journal/Student Pulse* 7, no. 2 (2015), <http://www.inquiriesjournal.com/a?id=999>.

23 Maybelline, "Maybelline: Will Beautify Your Eyes Instantly," *Detroit Evening Times*, January 12, 1941, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn88063294/1941-01-12/ed-1/seq-92/>, 77.

24 Naomi Wolf, *The Beauty Myth* (Harper Collins, 2009), 14.

25 Marvin G. Westmore, "Camouflage and Makeup Preparations," *Clinics in Dermatology* 19, no. 4 (July 1, 2001): 406-412, [https://doi.org/10.1016/S0738-081X\(01\)00180-8](https://doi.org/10.1016/S0738-081X(01)00180-8).

26 Virginia Bradford, "My Adventures In Hollywood," *New Britain Herald*, March 24, 1923, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn82014519/1923-03-24/ed-1/seq-5/>, 5.

27 Max Factor, *The New Art of Society Make-up* (Max Factor Studio, 1928), <https://www.cosmeticsandskin.com/booklets/max-new-art-1931.php>, 5.

28 Maybelline, "Maybelline: Will Beautify Your Eyes Instantly," 77.

29 Bradford, "My Adventures in Hollywood," 5.



manufacturer were seemingly oblivious to their possible risks. The rapidly growing, unregulated makeup industry used both the new trust in science and the changing beauty standards to market cosmetics in two ways: ingredients-based and purpose-based treatments.

The first type was marketed based on the primary ingredient itself. Today, the same marketing of an active ingredient exists, such as a Vitamin C serum or 2% BHA chemical exfoliant. This form of marketing came out of the cult of modernity and the American yearn for a connection to modern science. For women, cosmetics became the perfect opportunity to buy into science. For example, a century ago, a full range of radium products were sold based on the public's view of radium. Consumers purposefully used radium products because they read about its discovery in the headlines years before. It just so happened that these flashy developments in chemistry were not safe to apply on the skin.

The second kind of harmful product was marketed based upon its purpose. Hollywood had created a new female ideal which created insecurities that consumers felt compelled to fix. Brands then created purpose-based products to fix these new insecurities, including eyelashes that were not dark enough or cupid's bows that did not have the perfect arch. Lash dye, hair dye, and face powder all served their purpose yet happened to contain harmful ingredients. For example, Empress Hair Dye marketed itself as a "perfectly harmless way" to color hair in their newspaper ads.<sup>30</sup> Similarly, talcum powders took up an entire section of a drug store advertisement in the Washington Herald Newspaper and provided fifteen different brands of powders for their purpose of staying dry.<sup>31</sup> Later, products like Empress Hair Dye and talcum powders proved to have harmful long-term effects on their users, such as ovarian cancer and possible blindness. It was a trickier task to eradicate products that were not strictly marketed based on their active ingredients from the market, for the consumers were less aware of the ingredients and, therefore, could not as easily avoid them. The dichotomy of women using harmful products in hopes of beautifying themselves highlights the weight the cosmetic industry held in the delicate area of women's insecurities.

Not all women experienced life-threatening side effects, yet a number of cases were so severe that they resulted in life-altering damage. Between the years

<sup>30</sup> Empress Hair Dye, "A Perfectly Harmless Way of Retaining Hair Color," *The Birmingham Age-Herald*, October 23, 1910, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn85038485/1910-10-23/ed-1/seq-12/>, 12.

<sup>31</sup> People's Drug Store, "Toilet Article Sale," *The Washington Herald*, July 16, 1919, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045433/1919-07-16/ed-1/seq-7/>, 7.

of 1920 and 1938, reports of disconcerting side effects routinely popped up across the country. When Othine was marketed as a freckle-eraser to "get rid of those ugly spots" in 1921, women eagerly picked it up at their local drug store to achieve the pale, evenly toned skin that was desired at the time. A year after use, users noticed discoloration on their faces. After testing the skin, doctors discovered that the discoloration—grayness of the skin—resulted from a build-up of mercury below the epidermis.<sup>32</sup> Mercury is a heavy metal that is highly toxic to humans and affects the nervous system, leading to muscle weakness and difficulty breathing and walking.<sup>33</sup> Similarly, as radium products grew exponentially after its discovery in 1898, they became popularized in the later 1910s. Despite promising the glow of life, five clock dial factory workers died due to radium poisoning in 1925. They had ingested small amounts of radium daily by licking their tiny brushes to keep a fine tip.<sup>34</sup> The radium craze then came to a halt after the detection of its carcinogenicity.<sup>35</sup> In addition, advertisements such as Armand's Guide to Beauty encouraged the use of toilet waters, but multiple accounts in 1930 exposed that toilet waters, such as the brand Berlock, caused altered pigmentation or dermatitis.<sup>36</sup> Likewise, other recommendations at the time included the removal of "superfluous hair" through the use of depilatories, which could temporarily rid an area of unwanted hair.<sup>37</sup> When Koremlu came on the market as a new kind of depilatory that "took a skilled French chemist" to develop it, women were eager to try it, as it promised to kill hair at the root for a permanent treatment.<sup>38</sup> A year later, hospitals began to receive users of Koremlu suffering from "paralyzed lower limbs, abdominal pain, constant nausea, blindness,

<sup>32</sup> Othine, "Freckles: Now is the Time to Get Rid of These Ugly Spots," *The Washington Herald*, June 19, 1921, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045433/1921-06-19/ed-1/seq-57/>, 57; Ruth deForest Lamb, *American Chamber of Horrors: The Truth about Food and Drugs* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Incorporated, 1936), 26.

<sup>33</sup> Jon Johnson, "Mercury Poisoning: Symptoms and Treatment," *Medical News Today*, January 9, 2018, <https://www.medicalnewstoday.com/articles/320563>.

<sup>34</sup> Taylor Orci, "How We Realized Putting Radium in Everything Was Not the Answer" *The Atlantic*, March 7, 2013, <https://www.theatlantic.com/health/archive/2013/03/how-we-realized-putting-radium-in-everything-was-not-the-answer/273780/>.

<sup>35</sup> Special to The New York Times, "New Radium Disease Found; Has Killed 5," *New York Times*, May 30, 1925, <http://ezproxy.lib.calpoly.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/new-radium-disease-found-has-killed-5/docview/103577806/seq-2?accountid=10362>.

<sup>36</sup> Armand Company, Find Yourself (The Armand Company, 1929), <https://www.cosmeticsandskin.com/booklets/find-yourself-1929.php>; John Lane, M. J. Strauss, "Toilet Water Dermatitis," *Journal of the American Medical Association* 95, no. 10 (September 6, 1930): 717-719, <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/240783>.

<sup>37</sup> Dorothy Cocks, *The Etiquette of Beauty*, 192.

<sup>38</sup> Koremlu, "Superfluous Hair Removed," *Evening Star*, September 14, 1930, <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/lccn/sn83045462/1930-09-14/ed-1/seq-51/>, 51.

and loosening of teeth and all hair,” diagnosed as thallium poisoning.<sup>39</sup> Thallium, lead, pyrogallol, talcum, and a multitude of other unknown substances are included on the list that caused serious diseases aside from the cases explained prior.<sup>40</sup> The blame for these harmful products is not specific to any individual, yet small chains of events led to the mass distribution of toxic products.

### The Need for Regulation and How it Played Out

As Ruth deForest Lamb sat at her desk filtering through the piles of mail in the FDA information office, she opened a letter addressed to President Franklin Roosevelt by an eleven-year-old. Fifth grader Hazel Fay Musser wrote, “My mother suffered a great deal by the cause of some poison which was put in the dye and then applied to the lashes. [She] is totally blind, and we want you to please help us get the law across. I am ten years old and in the fifth grade.”<sup>41</sup> Musser was referring to her mother, Mrs. Fay Musser, who stopped by the salon in preparation to accept a PTA award the evening of May 17, 1933. After being talked into a touch-up on her brows and lashes with dye, she drove home with noticeable irritation in her eyes. Two hours later, she could hardly see, and two months later, she walked out of the hospital blind.<sup>42</sup> During Mrs. Musser’s stay, nurses recorded her symptoms hourly, which included severe burning sensations, awakening by severe pain around eyes, constant drainage from both eyes, inability to sleep, and so on.<sup>43</sup> The use of the cosmetic lash dye resulted in corneal ulcerations in both eyes which sloughed off the cornea, dermatconjunctivitis, or dermato-ophthalmitis.<sup>44</sup>

Lash-Lure, a synthetic aniline dye belonging to the paraphenylene group, was put on the market in 1932. By 1933, a series of articles through the *Journal of the American Medical Association* followed the Lash-Lure incidents.<sup>45</sup> Ruth deForest

39 Wallace Duncan and Edward Crosby, “A Case of Thallium Poisoning Following the Prolonged Use of Depilatory Cream,” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 96, (1931): 1866-1868. <https://www.ccjm.org/content/ccjom/1/2/113.full.pdf>.

40 Lamb, 26; Nicole M. Fletcher et. al, “Molecular Basis Supporting the Association of Talcum Powder Use with Increased Risk of Ovarian Cancer,” *Reproductive Sciences* 26, no. 12 (December 2019): 1603-12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1933719119831773>.

41 Hazel Fay Musser to President Franklin Roosevelt, 2 January 1934; Food and Drug Act, January, Proposed legislation (062), General correspondence, 1934, Record Group 88, National Archives, College Park.

42 Sigmund Greenbaum, “Dermatoconjunctivitis due to Lash-Lure, An Eyelash and Eyebrow Dye,” *Journal of the American Medical Association* 101, no. 5 (July 29, 1933): 363-364. doi:10.1001/jama.1933.27430300001010a.

43 Lamb, 16.

44 Ibid.

45 Greenbaum, “Dermatoconjunctivitis due to Lash-Lure,” 363-364; Duncan and Crosby, “A Case of Thallium Poisoning Following the Prolonged Use of Depilatory Cream,” 1866-1868.

Lamb, who opened Hazel’s letter, was so moved that she urged a response from the executive office. Though the message to her higher ups was lost, Lamb began correspondence with the mother of Hazel, a victim of Lash-Lure. Mrs. Musser and Lamb developed a friendship through their letters. The two coordinated a visit to Washington D.C. to speak to officials in hope that Musser’s statement would influence them to make a change.<sup>46</sup> During this, Lamb gathered her critiques on the lack of regulation under the 1906 Food and Drug Act. Ultimately, she produced a book titled *American Chamber of Horrors* in 1936 with Royal S. Copeland to highlight the need for federal change.<sup>47</sup>

As consumers became aware of the safety concerns of cosmetics, their mistrust of the products grew, and sales began to falter. In the 1930s, local crusaders sparked the movement that would eventually develop into the long-awaited regulation of the cosmetics industry. These isolated advocates would become the small but forceful group of victims, politicians, and activists needed to champion federal regulation. An early form of American consumer product regulation was, as mentioned above, the Pure Food and Drug Act of 1906. It laid the foundation for the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) and prohibited “adulterated, misbranded, poisonous, or deleterious foods, drugs, medicines, and liquors.”<sup>48</sup> It was unsurprising that cosmetics were excluded from the 1906 act, as cosmetic sales were not significant enough to produce an economic draw that required federal attention. Despite the progressive movement emphasizing consumer protection, cosmetics lay outside of this category in the early 20th century. Ostensibly for good reason, as cosmetics were viewed as fairly safe. Marketed as natural and stemming from home recipes, cosmetics were seen as both economically insignificant and harmless.<sup>49</sup> With this exclusion, the cosmetic industry began its remarkable growth in following decades, uninhibited by regulation or supervision.<sup>50</sup>

Word spread locally and throughout the medical community about some of these risks. As a result, small numbers of impassioned people published works to educate consumers on the risks of the beauty industry. Mary Catherine Philips wrote *Skin Deep* in 1934 with the goal to inform women on what they were

46 Kay, *Dying to Be Beautiful*, 54.

47 Lamb, 327.

48 House of Representatives, Congress, “21 U.S.C. I - FEDERAL FOOD AND DRUGS ACT OF 1906” <https://www.govinfo.gov/app/details/USCODE-2011-title21/USCODE-2011-title21-chap1-subchap1/summary>.

49 *Arts Revealed, and Universal Guide*, 11.

50 Kay, *Dying to the Beautiful*, 30.

buying by highlighting the serious cases some experienced.<sup>51</sup> Victims who experienced these cases also wrote to public officials pleading for change. A victim of Koremlu, the permanent depilatory, wrote to First Lady Roosevelt to inform her of her story. She wrote, “there are laws to punish people for committing murders [so there should be] something to prevent carelessness that wrecks lives and makes people invalids all of their remaining days, which is far worse than death.”<sup>52</sup> The FDA was in support of greater restrictions and safety as well. Much of the issue in dangerous cosmetics was not from the ignorance of the FDA, as they did not have the jurisdiction to regulate them.<sup>53</sup>

The years of tireless activism for cosmetic safety were not actually the initial reason for the passage of the 1938 Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act. In 1937, the Elixir Sulfanilamide disaster killed 105 patients. Because of the lack of testing requirements, the new drug of improperly prepared sulfonamide antibiotic hit the shelves, resulting in mass poisonings over the following months.<sup>54</sup> Out of this horrendous wave of deaths emerged change.<sup>55</sup> Notably, the incident that brought about regulation did not come from a product that was primarily intended for use by women, such as cosmetics. Nonetheless, on December 1st of 1937, Senator Copeland finally introduced Senate Bill S. 3073, which had been in consideration since 1933. Six months later, President FDR put his signature on the 1938 Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act as a part of his New Deal.<sup>56</sup>

Across a backdrop of sweeping changes in the economy and society, cosmetics became the forerunner of the ubiquitous \$50 billion industry today. Many factors contributed to the dramatic expansion of the cosmetics industry from homemade to mass-produced and from safe to hazardous. Though unintentional, the lack of regulation and false understanding of beauty products allowed toxic and harmful ingredients to make their way onto the faces of consumers across America.

51 Mary Catherine Philips, *Skin Deep: The Truth About Beauty Aids*, (New York: The Vanguard Press, 1934), xi.

52 Lamb, 33.

53 Gwen Kay, “Healthy Public Relations: The FDA’s 1930s Legislative Campaign.” *Bulletin of the History of Medicine* 75, no. 3 (2001): 446–487. <https://doi.org/10.1353/bhm.2001.0126>.

54 “Deaths due To Elixir of Sulfanilamide-Massengill: Report of the Secretary of Agriculture,” *Journal of American Medical Association* 109, no. 109 (1937): 1531, <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jama/article-abstract/279470>.

55 Robert M. Califf, Jonathan McCall, and Daniel B Mark, “Cosmetics, Regulations, and the Public Health: Understanding the Safety of Medical and Other Products” *JAMA Intern Med.* 177, no. 8 (June 2017): 1080-1082, <https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamainternalmedicine/fullarticle/2633254>.

56 Federal Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act 1938, Public Law 717, 52, Stat 1040; June 25, 1938, <https://catalog.archives.gov/id/299847>.

Women’s positions in the public sphere and the influence of Hollywood increased demand for cosmetics, making women more susceptible to the dangerous ingredients that passively surged in the 1920s and 1930s. Concerned citizens and activists like Mrs. Fay Musser and Ruth deForest Lamb rose to fight for further protection for consumers. Remarkably, in the end, regulation was not a direct outcome of the decades of harm that women experienced from using unsafe beauty products; rather, it took one mass poisoning to finally deliver the basic right to safety. Even so, while there was a dramatic increase in market, demand, and products since the 1938 reform, there has not been regulation to follow it. In an industry set to be worth \$571.1 billion in 2023, it is beyond concerning that there is not proper federal supervision.<sup>57</sup> The rapid expansion of the cosmetic industry in the early 20th century does not compare to the colossal growth the industry has undertaken in the past decades, which points to a need for further regulation.

Ultimately, the amalgamation of the Industrial Revolution and Hollywood influenced the American woman’s need for cosmetic consumerism, which led to a blind trust and eager demand for both ingredients-based and purpose-based treatments. Unfortunately, a number of these unsuspecting women were plagued by life-altering side effects before the need for regulation was finally noticed. Moreover, today, there are tragic parallels between these two periods of unregulated expansion in the beauty market.

57 “Beauty & Personal Care - Worldwide.” Accessed February 16, 2023. <https://www.statista.com/outlook/cmo/beauty-personal-care/worldwide>.

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## Editors

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**Nishanth Narayan** | *Executive Editor*

Nishanth graduated cum laude in 2023 with a degree in History, a degree in Liberal Arts/Engineering Studies, and a minor in Biology. His primary research interest is the history of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade, specifically British Royal Navy anti-Slavery efforts in the 19th century. His research interests additionally include the Indian Ocean intra-Asian trade and the history of the Indian sub-continent. In his free time, Nishanth enjoys performing in the Cal Poly Mustang Band as a Baritone player as well as playing the piano independently. Besides music, Nishanth enjoys, hiking, biking, surfing, video games, and reading copious amounts of sci-fi/fantasy novels. In the future, he hopes to work in both the bio-medical engineering field and for non-profits focusing on immigration justice.



**Julia Taylor** | *Senior Editor*

Julia is a graduating History major with a minor in Spanish. Her research interests include indigenous studies and advocacy in the United States and the Pacific Islands as well as postcolonialism and ethnohistory in Latin American. After graduation, she is pursuing a career in teaching history at the secondary level. In her free time, she enjoys traveling, hiking, and collecting altogether too many house plants.

**Sarah McCandless** | *Associate Editor*

Sarah McCandless has been an editor of the forum for 3 years and just graduated in the class of 2023 with a history major and political science minor. In the future she plans to attend law school in hopes of becoming a civil rights lawyer. She loves going to the beach and hiking in San Luis Obispo in her free time.

**Kaelyn Bremer** | *Associate Editor*

Kaelyn is a class of 2023 Anthropology & Geography major with a History minor. She plays piccolo in Cal Poly's Mustang Band and enjoys hiking SLO's scenery. In the fall, she'll be attending NYU for her Master's in Museum Studies.



**Amy Gavello** | *Associate Editor*

Amy is a fourth-year history major. She primarily enjoys social histories, and some of her research interests include ancient and medieval histories, women's history, and disability history. After graduation, Amy will earn her teaching credential to teach history in secondary education. In her free time, Amy enjoys painting, reading, playing piano, playing video games, and going to the beach.



**Morgan Vonder Haar** | *Associate Editor*

Morgan is a fourth-year History major, with minors in Religious Studies and Women and Gender Studies. Her research interest includes contemporary feminist movements, California history and abolition studies. In her free time, Morgan enjoys practicing tarot, spending time with friends, writing, and taking care of her plants. After graduation, she will be attending law school at University of San Francisco.

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Emma is a third-year history major with a minor in Ethnicity, Public Policy, Science, and Technology, and a (soon to be) minor in Political Science. Her areas of interest include the Enlightenment, history of science, women's history, and beauty. After graduation, Emma hopes to continue her education and pursue the legal field. In her free time, she enjoys baking, reading, and water coloring.



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Collin is a third year double major in History and Anthropology & Geography with minors in Environmental Studies, Sustainable Environments, and Indigenous Studies in Natural Resources. He is member of Cal Poly Rose Float and the Archaeology Club. His research interests include ancient history and environmental history. After graduation, he hopes to continue on to graduate school for Public History or Museum Studies. In his free time, Collin enjoys rollerskating, sewing, and getting outdoors.

**Jack Mount** | *Associate Editor*

Jack Mount is a second year history major with a minor in Japanese. He is interested in the history of the United States and Japan following the second world war.





**Tim Mullins** | *Associate Editor*

Timothy R. Mullins II is a third-year History major and Law & Society minor. He enjoys learning about Antiquity, American History, and World War II. In his free time, he cherishes photography, multimedia design, watching basketball or comedy, lifting weights, and trying new food. Career wise, he aspires to pursue the legal field.

**Jess O'Leary** | *Associate Editor*

Jess O'Leary, Associate Editor Jess is a third-year History major with minors in Ethnic Studies, Philosophy, and Religious Studies. Her research interests include intellectual history, medieval studies, and the history of the California Central Coast. Outside of academics, she enjoys hiking, gardening, and reading. After graduation, she plans to attend law school.

## Information for Authors

The Forum welcomes submissions from currently enrolled students or recent graduates of Cal Poly. Submissions must be historical in nature and submitted via the form on the History Department website: <https://history.calpoly.edu/students/forum-journal-history>.

Please review the following processes and policies.

### Editorial Procedure

All submissions are read and evaluated by a panel of editors using a double-blind review system. All decisions ultimately rest with the Executive Editor and faculty advisor based on the needs of the journal. The editors may request revisions and reserve the right to make adjustments to the text. The Executive Editor also reserves the right to publish any work that is submitted to The Forum, unless the author chooses to rescind their submission and notifies the Executive Editor before publication.

### Style

All submissions should follow the latest version of Chicago Manual of Style (Turabian) and cite all sources using footnotes. Papers should also include a complete bibliography sectionally organized by primary and secondary sources.

### Recency

All papers must have been written no later than one year prior to their submission.

### Recommendation

All students looking to submit their work must first ask their professor for which the paper was written to fill out a recommendation form. The Executive Editor reserves the right to waive this requirement depending on the needs of the journal.

