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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA SAN DIEGO

Racial Formation in Fallbrook 1970-1990: A Microhistory

A Thesis submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements
for the degree Master of Arts

in

Latin American Studies

by

Ricardo Quintana Favela

Committee in charge:

Professor Veronica Matsuda-Martinez, Chair
Professor John D. Blanco
Professor Juan Pablo Pardo Guerra

2024

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THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

The Thesis of Ricardo Quintana Favela is approved, and it is acceptable in quality and form for publication on microfilm and electronically.

University of California San Diego

2024

DEDICATION

This work has been inspired by a community in struggle and is dedicated to the people that forged my life trajectory. I approach this as more than a research project but more so as a continuation of this struggle. We have the right to have a history of our own. For colonized peoples, documenting our history is an act of resistance as well as anamnesis, the refusal to forget. Indeed, this work has also been driven by the concern that this history, would be forgotten, much as the rest of Mexican history in Fallbrook, and in similar communities in California, has been forgotten, ignored, misinterpreted, and erased. As Monica Muñoz Martinez stated, “the failure to remember this history enables its perpetuation.” In this sense, the failure to come to grips with Fallbrook’s legacy of white supremacy means that we have yet to make collective progress as a community.

I would like to recognize and offer my sincerest gratitude to all who have been a part of this brief, but intense journey of scholarly development. Beginning with my family, thank you for your encouragement. I am sorry I missed so many family events and get-togethers but thank you for understanding! Zeltzin, Itzel, and Tanoc, I hope you will read this one day and know that this is also your history to understand and continue to move forward. Yesenia, you can check this off your list! Thank you for your solid support. To the people in Fallbrook who I spoke with, your contribution has been invaluable. Please know that this is only the beginning of this project and thanks to you, there is much more that can be written and produced. I’d like to acknowledge Judy and Danny Muñoz, Jose Bravo, Dr. Elizabeth Ramos, Adriana Lopez, Frank Rangel, Eloy Rosas, Luis Gonzalez, Art Uribe and Daniel Martinez for sharing your stories. Thanks to all who stood up for the dignity and respect of our community such as Maria and Ernesto Muñoz, Francisca Acevedo, Hector Muro and many others of the United Pride generation. I would also like to express thanks to Tom Frew for supporting the research and making time to meet and talk.

I would like to acknowledge the Latin American Studies program at UCSD which provided such tremendous support and resources for us as Grad students. I am fortunate to have studied and trained with Veronica Matsuda-Martinez, Rosie Bermudez, Daphne Taylor-Garcia, Vanessa Ribas, Daniel Widener, Nir Shafir, Ross Frank, and Jose Ignacio Carvajal. I was also fortunate to have worked for Amy Kennemore and Troy Kokinis. Finally, thank you to Arcela Nuñez-Alvarez, Bonnie Bade and Isidro Ortiz for your support and recommendations. Nuestro norte es el sur.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|------|
| THESIS APPROVAL PAGE | iii |
| DEDICATION | iv |
| TABLE OF CONTENTS | v |
| LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS | vi |
| VITA | vii |
| ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS | viii |
| INTRODUCTION | 1 |
| Chapter 1 Racial Formation | 11 |
| Chapter 2 Racial Crystallization | 37 |
| Chapter 3 Racial Violence | 59 |
| Chapter 4 The Racialization of Mexican Youth | 84 |
| Chapter 5 Conclusion: A Public Reckoning | 100 |
| REFERENCES | 108 |

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-----------|--|
| ADL | Anti-Defamation League |
| AYM | Aryan Youth Movement |
| CKKKK | California Knights of the Ku Klux Klan |
| KKK | Ku Klux Klan |
| KKKK | Knights of the Ku Klux Klan |
| MEChA | Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán |
| MUDP | Mexicanos Unidos en Defensa del Pueblo |
| NAKBA | National Association to Keep and Bear Arms |
| N.P.D.U.M | National People's Democratic Uhuru Movement |
| SDPD | San Diego Police Department |
| S.B.S.U. | San Bernadino State University |
| SPLC | Southern Poverty Law Center |
| WAR | White American Resistance and White Aryan Resistance |
| WSU | White Student Union |

VITA

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

Racial Formation in Fallbrook 1970-1990: A Microhistory

by

Ricardo Quintana Favela

Master of Arts in Latin American Studies

University of California San Diego, 2024

Professor Veronica Martinez-Matsuda, Chair

The decades between 1970-1990 witnessed a crystallization of political whiteness and white supremacy in San Diego County, especially at its epicenter in Fallbrook, California. This microhistory focuses on the racial formation that transpired among Fallbrook's white and Mexican communities.

INTRODUCTION

In March of 2006, I was twenty-nine years old and working as the manager of the Town Centre Mobile Home Association in the heart of Fallbrook's downtown. It was here when I learned through a San Diego Union-Tribune article that the notorious white supremacist, Tom Metzger, had moved out of Fallbrook to northern Indiana after living here for almost 40 years. This news was a surprise, but welcomed. At the time, I was actively involved in the community organization known as Mexicanos Unidos en Defensa del Pueblo (MUDP), and since 1997, we had dedicated our efforts to organize with the Mexican residents of this low-income mobile home park to gain power within their own homeowners' association. After nine years, farm workers and laborers took leadership of the board and the park management, which is how I became the manager.

However, a few families in this mobile home park had opposed this transformation in leadership every step of the way. Only a few years before, the park was controlled and managed by its mostly retired white working-class residents, who were in the minority. Association meetings were held only in English and the Mexican families were treated with the disdain and disrespect that is all too common in these housing situations, especially in a town like Fallbrook. Yet, on the day I heard this good news in March, the five-member board was composed completely of Mexican workers, and association meetings were conducted primarily in Spanish. MUDP maintained an office in space number 38, which I occupied since the year 2000. A few weeks before reading about Metzger's departure, I had been alerted by Señor Arias that Tom Metzger had visited with a family in the park, who was known for opposing our organizing efforts. A young man, about my same age, lived in the travel trailer with his mother, and had

recently returned from prison as a Skinhead complete with an “SS”, Nazi affiliated tattoo.¹ A few days after Arias gave me the warning about Metzger, I also saw the former Klan Grand Dragon walk by the front office to visit this family.

We have no idea what this family discussed with Metzger, but there can be no doubt that what we had accomplished in this community was raised to his attention. According to the Union-Tribune, Metzger, moved out of his hometown because “the quality of life is going down.”² That was Metzger talk for saying that the town had changed and not to his liking. Reading about his departure from Fallbrook within weeks of these appearances, we understood this to be a retreat. Ever since this town turned him into a *racialist*, he dedicated his life to promoting a racial program to expel all Mexican, Black, Jewish and LGBTQ+ peoples from communities like Fallbrook. This is what he characterized as the freedom to be white. Considering Metzger’s mission since having moved to this town in 1968, the significance of his self-expulsion cannot be understated. At this particular moment, he left and *we remained*. I would dare say this was a victory to which the Mexican community’s resistance in Fallbrook contributed, and by only knowing how profoundly violent Metzger’s racial program was can we best appreciate the moment he retreated.

Recent discussions on “The Real World: Fallbrook” Facebook group express some of the myths and limited understandings of Fallbrook’s racial history. Some individualize this history to Tom Metzger as a character. Either he was Tom the television repairman who never did any wrong, or he was an isolated case of racism that did not reflect on the town overall. Some

¹ Paul R Bartrop, Eve E. Grimm, *The Holocaust: The Essential Reference Guide*, (New York: ABC-Clio, 2022), 225, The Schutzstaffel (SS) were Adolf Hitler’s elite guards.

² Lorell Fleming, White supremacist Metzger no longer living in Fallbrook, he says, *San Diego Union-Tribune*, March 15, 2006, <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/sdut-white-supremacist-metzger-no-longer-living-in-2006mar15-story.html>.

completely distort history by saying that most of the racism came from Mexicans. The conversation remains largely within the frame of racism and this term has different meanings to different people. Others refer to racism as being limited to the black/white binary, inferring that only Black people had been impacted.³ There is no short answer or summary of this history. Few in this community make the effort to understand the history of race as an idea, and even less made a lifelong commitment to challenge the ideas of race, racialization and colonization as did members of Fallbrook's Mexican organizations. The Mexican community's response in North San Diego County between 1970-1990 is missing from the historical and scholarly record regarding white supremacy in California.

When the San Diego Union-Tribune announced Metzger's retreat from Fallbrook, I reflected on what I believed was a historical moment, and I began to ask who and what created a Tom Metzger. What exactly did the Mexican community confront? This paper makes the effort to historicize Fallbrook's racial history. I am not writing about racism but rather the condition of being racially categorized and defined during the latter part of the 20th century, also known as racial formation.⁴ I ask if Fallbrook's racial history is a continuation of the settler colonial project, which after decades of struggle, was the conclusion that the Mexican led organizations arrived at. My work summarizes the racial violence that became part of the culture of this town and asks if this violence was related to a broader racial project. Through my research and talking to Fallbrook residents, community activists and organizers, I consider how Tom Metzger's racial project was historically related to a racial hegemonic formation of political whiteness. Political

³ Desiree Salome, "Hey guys, there is a conversation on Friends of Fallbrook. That this town both 1) has no racism and 2) has no racist history," *The Real World: Fallbrook Facebook Group*, Facebook, May 30, 2020, https://www.facebook.com/groups/363230410529407?hoisted_section_header_type=recently_seen&multi_permalink=1371048703080901.

⁴ Tomas Almaguer, *Racial fault lines: The Historical Origins of White Supremacy in California* (California: University of California Press, 1994), 2-3.

whiteness is defined by professor Daniel HoSang as a “political subjectivity rooted in white racial identity, a gaze on politics constituted by whiteness.”⁵ Looking beyond the black/white binary usually associated with the Ku Klux Klan, I take a close look at this movement’s anti-Mexican position. The larger questions I try to answer are how do we historicize Fallbrook’s legacy of white supremacy, and how does the Mexican community’s intergenerational resistance factor into this account?

Talking about race and racism can be complicated and some have even suggested that if we ignore racism, it will somehow go away. However, this project acknowledges that “at any given moment, we are in a particular phase of the trajectory of racial politics.”⁶ Furthermore, in describing the latter quarter of the 20th century, HoSang claims that racialization solidified and remained normative despite the nation having experienced a transformative civil rights movement. He states, “Race-based hierarchies, however, not only endured throughout this period, they increasingly came to be understood as both acceptable and inevitable within the same political discourse that so earnestly celebrated tolerance and condemned racial prejudice.”⁷ Añibal Quijano states that racialization in the Americas, “has a colonial origin and character, but it has proven to be more durable and stable than the colonialism in whose matrix it was established.”⁸ In other words, racialization and racial hierarchy is an integral part of the *longue durée* of history and is structurally embedded into our modernity. Fallbrook has its own episodes of racial history and as much as it defined racial identities of white and non-white racialized peoples, it gave the town of Fallbrook an identity on par with its economic notoriety as an

⁵ Daniel Martinez HoSang, *Racial propositions: Ballot Initiatives and the Making of Postwar California* (California: University of California Press, 2010), 20.

⁶ Michael Omi & Howard Winant, *Racial formation in the United States* (New York: Routledge, 2015), 7

⁷ Daniel HoSang, *Racial Propositions*, 8.

⁸ Añibal Quijano & Michael Ennis, “Coloniality of Power, Eurocentrism, and Latin America,” *Nepantla: Views from the South*, vol. 1, issue 3, (2000): Duke University Press, 533, Project MUSE.

agricultural producer. Until recently, Fallbrook has been known for being both the avocado capital of the world and for its affiliation with the Ku Klux Klan. The rise and presence of a white supremacist movement left a stinging legacy. Efforts to rebrand the town as the “Friendly Village” have fallen short since there has been no serious efforts to reckon with its racial history.

My family, friends, neighbors, colleagues and my *camaradas* from Fallbrook lived through this racial history. It was in our faces, written in graffiti on our desks and on the walls at school. School lockers were leafleted with white power literature.⁹ Some teachers called us beaners and wetbacks in front of our peers.¹⁰ It was in our living and working conditions in the avocado and citrus ranches which contained workers in a state of exploitation and virtual peonage. As brown youth, going into town meant regular harassment by Border Patrol and the local sheriffs. My father taught us to defend ourselves if we were ever provoked and this advice guided me through many fisticuffs from kindergarten to high school, all with white students who were the aggressors. I would later learn that my father defended himself while he was working in the groves, and that there was a pastime my peers in high school took part in known as “beaner bashing” which involved white youth looking for a Mexican worker in the groves to assault. It is convenient for some to ignore this history, while for others, to ignore is to erase decades of definitive lived experiences.

This is a microhistory of Fallbrook as described by Francesca Trivellato, in that I am “reconstructing networks of relations in order to understand how meanings are forged and how power is distributed.”¹¹ Fallbrook’s legacy of racial history was connected to surrounding

⁹ Jose Bravo, interview by Ricardo Favela, May 26, 2016.

¹⁰ Luis Higinio, Higinio, “Resistir Para Existir: ‘Giving Power Back to the Community.’” (California: *Scholarworks*, 2012), 36, <https://scholarworks.calstate.edu/downloads/tx31qj355>.

¹¹ Francesca Trivellato, “Microstoria/Microhistoire/Microhistory,” *French Politics, Culture and Society*, 123, <https://doi.org/10.3167/fpcs.2015.330107>.

communities in North County, to the border region where the largest mass murder in U.S. history took place in 1984, and to communities across the country that had links to the Metzgers, like Portland, Oregon. It was also rooted in the second Ku Klux Klan era of the 1920s, and it was connected to the white power movement of the 1980s. My thesis engages with works related to racial formation as presented by Michael Omi and Howard Winant, and Daniel Martinez HoSang. This work focuses specifically on the racialized experiences of ethnic Mexicans in Southern California, as does Thomas Almaguer and Martha Menchaca. I examine political whiteness through the lens of Daniel HoSang Martinez and George Lipsitz, and the “wall of resistance” described by Jacqueline Dowd Hall’s *Long Civil Rights Movement*. I also engage with work related to the study of white supremacy including Kathleen Belew who writes extensively about what she calls the white power movement and Elinor Langer who wrote specifically about the Berhanu vs. Metzger case, which was the trial of Tom and John Metzger for the murder of Mulugeta Seraw in 1988. I also consider how the John Birch Society was a factor in shaping political whiteness as detailed by Matthew Deleck’s *Birchers*. This work is also part of the scholarship on border studies as it relates to the work of Roberto Hernandez’ *Coloniality of the U-S//Mexico Border*, Monica Muñoz Martinez’ *The Injustice Never Leaves You* in looking at border region violence. Finally, I consider the prohibition of citizenship to ethnic Mexicans as a form of racialization as presented by Natalia Molina in *How Race is Made in America*.

To piece this history together I conducted an ethnography with the Fallbrook Historical Society and Museum. Through my ethnography I was able to have various discussions with historian, Tom Frew, and I gained an inside look as to how they curate history. Through the museum I accessed the archives of digital copies of the town’s newspaper, *The Fallbrook*

Enterprise. I conducted keyword searches related to racialized terms such as Mexican, illegal, alien, wetback, Chicano, Guatemalan, Ku Klux Klan, and I read stories and opinion letters between 1968-1993. Also within the museum's archives were two folders with photos and news clippings from the *Escondido Times-Advocate* on Tom Metzger, comprising the largest file collection for any Fallbrook resident. Additionally, I researched court depositions and testimonies from Tom Metzger, and interviews with Doug Seymour, an undercover San Diego Police Department reserve officer who infiltrated Metzger's Ku Klux Klan in 1979. Through my research on racial violence, I reviewed the transcription of a 1990 California legislative hearing on border region violence held in San Ysidro, a 1988 report on Skinhead violence by the Anti-Defamation League and Morris Dees' book, *Hate on Trial*, a first-person account regarding the trial of Tom and John Metzger for the murder of Mulugeta Seraw. I also researched the online archives of the White Aryan Resistance and I viewed two documentaries featuring Tom Metzger, one produced by Public Broadcasting System, which aired in 1978 and another that aired in 2003 featuring Louis Theroux. Finally, I conducted interviews with Mexican residents of Fallbrook who had relations with the Mexican-led grassroots organizations that were active between 1970 to 1993. Since I also have experiences participating with some of the Mexican-led organizations, I include my own personal *testimonio* when appropriate.

Chapter 1 presents a historical context for the formation of racial categories and labor relations that characterize Fallbrook in the 1970s. I begin by exploring the roots of Fallbrook's Mexican and white communities that together comprised the majority of Fallbrook's population. Based on the archives of the town newspaper, *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, and interviews with Tom Frew, the historian for the Fallbrook Historical Society, I align this history with Martha Menchaca and Natalia Molina's arguments describing the racialization of Mexican workers in

southern California. Menchaca and Molina argue that Mexican racialization was legally codified according to citizenship and immigration policies. Molina explains that the racialization of Mexican workers as foreign and alien was a result of the “long immigration debate era.”¹² Additionally, a racial formation of whiteness occurred within what Kathleen Belew describes as a fourth rise of the Ku Klux Klan, which occurred in sync with many white supremacist organizations and entities separate from the KKK.

Chapter 2 traces Tom Metzger’s political and racial development between his role as a local John Birch Society leader to becoming a state leader for the California Knights of the Ku Klux Klan; a Grand Dragon. News stories, opinion letters and advertisements in the *Fallbrook Enterprise* document this transition. At the same time, the history of Fallbrook’s Mexican community is captured through a weekly Spanish-language column written by Tom Owen, an ally of the Mexican community. Sharing stories of events organized by three active Mexican-led organizations, the Sociedad Progresista Mexicana, Club Progreso para Familias Mexicanas, and the American G.I. Forum, we witness a community on the rise. The local newspaper also reports a sharp increase in racial violence coinciding with the disclosure of the Ku Klux Klan in 1976, and abruptly, the silence of the three Mexican organizations. This chapter also examines Tom Metzger’s efforts to take his brand of political whiteness to the mainstream through his five election campaigns which took place between 1978 through 1982.

Chapter 3 takes a close look at how Metzger’s movement related to the fifth era of Ku Klux Klan history which came to be known as the white power movement. Tom’s electoral campaigns, based on an unapologetic racial program, along with his print and media work propelled him into the core of a coalition of white supremacist, neo-Nazi, Christian identity, and

¹² Molina, *How Race is Made*, 46, 22.

paramilitary organizations. This era was delineated by a declaration of war against the federal government in 1983. No longer associated with the Klan, Metzger and his son John led a neo-Nazi movement of their own known as the White Aryan Resistance (WAR). As highly visible spokespersons for the white power movement, Tom and John had frequent appearances in national talk shows, which helped their efforts in building a national movement. Their project explicitly promoted violence under the One Hundred Little Hitlers program and Operation Warlords. In Fallbrook and San Diego, violence against Mexican workers increased year-after-year, causing alarm from county and state authorities.

While the White Aryan Resistance strategically recruited a new generation of white youth to engage in racial violence, Mexican youth in Fallbrook were racialized by Metzger and his movement. Chapter 4 tells the story of how the Mexican community responded after Tom Metzger ran an advertisement in the *Fallbrook Enterprise*, warning parents about Mexican gangs in Fallbrook. Initially, Mexican youth attempted to appeal to political whiteness by attempting to change the white community's racist perceptions. An organization for Mexican young men and two organizations for Mexican young women formed. Together, United Pride, Thee Impressions and Sophisticated Ladies performed community service, painted over graffiti, picked up trash, and volunteered with local businesses. Despite their efforts and intentions, social conflict persisted between the Mexican youth, business owners, and the local sheriffs. The presence of the White Aryan Resistance and continued racial violence prompted the Mexican youth, now organized, to question political whiteness. Police brutality against youth leader, Guillermo Covarrubias, shattered an already frail relationship with political whiteness, spawning an anti-colonial Mexican political formation.

The period I researched bears parallels and similarities with the period of anti-Mexican violence in Texas between 1910-1920. In fact, the racial program promoted by WAR drew inspiration from the Texas Rangers to the point of encouraging their members to embrace western cowboy culture and attire. The perpetrators describe this racial formation in terms of upholding a settler colonial legacy and designating ethnic Mexicans as an enemy population. Chapter 5 proposes a starting point for a public reckoning in Fallbrook by summarizing the lasting legacy of the Metzgers and the White Aryan Resistance. This movement rearticulated new forms of racial violence, prompted a low-intensity race war, and led the calls for border militarization and enforcement that came to fruition. A clearer understanding of the white power movement and the lone wolf strategy demands that we take a closer look at mass shootings that have previously been attributed solely to mental health issues. In doing so, we can see the imprint of the white power movement on the San Ysidro McDonald's Massacre of 1984. Anti-Mexican and expulsionist policies have built the political careers of current North County politicians. and developed the space for political whiteness to thrive to this day.

Chapter 1 Racial Formation

In 1970, Fallbrook, as an unincorporated community of San Diego County, existed for less than a century and was still being settled by Anglo-Americans, Europeans, and Mexican nationals. Less than half of the land within Fallbrook's jurisdiction was developed and half of that land consisted of avocado and citrus groves. The town had 15,752 residents of which ninety-seven percent were white, however, with a noted exception. Of these ninety-seven percent, Mexican-Americans were also counted as white and comprised thirteen percent of the white population. In a 1974 article titled, "What you should know about Fallbrook," *The Fallbrook Enterprise* declared that, according to the 1970 census, "Fallbrook is predominantly a white community."¹³ After all, ninety-seven percent is nearly one-hundred percent. Historically, the racial categorization of Mexican people and their proximity to whiteness was weighed against their indigenous and African heritage and was repeatedly debated along legal terms and according to immigration policy.¹⁴

Yet, for this rare and unique instance, it was convenient for the *possessive investment in whiteness* for Fallbrook to count Mexicans as white, as they were legally defined according to the 1848 Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo, which ended the U.S. war against Mexico.¹⁵ As a condition of the treaty, after February 2, 1848, Mexican citizens of Mexican California, had a

¹³ Editor, "What you should know about Fallbrook," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, May 2, 1974, A2, A8.

¹⁴ Martha Menchaca, *Recovering history, constructing race: The Indian, Black, and White Roots of Mexican Americans*, (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2002) 221, 274, 281; Natalia Molina, *How Race Is Made in America: Immigration, Citizenship, and the Historical Power of Racial Scripts*. (California: Univ of California Press, 2014) 47.

¹⁵ Menchaca, *Recovering History*, 215; George Lipsitz, *The possessive investment in whiteness: How White People Profit from Identity Politics, Twentieth Anniversary Edition*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2009), chap.1, Kindle.

year to move south of the violently imposed border set between Alta and Baja California or remain and become United States citizens. In 1848, while slavery was still legal, citizenship was exclusive to people legally defined as white, therefore, to be a U.S. citizen was to be white. This is how Mexicans became white in legal terms. The legal definition granting ethnic Mexicans rights to citizenship, however, would be challenged within the year. In 1849, the first of a series of legal challenges and numerous immigration bills attempted to racially demote Mexicans to non-white status and disenfranchisement, alongside Black people, Asians and Indians.¹⁶

It is also important to note that in the *Fallbrook Enterprise* news article, only Mexican Americans were reported. Mexican nationals, who comprised the majority of the agricultural labor force, were not counted as they were considered “birds of passage,” who were presumed to return to Mexico once they harvested the fruit.¹⁷ This allowed the paper to make the additional claim that Fallbrook’s non-white population was only three percent compared to the rest of the County, which on average was eight percent non-white. Consequently, Fallbrook would read like a different town had it reported that the white population was eighty-four percent, while the non-white population was over sixteen percent. Eighty-four percent is still predominantly white, however, not near one hundred percent. This article titled, *What You Should Know About Fallbrook*, provides context for a continuously shifting and unstable racial history which was in fluctuation ever since the founding of the San Luis Rey Mission in 1769, and which put a mix of Spanish, Native Mexican, and African settlers in contact/conflict with the native Payomkawhichum/Shoshone peoples who were present in the area for over eight thousand years.¹⁸

¹⁶ Menchaca, *Recovering History*, 215.

¹⁷ Molina, *How Race is Made in America*, 29.

¹⁸ Richard Carrico, *Strangers in a Stolen Land*, (San Diego: Sunbelt Publications, 2008), 3.

The 1860 and 1870 censuses tell a different story. California Mexicans and Native Americans together comprised the majority in the area, and what we know as modern-day Fallbrook did not exist. Instead, the census counted this area among two townships, the San Luis Rey Township to the west and the Pala District to the east, named after the native village of Pala.¹⁹ Both of these townships were historic Native American villages and both had Spanish missions constructed at their center. However, in 1869, a Canadian immigrant by the name of Vital Reche squatted in a live oak grove, which is today known as Live Oak County Park. At the center of this shaded park by the creek are long boulders gently surfacing above ground making a comfortable seating arrangement where over a dozen mortars were labored, providing clear evidence that this was a large village of the Payomkawichum people, also known as the Luiseños.

Vital Reche squatted in this area for a reason. He was on the immediate northern boundary of the Rancho Monserate, a Mexican land grant commissioned to Ycidro Alvarado by the Afro-Mexican governor of Mexican California, Pio Pico in 1846. Pio Pico was Ycidro's brother-in-law, his immediate neighbor to the west and was the owner of the Rancho Santa Margarita y Las Flores, which is today known as the Camp Pendleton Marine base. Vital Reche was squatting in a historic native village site while he was waiting for surveyors from the State of California's Land Commission to determine the boundaries for the Rancho Monserate Mexican land grant. This thirteen-thousand-acre ranch would be approved by 1872, opening up the surrounding unclaimed land to homesteading and the settlement Vital would name Fall Brook, after a small town he resided in back in Pennsylvania before moving West.²⁰

¹⁹ Tom Frew, *Notes for the 1860 Census of San Luis Rey Township*, Fallbrook Historical Society; Tom Frew, *Notes for the 1870 Census*, Fallbrook Historical Society.

²⁰ Tom Frew, interview by Ricardo Favela, January 26, 2024.

A microhistory of Fallbrook in the latter part of the 20th century, and more specifically the decades between the 1970s to the 1990s, is reflective of a *longue durée* of conflicting racial historical processes. This history is marked by the colonial settling of the San Luis Rey Mission for the Spanish crown in 1798, and the settler colonial Mexican nation-building era and secularization of the mission lands during the early half of the 1800s.²¹ A second settler colonial project introduced by the U.S. invasion of Mexican California, was marked by the 1846 Battle of San Pasqual, which lies thirty miles to the south in present-day Escondido.²² Together, these three eras comprise a trajectory of colonialism developing in various historical stages of racialization, shaping and shifting racial hierarchies accordingly.²³ Fallbrook would not exist as a legally registered township until 1885, and by 1970 it was mythically declared to be a white community, whiter than the rest of San Diego. Thus, Fallbrook as an unincorporated community is a very recent historical settlement where encounters between Europeans, ethnic Mexicans, Africans, Asians, and Native Americans play out in a similar act of discovery, displacement, colonization and racial othering that was initiated by Christopher Columbus in the Caribbean islands in 1492.

During the 1970s, as newly arrived white and Mexican workers settled in Fallbrook, a renewed process of racial formation would again take place as Fallbrook's white residents would come to terms with the reality that there was a Mexican presence which no longer flew home for the winter. Instead, this population was growing year by year, which was problematic.²⁴

²¹ Phil Brigandi, "The Outposts of Mission San Luis Rey," *The Journal of San Diego History*, vol. 45, no. 2, (Spring 1999), <https://sandiegohistory.org/journal/1999/april/outposts/>.

²² Richard Griswold del Castillo, "The American Colonization of San Diego," in *Chicano San Diego, Cultural Space and the Struggle for Justice*, (Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 2007), 42-43.

²³ Menchaca, *Recovering History*, 3.

²⁴ Architects of immigration policy in the 1930s such as eugenicist C.M. Goathe spoke of a permanent Mexican presence as a new racial problem, similar to the problem created by the presence of Black people in the U.S. which led to the Civil War, Goathe warned that the presence of Mexican people would also become an existential threat.

Sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant describe racial formation as the social construction of race as an idea that “varies according to time and place.” Accordingly, Omi and Winant expand on this theory by explaining that it is part of a trajectory of racial politics which, “refers to a political process, in which rising phases of mobilization are followed by declining phases. From the long-run standpoint, the trajectory of racial politics is a process of ‘cumulative and cyclical development’ taking place over centuries: the *longue durée*.”²⁵ More specifically, Omi and Winant describe the decades treated here according to two historical shifts where political movements on the left and the right both rose and fell. The post-World War II, New Deal, and Civil Rights era is described as a “great transformation” where, particularly in the 1960s, an anti-racist and integrationist movement led by Black people transformed into anti-colonial and anti-imperialist movements and joined in solidarity with other social movements and oppressed peoples. These movements achieved partial victories and were, “quickly followed by incorporation and containment” from opposing forces by the 1970s.²⁶

The decade of the 1970s was marked by a counterattack on the Black liberation movement and its allies, which Omi and Winant describe as the beginning of a “racial reaction.” While the impacts of these leftist and revolutionary movements were unprecedented in confronting the racial social order, overall, they did not effectively challenge or end the hegemony of white rule and supremacy. In fact, these movements faced a “wall of resistance” from various conservative groups, including white voters both Republican and Democratic.²⁷

See: Molina, *How Race is Made*, 32-33; *The Fallbrook Enterprise* occasionally published alarmist stories regarding Mexico’s population growth: Editor, “Population Grows at a Surprising Rate,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, vol. #63, no. 24 (Fallbrook, July 4, 1974) A11.

²⁵ Omi & Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 12-13.

²⁶ *Ibid*, 14.

²⁷ Jacquelyn D. Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past.” *The Journal of American History* 91 (4) (2005): 1235. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3660172>; Michael Omi, “Shifting the Blame: Racial Ideology and Politics in the Post Civil Rights Era.” Sage Journals, (1991), 78-79.

The response came through a “racial rearticulation,” which reframed the narrative of civil rights for their own benefit, effectively defending the right to be white and to be separate from non-white people. The town of Fallbrook, North San Diego County, and more broadly the Southern California border region, would serve as a stronghold in this racial rearticulation with one of the most visible articulators arising in the form of Tom Metzger. His formation into a Grand Dragon, or state leader of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, took place while living in Fallbrook and left a lasting imprint on its community.²⁸

This microhistory must take into account a historical context of white supremacy as represented by the civic and vigilante organization known as the Ku Klux Klan (KKK). The Klan rose and fell in various key moments throughout U.S. history largely in response to changes in laws granting African Americans emancipation and civil rights. The KKK’s appearance in Fallbrook in 1976 is considered to be part of its fourth rise.²⁹ Historian Kathleen Belew argues that all Klan appearances followed major wars and military conflicts, and that Klan leaders were often veterans of wars. The Vietnam War greatly impacted the fourth rise of the late 1970s, especially in regards to the fight against communism. Klansmen made the call to “bring the war home” as they considered the Civil Rights Movement to be communist inspired and essentially saw no difference in fighting leftist social movements here versus fighting the Vietcong in Vietnam.³⁰ Tom Metzger, was an Army veteran and became a racialist after moving to Fallbrook, which neighbors the Camp Pendleton Marine base to the east. Metzger was influenced

²⁸ Elinor Langer, *A hundred little Hitlers: The Death of a Black Man, the Trial of a White Racist, and the Rise of the Neo-Nazi Movement in America*. (New York, Metropolitan Books, 2004).

²⁹ Kathleen Belew, *Bring the war home: The White Power Movement and Paramilitary America*, (Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2018), 8; It was preceded by the third rise which followed the Civil Rights movement of the 1950s and 1960s. The second rise occurred through 1910 and 1920, and the first one took place in the late 1860s. The first rise of the Ku Klux Klan followed the Civil War and formed in order to maintain control of black people upon being emancipated from enslavement. The second rise of the Ku Klux Klan followed World War I, while the third rise followed World War II and the Korean War.

³⁰ Kathleen Belew, *Bring the war home*, 62.

by white supremacists already established in the area and by 1976, a KKK organization separate from the Knight of the Ku Klux Klan, which Metzger joined, was openly operating within Camp Pendleton.³¹

Kathleen Belew makes critical distinctions regarding the fourth rise since some historians categorize this Klan as being dedicated to political campaigns and less violent, as opposed to a fifth rise in the mid-1980s which was largely paramilitaristic. She points out that the people who led the Klan of the 1970s were the same people who produced another rise during the 1980s. However, by this time, Klan leaders made strategic moves to form a united front among a widespread conglomeration of white supremacist, Christian Identity, tax resister, survivalist, skinhead and neo-Nazi groups, which together became the white power movement. Belew's assessment of the movement is key to understanding its reach in the fifth rise:

White power should be recognized as something broader than the Klan, encompassing a wider range of ideologies and operating simultaneously in public and underground. Such an understanding is vital lest we erroneously equate white power with covert violence and thereby ignore its significant inroads into mainstream society, which hardly came under cover of night. Activists such as David Duke mounted political campaigns that influenced local and national elections. They produced a vibrant print culture with crossover appeal that reached more mainstream readers.³²

Understanding white supremacy beyond the Klan is, therefore, important for gaining a better understanding of different movement cycles and their mainstream reach.

In San Diego, there have been various white supremacist organizations that have existed alongside the Ku Klux Klan, such as the Silver Shirts in the 1920s and the Christian Identity Church during Metzger's time in the 1970s-1990s.³³ However, as Belew points out, the post-

³¹ Elinor Langer, *A Hundred Little Hitlers*, (New York: Metropolitan Books, 2003), 107, 120-121, 135, 137.

³² Belew, *Bring the War Home*, 8 .

³³ Carlos M. Larralde, and Richard G Del Castillo, "San Diego's Ku Klux Klan 1920-1980" San Diego History Center. 2000. Accessed March 6, 2023. <https://sandieghistory.org/journal/2000/april/klan/>; Langer, *A Hundred Little Hitlers*, 123.

1980s movement distinguished itself from previous Klan formations in that it considered the federal government to be antagonistic towards the interests of white people and declared war against the government in 1983, whereas previous Klan movements largely acted as extensions of the state through their vigilantism. Given the various white supremacist movements and organizations, it is necessary to underscore that Tom Metzger played an integral role in the consolidation of the white power movement.

During 1970-1990, Fallbrook was also impacted by two intersecting historical processes related to civil rights and the legal status of Mexican laborers. The question of racial and gender equality before the law motivated leaders of the working-class Mexican community, such as Maria Muñoz, to mobilize at the start of the 1970s.³⁴ Mrs. Muñoz was a co-founder of the Club Progreso para Familias Mexicanas, whose membership was comprised of Mexican farm workers and laborers. The Club Progreso formed in 1970 with the support of another Mexican led organization that had been present since the late 1930s; a mutual aid society known as the Sociedad Progresista Mexicana.³⁵ Operating outside of the black/white racial binary, Mexican mutual aid societies were often the vehicles for defending ethnic Mexicans' civil rights.³⁶

Fallbrook was also in the jurisdiction of Palomar Community College, which saw much activism from Chicanos and Chicanas promoting Ethnic Studies and forming a student chapter of the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán.³⁷ In this way, Fallbrook's Mexican community would be the catalyst for connecting the town to the "Long Civil Rights Movement," as described by historian Jacquelyne Dowd Hall. According to Dowd Hall, this movement, "took

³⁴ Judy and Danny Muñoz, interview with the author, April 11, 2024.

³⁵ Editor, "FUHS dealing with Mex-Am problems," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, (Fallbrook, April 23, 1970) p. B10; Editor, "Mexican group fetes Cinco de Mayo," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, May 21, 1970, B5.

³⁶ Julie Leininger Pycior, *Democratic Renewal and the Mutual Aid Legacy of US Mexicans*, (Texas: Texas A&M University Press), 18, Kindle.

³⁷ Editor, "MECHA group to host students at Palomar," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, February 5, 1973, B5.

root in the liberal and radical milieu of the late 1930s, was intimately tied to the ‘rise and fall of the New Deal Order,’ accelerated during World War II, stretched far beyond the South, was continuously and ferociously contested, and in the 1960s and 1970s inspired a ‘movement of movements’ that ‘def[ies] any narrative of collapse.’³⁸ The experience of Mexicans in Fallbrook reminds us that the Long Civil Rights Movement had a Southwestern front led by Mexican mutual aid organizations operating outside of the black/white binary of racialization.

Much as the Civil Rights Movement had been underway decades before the 1970s, so had the debate regarding ethnic Mexican people’s legal immigration status. Tensions concerning immigration are well recorded over several decades within the pages of the small-town newspaper, *The Fallbrook Enterprise*. This debate was bookended, on the one side, by local politicians and the leadership of agricultural associations who advocated for Mexicans to work as seasonally contracted laborers. And, on the other side, the debate was bookended by white workers who opposed the presence of Mexican people under any conditions, instead advocating for expulsion/deportation, which was distinct from promoting segregation since expulsion was geared more towards keeping Fallbrook white. Furthermore, the expulsionist position reinforced immigration enforcement efforts based on racialization over the two decades. Historian Natalia Molina describes this moment as the “long immigration debate era,” which is defined as a key period in which Mexicans’ racial formation took place according to the development of nearly two dozen immigration bills from 1924-1965. Through this debate, Molina demonstrates how Mexicans were defined according to racial scripts, which are already established and familiar racial narratives associated with Black people, Asians, and American Indians. Racial scripts were especially useful outside of the Southwest where immigration officers and Anglo-Americans

³⁸ Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, “The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past.” *The Journal of American History*, 2005, 91 (4): 1235. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3660172>.

were not familiar with ethnic Mexicans, did not know how to categorize them in racial terms, and “were increasingly positioned alongside Indians, Asians, or [B]lacks on immigration discourse.”³⁹

Most significantly, it was during this immigration debate era that Mexican migrants were cast as a cheap labor force that could be deported upon the completion of seasonal work, thus ensuring through immigration law that this population would be prohibited from achieving citizenship. These notions were arrived at in contrast to the threat of having Puerto Rican or Black agricultural workers, who were citizens, and were under no obligation to leave the communities where they found work.⁴⁰ Despite the large presence of Mexican American citizens, therefore, and despite ethnic Mexicans’ historical presence in the Southwest preceding U.S. annexation, immigration policy from the 1924-1965 racially scripted ethnic Mexicans as immigrants and subsequently foreign. It was through this long immigration debate that Mexicans were racialized as “deportable people”.⁴¹ In the pages of the *Fallbrook Enterprise*, “wetback” was a common term, often used by supporters of agribusiness, referring to Mexican laborers through the early 1970s. Additionally, the book *Fallbrook Yesterday and Today*, produced by the Fallbrook Historical Society and published in 1977, refers to Mexican undocumented laborers as “wetbacks.” The image chosen by the historical society to depict Mexican braceros was that of a half-naked Indian, with long braided hair, two feathers worn on his head, while seated on the floor cross-legged, and holding pottery.⁴² This one-page entry in the book was all there was to represent the history of Mexican laborers like my father. The terms “alien,” “illegal aliens,” and

³⁹ Molina, *How Race is Made*, 46, 22.

⁴⁰ *Ibid*, 36.

⁴¹ *Ibid*, 34.

⁴² H. Marquis, *Fallbrook Yesterday and Today*, 60.

in some cases simply “illegals,” became more popular in the pages of the *Fallbrook Enterprise* in the 1970s.

THE RACIALIZATION OF POLITICAL WHITENESS

Tom Metzger became one of the leading voices for white supremacy, not only in Fallbrook but in the nation. Since this historical period is described as a racial rearticulation, understanding Metzger’s path to racialization is important for understanding racial formation in Fallbrook. In researching what made a figure like Tom Metzger, my findings contradicted my assumptions. Having been born and raised in Indiana, I had assumed that Metzger arrived in Fallbrook with some affiliation or experience with the Ku Klux Klan. After all, Indiana has a tremendous history with the KKK, which during the 1920s had marked the state the “epicenter of the national Klan movement” for its political successes.⁴³ Yet, this was not the case. After his military service in the army, Metzger moved to Los Angeles in the early 1960s, finding work in the military industry at Douglas Aircraft. There, he met and married Kathleen, who was Catholic. Tom converted to Catholicism to marry her. The Klan of Indiana and of the second era was anti-Catholic, hinting to the fact that he did not harbor sentiments or affiliations of the Klan of Indiana. Together they lived through the turbulence of the Watts Rebellion, and the United Farm Worker grape boycott. These events, along with efforts to unionize at Douglas aircraft pushed Metzger towards conservatism and the John Birch Society.⁴⁴

The John Birch Society was an anti-communist group of major capitalists, business owners, white workers, conservatives, and some Democrats who strongly advocated for local

⁴³ Leonard J. Moore, *Citizen Klansmen: The Ku Klux Klan in Indiana, 1921-1928*. (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press, 1997), 7.

⁴⁴ Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 116-117.

government to take a hard stance against anything they believed associated with communism. They were convinced that the Civil Rights movement was a communist-backed plot to undermine America since the movement advocated for equality. Moreover, they believed that by supporting Civil Rights legislation, the federal government was also succumbing to communism.⁴⁵ They targeted local school boards, banned books, created front groups and coordinated letter writing campaigns directed at political representatives, and encouraged members to run for local office.⁴⁶ The Birch Society, as it became known, grew a large following throughout the nation, and many of the white supremacist leaders of the 1970s and 1980s were members and leaders within this group. As some scholars have argued, the John Birch Society was one of the greatest meeting points of ordinary Americans on the right since the New Deal and it was the seed of much that followed.”⁴⁷

By the late 1960s, Tom and Kathleen had tired of Los Angeles and searched for a place to live in the countryside where they could raise their family. This search led them to move to Fallbrook on July 4, 1968. Their move to San Diego County would further expose Tom to deeply embedded political whiteness decades in the making. American Studies professor Daniel HoSang states that political whiteness “describes a political subjectivity rooted in white racial identity, a gaze on politics constituted by whiteness.”⁴⁸ By 1971, Tom was active in conservative groups and began to submit opinion letters to the local paper announcing his activities. That year, articles and letters showed he was elected as an officer of the National Association to Keep and Bear Arms (NAKBA), and by 1972 he became the local chapter leader of the John Birch Society.

⁴⁵ Ibid, 113-114.

⁴⁶ Matthew Dallek, *Birchers: How the John Birch Society Radicalized the American Right*, (New York: Basic Books, 2023), 57-59.

⁴⁷ Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 115.

⁴⁸ Daniel HoSang, *Racial propositions: Ballot Initiatives and the Making of Postwar California*, (California: University of California Press, 2010), 20.

Through the Birch Society he came into contact with other radical conservatives and white supremacists. For example, Civil Rights opponent Jesse B. Stoner of the National States Rights Party, exposed Metzger to the tax rebellion movement. Believing that the Vietnam War was a plot to bankrupt the United States, Metzger became a tax resister and was soon the spokesperson for Fallbrook division of the North County Tax Rebellion Committee.⁴⁹

It was through the anti-tax movement that Metzger became a racialist. A racialist is someone who believes in a racial hierarchy and rearticulates international crises, domestic problems, and personal difficulties, within racial terms.⁵⁰ Through this movement he heard William Potter Gale speak for the first time at a meeting in San Diego. In Tom's own words, "Gale's speech... lifted me out of my chair, spun me around, and set me back down again. [He] showed me the light."⁵¹ Gale was the founder of the white supremacist movement called *Posse Comitatus*. He was also a leader of the Ministry of Christ Church, which was part of a growing "racial-religious-political movement known as Christian Identity."⁵² This was a nineteenth-century belief originating from Protestant England also known as "British Israelism," in which it was believed that "various peoples of Northwestern Europe were the true descendants of the ten lost tribes of Israel."⁵³

Its central tenets, shared by Gale, are that it is modern Aryans, not Jews, who are descendants of the lost tribe; that Jews are literally the children of the Devil, the offspring of a union of Eve with Satan in the Garden of Eden, which produced Cain; and that the world is nearing a final battle between Good and Evil, with the Aryans representing God and the Jews representing the Devil, a battle that must be won by Aryans for the world to be saved. Nonwhites are considered not fully human but part of a separate line of creation that preceded Adam and Eve, 'Pre-Adamite' of subhuman 'Mud People,'

⁴⁹ George Michael, "This is WAR! Tom Metzger, White Aryan Resistance, and the Lone Wolf Legacy." *International Journal of Terrorism & Political Hot Spots*, 2016, (1), 11; Editor, "Tax rebellion groups holding meetings," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, May 11, 1972, B12.

⁵⁰ Michael Omi, "Shifting the Blame: Racial Ideology and Politics in the Post Civil Rights Era." *Sage Journals*, 1991, 79.

⁵¹ Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 121.

⁵² *Ibid*, 120-121.

⁵³ Michael, "This is WAR!", 32.

believed to be governed by Cain; lacking capabilities of their own, they are instruments of the Jews in the battle, used to try to miscegenate the Aryans out of existence.⁵⁴

This biblical interpretation of race was a core belief that forged the religious and socio-political worldviews of Christian Identity members, Klan members and Nazis.

After Metzger was convinced on the question of racialism, he centered his political world view on race and from this point forward he never turned back. Metzger was converted to Christian Identity through Reverend Bertrand Compert and became an ordained minister by 1974, preaching out of the Christian Crusader Church in the neighboring city of Escondido.⁵⁵ These beliefs would anchor Tom Metzger's racial formation and set him on his course to build a movement for white revolution. Through this racial-political development, his definition of white and Mexican would sharpen. By 1983, he published a newspaper called the *White American Resistance*, which changed its name to the *White Aryan Resistance* in 1986. His organization followed the same transition from the *White American Political Association* to the *White Aryan Resistance*. The term “mud people” was used in the pages of his movement’s newspaper to describe Mexicans and migrants crossing the border and settling in communities like Fallbrook. However, Metzger also made it clear that when he spoke of expelling Mexicans, he did not distinguish between those with legal or undocumented status.⁵⁶

Here, it is important to note how the racial-political environment of San Diego nurtured Metzger’s racial formation. He did not bring racism to Fallbrook, nor did Fallbrook’s racial history begin with Tom Metzger. Rather, Fallbrook’s racial history radicalized and racialized his

⁵⁴ Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 120-121.

⁵⁵ Editor, Metzger guest at KABC Radio, *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, February 12, 1976, A11; Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 124.

⁵⁶ Tom Metzger, “Comments on Bleeding Hearts,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, March 3, 1977, B20; Donald E. Hubbard, “Margaret Navarro, et al vs. David Duke. Deposition of Tom Metzger. 1977.” *Court Case Files - Herman Baca Collection*, 1977.

conservatism. While my research on the Christian Crusade Church in Escondido is limited, there is some information about the presence of the Ku Klux Klan in San Diego County since the 1920s. The KKK had a chapter in the county during the second rise of the Klan. Historians Carlos M. Larralde and Richard Griswold del Castillo explain, “They presented themselves as defenders of Christian morality and law enforcement, and they were also chosen to be members of grand juries where they were able to influence district attorneys.” While they considered themselves to be humanitarians by supporting local government institutions, they also engaged in vigilantism and egregious violence to drive out Mexicans and to keep them from taking part in the civic life of their communities. The Klan would be active in the region up until the 1960s, for well over forty years. Just when many assumed that the Klan was dead, the group renewed its efforts in the mid-1970s in Fallbrook.⁵⁷

In 1975, twenty-five-year-old David Duke was a rising star among the far right and he set out to rebuild the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, known as the original Klan that formed in the 1920s.⁵⁸ He found a receptive audience among the New Christian Crusade Church, that is, among Tom Metzger’s peers.⁵⁹ When Duke asked the Crusaders in San Diego to help start the California Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, Metzger was among thirty who joined, and he became their state leader and Grand Dragon.⁶⁰ Working clandestinely over the year, California membership increased from three hundred to three thousand. Far from being an anomaly, the Klan in the 1970s continued to define the terms for political whiteness and racial formation as it had done in the 1920s, serving as a testament to the hegemonic character of political

⁵⁷ Larralde and Del Castillo, “San Diego’s Ku Klux Klan 1920-1980”.

⁵⁸ Eleanor Bingham and Leslie Shatz, “The New Klan: Heritage of Hate “, 1978 PBS, video 08:40, Media Burn: Independent Video Archive, <https://mediaburn.org/video/the-new-klan-heritage-of-hate/>.

⁵⁹ Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 131.

⁶⁰ *Ibid*, 133.

whiteness. On this point, HoSang cites Raymond Williams in saying that a “lived hegemony is always a process. It must be ‘renewed, recreated, defended, and modified’ as it is ‘continuously resisted, limited, altered, [and] challenged by pressures not all its own.”⁶¹ The legacy of the Klan in San Diego up until the fourth rise suggests that organized political whiteness had not been significantly challenged except for the federal and state laws mandating integration and other civil rights guarantees. This could explain the long duration of the Klan’s presence in San Diego County and the pervasiveness of political whiteness as a hegemonic formation that nurtured Tom Metzger and his associates.

THE RACIALIZATION OF MEXICAN WORKERS

HoSang, again citing Williams, discusses a second point regarding hegemonic formations: “Williams argues that the very power of hegemonic formations derives from their capacity to shape the terms on which they are opposed: ‘nearly all initiatives and contributions, even when they take on manifestly alternative or oppositional forms, are in practice tied to the hegemonic: that the dominant culture, so to say, at once produces and limits its own forms of counter-culture.’”⁶² This understanding regarding the hegemonic character of political whiteness comes into play through the racialization of Mexican workers between the 1970s and 1990s. In response, the Mexican community in Fallbrook organized a clear defense against the racial formation and political whiteness they encountered. However, this response did not attempt to

⁶¹ HoSang, *Racial Propositions*, 21.

⁶² *Ibid*, 22.

challenge or identify political whiteness “as an exorable force of political life.”⁶³ Yet, within their opposition Mexican activists laid the seeds for an eventual reckoning with political whiteness and settler colonialism as the fundamental impediment to social and political progress for the Mexican community, which would bear fruit by the 1990s.

Mexican workers’ racialization took place according to two processes: first, within the continuation of the “long immigration debate” where capitalist agribusiness sectors debated with white workers regarding the place and status of Mexican workers in Fallbrook; and, second, through the agency of the Mexican community in defining their own identity and place within Fallbrook, continuing a process related to the “long civil rights movement” yet existing outside of the black/white binary. Again, this effort was built off the long tradition of mutual aid organizing in the Southwest, which was also a front in the struggle for civil rights. The *Mutualista Movement* has been described by its members as originating as far back as the mid-1800s in Mexican communities of the Southwest, which formed to protect the community from discrimination.⁶⁴

The decade of the 1970s marked a period of transition between the conclusion of the Bracero Program in 1964 and the establishment of Fallbrook’s Mexican community, resulting from single male braceros (ranch hands), like my father, starting their families in this community. The Bracero Program, being a temporary contract labor agreement for Mexican nationals, did not include a path to earn residency nor citizenship. Thus, the expectation was that these workers would return to Mexico once their contracts expired, keeping Fallbrook white.⁶⁵ Population projections by the County of San Diego and the Fallbrook Planning Group

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Pycior, *Democratic Renewal and the Mutual Aid Legacy*, 66,79.

⁶⁵ Molina, *How Race is Made*, 29;

did not take into account undocumented persons.⁶⁶ To the dismay of Fallbrook's white community, Mexicans settled in Fallbrook, established families, and their children enrolled in local schools, which created new challenges and problems for the mostly white community.⁶⁷ This would polarize the debate regarding Mexican workers' place in Fallbrook.

This debate was evident in the pages of the town's newspaper, *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, since at least the early 1950s.⁶⁸ Here we see how the terms were set for the racial formation of ethnic Mexicans during this period. The debate centered around whether Mexican workers had the right to work in Fallbrook and under which terms. Those advocating for Fallbrook's agricultural industry (agribusiness) argued for an extension or renewal of a guest worker program, with no other rights or guarantees beyond the scope of their contracted labor. On the other hand, white workers argued that Mexican workers should not be allowed to work or reside in Fallbrook under any conditions since they posed a threat to the job market for white workers.⁶⁹ It is important to note that neither residency nor citizenship was part of the debate, and essentially both sides agreed that Mexicans must not remain in Fallbrook and had no right to the franchise. To this regard, Mexicans within the previous decades had been racialized as *wetbacks*, *illegal*, *alien*, and essentially scripted as foreign and deportable despite the fact that Fallbrook had a strong Mexican presence and history. Searching the pages of the *Fallbrook Enterprise* for the keyword, "Mexican," produces many stories regarding Fallbrook's first settlers, the Picos, the Alvarados, and their ranches and the history of the nearby San Luis Rey Mission.

⁶⁶ Editor, "IPO sees 23,100 here by 1995," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, vol. #59, no. 9 (Fallbrook, March 17, 1977), A1.

⁶⁷ Editor, "FUHS dealing with Mex-Am problems," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, vol. #66, no. 3 (Fallbrook, April 23, 1970), B10.

⁶⁸ Paid Ad by Farmers in Bonsall and Pauma Valley, "Let's talk sense about farm labor," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, October 31, 1952, A2.

⁶⁹ Frank Thurlow, "Thurlow writes Nixon: Aliens concern local resident," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, December 24, 1970, B8.

Spokespersons for agribusiness included Lionel Van Deerlin, a politician who since 1952 expressed deep concerns for the lack of workers needed for the harvest seasons, and Elmer Allen, Manager of the Fallbrook Citrus Association.⁷⁰ The association included farms from Carlsbad to Pauma Valley. Van Deerlin's campaign advertisement in 1952, paid for by a group of local farmers, was centered on bringing in, "as many Mexican workers as we need." In addition to concerns about workers leaving the farms for better paying jobs in the defense industry, the ad also lamented that "Wetbacks (illegal Mexican Immigrants) are in short supply too."⁷¹ In 1974, the *Fallbrook Enterprise* reported that from 1943 to 1974 ninety-five percent of crops were harvested by Mexican labor. After the Bracero contracts were terminated in 1964, the Fallbrook Citrus Association depended on "Green Card Mexicans". Sixty percent of these workers lived in the association labor camps, while the remaining forty percent commuted from Tijuana. Elmer Allen, who served as manager of the Fallbrook Citrus Association, was appointed to Governor Reagan's farm labor commission in 1968. Reflecting his perspective on Mexican workers, in 1974 Allen stated, "It would be nearly impossible to harvest the citrus, avocado, strawberry and tomato crops in Northern San Diego County without the Mexican laborer."⁷²

We can see in the agribusiness position a racialization of Mexicans as "wetbacks" and the only people capable of doing farm work. Considering the fact that residency and citizenship was never part of the labor contract agreements, this condition relegates the Mexican worker to being an expendable and temporary worker, with no access to the franchise. Additionally, Mexican laborers were relegated to living in "association labor camps" resembling a form of

⁷⁰ Editor, Origin of Mexican-Lemon Pickers recalled," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, June 27, 1974, A11

⁷¹ Paid Ad by Farmers in Bonsall and Pauma Valley, "Let's talk sense about farm labor," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, October 31, 1952, A2.

⁷² Editor, Origin of Mexican-Lemon Pickers recalled," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, June 27, 1974, A11.

peonage.⁷³ Having been raised in an avocado/citrus ranch which my father managed, I can attest to this condition where workers lived in the same ranch where they worked and rarely had any means to leave. Workers were not paid a minimum wage, rather they were paid by the pound of product they harvested. This condition of labor is a form of racialization based on the prohibition of citizenship which Martha Menchaca traces in her work, *Recovering History Constructing Race*. She defines racialization as “the use of the legal system to confer privilege upon Whites and to discriminate against people of color,” and in terms of ethnic Mexicans, this has involved legally denying citizenship based on their non-white indigeneity.⁷⁴

The position expressed by Frank Thurlow, Joe Reedy, and Tom Metzger was the position of expulsion and border militarization in order to maintain a white majority and white political power. Metzger did not hold back when he argued that farm jobs should be held for white workers.⁷⁵ Although Mexican migrant workers lived in a state of peonage in the labor camps, to racialists like Metzger none of this was acceptable. In the 1970s, Metzger rearticulated Mexican identity and developed a racial policy based on the separation of races and a literal race war against Mexicans to keep towns like Fallbrook white. Through this policy, ethnic Mexican workers were racialized according to subhuman terms. Dehumanizing terms such as “mongrels”, “mud people,” and “half-breeds” more Indian than Spanish, were part of the racial vernacular. This language was communicated through the White American Resistance (WAR) newspaper, which was published out of Metzger’s home in Fallbrook and distributed across the country.⁷⁶ In addition to the newspaper, leaflets and cartoons depicting Mexican, Asian, Black, and Jewish

⁷³ Ibid.

⁷⁴ Menchaca, *Recovering History Constructing Race*, 215.

⁷⁵ Judy Mesko, “KKK Leader Runs for Office” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, no.9 (Fallbrook: March 13, 1980) A6.

⁷⁶ Church of the Creator, “The Mud Flood from Mexico becoming a torrent,” *White American Resistance*, October 1983, from <https://resist.com/w-a-r-paper-titles/>.

people according to vulgar racist tropes were spread across high school and college campuses.⁷⁷ Altogether, Belew states that up to 175,000 people bought white power literature during the 1980s and up to 450,000 read the literature, surpassing the reach of the Birch Society which peaked at 100,000 members.⁷⁸

In this “long immigration debate” the hegemonic character of political whiteness racializes Mexicans by excluding the question of citizenship. Both sides are essentially in agreement on the prohibition of citizenship and the franchise to Mexican workers as it is an existential question for political whiteness. The position of the agribusiness sector relegated Mexican laborers to a continued form of peonage.⁷⁹ Expulsionists created an image of Mexicans as a threat to white men as competition for the labor market, to white women as a miscegenation threat, and to white children as being responsible for reducing the rigor of education.⁸⁰ The expulsionist position encouraged the Border Patrol to conduct raids and checkpoints in the area and organized a vigilante Klan Border Watch program at the San Ysidro border in 1977 to assist the Border Patrol in apprehending Mexican workers.⁸¹ Prior to the Klan Border Watch of 1977, while a member of the Christian Crusade Church, Tom organized a vigilante “Border Watch” in 1974, which did not receive much attention but would be repeated years later with more success. Langer claims that the Crusader Border Watch “may have well been the first action in the rising tide of national feeling against immigration that has not yet come to a stop.”⁸² The expulsionists also encouraged white youth to carry out acts of violence as part of the strategy of

⁷⁷ Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 165.

⁷⁸ Kathleen Belew & Ramon Gutierrez, “There are no lone wolves,” in *A Field Guide to White Supremacy*. (California: University of California Press, 2021), 317.

⁷⁹ Editor, “KKK leader here,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, October 20, 1977, A4; Molina, *How Race is Made*, 32; Tom Metzger, “Too Much Education,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, March 25, 1976, B15.

⁸⁰ *Ibid*, 31.

⁸¹ Laura Kaufman, “Supremacists open checkpoint drive,” *Times Advocate*, Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 138

⁸² Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 129.

expulsion, and the racial rearticulation of Mexicans facilitated these acts by depicting them as less than human. Dave Mazzella, vice-president of WAR's youth division, admitted that "Metzger constantly talked about violent racial incidents and counseled that the skinheads should try to provoke others to take the first swing. That way the skinheads could retaliate violently but claim self-defense."⁸³ In the WAR movement, Mazzella said, "people didn't matter," and people of color looked "like bugs you could step on."⁸⁴

THE MEXICAN RESPONSE TO RACIAL FORMATION IN THE 1970S

1970 would demarcate a new decade for increased social visibility and civic engagement by the Mexican community of Fallbrook. Sparked by the Fallbrook High School's concerns about educating an increasing number of Mexican high school students (expecting a cohort of twenty to twenty-five total), Spanish speaking parents called for organization, and with the help of the VISTA Volunteers from the neighboring city of Vista, the Club Progreso para Familias Mexicanas was formed under the leadership of Angel Pinedo.⁸⁵ Pinedo had been an active member of the Sociedad Progresista Mexicana Narciso Mendoza Lodge Number 15. This *mutualista* was active in the Fallbrook/Pala area since 1937.⁸⁶ In 1971, the Club Progreso para Familias Mexicanas elected Mrs. Maria Muñoz as the president, a dynamic bilingual leader originally from Texas.⁸⁷ The Club Progreso, as it was also known, then formed Club Azteca as a

⁸³ Morris Dees, *Hate on Trial: The Case Against American's Most Dangerous Neo-Nazi*, (New York: Villard Books, 1993), 73.

⁸⁴ Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 319.

⁸⁵ Editor, "FUHS dealing with Mex-Am problems," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, April 23, 1970, B10.

⁸⁶ Editor, "Mexican Society honors town leaders," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, July 29, 1971, B3 .

⁸⁷ Tom Owen, "El Rincon Español," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, January 28, 1971, B3.

cultural group for youth and the American G.I. Forum held a membership drive.⁸⁸ Danny Muñoz, Maria's son, stated that his mother's motivation was the belief that "everybody was equal."⁸⁹

It was also this year that Thomas Owen would emerge as a strong ally of the Mexican community. In his response to an anti-immigrant opinion letter written by Frank Thurlow (an associate of Tom Metzger) Owen would define his uncompromising position of support, which he would provide for years to come. In his letter titled, "IMMIGRATION; MAY IT NEVER CEASE," Owen states, "...somewhere back along the line, even Mr. Thurlow's forebearers were immigrants. Actually, the ones that aren't immigrants now are the Mexicans and Indians, they were in this area long before we were. The infusion of new blood by immigrants has long been credited with the forward look of our nation, may it never cease."⁹⁰ That year, Owen began a new column in the Fallbrook Enterprise called, *El Rincon Español*, where he wrote articles in Spanish mostly dedicated to the activities and events organized by the Club Progreso para Familias Mexicanas, Club Azteca, the Sociedad Progresista Mexicana, and the G.I. Forum.

Together, these groups raised funds to provide scholarships to Mexican high school graduates and they held large events at Live Oak Park, like the Mother's Day event which drew over 600 people in 1971.⁹¹ Education issues became a central issue of concern for the Mexican organizations during this time. They were involved with English as a Second Language programs, bilingual education, and promoted cultural awareness. Club Progreso and the Sociedad Progresista Mexicana organized "fiestas" with the schools in town and in the community. A ballet folklórico group was formed by Club Azteca, and ethnic/multicultural and

⁸⁸ Tom Owen, "El Rincon Español," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, September 24, 1970, B4

⁸⁹ Danny Muñoz, interview with the author, April 11, 2024.

⁹⁰ Tom Owen, "Open forum: IMMIGRATION; MAY IT NEVER CEASE," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, December 31, 1970, B4.

⁹¹ Editor, "600 attend festival for Mexican mothers," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, May, 13, 1971 B2.

Chicano studies programs were organized at the local community college. Ethnic Mexicans claimed agency over their identity in the face of a community dominated by political whiteness. Their claims came in the form of programs which aimed to retain and develop Spanish as a native language, through the formation of a cultural youth club identifying as Aztec and indigenous, and with college students identifying as Chicano. Additionally, the Sociedad Progresista Mexicana, the Club Progreso para Familias Mexicanas, and the American G.I. Forum were involved in local Chamber of Commerce events and efforts to integrate ethnic Mexicans into the larger fabric of the community. By 1974, Maria Muñoz along with her husband Ernesto inaugurated the Union Mutualista de San Jose based out of Saint Peter's Catholic Parish. Before a celebratory gathering of 500, Ernesto was elected president, Maria was elected vice president and the *mutualista* was formed with 50 new members.⁹² According to their daughter Judy and son Danny, Mr. and Mrs. Muñoz were key to advocating for St. Peter's church to hold mass in Spanish. Mr. Muñoz then provided transportation for Mexican workers to attend mass, driving out to the avocado ranches to bring workers to receive the sacrament.⁹³ As the Mexican community was making its presence known, Tom Metzger's racial identity was consolidating around whiteness and Aryanism.

The Mexican community of Fallbrook experienced continued growth not only in population size, but also in activity among its social organizing groups. In *El Rincon Español*, Owen reported on the expansion of the Multicultural Studies Program at Palomar College, murals painted by Richard Gabriel Chase, and the official non-profit incorporation of Club

⁹² Editor, "Standing room only at St. Peter's event," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, October 3, 1974, B7; Editor, "St. Joseph's Guild forms here Sunday" September 6, 1974, A10.

⁹³ Danny Muñoz, interview with the author, April 11, 2024.

Progreso para Familias Mexicanas.⁹⁴ Additionally, Precious Few, a new organization for Mexican-American young women, formed in early 1977.⁹⁵ Profits from avocado production reached record levels in 1976 with the Calavo Association members proceeds reaching \$24.7 million; a 12% increase over the record established a year before.⁹⁶ By 1977, the Mexican community could no longer be ignored. Live Oak Park was the site for large social gatherings organized by the Mexican organizations, Spanish language mass was being held at the local church, the Mexican student population was growing and now bilingual education was implemented in the local schools.

Signaling in a direction towards local politics, Tom Owen began questioning the lack of Mexican representation on local governance committees. Maria Muñoz then stepped forward as a nominee to be a director on the Chamber of Commerce board, the only female and Mexican running alongside ten white male candidates.⁹⁷ At the same time, President Carter introduced a proposal for amnesty for undocumented workers.⁹⁸ When a meeting of the Fallbrook Farm Bureau in 1976 touched on illegal immigration, Tom Metzger stood up and told the audience, “The flow of illegal immigrants may be getting out of control and threatens to lower standards of living in the United States by increasing the amount of taxes needed to provide welfare and social security to culturally backward masses of immigrants.” He then warned, “through bloc

⁹⁴ Editor, “Multicultural studies expansion announced,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, January 30, 1975, A4; Editor, “Southwest murals now on display,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, February 6, 1975, A7; Tom Owen, “El Rincon Español: Club Progreso,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, September 23, 1976, B15.

⁹⁵ Editor, “Precious Few plan fundraising event,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, February 24, 1977, B6.

⁹⁶ Editor, “Calavo members get \$979,931,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, January 8, 1976, A11.

⁹⁷ Danny Muñoz, interview with the author, April 11, 2024, Danny spoke about how his father would drive workers to church once Spanish language mass began. His parents were involved in advocating for Spanish language mass; Editor, “Board votes to approve bilingual school program,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, June 30, 1977, A1; Editor, “Two appointed to C of C board,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, July 28, 1977, A1; Tom Owen, “Rincon Español: Honor Bien Merecido,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, August 4, 1977, B5; Editor, “Oct. 31 deadline for C of C nominations,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, October 27, 1977, A4.

⁹⁸ Metro News, “States bordering Mexico form joint commission,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, August 18, 1977, A6.

voting, the immigrants may gain political control in some areas.” He ended by claiming that “fat cats who want cheap labor are responsible for the lack of efficient enforcement of immigration laws.” Ultimately, he believed someone had to put a stop to all this before it was too late.⁹⁹

⁹⁹ Bruce Wilson, “Funding stalled for airport,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, December 2, 1976, A1, B18.

Chapter 2 Racial Crystallization

Beginning in 1970, the Fallbrook Enterprise captured the voices of two Toms. Each Tom spoke for two different communities. The recently converted racist and local television repairman, Tom Metzger, claimed to speak for white people and white workers in particular.¹⁰⁰ Tom Owen, a long-serving director of Fallbrook Community Services Committee, wrote a weekly column in Spanish called “El Rincon Español”, or the Spanish Corner, where he reported on the activities organized by Mexican led organizations in the small agricultural town.¹⁰¹ Through these two Toms we witness a simultaneous racial rearticulation. Through numerous opinion letters published over many years, Tom Metzger reveals a hardening of his defense of whiteness. Tom Owen’s column demonstrated how the Mexican organizations took agency over their identity, language and culture. The Mexican community I was born into, my parents, their grove worker peers, their compadres (the Muñoz’s and Covarrubias) were all within the gaze of a Grand Dragon, the state leader of the California Knights of the Ku Klux Klan, and his Klansmen.

However, the Mexican organizations during the 1970s rarely challenged political whiteness, and by not doing so allowed it to grow unimpeded. That is not to say that there were not acts of resistance, there were. What resistance took place, however, came from individuals and not from an organized position. Additionally, cases of individual resistance were summarized through the local newspaper through white residents and local law enforcement,

¹⁰⁰ Tom Metzger, “Open Forum: The case for night meetings,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, June 8, 1972, A12.

¹⁰¹ Editor, “Tom Owen retires again, to be honored Saturday,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, May 14, 1981, B3.

including the Sheriffs and the Border Patrol. In other words, Mexican resistance was interpreted through the lens of political whiteness and racial rearticulation. Therefore, like a geode that allows crystals to grow in a sheltered environment, the community of Fallbrook fostered the regeneration of the fourth rise of the Ku Klux Klan. This movement would crystallize and harden over the next decade.

Before moving to Fallbrook, both Toms worked at Douglas Aircraft, and both moved to Fallbrook in the late 1960s. News articles about both Toms and letters they each submitted began to appear around the same time; Tom Owen in 1970 and Tom Metzger in 1971.¹⁰² As their letters in the paper would reveal, their objectives and world views were at political opposites. Metzger and his NAKBA colleagues Joe Reedy and Frank Thurlow called for the complete expulsion of Mexicans from Fallbrook. In a letter to President Nixon printed in the *Fallbrook Enterprise* in 1970, Frank framed “poorly educated and unskilled” immigrants from Mexico taking jobs, attending already overcrowded schools, and receiving welfare as an existential threat that, “will cause the death of our nation.”¹⁰³ Tom Owen responded to Thurlow’s letter through an opinion editorial where he proclaimed, “[T]he ones that aren’t immigrants now are the Mexicans and Indians, they were in this area long before we were. The infusion of new blood by immigrants has long been credited with the forward look of our nation, may it never cease.”¹⁰⁴ Tom Owen called for solidarity and support for the Mexican community. He took action by allowing leaders of the various groups to speak through his column, leaving a chronicle of the Mexican community’s actions for nearly a decade.

¹⁰² Tom Owen, “Immigration: May it never cease,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, December 31, 1970, B4; Editor, “Officers Elected,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, March 18, 1971, B4.

¹⁰³ Frank Thurlow, “Aliens concern local resident,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, December 24, 1970, B8.

¹⁰⁴ Owen, “Immigration,” B4.

The years between 1976 and 1982 document the rise of a new Ku Klux Klan as one of many organizations led by Tom Metzger. At the same time there was an abrupt silencing of the three most active and prominent Mexican organizations; the Sociedad Progresista Mexicana, the Club Progreso para Familias Mexicanas, and the American G.I. Forum. Stories about racial violence and social unrest rocked the town at the moment when the Mexican organizations were at their most active and developed stages. Given the increase in anti-Mexican sentiment and violence during the late 1970s, it is difficult to deny that this climate likely factored into the Mexican organizations' decline. Public spaces like Live Oak County Park and local school board meetings for the elementary and high school districts became contested spaces and battlegrounds. Metzger amplified his movement and message by running for office four times. He ran for two different seats in 1978, in the primary and general elections in 1980, and again in 1982. In the process, he transitioned from being a local voice for political whiteness to a national voice for white power by 1983. What follows are examples from the *Fallbrook Enterprise* that tell the story of a hardening of whiteness and racial formation.

Metzger's organizational affiliations and titles would change year to year and according to the subject he was writing about. He had been a spokesperson for the John Birch Society, the National Association to Keep and Bear Arms (NAKBA), the North County Tax Rebellion Committee, and the American Independent Party.¹⁰⁵ Most of his earlier submissions focused on critiquing politicians or the Nixon administration's international affairs. He critiqued the federal reserve system as a con and he expressed discontent with the "socialized" public school system

¹⁰⁵ Editor, "Birch Society opposes Nixon trip to China," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, October 14, 1971, A4; Editor, "Officers Elected," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, March 18, 1971, B4; Editor, "Tax rebellion groups hold meetings," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, May 11, 1972, B12; Tom Metzger, "Opposition to Prop. 9," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, May 30, 1974, B7.

which was allowing Mexican students to attend, “when they should be out working.”¹⁰⁶ At the start of 1976, he claimed to represent the Crusader Christian Church, but by December he was the statewide director of the White Brotherhood, and finally a spokesperson for the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.¹⁰⁷ Langer argues that Metzger’s changing affiliations between organizations was indicative of his drive to find an action oriented organization. This drive was especially motivated by his military background.¹⁰⁸

His public announcement as a Klansman was prompted by a fight between Black Marines and white Marines attempting to hold a Klan meeting on Camp Pendleton. In an attempt to deflate the matter, Camp Pendleton leadership began to relocate the Klan affiliated marines to bases across the country, while the Black marines faced assault charges. The Klan marines that were facing relocation sought the support of Tom Metzger. After all, he was the state Grand Dragon since 1975, and he was a Christian identity minister. For almost two years, he kept his Klan affiliation out of the public light until he was forced to take action.¹⁰⁹ This story involving Black marines, Klan marines, and a Klan Grand Dragon shook Fallbrook and the local community. Metzger admitted that other white supremacist groups had also operated on base, including the National States Rights Party, National Socialists White People's Party, and the American Rangers.¹¹⁰ The Klan chapter on the marine base was a different Klan group from Tom’s California Knights of the Ku Klux Klan.¹¹¹ This turn of events in Fallbrook would set the stage for a racially volatile year in 1977.

¹⁰⁶ Tom Metzger, “Tax expo attracts 1,000,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, March 22, 1973, A3; Editor, “Expressing pent up hatred,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, January 4, 1973, B8; Tom Metzger, “Too much education,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, March 25, 1976, B15.

¹⁰⁷ Bob White “Metzger guest at KABC radio,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, February 12, 1976, A11; Bob White, “Legal action promised in base Klan upheaval,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, December 9, 1976, A2

¹⁰⁸ Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 123-124.

¹⁰⁹ Bob White, “Legal action promised in base Klan upheaval,” A2.

¹¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹¹ Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 137.

Since March of 1975, the San Clemente and Temecula “alien checkpoints” were closed pending a decision from the U.S. Supreme Court regarding the constitutionality of stops and searches at freeway checkpoints. In July of 1976, The Supreme Court ruled that the checkpoints did not violate the Fourth Amendment, allowing for the checkpoints to open again. This decision would also bring an increase number of Border Patrol agents to conduct large scale raids deep within the communities of Fallbrook and De Luz.¹¹² The paper’s opinion section reported on and debated the community forums held regarding the “alien problem.” Stories relating aliens and crime also began to appear with increased frequency.

Finally, episodes of violence in 1976 would foreshadow a sharp increase in racial violence in 1977. In the February 5, 1976 edition of the *Fallbrook Enterprise*, nestled in between his update on the bilingual school and Migrant Education, Tom Owen confirmed that he was nearly shot. While he was out driving with his son-in-law to pick up firewood, he heard a loud “bang,” thinking that his car was hit by a rock. He stopped the vehicle and got out to inspect what occurred and found a shattered window with a bullet hole in the center. He reported the incident to the Sheriffs, although there was not much that could have been done.¹¹³

On October 28, 1976, some fighting at the Fallbrook High School campus brought the Sheriffs out for the day. Later in the evening at the Friday football game, Sheriffs were still present when more fighting broke out. Deputy Snoddy attempted to break up a fight between white and Mexican males, but soon became the target of the white students. One of the students, Robert Stackhouse, rushed the deputy after a 15-year-old white student yelled, “Waste the fucking pigs and kill the beaners.”¹¹⁴ More violence would occur after the revelation of the Ku

¹¹² Editor, “Checkpoints reopening,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, July 8, 1976, A3.

¹¹³ Tom Owen, “El Rincon Español: Mi Ataque,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, February 5, 1976, B6.

¹¹⁴ Editor, “Three violent acts keep deputies alert,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, October 28, 1976, A2.

Klux Klan was made public in December. On February, 1977, an unusual episode of violence took place at Live Oak Park. According to the *Enterprise*, a large fight occurred involving about one hundred people. The paper describes a fight between Vista Construction workers versus Mexicans. The article came across as sympathetic to the alleged construction workers and made the young Mexicans look like the unruly instigators who were careless during their game of horseshoes, nearly striking a member of their group. A large fight erupted and, according to the paper, the victims reported “a group of male Mexicans charged into the picnickers with clubs, chains and guns.” After the confrontation, the police and Border Patrol rounded up ten to twelve Mexican youth including some suspected “aliens.”¹¹⁵

Atanasio Ordonez Velasco recounted a different story. According to Velasco the fight was with some marines after they tried to pick up on his wife. Sergeant Don Funk said “no doubt the riot had a racial flavor.” The discrepancy in describing the white males as construction workers versus marines is worth noting. The controversy about the Ku Klux Klan based on Camp Pendleton had begun to reverberate throughout the County of San Diego and beyond. In December of 1976, national leaders like the Klan’s Grand Wizard, David Duke, and Civil Rights leader, Jesse Jackson, both traveled to the base for press events.¹¹⁶ In June, the City of San Diego called for a racism probe after a “night rider” incident occurred in Paradise Valley. The night rider was revealed to be David Duke’s bodyguard when he visited Camp Pendleton in April.¹¹⁷ Thus, describing the white workers involved in the violence at Live Oak Park as marines could have associated this incident as another episode involving the Klan. Yet, the local

¹¹⁵ Editor, “Violence hits Fallbrook: Two deaths, park riot,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, February 24, 1977, A1.

¹¹⁶ Editor, “KKK lead here; Will file suit,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, December 16, 1976, A9.

¹¹⁷ Metro News, “Racism probe urged by city,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, June 30, 1977, A13.

media shielded the Marines, while the sheriffs and the Border Patrol all disparaged and repressed the Mexican youth.

This story regarding violence at Live Oak Park would not be an isolated incident. Local artist Daniel Martinez also recalled narrowly escaping with his life after being beaten and chased out of Live Oak Park by a white mob in a frenzy in 1976. While he was an art student at Palomar College at sixteen years of age, he and his friend visited Live Oak Park to work on an art project. He recalled:

We're sitting there painting, having a good time, and then these things got hurled at us, like rocks. I turned around, and [saw] all these guys, like 17 of them. One of them goes, "What are you doing in our park? You're brown, get the fuck out of our park." I say, "it's a public park." [They respond] "No, it's not a public park, this is our park, it's only for white people." And they basically just slammed me right in the face. I got beat up really bad. And my buddy, he's Hawaiian, he's getting hit too, and we're just getting pummeled all around in a circle... They had crowbars and knives, clubs and sticks. There were two women with them. And I remember thinking the women could be compassionate. No way. These women gave us two minutes. She came right up to me [and said] "You got two minutes to run young man, or they're going to kill you and chop you up, and leave you in the park, and somebody someday will find you years down the road."¹¹⁸

After defending himself, Daniel was able to escape the brawl run away towards Gird Road, exiting the park. Being a cross-country runner, he was able to flee from what he described as a "shark frenzy." He sincerely believed they were attempting to kill him and his friend. During these years, Tom Metzger began hosting Ku Klux Klan meetings and events at Live Oak Park. In 1979, they held a "social" gathering and reception for David Duke who was in town again. Approximately one hundred Klansmen were in attendance.¹¹⁹ The Klan's presence at Live Oak Park and the hostility towards ethnic Mexicans would designate the park as a contested space for whiteness, since the Mexican-led organizations had also held many large gatherings at

¹¹⁸ Daniel Martinez, interview with author, January 19, 2024, interview in author's possession.

¹¹⁹ Editor, "Metzger hosts KKK leader," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, February 22, 1979, A3

Live Oak Park. The Club Progreso para Familias Mexicanas had recently held a fiesta in February of 1976.¹²⁰

Another tragic story involving the murder of 43-year-old Anacieto Avila would rock the community along with the District Attorney's decision in that case. Henry Hardy plead guilty to voluntary manslaughter for shooting and killing Avila in January of 1977 while Hardy was heavily intoxicated. The motive was unknown. The District Attorney settled on this case because he expressed that a jury would acquit Hardy regardless.¹²¹ Fallbrook residents sent opinion letters expressing outrage about the decision, while Metzger wrote an opinion in defense of Henry Hardy.¹²² Owen responded with an emotional commentary in his "Rincon Español" stating that due to his line of work he often gets to "go to families very quickly after a tragedy and see the stiff horror on the faces [of family members]." Owen mentioned that Mr. Avila participated in events organized by the Mexican organizations in town, revealing how close this murder was felt by the Mexican community.¹²³ Within weeks of Avila's murder, Tom Owen reported the death of another Mexican father, Enrique Escobedo, who died from unknown injuries.¹²⁴ Tom Metzger responded with a racial rearticulation in defense of white people stating, "When a Mexican is killed and a white man just happens to get a lenient sentence, all the bleeding heart minority racists cry crocodile tears... I wish, however, the bleeding hearts would just once bleed a little for the white Caucasian who is brutally attacked by roving gangs of non-whites."¹²⁵

¹²⁰ Tom Owen "El Rincon Español: Club Progreso," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, April 15, 1976, B7.

¹²¹ Editor, "Voluntary manslaughter plea in shotgun slaying," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, February 3, 1977, B1.

¹²² Frank B. Harriman, "Open Forum: Shocked about plea in killing," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, February 17, 1977, B16.

¹²³ Tom Owen, "Open Forum: Public reactions to killings," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, February 24, 1977, B18.

¹²⁴ Tom Owen, "El Rincon Español: Fallecimiento," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, February 27, 1977, B6.

¹²⁵ Tom Metzger, "Comments on bleeding hearts," Metzger hosts KKK leader," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, March 3, 1977, B20.

More violence between white youth and white adults versus Mexicans continued. In 1979, the *Fallbrook Enterprise* reported, “Gunshot victim 15 stable after fight.” Fights involving fifteen to twenty “Mexicans and Anglos” took place on South Alturas Road, which has historically been the Mexican side of town. A teenager by the name of Roberto Navarro Torres was shot in the abdomen but survived. On that day, two fights had taken place where one involved Anglo youth and the second involved Anglo adults.¹²⁶ Another large fight described by the newspaper as a “near riot” involved a group of young “Chicanos” in a confrontation with a group of white males in the Alpha Beta parking lot.¹²⁷ Additional stories were reported involving robberies, shootings, fire bombing, and kidnappings of migrants by white youth and adults.¹²⁸ Bodies of dead migrants were found in shallow graves in De Luz, a desolate canyon north of the town of Fallbrook.¹²⁹ The paper also reported that four of the six murders that

¹²⁶ Editor, “Gun shot victim, 15, stable after fight,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, May 24, 1979, C1.

¹²⁷ Editor, “Near-riot brings cops out in force,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, August 31, 1978, A1.

¹²⁸ Editor, “Alien loses \$ to two armed robbers,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, July 21, 1977, A3, a 19-year-old migrant student returning from night school was robbed at gunpoint by two “Caucasians” who entered his home; Editor, “Man arrested for throwing fire bomb,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, August 3, 1978, B9, Robert Jett was arrested for intent to murder for throwing a Molotov cocktail at a group of Mexicans; Editor, “Two arrested for shots at house,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, October 26, 1978, A18, Paul Walker and Lawrence Bowman were arrested for shooting at a random home where Mexicans reside. The incident was described as a racial act; Editor, “Rainbow man faces charges in alien case,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, December 1, 1977, A6, Fernando Martin Steer kidnapped two undocumented workers at gunpoint and took them to the Temecula checkpoint where he turned them over. The workers told the agents that Steer owed them wages for 42 hours of labor; Editor, “Robbers gun down Mexican alien,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, January 1, 1981, A1, Grove worker Guadalupe Salgado was shot in the back as he ran from two white gunmen in De Luz. His brothers witnessed the killing and the sheriff’s investigator said this was the first crime of this type he has heard of in that area, noting that migrant workers are afraid to report crimes; Editor, “KKK incident probed,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, January 24, 1980, A10, Two men wearing KKK caps started a fight with Marines at the Jack- in-the-Box in Fallbrook. One of the Marines was Mexican and racial slurs were yelled. The Klansmen had just returned from a Klan rally at San Pasqual.

¹²⁹ Editor, “Body found in shallow grave makes neighbors nervous,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, February 7, 1980, A1, An unidentified body of man of assumed Mexican heritage was found. It was one of an increasing number of violent crimes reported in migrant camps recently. He was in his 30s with multiple lacerations and was carrying a year’s wages earned. He was found with his hands tied behind his back. An informant said that two men had been killed and buried, but only one was found. A week later, the *Fallbrook Enterprise*, confirmed it was Oscar Enrique Caste of Guatemalan heritage.

occurred in Fallbrook in 1977 involved “Mexican aliens” and that these counted among nine “Mexican aliens” killed in North San Diego County in that year.¹³⁰

The sharp increase in violence in Fallbrook coincided with the overt resurgence of the Ku Klux Klan in 1977. Also, during the year, Metzger revived his border watch program under the auspices of the Knights of the Ku Klux Klan (KKKK). In October, the KKKK launched a southern border-wide effort to create a volunteer border patrol auxiliary to support the U.S. Border Patrol. This anti-Mexican campaign drew large attention from the media and from a unified front of Chicanos/Chicanas and African Americans in San Diego.¹³¹ Metzger and David Duke launched the effort in spectacular form by arriving at the border in a rented helicopter, reminiscent of a similar tactic used by Adolf Hitler.¹³² Later, when the program was investigated for its use of weapons and complicity with the U.S. Border Patrol, Metzger described the border watch program and strategy in a very telling form.

In a legal deposition, Metzger was questioned by attorney Peter Schey. Regarding the reach of the program, Metzger stated, “You must understand that the term ‘Klan Border Watch’ is a program that encompasses the entire state, not just the border... all Klan people, be they children, adults or what, are involved in this program, on the job, off the job, traveling to work, traveling home.” When asked about where the most recent patrolling activity had taken place, Metzger replied, “Generally, in the North County.”¹³³ Through this statement, Metzger revealed that they were watching for Mexicans anywhere in the state and their most active area was in the North County of San Diego. It is also important to note that Metzger did not distinguish between

¹³⁰ Editor, “6th murder case probed,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, November 3, 1977, A1.

¹³¹ Jimmy Patiño, *Raza sí, migra no: Chicano Movement Struggles for Immigrant Rights in San Diego*, (North Carolina: University of North Carolina Press Books, 2017), 208.

¹³² Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 138, 139.

¹³³ Donald Hubbard, “Margaret Navarro, et al vs. David Duke. Deposition of Tom Metzger. 1977,”. *Court Case Files - Herman Baca Collection*, 1977, 12,13,14.

a Mexican immigrant and a Mexican American. In a 1983 article printed in his WAR newspaper authored by the Church of the Creator, it was explicitly stated that the policy for the expulsion of Mexicans was two-fold. First would be to completely seal the border. Second would be to expel all Mexicans from white communities.¹³⁴ This is how they would achieve the separation of races, and the violence that accompanied the rise of the fourth Ku Klux Klan was part of a policy of racialization.

Mexican organizations' response to the increase in racialized violence was a bit puzzling, yet fit according to the theory of racial and hegemonic formation. Unwilling or incapable of calling out political whiteness or white supremacy, the Club Progreso sided with the white community in criticizing Mexican families for their failure to control their youth. One incident in particular was of concern. In March of 1977, Carolyn Louise Hubbert reported being surrounded and threatened by six Mexican males when she was in the post office lobby. According to the woman, the young men began to make lewd remarks until a Mexican woman intervened. She called the sheriffs who gave the opinion that "she would have been abducted had a Mexican woman not intervened." The deputies then arrested five of the six males over the next two days on charges of false imprisonment and disturbing the peace.¹³⁵ The leadership of the Club Progreso lamented, "What has become of Fallbrook? What has become of the community where women could travel the streets by night without fear?" This response seems odd considering all that was taking place with the presence of the Klan, yet it is important to also keep in mind how the local newspaper, the Sheriffs, and the Border Patrol were in sync with the Klan in articulating the Mexican presence as problematic.

¹³⁴ Church of the Creator, "The Mud Flood." (Fallbrook: *White American Resistance*, 1983), 11, Accessed March 25, 2023. <https://resist.com/w-a-r-paper-titles/>.

¹³⁵ Editor, "Six threaten woman in post office lobby," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, March 10, 1977, A2.

The concern was clearly for the white woman who felt threatened. After meeting with the local churches and the sheriffs regarding reports of crime in the small town, the club called for a special meeting to address Mexican parents for failing to control their children.¹³⁶ This response is indicative of the hegemonic character of political whiteness. Daniel HoSang explains a similar dynamic that arose in California related to the racial ballot propositions during the 1990s. As HoSang states, “Unwilling or unable to challenge political whiteness as a universal standard of political judgment, self-identified liberal groups played an active role in reproducing its normative assumptions, constraining the boundaries of acceptable claims for racial justice in the future.”¹³⁷ In the 1980s, new Mexican youth groups would form to address what they would describe as the negative image of Mexicans, demonstrating the internalization of the dominant narrative regarding the problematic Mexican.

In contrast, Tom Metzger claimed that after his Klan affiliation became public he received more support from the community. Initially, Metzger kept his Klan membership a secret until the Klan Marines called for support. Despite his worries regarding how the public would react to his new title when the news broke in 1976, they were dispelled when all but four of the two hundred personal letters they received were supportive. As for his television repair business, “it actually improved.”¹³⁸ In the *Fallbrook Enterprise*, a few people expressed shock and concerns about the revelation of the state leader of the Klan in their community, while roughly the same number wrote letters in support of the Klan.¹³⁹ In the March 27, 1980 issue of the newspaper, Beverly June Grove would express her concerns about Metzger. She read an article

¹³⁶ Editor, “Mexican-Amer leaders plan special meeting,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, March 24, 1977, B7.

¹³⁷ HoSang, *Racial Propositions*, 22.

¹³⁸ Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 138.

¹³⁹ G. Johnson, “Shocked by Klan here,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, July 6, 1978, A18; Harry Lundquist, “Open Forum: Commending the Klan,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, September 21, 1978, A14.

in the *Enterprise* from the previous week that reported on an event organized by the KKK at John Landes Park in Oceanside. Once again, targeting a public park, the Klan showed up in a racially diverse community dressed in black riot gear, donning shields, helmets, bats and clubs. The local residents turned out to confront them and the event erupted in violence after Metzger issued a short speech through his bullhorn.¹⁴⁰ The police stood by and were slow to interfere. Beverly's opinion letter makes clear she was upset at Metzger for holding his rally in Oceanside and not in Fallbrook, which had "more illegal aliens in Fallbrook, than there are left in Mexico!"¹⁴¹

When Metzger took his breaks from plotting for race war, he was known for singing karaoke at local bars, including the Red Eye Saloon, which is directly down the street from where I live. On a wall in this bar there is a painted mural of an old western town. There, Metzger is memorialized wearing his black cowboy hat with microphone in hand. When I was a youth in high school, every fourth of July from my front yard, I could hear bar patrons screaming "*White Power!*" from the top of their lungs. Metzger lived in Fallbrook through the peak of his white power movement and as late as 1991 after he lost his home due the *Berhanu vs. Metzger* court ruling. He expressed his thoughts about Fallbrook in the *Times Advocate* stating, "My political base is stronger here than in other areas."¹⁴² After taking leadership of the California Klan, membership increased from three hundred to three thousand in its first year of operating overtly, while on a national level, Duke and Metzger's Klan increased from 6,500 in 1975 to 10,000 in 1979, "plus an additional 75,000 active sympathizers." A Gallup poll showed that "that

¹⁴⁰ Michael Valente, "Two Cents Worth," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, March 20, 1980, A17.

¹⁴¹ Beverly June Grove, "Now its Tortilla Flats," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, March 27, 1980, A20.

¹⁴² Pancho Doll, "Metzger vows to keep living in Fallbrook," *Times Advocate*, February 22, 1991, B1.

the number of people with favorable opinions of the Klan rose from 6 percent in 1965 to 11 percent in 1979.”¹⁴³

Remarkably, by 1978 “El Rincon Español” almost abruptly stopped reporting on the activities of any of Fallbrook’s Mexican organizations and the column itself began to appear with less frequency. When Tom Owen did submit a piece in Spanish, he mostly gave his own personal opinions or asked his readers to share stories. On a few occasions he mentioned citizenship events organized by the American G.I. Forum. By the latter half of 1982, there were no longer mentions of Owen, nor any Mexican organizations, in the *Fallbrook Enterprise*. Despite this lack of visibility, Mexican community leaders still kept working on projects that their groups had launched. Mr. Ernesto Muñoz continued to teach Spanish classes at the Bilingual Center. As to what led to the decline of Club Progreso para Familias Mexicanas, neither Judy nor Danny Muñoz were exactly sure, but Judy mentioned that the leadership was always the same and some just could not continue with the commitments. They also mentioned that the Sociedad Mutualista de San Jose is still active and continues to be operating out of St. Peter’s Catholic Church. Judy Muñoz is still a dues-paying member.

RACIAL POLITICS

Primary sources tell a compelling story about Tom Metzger’s political career and the community in which he built his movement. This summary will draw from stories available in the *Fallbrook Enterprise*, election data from the San Diego Registrar of voters, a deposition of

¹⁴³ Belew, *Bring the War Home*, 58; and Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 133.

Tom Metzger taken in 1977, testimony given by a San Diego reserve officer who infiltrated the Klan in 1978, a 1978 PBS feature documentary about the “new Klan,” and content from Metzger’s website, resist.com. The information provided by these sources reveal how since 1975, Metzger was a rising star within a national revival of the Ku Klux Klan led by David Duke, which took strategic steps to advance its racially separatist and anti-government objectives through mainstream avenues. Arguing on behalf of the white working class, Metzger consistently contended for his right to free expression, free from censorship and repercussions. He tested the limits of free speech by running for office five times between 1978 and 1982. Metzger’s political career provides a quantitative means to measure the reach of white supremacist politics and the impact on voters.

Election data and Tom Metzger’s involvement in electoral campaigns are indicators as to how white nationalist politics, or political whiteness in its most overt expression, operates in a mainstream arena where ideas about power and policy are debated and decided upon. Metzger began to engage in electoral politics in Fallbrook as far back as 1972 where he and his wife Kathleen were on an endorsement list printed in the *Fallbrook Enterprise* mentioning Fallbrook residents who supported Eunice Lowell’s candidacy for the Fallbrook High School Board of Trustees.¹⁴⁴ Metzger was also involved with Jack McCoy’s campaign for the 80th Assembly District in 1973, announcing a potluck to be held at Live Oak Park on May 13.¹⁴⁵ At that time, he was a leader within the John Birch Society and local residents were comfortable with having his name on a public endorsement. Kathleen Metzger had been a faithful supporter of her husband all throughout her life, performing secretarial duties and proofreading the *White Aryan*

¹⁴⁴ Eunice Lowell, “We endorse the candidacy of Eunice W. Lowell,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, January 20, 1972, B1.

¹⁴⁵ Editor, “McCoy talks to supporters,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, May 10, 1973, A7.

Resistance newspaper.¹⁴⁶ She considered the Ku Klux Klan to be an improvement from previous organizations they had been a part of as there was an emphasis on recognizing and respecting the role of white women within the movement.¹⁴⁷

Tom cut his teeth in political campaigning working with Imperial Grand Wizard David Duke. In 1978, PBS aired a documentary called, “The New Klan: Heritage of Hate,” which included footage of Metzger working as the campaign manager for Duke who launched his run for the Louisiana State Senate in 1975. This affiliated Metzger with the Klan nearly two years before they publicly surfaced for the first time in Fallbrook. Duke lost the election; however, he won 11,000 votes comprising nearly a third of all votes “in a well-educated, urban district.”¹⁴⁸ In 1978, after operating openly as the California State Director of the Ku Klux Klan for over a year and having received national and international media attention for organizing the Klan Border Watch, Metzger initiated his own electoral career. In March 1978, he ran for the Fallbrook Planning Group, finishing last with 459 of 2,342 total votes, earning twenty percent of the vote. He was not the only Klansman running. The *Fallbrook Enterprise* also mentions William Karn, also a Klansman and agricultural rancher, who narrowly lost a seat.¹⁴⁹ Metzger then immediately began his campaign for 5th District Supervisor for the County Board of Supervisors.¹⁵⁰ This race involved Metzger in various public events and forums, giving him a platform around San Diego’s North County. Metzger lost this race, but according to the San

¹⁴⁶ Tom Metzger (Editor), *White Aryan Resistance*, White Point Publishing, vol. 7, no. 6, 11

¹⁴⁷ Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 135.

¹⁴⁸ Eleanor Bingham and Leslie Shatz, “The New Klan: Heritage of Hate “, 1978 PBS, video 05:15, Media Burn: Independent Video Archive, <https://mediaburn.org/video/the-new-klan-heritage-of-hate/>.

¹⁴⁹ Editor, “Plan group heavier in Rainbow,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, March 16, 1978, B1; Carlos Larralde, “El Congreso in San Diego: An endeavor for civil rights,” *Journal of San Diego History*, 2023, https://sandiegohistory.org/journal/v50-1/el_congreso.pdf.

¹⁵⁰ Bruce Wilson, “State KKK director running for supervisor,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, March 23, 1978, A9.

Diego Registrar of Voters, he won 11,239 votes among a four-person contest giving him 11% of the vote overall.¹⁵¹

Metzger's 1980 race for the 43rd Congressional District would catapult him into regional and national headlines. Running as a Democrat against two other candidates, Metzger won the June 3rd Primary Election with 33,071 votes from Imperial, southern Riverside, and San Diego Counties combined. The 43rd District started at La Jolla on the coast and stretched east to Imperial County. In San Diego County, he won 24,207 votes, 4,779 less than Edward Skagen. However, the votes from outside of San Diego put Metzger at 392 votes over Skagen overall for the win.¹⁵² In November, Metzger was soundly defeated in the General Election versus Republican Clair Burgenor, but he increased his vote tally by 13,312 for a total of 46,383 votes comprising 13% of the turnout from the 43rd district.¹⁵³ He ran again for Senate in 1982, finishing sixth in the Democratic Primary with 76,502 votes from across the state.¹⁵⁴ It is important to note that in all of these races he ran his own campaigns without the backing of any major political party or funder, and he ran as a Democrat, highlighting the presence of racist Democrats in Southern California.

In an interview with the *Fallbrook Enterprise*, Tom Metzger explained that he switched from Republican to Democrat because the "largest percentage of low and middle class people that he identifies with are Democrats."¹⁵⁵ Considering the outcome of the 1980 General Election, where voters from all parties were able to vote for the candidate of their choice, his combined

¹⁵¹ "Primary Election June 6, 1978," Registrar of Voters, accessed February 21, 2024, <https://www.sdvote.com/content/dam/rov/en/archive/197806CV.pdf>.

¹⁵² Mark Beckington, "Metzger wins by 318 votes," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, June 5, 1980, A1; March Fong Eu, "Primary Election June 3, 1980," California Public Records Act Request, email correspondence with the California Secretary of State, March 1, 2024, 18.

¹⁵³ March Fong Eu, "Statement of Vote General Election, November 4, 1980," California Public Records Act Request, email correspondence with the California Secretary of State, March 1, 2024, 12.

¹⁵⁴ March Fong Eu, "Statement of Vote Primary Election June 8, 1982, 1.

¹⁵⁵ Judy Mesko, "KKK leader runs for office," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, March 13, 1980, A6.

vote total increased by 13,312 points compared to the June primary, where only Democrats voted for that position.¹⁵⁶ If the same Democratic voters that turned out for him in June also turned out in November, that could mean that 71% of support for Metzger came from Democratic voters. An analysis by political sociologists regarding voters who are described as “Reagan Democrats” noted how political messaging, which played on fears and anxieties of voters, was implicitly framed around race during the Reagan presidential elections. Sociologist Michael Omi points to, “The Report on Democratic Defection” commissioned by the Michigan House Democratic Campaign Committee to study Democratic voters who defected and voted Republican in 1980 and 1984.¹⁵⁷ As Omi explains, “Researchers conducted ‘focus group’ interviews with young, white, male workers to get a sense of voter beliefs and their reasons for shifting party allegiance...A dramatic finding which emerges from this study is that for many of the respondents their understanding of international crises, domestic problems, and personal difficulties were all framed in racial terms.”¹⁵⁸ Metzger was very explicit and unapologetic about centering his campaign positions around race. Overall, among his different electoral bids, Metzger consistently won anywhere from 11% - 33% of the vote from the Southern California communities of San Diego, Riverside, and the Inland Empire. Although the *Fallbrook Enterprise* made the point to mention that he did not win any precincts in Fallbrook during the 1980 primary, the losses were by a small margin, and he won many precincts in communities east and south of Fallbrook including Valley Center, Palomar Mountain, Warner Springs, Poway, Ramona, Santee, El Cajon and La Mesa.¹⁵⁹

¹⁵⁶ March Fong Eu, “Primary Election June 3, 1980,” 18.

¹⁵⁷ Omi, “Shifting the Blame,” 79.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ “Presidential Primary Election June 3, 1980,” Registrar of Voters, accessed February 21, 2024, <https://www.sdvote.com/content/dam/rov/en/archive/198006CV.pdf>

When it came to his political positions, Metzger was not shy about his racist world view. He targeted Mexican migrants as the focal point of his campaign and advocated for, “establishing a militarized zone from the ocean to the Otay Mountains and shooting any illegal aliens who attempt to cross it.”¹⁶⁰ His platform centered around race and Klan events. He first mentioned his interest in becoming a Congressman at a Klan commemoration for Kit Carson in San Pasqual on January 20, 1980.¹⁶¹ San Pasqual, in present day Escondido, had been a site of anti-Mexican significance for Metzger’s Klan and the San Diego Ku Klux Klan from the 1920’s. This was the site of the Battle of San Pasqual of 1846, where the invading U.S. Army of the West was defeated in battle by a militia of local Mexican vaqueros, which included Ysidro Alvarado, a rancher from the Fallbrook area.¹⁶² A book about Fallbrook History, published by the Fallbrook Historical Society in 1977, noted that a Ku Klux Klan initiation held at Battle Mountain was an accomplishment of the 1920s.¹⁶³ To this day, a 30 foot cross stands on the mountain and is illuminated at night. It is maintained by an organization named, “Let’s Light the Cross, Inc.”¹⁶⁴ According to undercover police reserve officer Doug Seymour, a cross lighting is Klan lingo, which effectively makes the cross a memorial to the Ku Klux Klan.¹⁶⁵

¹⁶⁰ Mark Beckington, “Election runs gamut from Y to KKK,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, October 30, 1980, A1.

¹⁶¹ Jim Berns, “San Diego Police Asked Doug Seymour to Infiltrate the California Ku Klux Klan - and Then Repudiated Him.” *San Diego Reader*, June 25, 1987, accessed February 22, 2024, <https://www.sandiegoreader.com/news/1987/jun/25/cover-undercover-klansman/>.

¹⁶² Jose Francisco Palomares, *Memoirs of Jose Francisco Palomares*, translated by Thomas Workman Temple II, (Los Angeles: George Yamada, 1955), 64, This book mentions that Ysidro Alvarado was a scout for the Mexican forces who spied on the invading U.S. forces.

¹⁶³ H. Marquis, *Fallbrook Yesterday and Today*, (California: Fallbrook Historical Society, 1977), 28.

¹⁶⁴ Author’s field observations. When I read about the Klan initiation on Battle Mountain in 2010, I visited the location and hiked to the top where the cross stands. It had a plaque that read, “Since 1977, Let’s Light the Cross, Inc.” A San Diego Union-Tribune article mentioned that the cross had burned in 1988. See <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/pomerado-news/sdpn-around-the-ranch-all-about-battle-mountain-2009jan29-story.html>.

¹⁶⁵ Nancy Schoeffler, “Seymour wants grant jury to look again as this charges,” *The Times-Advocate*, March 13, 1988, A9.

From his first effort running for the Fallbrook Planning Group, Metzger was quoted as saying, “I owe no allegiance except to the productive race that built this nation.”¹⁶⁶ When Metzger announced that he was running for Congress on March 1, 1980, he was among 300 Klansmen and supporters at member George Pepper’s property in Fontana where they gathered in a show of force to intimidate his neighbors.¹⁶⁷ “KKK Leader Runs for Congress” was the headline in the *Fallbrook Enterprise* on March 13, 1980. Two days later, Metzger led the Klan in a rally that turned violent at John Landes Park in an ethnically diverse area of Oceanside.¹⁶⁸ Metzger counted on Klan related actions to help him get as much media attention as possible, leaving no question as to what distinguished him as a candidate.

By 1982, during his run for Senate, Metzger synthesized his platform around race and the expulsion of “aliens,” which was his racialized term for primarily Mexican migrants. Speaking to the *Fallbrook Enterprise*, he racially rearticulated his positions: “Automatically with the expulsion of aliens more people will be working, more people will be paying Social Security which in turn can be passed along to senior citizens. Also, if we deport massive numbers of aliens, like we did in 1946, this would open up low-cost housing to the workers.”¹⁶⁹ He did not distinguish between legal residents and undocumented Mexican nationals when he referred to “aliens” and, in fact, the “expulsion” of all Mexicans was a Klan objective of the Klan Border Watch program of 1977. During his 1982 Senate campaign run, Metzger attempted to temper his Klan affiliation. Writing for the *Fallbrook Enterprise*, Helen Moriarty notes that he identified with the Ku Klux Klan during the 1980 election, however, he now stated that, “There is no Klan activity going on now and I am too busy with the White American Political Association.” This

¹⁶⁶ Editor, “Candidates ready for election,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, February 23, 1978, A1, A16.

¹⁶⁷ Jim Berns, “San Diego Police Asked Doug Seymour to Infiltrate the California Ku Klux Klan,” 1987

¹⁶⁸ Michael Valente, “Two Cents Worth,” A17.

¹⁶⁹ Helen Moriarty, “Metzger runs for senate,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, March 18, 1982, A10.

rebranding of his campaign issues and organizational affiliates is demonstrative of the malleable nature of political whiteness, and exemplifies racial rearticulation as described by Omi. While Metzger was not apologetic about his racial positions, he was campaigning in California in 1982 when, “public defenses of racial nationalism grew increasingly rare” since World War II.¹⁷⁰

Doug Seymour, San Diego Police reservist and undercover informant who infiltrated Metzger’s Ku Klux Klan between 1979-1981, tells the story about how the formation of the White American Political Association was in line with the Klan’s internal strategies. In August of 1979, Seymour traveled with Metzger to New Orleans to attend the Klan National Leadership Conference. Seymour states that a three-part strategy was developed for gaining power, “The plan called for all Klan members to buy and learn how to shoot guns; the study of small claims court to help raise money for the Klan, regardless of a case’s merit; and for Klan members to run for elected office, from the PTA to the U.S. Congress.” Five weeks after the sensational melee in Oceanside, “Metzger changed the name of the California Klan, in keeping with this political strategy developed at the New Orleans convention of the previous summer, and created the White American Political Association (WAPA), an organization that [was], according to Seymour, a transparent attempt to sanitize the Klan’s image.”¹⁷¹

After his 1982 run for Senate, Tom Metzger faded out of sight in the *Fallbrook Enterprise*, appearing less and less until the latter half of 1984 when he ceased to appear at all until 1986. On May, 1, 1986 the *Fallbrook Enterprise* printed an advertisement promoting a television appearance titled, “Tom Metzger Uncensored,” to air on Channel 30 local cable television. Turning towards his organizational archives on his website, www.resist.com, it is evident that from 1983 until 1989 he developed an independent media network that centered

¹⁷⁰ HoSang, *Racial Propositions*, 6.

¹⁷¹ Jim Berns, “San Diego Police Asked Doug Seymour to Infiltrate the California Ku Klux Klan,” 1987.

itself within the national white power movement. This network consisted of a quarterly newspaper, a talk show produced for public access cable television, a radio program, and a clearinghouse for recorded television and radio shows along with books and publications from allied white power movements. Additionally, as early as 1985 he was pioneering a computer-based online communications forum. The first issue of the White American Resistance newspaper printed in 1983, which was the official publication of the White American Political Association, made a literal declaration of war with its headline "WAR DECLARED."

Chapter 3 Racial Violence

“Race is a cultural construct, but one with deadly social causes and consequences.”

George Lipsitz

On October 22, 1990, Tom Metzger and his son John, along with members of the East Side White Pride skinhead group based in Portland, Oregon, were held legally and financially responsible for the fatal beating of Mulugeta Seraw, an African immigrant from Ethiopia. Tom and John Metzger were in Fallbrook when Kyle Brewster and Ken Mieske assaulted Mulugeta during the evening of November 13, 1988, in Portland. Mulegeta’s skull was crushed after being hit repeatedly with a bat. Morris Dees, attorney and co-founder of the Southern Poverty Law Center, successfully convinced a jury of twelve Oregon residents that Tom, John, and their organization, WAR, were responsible for the murder *by agency*. Dees explained the SPLC’s strategy, which had previously applied successfully to a case involving the United Klans of America:

the UKA, like any corporation, should be held liable for the acts of its agents when those agents were acting to further the organization’s goals. By securing secret Klan documents and demonstrating that the UKA had a long history of violence to advance its stated goal, the ‘God-given supremacy of the white race,’ we were able to persuade an all-white jury to deliver a landmark \$7 million verdict.”¹⁷²

A murder by agency implied that the Metzgers had supplied the personnel and the training for a group like the East Side White Pride to carry out deliberate acts of violence against racialized people. The agents for the Metzgers were Dave Mazzella, Vice-President of the Aryan Youth Movement (WAR’s youth wing), Michael Barrett, and Michael Gagnon, among

¹⁷² Morris Dees, *Hate on Trial: The Case Against American’s Most Dangerous Neo-Nazi*, (New York, Villard Books, 1993), 49, 272, 11-12.

others. The Metzgers sent the three to Portland to help organize the East Side White Pride skinhead gang and recruit them into their movement. Less than six weeks later, Seraw was killed as a result of a renewed racial rearticulation manifested as a racial policy which included a call for violence.¹⁷³ A WAR newspaper used by Mazzella for training called for the implementation of OPERATION WARLORDS which aimed to develop the “hunter-killer instincts” of the youth and “create a new wave of predatory leaders.”¹⁷⁴ While on the witness stand, Dave Mazzella, testifying against Tom Metzger, claimed that the WAR literature and political cartoons dehumanized Black and Mexican people to the point where they looked like, “bugs you could step on.”¹⁷⁵ The *Berhanu v. Metzger* trial was a signature case that would bankrupt the Metzgers and their movement, however, the case would come a decade too late. As part of a process of a renewed racial formation, a campaign of violence and terror against racialized peoples had been underway since the rise of Metzger’s Klan in 1976, and by 1990 it had spread across the country.

On June 22, 1990, four months before the *Berhanu v. Metzger* trial ended, the California Legislature held a joint hearing in San Ysidro on international migration and border region violence. This hearing was called due to an alarming increase in violence and hate crimes directed at ethnic Mexican and Latin American migrants at the San Diego border and in the northern part of the county. State and local representatives, human rights organizations, attorneys and anti-immigrant groups were in attendance. Political leaders and academics from Mexico also were present. Representatives from the San Diego Police Department attended, however, the Immigration and Naturalization Service (U.S. Border Patrol) refused to participate.¹⁷⁶

¹⁷³ Michael, “This is WAR!,” 45.

¹⁷⁴ Dees, *Hate on Trial*, Prologue.

¹⁷⁵ Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 319, Dees, *Hate on Trial*, 211.

¹⁷⁶ Joint Committee on Refugee Resettlement, *International Migration and Cooperative Development, International Migration and Border Region Violence*, San Ysidro, California Joint Committees, Paper 89, 1990, 2.

State Senator Art Torres chaired the hearing and in his opening statement he said,

Border violence is not a new phenomenon. However, in the recent past, its intensity has increased and its nature worsened dramatically. Tragically, reports of deaths are becoming commonplace; ironically, in some cases, at the hands of enforcement agencies with the responsibility to protect human life. And we have seen discrimination take new form and voice in fomenting anti-immigrant activity, not only here but throughout the state, and quite frankly, throughout the nation. Most troubling are reports of young people taking part in vigilante acts against migrants.¹⁷⁷

While many testifying raised concerns about violence near the San Diego/Tijuana border, human rights advocate Roberto Martinez, speaking on behalf of the American Friends Service Committee, was particularly troubled by the increase in reports their office received from cases happening in North San Diego County. He asked chairman Torres to call his attention to a fact sheet he submitted detailing these cases, some committed by what Roberto described as white gangs. In response, Torres read from Martinez's report:

1979, gang shoots, injures migrant workers in a camp; 1980 in Escondido, reports of assaults on migrant workers by law enforcement and gangs; 1981, Del Mar, Mexican man beaten to death; 1982, Escondido, migrant worker beaten severely by gang in truck; 1983, Oceanside, Pablo Martinez Toledo and Raul Mejia Garcia shot and killed by three white youths; 16-year-old migrant worker shot and wounded in 1984, Fallbrook, California, six U.S. Marines conduct, quote, "beaner raids", unquote, armed attacks on Mexican migrant workers in their caves; 1985, Fallbrook, California, sniper shoots and wounds 17-year-old migrant in back, paralyzing him from waist down; 1986, November, Encinitas, California, three 17-year-old white arrested in shootings of migrant workers; San Ysidro, November of 1986, seven undocumented people shot by unidentified assailants on the freeway; 1987, north San Diego County, unidentified bodies of migrant workers -- victims of violence -- begin to appear throughout north county; 1988, Del Mar, California, killing of two migrant workers two self-proclaimed white supremacists victims: Hilario Salgado Castaneda and Matilde de La Sancha; October, 1989, Poway, California, gangs of white teens attack and shoot 14 migrant workers with guns and paint bullets; Encinitas, October of '89, California, two border patrol agents shoot at, detain, and beat migrant worker; 1990 in Carlsbad, two store owners beat, handcuff, and kidnap migrant; 12-year-old Emilio Jimenez shot and killed by unidentified assailants; Carlsbad, California, robberies continue on migrant workers; Chula Vista, California, 1990, Border Patrol Agent shoots into van filled with Salvadorians, wounding two; Vista, California, 1990, Sergio Mendez, farm worker, shot in the face by paint pellet fired in drive-by shooting.¹⁷⁸

¹⁷⁷ Ibid, 1.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid, 24.

Martinez stressed that this was a partial list as more incidents had been reported and he had not been able to add them to this list in time for the hearing. He claimed that reports have been arriving on a weekly basis.¹⁷⁹ These cases that targeted migrant children and adults, documented by one human rights organization in San Diego, collectively demonstrate that the anti-Mexican violence experienced by residents in Fallbrook was not unique to the town alone and was indeed part of a regional phenomena. This is important to point out because people I spoke with, such as Jose Bravo and Daniel Martinez, experienced racial violence in what seemed to be isolated acts.¹⁸⁰ However, we see that these attacks were part of a culture of violence that was strategically promoted by Klansmen and Skinheads. The collusion with law enforcement, Border Patrol agents and Marines align with the strategy that Metzger had expressed since having launched the Klan Border Watch program.

Speaking on behalf of the Comité Civico Popular Mixteco, Sergio Mendez gave his testimony following Martinez. On May 16, 1990, Sergio was making a phone call from a public pay phone near a busy street in the city of Vista, when a car drove by with two “Americans” who shot Sergio in his left eye with a paint pellet. When the paramedics arrived, one of them said that a pregnant woman had also been shot in the chest. Father Guillen added that two other migrants were also wounded, all in the same day and in the same city. Vista neighbors Fallbrook directly to the south. This testimony was followed by attorney Marco E. Lopez who recounted brutal shootings and beatings of migrants by Border Patrol agents, including children and a pregnant woman. He told the story of Francisco Ruiz, “who was waiting on the Tijuana side for his

¹⁷⁹ Ibid. 28.

¹⁸⁰ Jose Bravo, Interview with the author, May 26, 2016, 07:25; Jose Bravo mentioned being shot at after he and a friend mistakenly happened upon a Klan rally in an abandoned mobile home park in the center of Fallbrook.

pregnant wife, Evelyn, 21, seven-months pregnant, who had just entered the U.S. to shop at K-Mart. The Border Patrol forced the wife's companions to flee back to Mexico. But she was seven-months pregnant and could not run fast. Consequently, an agent grabbed her by the hair. He then slammed her to the ground and with his foot he stepped on her throat. Francisco came to her defense. He shouted at the agent, 'She's pregnant; don't hit her.' The agent then put his foot on her stomach. The husband picked up a rock, but before he could throw it, the agent shot him, once in the stomach and once in the back, as he attempted to flee."¹⁸¹ Lopez and another attorney followed this testimony describing more tragic cases involving the Border Patrol.

Five days before this hearing, attorney Morris Dees was in Los Angeles taking depositions for his case against Tom Metzger and his son John. Until this case, Dees never came to California to deal with hate crimes. By 1988, however, California was "the state with the highest level of Skinhead activity" and had "also been the site of the most criminally violent activity" according to a special report released that year by the Anti-Defamation League.¹⁸² Both the Southern Poverty Law Center and the Anti-Defamation League had been tracking the nationwide rise of the White Aryan Resistance, which since Tom Metzger's run for Congress in 1980, began to spread far beyond Fallbrook. Building off of his successful primary run for Congress and his high profile talk show appearances, Metzger placed himself within the core of the white power movement by 1983.

In 1983, Ronald Reagan was campaigning for reelection in the midst of a worldwide economic recession.¹⁸³ Leaders of various white supremacist movements, including Metzger, had

¹⁸¹ Ibid, 30.

¹⁸² Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, "Young and Violent: The Growing Menace of America's Neo-Nazi Skinheads," Washington D.C., *U.S. Department of Justice, National Institute of Justice*, October, 1988, 11.

¹⁸³ Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 155-156.

been disillusioned with Reagan and the conservative right since he entered as governor of California and upheld the integration of schools through busing.¹⁸⁴ Advancements in civil rights and LGBTQ rights protections fortified a “wall of resistance” from conservatives and white supremacists that, as historian Jaquelyn Dowd Hall explains, “rose in tandem with the civil rights offensive in the aftermath of World War II.”¹⁸⁵ The white power movement, consisting of Klan groups, neo-Nazis, Christian Identity, survivalists and tax rebellion groups, convened annually in Idaho since 1975 for the Aryan Nations World Congress where their movement had consolidated in response to the actions of the federal government.¹⁸⁶

White supremacist activists were increasingly subjected to FBI and police surveillance, which motivated movement leaders to push for guerrilla style “cell-based organization.” This called for leaderless organizing in small groups of five members in order to complicate infiltration and to protect the leadership. This strategy was largely shaped by the “Vietnam War narrative,” since many of the white power movement leaders were Vietnam War veterans and were familiar with guerrillas and counter-guerrilla tactics. The threat of the Cold War and nuclear war also factored into an apocalyptic view of the future of the movement, espoused by leaders like Texas Klansman Louis Beam who ran a militia training camp based on survivalism to prepare for the aftermath. Demonstrating the disillusionment with the political process, Beam wrote in his influential *Essays of a Klansman*, “It is... pure fantasy to imagine the Klan as a broad-based political movement that will obtain the numbers requisite to effect peaceful political change.”¹⁸⁷ This position also reflects Tom Metzger’s pivot away from electoral campaigns after 1982.

¹⁸⁴ Ibid, 116-117.

¹⁸⁵ Dowd Hall, *The Long Civil Rights Movement*, 1235.

¹⁸⁶ Belew, *Bring the War Home*, 104-105.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid, 108.

DECLARING WAR

In 1983, with the white power movement consolidating and engaging in paramilitary training, an event took place that catalyzed into a declaration of war against the federal government. Posse Comitatus leader and decorated war veteran Gordon Kahl engaged in a shoot-out with federal agents, killing two and injuring three others. He went underground and evaded capture for several months until he was found and was killed by federal agents when the bunker he was hiding in caught fire. “His fiery martyrdom at the hands of the federal agents became part of a white power call to arms against the state.”¹⁸⁸ In 1984, the white power movement declared war by forming a new guerrilla group known as the Order. The Order carried out one of the most serious efforts to launch a revolutionary campaign of violence against the government.¹⁸⁹ Kathleen Belew notes that for the first time, white supremacist violence was directed at the government for revolutionary goals, in contrast to the violence of previous Klan formations which was largely for vigilante purposes and “demarcated whites as separate from and more powerful than not only blacks but also Mexicans and Mexican Americans.”¹⁹⁰

The writer Elinor Langer suggests that Tom Metzger was “part of a larger racist circle that may have influenced the conception of the Order in the first place or provided underground support later on.”¹⁹¹ Two of Metzger’s comrades and California Klansmen, Frank Silva and Randy Evans, were recruited by Robert Matthews, a founder of the Order. In November of 1984, Robert Matthews died in a shootout with the F.B.I. and became a martyr hailed by Metzger and

¹⁸⁸ Ibid, 119-120.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid, 117.

¹⁹⁰ Ibid, 104, 106.

¹⁹¹ Ibid, 156.

his White Aryan Resistance. These actions were inspired by William Pierce's, *Turner Diaries*, "a fictional U.S. revolution in 1992, led by whites fed up with our 'Zionist Occupational Government' (ZOG), which catered to non-Aryans."¹⁹² A member of the Order who broke silence later confessed that Metzger had received over \$300,000 from the group, which pulled off a number of successful robberies of armored vehicles.¹⁹³ His WAR newspaper consistently paid homage to Order members and after he bought property in Rainbow (a subdivision of Fallbrook), he placed a trailer there for WAR meetings. The meeting space was named Matthews Hall in honor of Robert Matthews.¹⁹⁴ With the leadership of the Order dead or imprisoned, "Metzger had become the leading white supremacist revolutionary." With his protege and twenty-something year-old son, John, they were "the most dangerous demagogues," of white supremacy during the 1980s, according to Dees.¹⁹⁵ Together, they organized, consolidated, and promoted white supremacist groups across the country, targeting neo-Nazi Skinheads and white youth for recruitment. The WAR newspaper, published out of Metzger's home in Fallbrook, became the forum and clearing house for the white power movement.

"WAR DECLARED" was the headlines for the first issue of the White American Resistance newspaper published in 1983 by the Metzgers. The declaration of war included a short statement and initially declared that W.A.R., "maintains a strictly racial position." Explaining what Metzger described as a "third position," the editor of the article states, "W.A.R. will not walk a conservative line... nor liberal nor left nor right (sic). Whatever benefits white racial culture, we endorse. Whatever degrades our race we oppose." The statement concludes by identifying politicians, "fat cats" or capitalists, and the "conspiracy of Judaism" as

¹⁹² Dees, *Hate on Trial*, 13-14.

¹⁹³ Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 156.

¹⁹⁴ *Ibid*, 157.

¹⁹⁵ Dees, *Hate on Trial*, 13-14.

their greatest enemy, blaming this system for opposing the interests of white working people while they “grovel at the feet of every minority group.” To the left of the column containing this short declaration, is a political cartoon depicting the “capitalist fat cat” who is seated smoking a cigar with a money bag in his back pocket which came out of an empty chest by his side. The capitalist is watching while a laborer is pinned down to the floor by four stakes, one at each hand and foot. The stake at his right hand is tagged and labeled, “Mexican Aliens.” At his left hand, the stake is tagged, “Bureaucrats.” By his left foot, the stake reads, “Foreign trade war.” And, by his right foot, “Aliens & Cubans.”¹⁹⁶ This image reinforces the notion of the Mexican and Latin American alien as the existential threat to the white working class.

RACIAL VIOLENCE STRAIGHT OUT OF FALLBROOK

By 1988, the year of Mulugeta Seraw’s murder, the SPLC’s Klanwatch, which is “the Center division that monitored the Klan and brought lawsuits against the KKK and other hate groups,” documented a dramatic rise in racially motivated cases occurring all over the country. Dees points out, “In the last four months of 1988, the U.S. Justice Department had initiated almost as many cases for racially motivated violence as it had in all of 1987, which had been a record year... A shocking 90 percent of these crimes were committed by persons under twenty-one, many of them skinheads.”¹⁹⁷ This same year, the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) issued its special report, *Young and Violent: The Growing Menace of America’s Neo-Nazi Skinheads*, which was centered on Tom Metzger and his movement.

¹⁹⁶ Tom Metzger, “WAR DECLARED,” *White American Resistance*, Fallbrook: 1983, Vol. 3 issue. 1

¹⁹⁷ Dees, *Hate on Trial*, 10, 22-23.

The ADL report documented the rise of Skinhead groups and racial attacks across twenty-one states and in forty-four cities, “slowly forming a loose national network” connected by established leaders like Tom Metzger.¹⁹⁸ The younger Metzger, John, led the efforts to organize youth through WAR’s Aryan Youth Movement. Their work often involved spreading leaflets and newspapers across high schools and college campuses throughout California and other states. Their philosophy was expressed in their literature under the heading of, “Operation Warlords,” which stated,

Our enemies understand only one message: That of the knife, the gun and the club on the campus or in the streets... Our goal simply put is racial Revolution... we shall continue to mobilize and agitate on all fronts. We shall continue to encourage ‘sporadic incidents’ on school campuses and neighborhoods across America while simultaneously rebuilding the hunter-killer instincts in our Youth.”¹⁹⁹

In his prologue, Morris Dees adds that the goal of this organization was to “create a new wave of predatory leaders among Aryan youth,” and the SPLC’s effort to hold the Metzger’s responsible for Seraw’s murder was part of the effort to stop Operation Warlords. The ruling in this case greatly contributed to the bankrupting and crippling of Metzger’s settler colonial enterprise.

Not only were these ideas and words being published out of Metzger’s home, but the strategy for carrying out “sporadic incidents” of violence was tested in Fallbrook and surrounding communities, as evidenced in Roberto Martinez’s report. This strategy was exported across state lines by the Metzgers’ agent, Dave Mazzella, which led to the murder of Mulugeta Seraw in Portland, Oregon. Mulugeta’s murderer, Ken Mieske, used a baseball bat to crush his skull. Mazzella testified in court that Metzger had instructed him to carry a baseball

¹⁹⁸ Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, “Young and Violent,” 20.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid, 4.

and a glove whenever he packed his bat in his vehicle, and he was encouraged to carry out acts of violence as part of his training in becoming a leader within the organization. In fact, he rose in the ranks precisely because of the violence he committed.²⁰⁰ The alibi of playing baseball to cover for Klan activities goes as far back as 1977, when Metzger led his Klansmen to a rally at Border Field State Park. Undercover agent, Doug Seymour, who was with the group, said that about 20 Klansmen, “carried an array of weapons, including chains, knives, baseball bats, guns, and bottles.” When they were searched at a roadblock, Metzger protested, “claiming he and his friends had come to the park to play ball.”²⁰¹

VIOLENCE REARTICULATED: FROM LYNCHING TO BASHING

The reference to the “club” in the *Operation Warlords* philosophy is also a reference to the bat as a weapon. Bats and steel-toed boots were the weapons of choice to carry out what became WAR’s brand of racial violence, “bashing.” During the Metzger’ trial, Dees read from an Aryan Youth Movement newspaper, which stated: “White students and youths who are fans of both heavy-metal and Punk Rock music are experiencing a phenomenon across the nation. It’s called ‘bashing,’ a sport in which ‘hunting parties’ of White youth seek out non-White individuals and break their bones.” Attending Fallbrook High School in the early 1990s, I was made aware of this phenomenon, which was known as beaner bashing. We would hear of friends’ family members who were attacked by white youths while they were working in the groves or other isolated areas of Fallbrook. Community leaders I spoke with, including Eloy

²⁰⁰ Dees, *Hate on Trial*, 22-25.

²⁰¹ Jim Berns, “San Diego Police Asked Doug Seymour to Infiltrate the California Ku Klux Klan.”

Rosas and Dr. Elizabeth Ramos, were also aware of this activity. As Eloy recalls:

We were organizing. One of our tactics in response was to go to some of the camps... so taking blankets, taking water, but just also checking in on where we knew that people would come together... workers, you know... as they were just living in the *cerros* or whatever. And, so we would take them supplies, and interview them just to make sure everything was okay. And so... they themselves would also say, “Yeah, you know, cars would drive by, yell at us, throw shit at us. And in some cases, you know, hit us with a bat” ... And so that's how we knew, through them, that this was going on.

Dr. Elizabeth Ramos also remembers, “The baseball players... I remember in high school hearing that they were beaner bashing, is what they called it, and they would go with their baseball bats... and go into the groves and assault people that, you know, were camping out in the groves. So, they would go specifically seeking out people knowing that they were there.”²⁰²

Around 1994, a Mexican friend of mine told me that he overheard two white youths having a conversation while they were in the P.E. locker room. One had invited the other to go beaner bashing during the weekend. His friend reluctantly turned down his invitation because he was grounded and didn't have his parent's permission to go out. I had also grown up hearing the story about my father who in 1978 was working in an avocado grove in Fallbrook near a road when two white youths pulled up in a truck, got out, and approached him in a menacing manner. Luckily, my father had a water key in his hands. A water key is a long metal rebar with a forked end to shut off water faucets encased in irrigation boxes buried in the ground. He raised his water key like a bat in self-defense, and the two youths backed off, then drove away. Stories like these would be some of my first lessons in the value of self-defense. I had also wondered for some years if my father's incident was an isolated incident, however, understanding the history of racial violence in Fallbrook leaves no doubt that his experience was part of a culture of anti-Mexican violence. After more than a decade, beaner bashing in Fallbrook was as socially

²⁰² Elizabeth Ramos, interview with the author, April 7, 2024, 01:20.

embedded as going to the movies on the weekend. Bashing would become the Metzger brand of racialized violence packed and shipped across the country, straight out of Fallbrook, “rebuilding the hunter-killer instincts” in white youth.²⁰³

What was the goal of creating this culture of violence? Tom Metzger maintained the position that his movement was about the separation of races. In the deposition taken in 1977, he stated that the goal of the Klan Border Watch program was to first, seal the border completely, then expel all Mexicans from white communities within California.²⁰⁴ This position would be repeated in more detail in the 1983 WAR newspaper where a manifesto regarding Mexicans was published, and which also called for the expulsion of Mexicans along with another occupation and colonization of Mexico. This was repeated in the WAR newspaper in 1988.²⁰⁵ The article titled, “What is WAR?” states, “WAR is a racial separatist group. We are not interested in the old time (sic) segregation, but complete racial separation.” This concept of expulsion versus segregation made some sense when considering the history of a town like Fallbrook.

Unlike other agricultural communities where the Klan had presence in Southern California and de jure segregation was in effect, such as Santa Paula, I could not find evidence of a similar history of segregation during the same time periods as these two communities, which was during the early half of the 20th century.²⁰⁶ In conversations with the Fallbrook Historical Society’s historian Tom Frew, I learned that while Mexican residents were the majority in the

²⁰³ Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 165, Through the *One Hundred Little Hitlers* program, Greg Withrow and John Metzger mailed start-up kits for those who were interested in starting White Student Union and Aryan Youth Movement chapters.

²⁰⁴ Donald Hubbard, “Deposition of Tom Metzger” United States District Court Southern District of California, 77-0676-S, 1977, Herman Baca Collection.

²⁰⁵ Tom Metzger, “The Mud Flood: The Mud Flood from Mexico becoming a Torrent,” *White American Resistance*, vol. 3, no. 2, 1983, 1; Tom Metzger, “What is WAR?” *White Aryan Resistance*, Fallbrook: White Point Publishing, 1988, vol. 7, no. 3, 2

²⁰⁶ Martha Menchaca, *The Mexican Outsiders: A Community History of Marginalization and Discrimination in California*, (Texas: University of Texas Press, 2010), 25-26.

area between 1850-1870, Anglo settlers quickly became the majority as homesteading was opened up after the 1870s. Mexicans that did remain lived in virtual peonage on ranches. It was not until after the Bracero Program ended in 1964 that Mexicans began to establish more roots in the community, outside of the ranches where they had been relegated to in previous decades.²⁰⁷ Thus, the presence of a growing Mexican community with settled families took place during this period of renewed racial formation. We know that by 1970, Mexican Americans accounted for thirteen percent of the white population, which amounts to roughly one-thousand-nine-hundred people in Fallbrook. The growing Mexican presence began to pose a “Mexican problem” for the community in many ways, but most significantly in terms of citizenship and education.²⁰⁸ The problem involved Mexicans that were not going back to Mexico, as was expected once their bracero contracts expired. They were establishing families and their children began to enroll in the local schools.

The Mexican problem framed the debate regarding Mexicans from this point forward and began to polarize the community against Mexicans beginning in the 1970s, especially as the first class of twenty Mexican students were coming into the high school, causing alarm.²⁰⁹ On the one hand were the agricultural business owners who needed the “ranch hands” to harvest the produce and argued for the extension of the Bracero Program. On the other-hand were the separatists/expulsionists like Metzger, who argued that those jobs should be given to white workers and Mexicans should not be allowed to settle in Fallbrook at all. There were very few Mexican families, and much less African American residents or any other residents of color, so prohibiting Mexicans from settling in Fallbrook was not such a far-fetched concept.

²⁰⁷ Editor, Origin of Mexican-Lemon Pickers recalled,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, June 27, 1974, A11

²⁰⁸ Molina, *How Race is Made*, 32-33.

²⁰⁹ Editor, “FUHS dealing with Mex-Am problems,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, vol. #59, no. 3 (Fallbrook, April 23, 1970) p. B10.

Metzger moved into Fallbrook when it was nearly a completely white town. He saw the town begin to change as former braceros like my father gained residency and established roots. He sounded the alarm warning white people that immediate action should be taken for them to maintain the Fallbrook they had known and warned of Mexicans taking political leadership in certain parts of the country.²¹⁰ He then led the charge by creating a political program based on the expulsion of Mexicans by way of citizen/vigilante patrols and calling for the militarization of the border region. By the late 1980s, the strategy of attacking Mexicans and non-white people described as “sporadic incidents,” *bashing*, or essentially political violence/terror became an integral step in the development of a white power revolutionary.²¹¹ He and his son John exported this program for expelling non-white and racialized peoples across the country and thousands were receptive. Eventually, WAR had a goal of establishing an Aryan nation along the U.S. west coast from California to Washington state and they made a serious effort to carry this out.²¹²

Nearly a decade before the Metzger trial in 1990, before the Hearing on International Migration and Border Violence, and before the reports released by both the ADL and the SPLC’s Klanwatch, San Diego undercover police reserve officer, Doug Seymour, tried to warn the department and the public as to the danger of a white supremacist movement led by Grand Dragon, Tom Metzger. In 1978, Seymour joined the California KKKK, gained Metzger’s trust and became his personal bodyguard at the moment when Tom launched his political career.²¹³ After his cover was blown in 1981, Seymour made many alarming allegations that merited investigations. He reported that there was a cache of weapons obtained from Camp Pendleton buried in the desert beyond Fallbrook. At a Klan conference in Louisiana in 1978, he

²¹⁰ Bruce Wilson, “Funding stalled for airport,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, December 2, 1976, A1, B18.

²¹¹ Dees, *Hate on Trial*, 183.

²¹² Belew, *Bring the War Home*, 115.

²¹³ Berns, “San Diego Police asked Doug Seymour to infiltrate the California Ku Klux Klan,” 1987.

witnessed a discussion that took place between Tom Metzger and David Duke for plans to invade and occupy the Dominican Republic to establish a Klan controlled country. And while at a gathering in Fontana in 1980, Klan members had confessed to him that they had beheaded a couple of Mexicans, then buried their corpses in undisclosed locations nearby.²¹⁴

Different researchers have mentioned the use of decapitation as a terror tactic against Mexicans in the border region. Carlos Larralde's biographical article about union organizer Roberto Galvan described the terror tactics used by the San Diego Klan in the 1940's. As Larralde explains:

Migrant workers were discovered hanging from trees in rural areas, sometimes with their abdomens split to expose the intestines. Some field workers were buried alive. A worker could have his throat cut if he or she argued with or insulted a white woman. Gas torches were used on captured minorities to 'see them dance.' Occasionally, the head of a Latino immigrant would be set on a fence post while the rest of his naked body lay in a ditch. The Klan once threatened to do this to Galvan if they ever caught him."²¹⁵

Activist Chole Alatorre described a beheading that occurred on December 10, 1983. She stated, "Several Mexican men in remote regions disappeared. Their wives saw them for the last time when they were driven out to work in the fields. Nobody saw them again. I believe that the sadistic Klan had fun with them and dumped their bodies in a crevice."²¹⁶

Decapitation was part of paramilitary training for Klansman and the white power movement. By 1980, Klan leader Louis Beam had trained over 500 Klan members at his Camp Puller in South Texas. Controversy ensued when it was discovered that, "Klansmen had used the facility to instruct a group of high-school age Explorer Scouts on strangulation, and decapitation using a machete." Additionally, the trainers had planned on including the students in a Klan

²¹⁴ Ibid.

²¹⁵ Carlos Larralde, "Roberto Galvan: A Latino Leader of the 1940s." *Journal of San Diego History*, March, 2006, 154, https://sandiegohistory.org/journal/v52-3/pdf/2006-3_galvan.pdf.

²¹⁶ Larralde and Del Castillo, "San Diego's Ku Klux Klan 1920-1980,"

border watch along the Texas border.²¹⁷ Decapitation was also reserved as a form of revenge. When Order members pledged their oath to the race war, they swore to enact revenge on any federal agent who hurt their comrades and promised to “chase him from the ends of the earth and remove his head from his body.”²¹⁸ While Klan and vigilante violence have often been associated with spectacle lynching and hangings, in the era of racial rearticulation, the goal was to carry out racial terror without getting caught. In a twisted turn of events, Doug Seymour’s allegations were not taken seriously by the San Diego Police Department.

Seymour’s cover was blown after Metzger looked through Seymour’s briefcase and found a business card of an FBI agent that Seymour was communicating with. Seymour alleged that on a different date, Metzger asked him to come to his home to discuss the matter. Once there, Metzger interrogated him while a gun was held to the back of his head by someone else in the room. In Russian roulette style, the trigger clicked after certain questions, causing Seymour to pass out. He was let go without any physical harm. Later, after his cover was blown, the San Diego Police Department’s Chief Kolender disavowed Doug and claimed that he was never at the service of the SDPD. The police department dismissed his calls for an investigation into the Klan’s activities and only after being sued by Seymour, the Chief of Police admitted that Seymour was affiliated with his department. Why did the SDPD disavow Seymour? The San Diego Reader explains that he had infiltrated the Klan the year before Metzger began his electoral career. While he was an active SDPD agent, he became Metzger’s right-hand man and head of security. During the 1980 run for Congress, Seymour worked on Metzger’s campaign. He collected the critical signatures for his name to be on the ballot, contributing to his victory in the June primary. Metzger accused the SDPD of being partisan against the campaign

²¹⁷ Belew, *Bring the War Home*, 39-40.

²¹⁸ *Ibid*, 116.

of a potential Congressman, which was not taken lightly. On the other hand, the SDPD had an agent who provided the key support to help get an active Klansman elected to office.²¹⁹ Seymour also made the allegation that “high government officials in the county were involved in the Klan.”²²⁰ Altogether, this information was a disservice to the SDPD and possibly others.

The SDPD attempted to distance themselves as much as possible from Seymour, even to the point of discrediting his calls for the Klan to be further investigated for alleged crimes and conspiracies. Seeing how effective Morris Dee’s strategy was for going to great lengths to bankrupt Metzger’s movement, I cannot help but wonder how an investigation of the Klan during this critical moment in 1980 could have limited or prevented the rise of Metzger’s group over the next decade. The SDPD posed no challenge whatsoever and in conclusion to that controversy, Metzger himself stated that “San Diego is a good-old-boy town.”²²¹ In San Diego, white power was given free rein to grow and thrive for another decade causing countless deaths and injuries.

Tom Metzger’s White Aryan Resistance left a legacy of ideological and physical racialized violence that still merits attention and analysis from academics, educators, political leaders and community members concerned with better understanding racism and the current anti-immigrant/anti-Mexican political climate. In his book, *Coloniality of the U-S//Mexico Border*, Roberto Hernandez says that this particular form of violence based on:

frontier vigilantism, and civilian border patrols follow an interwoven trajectory rooted in the dominant episteme of the first colonial encounter dating back to the end of the fifteenth century. In other words... the anti-Indian colonial violence exerted upon Indigenous-marked bodies that shaped the frontier has been relocated to the border (frontier’s end) in the guise of anti-’immigrant’ and anti-’Latin@’ sentiment.

²¹⁹ Jim Berns, “Why did the police disavow Doug Seymour? Undercover Klansman, part two,” *San Diego Reader*, July 2, 1987, <https://www.sandiegoreader.com/news/1987/jul/02/cover-undercover-klansman-part-ii/>

²²⁰ David Hart, “Informer says Klan active throughout SD County,” *The Times-Advocate*, December 10, 1983, A1.

²²¹ Berns, “Why did the police disavow Doug Seymour?”

The violence of this period is structurally related to a colonial racial formation process that has historically marked encounters between Europeans and Indigenous peoples, “creating categories of race as we know them.”²²²

Voices from the white power movement express the same idea in their own terms. In 1983, WAR published an article titled, “The Mud Flood,” which was a manifesto on Mexicans that was written by the Church of the Creator, a group based out of North Carolina. Mexicans are said to be Indians who through intermarriage “absorbed the Spaniards,” creating a “mixture of mongrelized mestizos.” At the conclusion of this lengthy article describing the history of White and Mexican settler colonial conflicts, it states:

We now have a Racial Policy. There will be one difference at this stage of history. Whereas the White Man’s instincts in 1846 were basically sound, he did not have a clearly formulated racial creed of policy. **Now we do...** Either the Mexicans will take over... or we push the Mexicans ever southward into oblivion... This is not a new program, but a program initiated by our courageous forefathers who built America. It is in fact 350 years old and is [sic] bedrock on which America was built.²²³

Their racial policy is clearly part of maintaining and advancing the settler colonial project initiated during the colonial era. This article concludes by confirming that “conquest and colonization is the American Way.”²²⁴

Kathleen Belew and Ramon Gutierrez define settler colonialism as “the process of taking and populating the nation through violence against, forced assimilation of, and legal exploitation of first peoples.”²²⁵ Admittedly, most ethnic Mexicans during this time period were migrants and were not native to the Fallbrook area, however, ethnic Mexicans were historically racialized

²²² Roberto Hernandez, *Coloniality of the U-S//Mexico Border: Power, Violence and the Decolonial Imperative* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2018), 37.

²²³ Church of the Creator, “The Mud Flood,” 11.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ Kathleen Belew, “Introduction” in *A Field Guide to White Supremacy*, Editors K. Belew, R. Gutierrez (California: University of California Press, 2021), 7

based on their indigenous heritage, phenotype, languages, and blood quantum. Martha Menchaca demonstrates how racialization based on Indian blood quantum became the legal basis for denying citizenship beginning in 1849, the year after California became a U.S. state. By 1851, the quantum became more restrictive resulting in denial of citizenship to those who were of one-fourth Indian descent. As Menchaca explains, “These laws remained in operation into the twentieth century.”²²⁶

RACIAL VIOLENCE AS SETTLER COLONIAL VIOLENCE

In their definition of settler colonialism, Belew and Gutierrez mention violence as being part of the settlement process, and Roberto Hernandez asks if vigilante violence is structurally embedded in the coloniality of the U-S//Mexico border. Violence as a legacy of colonialism is addressed in the “Mud Flood” article, where the white power movement’s racial policy regarding Mexicans is that of a literal state of racial war. To put their policy into historical context they evoke the Texas Rangers stating, “In continuing War [sic] against the Mexicans it is our intention to revive the spirit and the goals of the Nineteenth Century Texas Rangers. Their goal was - as is ours today - to drive every Mexican and every Indian from the territory of the White Man.”²²⁷

In 1983, these words published from a family home in Fallbrook, with an editorial team that included Metzger’s wife, Kathleen and his son, John, could seem like a farfetched rant. However, Tom Metzger had recently concluded his run for office a year before, running for Senator as part of a statewide race to represent California in the United States Senate. Although

²²⁶ Menchaca, *Recovering History Constructing Race*, 221.

²²⁷ Church of the Creator, “The Mud Flood”, 11.

he did not win the race, he did manage to win 76,502 votes from across the state while at the same time gaining national exposure after numerous nationally syndicated talk show appearances with Oprah, Morton Downey, and Gerald Rivera.²²⁸ Additionally, Metzger produced a talk show called “Race and Reason” that aired on public access cable across sixty cities nationwide. The white power movement also pioneered the use of personal computers connected via telecommunication lines to create a private forum for their network, now known as the internet. By 1984, the WAR newspaper had a circulation of over four thousand subscriptions from across the country.²²⁹

The Metzger women played active roles within the WAR movement. Aside from proofreading the WAR newspaper, Kathleen Metzger started the Aryan Women’s League in the late 1980s, which would later be led by her daughter Lynn. According to Belew, “The Aryan Women’s League located its concerns within the bounds of home and family, a terrain marked in the movement as feminine... They advocated homeschooling, fearing corruption, Jewish content, and race-mixing in public schools.” Motherhood and white women’s reproduction was a core unifying value for the white power movement due to the fear of a declining white population.²³⁰ The concern for the birth of white children to ensure a white future was the central goal of the mission of the white power movement, expressed in the slogan known as the Fourteen Words, “We must secure the existence of our people and a future for white children.”²³¹ This slogan was coined by Order member David Lane.

²²⁸ Morris Dees, *Hate on Trial*, 15

²²⁹ Michael, “This is WAR!,” 42.

²³⁰ Ibid, 35; Belew, *Bring the War Home*, 166, 169-170.

²³¹ Kathleen Belew & Ramon Gutierrez, “There are no lone wolves,” in *A Field Guide to White Supremacy*. (California: University of California Press, 2021), 320; Anti-Defamation League, “14 Words,” adl.org, accessed June 13, 2024, <https://www.adl.org/resources/hate-symbol/14-words>.

By 1988, WAR had become a movement which had recruited white youth and skinheads into its youth wing known as the Aryan Youth Movement, led by John Metzger. During this time, they implemented “Operation Warlords” with WAR affiliated chapter across twenty-one states. This operation amounted to countless assaults, beatings, shootings and killings. The increasing scale and intensity of violence across San Diego County, the state of California, and the nation caught the attention of the Anti-Defamation League and the Southern Poverty Law Center, two organizations that tracked hate crimes and litigated cases.²³² The California Legislature’s joint hearing in San Ysidro on international migration and border region violence documented attacks committed by “white gangs”, Border Patrol agents, and Marines between 1979 - 1990. Incidents took place in the communities of Escondido, Vista, Oceanside, Encinitas, Del Mar, Poway, Carlsbad and Fallbrook. The attacks consisted of drive-by shootings, beatings, “beaner raids,” killings, sniper fire, robberies and bodies of migrant workers appearing throughout North County.²³³

This was the type and scale of violence inspired in part by the Texas Rangers, and these were reports from one office in San Diego alone. Other lawyers presented more cases and my research in the *Fallbrook Enterprise* reported other cases not mentioned at this hearing. Fallbrook is only one community among over a dozen in North San Diego County with racialized histories. Historian Greg Grandin writes that “between 1988 and 1990, one hundred migrants had been murdered in San Diego County.”²³⁴ This figure is similar to the one hundred Mexicans killed by Texas Rangers and deputy sheriffs between 1915 and 1916, described in

²³² Morris Dees, *Hate on Trial*, 183; Anti-Defamation League of B'nai B'rith, *Young and Violent*, 4.

²³³ Joint Committee on Refugee Resettlement, *International Migration and Cooperative Development, International Migration and Border Region Violence*, 24.

²³⁴ Greg Grandin, “How violent American vigilantes at the border led to Trump’s wall,” *The Guardian*, February 28, 2019, <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2019/feb/28/how-violent-american-vigilantes-at-the-border-led-to-trumps-wall>.

Monica Muñoz Martinez’s book, “*The Injustice Never Leaves You*,” as an “orgy of bloodshed.”²³⁵ Claiming “Western Heritage” as their trademark, the *Mud Flood* article called for their movement to embrace the “Western style of dress, in the manner of the cowboy, or the U.S. calvary, or the Texas Rangers.”²³⁶

This period of violence in San Diego exhibits certain similarities to the violence that occurred in South Texas a century ago. By the end of the 1920s in Texas, “the intersecting regimes of vigilante, state and military policing took hold of the broader social landscape, declaring all Mexicans enemies of the state.” Martinez notes that the Rangers were the first vigilantes “endowed with legal authorities.” Local police and military joined them on their indiscriminate raids in Mexican communities.²³⁷ As in Texas in the early 20th century, ethnic Mexicans in North San Diego County had been racialized as an existential threat for whiteness. Vigilante white supremacists, rogue Border Patrol agents, and Marines all engaged in this violence. Metzger himself admitted that members of his organization were employed by the Border Patrol, and were encouraged to do so.²³⁸ The first Ku Klux Klan chapter to surface in 1976 was on the Camp Pendleton Marine Base, and the Klan Border Watch program was their initial public campaign.²³⁹

In her book, Martinez looks at the larger effect that the violence took on affected families and communities in South Texas. She states, “Grappling with racial violence requires broadening the focus from documenting a singular historical act of violence to exploring how people lived in and navigated a violent world.”²⁴⁰ She also shares the insight from political scientist and

²³⁵ Monica Muñoz Martinez, *The Injustice Never Leaves You: Anti-Mexican Violence in Texas* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2018), 21.

²³⁶ Church of the Creator, “The Mud Flood” 11.

²³⁷ Martinez, *The Injustice Never Leaves You*, 11, 20.

²³⁸ Hubbard, “Deposition of Tom Metzger,” 24.

²³⁹ George Michael, “This is WAR!” 33.

²⁴⁰ Martinez, *The Injustice Never Leaves You*, 80.

anthropologist James Scott, who “reminds us that people subordinate to the state, power, and violence are not often afforded the luxury of ‘open, organized, political activity.’ These acts often are met with brutal repression.” The archives of the *Fallbrook Enterprise* show that three Mexican worker-led organizations that were very active and prominent since 1970, abruptly went silent after the Ku Klux Klan surfaced in Fallbrook in 1976.

The California Legislature’s joint hearing in San Ysidro on international migration and border region violence in 1990, did make an attempt to address the escalation of anti-Mexican violence, however, did not produce any significant results. In his concluding statement Art Torres called on the U.S. Border Patrol to develop a clear use of force policy, the development of a “formal mechanism... to register complaints of excessive force at the hands of the Border Patrol agent,” and finally a commission to “monitor and report its recommendations to Congress.”²⁴¹ Cathryn Thorup, Director at the Center for U.S.-Mexican Studies at the University of California San Diego suggested a Binational Border Task Force, a Citizen’s Coalition on Border Violence and public education noting that “violence flourishes under a steady diet of ignorance and stereotypes.” She described the events happening in the border region as a “downward spiral of deterioration.” Other recommendations included de-criminalizing migration, accountability and oversight over Border Patrol, and economic development (neoliberalism) in Mexico to “keep Mexicans working in Mexico.”²⁴²

There was no mention of addressing any form of political whiteness nor any recommendation to hold the white power movement responsible for the surge in violence happening not only in San Diego but across the country. This confirms HoSang’s assertion that

²⁴¹ Joint Committee on Refugee Resettlement, International Migration and Cooperative Development, International Migration and Border Region Violence, 83-84.

²⁴² Ibid, 5, 85-122.

efforts to resist the effects of racial formation, “rarely attempted to challenge political whiteness as a fundamental identification, treating it instead as an inexorable force of political life.”²⁴³

George Lipsitz also critiques the limitations of remedies that fail to address the “possessive investment in whiteness.” He states that “neither conservative ‘free market’ policies nor liberal social welfare policies can solve the ‘white problem’ in the United States because both reinforce the possessive investment in whiteness.”²⁴⁴ Lipsitz proposes, “An explicitly antiracist interethnic movement, however - one that acknowledges the existence and power of whiteness might make some important changes.”²⁴⁵ Sociologist Luis Higinio wrote about how this took place in Fallbrook in his work, “Resistir para Existir: Giving Power Back to the Community.” In his work, he researched how the Mexican community in Fallbrook, over two generations, organized in an oppressive environment. Another wave of Mexican-led organizations emerged in the 1980s, however, these were led by the youth who were influenced by the work of the Mexican organizations of the 1970s, as well as the Chicano Movement, which had a front at the nearby Palomar College. They attended local Fallbrook schools alongside Tom Metzger’s children. By 1993, the youth groups consolidated into a political self-defense organization by the name of Mexicanos Unidos en Defensa del Pueblo (Mexicans United in Defense of the People). This struggle became the catalyst for social progress in defense of human rights in Fallbrook.²⁴⁶

²⁴³ HoSang, *Racial Propositions*, 22

²⁴⁴ George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness: How White People Profit From Identity Politics*, (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2018), 1024, Amazon Kindle.

²⁴⁵ Ibid.

²⁴⁶ Luis Higinio, *Resistir Para Existir: “Giving Power Back to the Community”* (San Marcos: Scholarworks, 2017), 2.

Chapter 4 The Racialization of Mexican Youth

In the October 9, 1980 edition of the *Fallbrook Enterprise*, Tom Metzger ran an advertisement with the following message:

Warning
Parents of Fallbrook

Gang violence is dangerous to the health of Fallbrook school students.

Gang violence and intimidation is becoming a serious problem in and around the Fallbrook community. Most gang members are armed.

Physical attacks are taking place on or near school buses. Much of the gang activity is Mexican-American, however, I am sure responsible Mexican-American leaders condemn such activity and will take proper action.

Let your school boards, sheriff's department and civic leaders know of your concern. Act now before it is too late.

Tom Metzger
Parent
Businessman

The following week, the *Fallbrook Enterprise* ran a story titled, "School trustees deny gang activity." Tom's ad was motivated by an alleged fight between six teenage Mexican-American girls and a "Caucasian" girl on the school bus, which his daughter Dorene was also riding. The six Mexican girls were arrested and then turned over to juvenile authorities. White and Mexican parents attended the Fallbrook High School Board of Trustees meeting, including Kathleen Metzger, Tom's wife, and Francisca Acevedo, a bilingual aide at the Bonsall school district. Speaking before the school board, Francisca called Metzger's advertisement, "a direct insult on the Mexican American people," and likened the comments to Nazi propaganda. There, Panchita, as she was known, declared that she would start the "Fallbrook Chicano Movement," which

would “reply to statements made by Metzger in the future.”²⁴⁷ This was the first time that Mexican youth in Fallbrook were described as “gang members,” and coming from Tom Metzger this was shocking.

Through racializing Mexican youth in Fallbrook as gang members we see a renewed racialization through the use of racial scripts. The racial scripting of migrants as illegal and a social burden extended to Mexican students as they were progressing through the local school system. Initially, expulsionists such as Metzger were completely opposed to students of color attending the local public school based on the belief that they could not handle the rigor and would force white students to learn “at the pace of the dullest students.”²⁴⁸ As Mexican students began to attend the local high school in larger numbers, this was described in the frame of a “Mexican problem.” Issues regarding bilingual education became a “bilingual problem” with controversy ensuing when Mexican parents attended school board meetings and spoke to the board in Spanish to demand the school district’s program be in compliance with state regulations.²⁴⁹ Ironically, at the very same time that Metzger was racially scripting Mexican youth as problematic and gang affiliated, his high school aged son, John, had recently joined forces with Sacramento junior college student, Greg Withrow, and together they plotted on cultivating a violent Aryan youth movement.^{250e}

Withrow had joined Tom Metzger’s Klan in 1979 and greatly admired him. In his early twenties, he was full of youth and fired up.²⁵¹ When Withrow joined, he had “vowed to create the largest, most violent white supremacist group this nation had ever seen.” Following the model of

²⁴⁷ Editor, “School Trustees Deny Gang Activity,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, October 16, 1980, A1.

²⁴⁸ Tom Metzger, “Open Forum: Much Education,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, March 25, 1976, B15.

²⁴⁹ Various, “Our Readers Write,” *Fallbrook Enterprise*, September 17, 1981, A10.

²⁵⁰ Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 162.

²⁵¹ Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 160.

black, Chicano and LGBTQ organizations, he formed the White Student Union which would demand, “Equal Rights for Whites.”²⁵² In reality this group was an overt front to recruit white students into a more militaristic underground organization which he called the Aryan Youth Movement (AYM). Withrow called this project the “Hundred Little Hitlers” program. Tom and John were impressed by what he had done at the American River College and asked him to join forces with WAR, and John soon became the vice-president of the AYM.²⁵³ Following in the tradition of Klan night riders, they instructed their members to spread their flyers and newspapers across many college and high school campuses overnight. Upon request, Greg and John sent start-up kits to students who were interested in forming their own White Student Union (WSU) chapters, which created new momentum for a rising skinhead movement that would grow across California and the country.²⁵⁴ Withrow was a rising star within the white power movement. At the Aryan Nations Congress in 1986, he declared, “The white youth of this nation shall utilize every method and option available to them to neutralize and quite possibly engage in the wholesale extermination of all subhuman non-Aryan peoples from the face of the American continent!” Operation Warlords would later grow from this effort.

In Fallbrook, John Metzger did not have much success in forming his own WSU chapter. Author Elinor Langer notes this fact but does not account for the reason.²⁵⁵ Hector Muro answered the question in a story to the Voice of San Diego. “Basically, they were saying, ‘Well, they get to have their Hispanic club, so why can’t we have our own group,’” Muro said. After the Fallbrook High School administration let John Metzger form the White Student Union, Hector noted that school clubs were required to accept any students that signed up. So, at the

²⁵² Ibid, 163.

²⁵³ Ibid.

²⁵⁴ Ibid, 165.

²⁵⁵ Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 170.

club's first meeting, the Mexican students were the first to sign up. "We all asked for membership and they had to close it down," said Muro. "We lost our fear."²⁵⁶ Organized Mexican resistance would prove to be the most effective means of keeping the white power movement in check in Fallbrook.

It became apparent that organized Mexican resistance was often a concern from both John and Tom Metzger. "You have to sleep somewhere," would be the family's view of their personal need to keep the peace in town.²⁵⁷ Some have confused this stance as a softening of Metzger's racial outlook, or even as a reasonable side of Tom. However, he operated much like an ambassador of white power, one who delegated the movement and as a foot soldier.²⁵⁸ He often had cordial conversations and relations with his Mexican clients who needed his television repair services. Danny Muñoz claimed to have had an occasional beer with Tom at the Red Eye Saloon.²⁵⁹ However, Langer stated that he rationalized these superficial relations in a sinister manner. While campaigning for his election bid in El Centro, he met some Mexican Americans whom he befriended and convinced to contribute to his campaign. After doing so, he turned to Doug Seymour and said, "Mark this down. Gas them last," making reference to the gas chambers used as a method of mass murder by the Nazis during the Holocaust.²⁶⁰

²⁵⁶ Will Huntsbury, "Fallbrook Is Nearly a Majority-Latino Town. Until Recently It Had No Latino Representatives," *Voice of San Diego*, January 18, 2022, <https://voiceofsandiego.org/2022/01/18/fallbrook-is-nearly-a-majority-latino-town-until-recently-it-had-no-latino-representatives/>

²⁵⁷ Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 169.

²⁵⁸ *Ibid*, 147.

²⁵⁹ Danny Muñoz, Interview with the author.

²⁶⁰ Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 149.

THE FALLBROOK CHICANO MOVEMENT

Organized Mexican resistance would take time to develop. Three years after Tom Metzger made the gang allegations, a youth club for Mexican girls known as Thee Impressions began to meet and organize community service events. In 1985, a club for Mexican teenage boys also formed by the name of United Pride, and Francisca “Panchita” Acevedo was their advisor.²⁶¹ Herb Torrens, writing for the *Fallbrook Enterprise* noted that these Mexican-American youth were working hard, “to make a good impression on the community.” Torrens specifically noted that by doing community service which involved picking up trash and painting over graffiti, they were “cleaning up racial friction.” Speaking for Thee Impressions, Alma Betancourt stated, “We formed the club because we were concerned with all the fighting going on... we wanted to improve relations in the community, enhance our image in the area, and to help people in need.”²⁶² Speaking for United Pride, eighteen-year-old Guillermo Covarrubias also mentioned that the goal of their group was to change the image and stereotypes of “Chicanos.”²⁶³ The concern regarding white people’s perceptions of Mexicans was the driving motive for organizing. This stance was a continuation of the position taken by the Mexican organizations of the 1970s when there was alarm regarding the increasing reports published in the *Fallbrook Enterprise* regarding violence, riots, and crime. Despite clear provocations motivated by a sharpening racial formation and a rise in white supremacy, the Mexican community’s response was framed within the hegemonic formation of political whiteness and did not pose any direct opposition to the disenfranchisement it had faced for decades. Instead, the

²⁶¹ Editor, “United Pride Graffiti paintout,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, April 4, 1985, A12.

²⁶² Herb Torrens, “Good Impressions,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, June 27, 1985, A8.

²⁶³ Editor, “Year-old organization looks back in pride,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, March 13, 1986, A10.

strategy opted to appeal to the possessive investment in whiteness through actions that directly benefited businesses in the downtown district. In essence, confronting a wall of resistance to their presence in the community, the effort to intervene in the ongoing racial formation was based on winning the respect of the white community by fitting into their image of what they assumed Mexicans should be and how they should behave. United Pride co-founder, Hector Muro, reflected on the moment when the organization was formed, “that’s when we met Panchita... She had been around politics... in her mind the question was racism not colonialism... we are fighting against racism, the idea in white people’s heads... so we need to prove to them that we are just like them... so we spent our whole time trying to change their minds.”²⁶⁴ The plan had a short-lived success.

United Pride grew quickly, recruiting fifty-three male youth within their first year.²⁶⁵ Proclaiming to dispel the image of the criminal Chicano, they organized an annual Graffiti Paint Out where they offered to paint over graffiti for any business that would provide the paint and brushes. They pulled weeds, picked up trash along the streets, organized canned food drives, tutored at the Bilingual Center, and volunteered with the Chamber Commerce and the Senior Center.²⁶⁶ The Chamber of Commerce celebrated their work and the Board of Supervisors declared August 20, 1985 to be “United Pride Day” throughout the county of San Diego.²⁶⁷ They often worked on projects together with Thee Impressions and by 1986, a second club for Mexican female youth was also participating by the name of Sophisticated Ladies.²⁶⁸

²⁶⁴ Higinio, *Resistir para Existir*, 46.

²⁶⁵ Editor, “United Pride Graffiti paintout,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, April 4, 1985, A12.

²⁶⁶ Editor, “Cleaning Up,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, February 21, 1985, B1; Editor, “Chamber Proud of United Pride,” February 28, 1985, A1; Editor, “United Pride graffiti paintout,” A13.

²⁶⁷ Editor, “United Pride notes past achievements,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, March 20, 1986, A19.

²⁶⁸ Editor, “Year-old organization looks back in pride,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, March 13, 1986, A10.

United Pride club spokesperson, Guillermo Covarrubias, was selected as the Boy of the Year by the Boys and Girls Club.²⁶⁹

The success of the Fallbrook United Pride motivated Escondido youth to form a chapter in their city as well.²⁷⁰ While addressing concerns regarding their perception they also expressed interests in supporting the Mexican community and those in need. United Pride encouraged Mexican youth to stay out of gangs and to consider attending college. They also organized cultural events based on Mexican nationalism and identity, such as the *fiestas patrias* and various dances, making United Pride the center of social life for youth. Additionally, they raised funds for a scholarship and collected donations when a community member passed away from a job-related accident. The club also recruited Black and white members.²⁷¹

Although certain sectors of Fallbrook, like the Chamber of Commerce, were willing to support this effort, not all were impressed. A critical view from the members spoke of challenges during their volunteer efforts. The neighboring newspaper from Escondido, the *Times-Advocate*, captured a more critical perspective not found in the pages of the *Fallbrook Enterprise*. Testimony from the members mentioned that when they held their first community cleanup of downtown Fallbrook, adults were suspicious of the youth. “Old people would drive up to the stop sign and roll up their windows and locked their doors,” said the club’s spokesperson Hector Muro.²⁷² When United Pride offered to remove graffiti from all local businesses, only the Bilingual Center responded.²⁷³ Another story reported continued harassment from business owners and the local sheriffs. The owner of the Enchanted Castle, the town’s video arcade, called

²⁶⁹ Editor, “Covarrubias and Pearson honored by Boys & Girls Club,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, July 17, 1986, B3.

²⁷⁰ Editor, “United Pride to celebrate anniversary,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, February 5, 1987, B3.

²⁷¹ Editor, “United Pride Graffiti paintout,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, April 4, 1985, A12.

²⁷² Laura Kauffman, “Youths struggle to change their image,” *The Times-Advocate*, 1985, in author’s possession.

²⁷³ Dan Rios, “Off the Wall,” *The Times-Advocate*, United Pride archives, in author’s possession.

the sheriffs on two of the club members, claiming they were making a disturbance. When deputies showed up, Juan Serrato and Saul Varela were arrested on “suspicion of obstructing a police officer.” The youth claimed it was a case of harassment.²⁷⁴

For all of their work to change the image of Mexican youth, their efforts met limitations when controversial situations pitted them against the word of local business owners, law enforcement, and the hegemony of racial formation. The club’s sponsor, Joe Jackson who represented the Fallbrook Village Rotary Club, made a statement precisely situating this incident within Fallbrook’s racialized context, “In my view, they are not going to be lily white. We’re not looking at St. Francis of Assisi here... We’re looking at a guy who’s survived until the age of 19. I don’t expect them to clean the angel dust off their wings.” Clearly, even their club sponsor expressed his view through the frame of political whiteness and described the youth according to racial scripts, inferring that they were partially reformed drug users whose words cannot be trusted. Fernie Gomez, another United Pride member, asked a critical question that posed a challenge for the group to resolve, “Should you let a cop beat you up when you haven’t done anything?”²⁷⁵ This critical reflection along with witnessing the limitations of their intervention in racial formation would challenge a large group of organized Mexican youth, that now included eighty-five members in addition to the women’s groups, to debate deeper questions related to social justice for their community and the way forward. “We were starting to get political consciousness,” said Muro, “going from this community service group where we were trying to change the minds of white people... to the point where we were saying, fuck, we’re exploited here.”²⁷⁶

²⁷⁴ Laura Kaufman, “Recent incident points up problem between the Hispanic youth, police,” *The Times-Advocate*, April 11, 1985, D1.

²⁷⁵ *Ibid*, D5.

²⁷⁶ Higinio, “Resistir Para Existir,” 46.

In 1988, United Pride was no longer in the newspaper reporting on its community service work. The political debates mixed with machismo eventually caused the group to splinter into different factions. This was around the time my older brother Enrique, who was twenty years-old, got involved with United Pride, who then got me involved at the age of fourteen. Hector Muro, now attending MiraCosta Community College, became active in the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA), connecting with the broader Chicano Movement.²⁷⁷ Ulysses Flores formed the Zapatistas (pre-EZLN). Guillermo Covarrubias formed Aztlán Creation, while Eloy Rosas regenerated a more political and militant United Pride while forming a MEChA club at Fallbrook High.²⁷⁸ Many former United Pride members completely shied away from this politicization, while I bounced from one group to the other, taking it all in.

Also, during this time, Metzger again appeared in the headlines starting in 1987 related to legal charges for his involvement in a cross burning as well as for the murder of Mulugeta Seraw, which was litigated through 1990.²⁷⁹ Despite having many years affiliated with the national white power movement, he still received letters of support in the local paper's opinion section. John Lester issued a warning should Metzger be forced to operate underground, "Tom Metzger has a history of heading up successful organizations. His last one was rated with not one, not two, but three K's."²⁸⁰ Another reader was appalled by the community's support for Tom Metzger and the town's claim for being the "Friendly Village." In her letter, Nancy Breining issued a call for the town to confront its political whiteness:

²⁷⁷ I intentionally name the Chicano Movement as written to historicize the vernacular language of this era. During this time, there was no Chicano, Latinx movement.

²⁷⁸ Higinio, "Resistir Para Existir," 48.

²⁷⁹ Editor, "Metzger Ordered to Stand Trial - 1983 Cross burning case Fallbrook Enterprise," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, April 30, 1987, A3; Editor, "Metzger sued for alleged connection with killing," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, March 1, 1990, A5.

²⁸⁰ John Lester, "Our Readers Write: Metzger and Donahue," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, September 8, 1988, A13.

Now, once again we enjoy notoriety of a far worse kind. Fallbrook happens to be ‘home-town’ to the Metzgers, father and son. Now, I realize that this pitiful, bigoted pair have to dwell some place, but I am amazed to observe that a number of our Fallbrook residents treat them with cordiality... even shows of affection – since these two have had an onslaught of media attention lately, it would be naïve to think that anyone in this area would be ignorant of the (alleged) lies, slurs and hatred that they espouse. Therefore (sic) I suggest that until our community reviles and ostracizes these outrageous men we refer to our town as just plain Fallbrook.²⁸¹

On a national level, I recall when in 1992, the 500-year anniversary of Christopher Columbus’ landing in the Americas had prompted the African, Chicano, and Native American movements to mobilize for marches and denounce the legacy of colonialism. The racial climate in the state of California was exacerbated by the beating of Rodney King by Los Angeles Police officers, which was caught on videotape and repeatedly aired on news stations. The non-guilty verdict of the officers involved caused Los Angeles to erupt once again along with other cities across California and the nation. What I call *Chicanismo*, or the identity-based association based on pride in Mexican indigeneity and anti-colonial historical resistance, was electrifying Mexican youth, men and women, as all these events were unfolding. *Chicanismo* was also a racial rearticulation in response to racial formation, one in which Mexican youth took agency in defining themselves.

The white high school youth affiliated with WAR and the Metzgers noticed this activity. Before the Christmas break in 1992, a group of nearly 30 white students marched across campus during lunch time towards the area where Mexican students gathered, provoking them to a

²⁸¹ Nancy Breining, “Our Readers Write: Fallbrook the friendly village?” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, December 22, 1988, A10.

fight.²⁸² I was a sophomore at the time and personally witnessed this fight and the subsequent fights that followed over the next two days. The Mexican students gathered in about an equal number, then were attacked by the white students resulting in a large-scale brawl, which some students called a riot. The Mexican students fought back and chased the white students back towards the direction from which they marched. In the previous week, I had gotten into a fight with a white high school senior and had just come back to school from serving my suspension, so I was careful to maintain my distance during the brawls. The following day, a fight occurred after school at the bus terminal when skinheads again provoked Mexican students. The location clearly marked this as a provocation since primarily Mexican students rode the school buses while most white students drove or got picked up. The parking lot was on the opposite side of the campus. Despite the tragedy of all the violence that occurred, Mexican students responding in self-defense sent the message that they would stand their ground.²⁸³ Incidents of violence continued in the community, however, in isolated cases. Racial violence had reached a climax and this scale of racial attacks on Mexican students would not be seen since.

Subsequently in 1993, in an act that completely shattered the Mexican youth's complicity with political whiteness, Guillermo Covarrubias, former United Pride leader was brutalized, hospitalized, and arrested by the Fallbrook Sheriffs.²⁸⁴ The incident occurred at his grandparents' home after neighbors reported loud music being played. His grandmother was knocked to the ground when she tried to intervene. This injustice shocked the community as Guillermo and his family were well known by Mexican youth and elders. In response, the Mexican youth groups reunited and consolidated into a decidedly political formation calling themselves Mexicanos

²⁸² Editor, "Tensions abate at Fallbrook High as vacation starts," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, December 24, 1992, A1

²⁸³ Eloy Rosas and Luis Gonzales, interview with the author, August 27, 2024, 1:05:22.

²⁸⁴ Mexicanos Unidos en Defensa del Pueblo, "Acabemos con la brutalidad policiaca," in author's possession, 1993.

Unidos en Defensa del Pueblo (Mexicans United in Defense of the People, also known as MUDP). They organized on May 15, 1993, to protest the abuse and to demand Guillermo's release. With over two hundred people participating, this was the Mexican community's first political act of protest against what was understood as a legacy of anti-Mexican violence.²⁸⁵

At sixteen years of age, I was a participant in the march and I recall seeing Metzger parked in his vehicle observing us while he video recorded with a VHS camcorder. The situation was tense. Aside from an occasional truck passing by waving a confederate flag, there was no response from the white power movement. A report in the *Fallbrook Enterprise* a week later, however, mentioned that there were plans for a counter rally by white supremacists, which failed to materialize.²⁸⁶ Metzger's movement during this time was at its peak, yet the lack of a response confirmed what I noticed as a hesitancy to confront organized Mexican resistance, which became apparent during this period of turbulence. Eloy Rosas and Luis Gonzalez mentioned that conflicts took place in the community with WAR supporters, in some cases confronting those who were known for engaging in "beaner bashing". Eloy recalls, "We knew them so we knew who to target... so we took any opportunity to target them or their friends. So, we had two or three little scuffles right there... a lot of fights in the community happened at house parties." Luis Gonzalez who was also a high school student with Eloy at that time adds, "I remember when we'd go in front of a house, four or five of us, and we would just park there... we heard about the beaner bashing and we knew where it was coming from, so... we would just park there

²⁸⁵ Chris Moran, "Scuffle sparks demonstration: Protestors decry police violence," *San Diego Union-Tribune*, May, 16, 1993, B1.

²⁸⁶ Debbie Murphy, "Peaceful rally Saturday follows last Wednesday's protest march," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, May 20, 1993, A2.

and wait for them to come out, so we could do our thing. Sometimes they were caught, most of the times they weren't, but we were there to enforce ourselves."²⁸⁷

Aside from Morris Dees bankrupting the Metzgers over the murder of Mulegeta Seraw, Mexican resistance was the only other factor that contributed to the decline of white settler racial violence in Fallbrook. Beyond the occasional letter to the editor in the *Fallbrook Enterprise*, no local organization or prominent leaders from the white community stood by the Mexican youth in denouncing what had been a long-standing legacy of anti-Mexican violence. Father Bud Kaicher from St. Peter's Church attempted to help by encouraging talks to address the tension that was "no longer hidden."²⁸⁸ The California State Legislature's hearing on border region violence had absolutely no impact and neither did Fallbrook High School's Human Relations Task Force formed after the December racial attacks on Mexican students.²⁸⁹

Mexicanos Unidos en Defensa del Pueblo initially formed as a coalition of primarily local Mexican youth organizations and supporting Chicano Liberation organizations from San Diego and from the Black Liberation movement. United Pride, Zapatistas, Aztlan Creation, Raza Rights Coalition, N.P.D.U.M. and S.B.S.U. MEChA were mentioned on the coalition's first flyers calling for action.²⁹⁰ A few African and Native American students also stood with the Mexican students during this time in a rare show of anti-colonial solidarity.²⁹¹ Only in this way could political whiteness in its most violent form be effectively addressed. As stated by George

²⁸⁷ Rosas and Gonzalez, interview with the author, August 27, 2024, 1:03:46.

²⁸⁸ Debbie Murphy, "Peaceful rally Saturday follows last Wednesday's protest march," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, May 20, 1993, A1.

²⁸⁹ Debbie Murphy, "Students needed on FHS Human Relations team," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, January 28, 1993, A1.

²⁹⁰ Isidro Ortiz, "¡Sí se puede!": Chicana/o activism in San Diego at century's end," chapter in *Chicano San Diego: Cultural Space and the Struggle for Justice*, (Arizona: University of Arizona Press, 2007), 145, Based in the City of San Diego, the Raza Rights Coalition was active in denouncing anti-Mexican hostilities at San Diego border; The National People's Democratic Uhuru Movement was a mass organization led by the African People's Socialist Party. See <https://apspuhuru.org/about/the-uhuru-movement/>.

²⁹¹ Eloy Rosas, interview with author, August 27, 2024. Interview in author's possession.

Lipsitz, “An explicitly antiracist interethnic movement, however - one that acknowledges the existence and power of whiteness - might make some important changes.”²⁹² In this case, the formation of an anti-colonial movement, not antiracist, was the decisive factor, which then set in motion a new movement that has been the catalyst for social change, defense of human rights, and enfranchisement of ethnic Mexican workers in Fallbrook since 1993.

Historian Monica Muñoz Martinez asserts that, “Grappling with racial violence requires broadening the focus from documenting a singular historical act of violence to exploring how people lived in and navigated a violent world.” Sociologist Luis Higinio captured the oral histories of organizers who were central to navigating the political turbulence that evolved during the Fallbrook Chicano movement. Hector Muro, who was at the core of this movement, described the profundity of this watershed moment in confronting racialized violence: “This is the humiliation that people had withstood... there was real fear in the community, it’s not like a perceived fear... so you lived under this repression and this fear of acting out, of calling for human rights... all that changed all within this little period of time in a matter of weeks.”²⁹³ Through Mexicanos Unidos en Defensa del Pueblo, a self-defense organization was formed, which created a cadre of organizers committed to organizing according to the right to be political outside of political whiteness and for self-determination.²⁹⁴

What commenced from that point forward is another story worth telling at length. Yet, to briefly summarize the impact of a movement that was no longer confined to operating within political whiteness, I will briefly give my own personal testimony of some significant achievements accomplished in North San Diego County while I was a member of MUDP. From

²⁹² George Lipsitz, *The Possessive Investment in Whiteness*, 1024, Amazon Kindle.

²⁹³ Higinio, “Resistir Para Existir,” 52.

²⁹⁴ Higinio, “Resistir Para Existir,” 40.

1997 to 2008, MUDP established an office in the Towne Centre Mobilehome Association, which consisted of primarily fifty Mexican working-class families. We organized alongside the residents to take leadership of their resident-owned association. A popular education program was at the core of the organizing strategy and it was here where MUDP implemented a working praxis of anti-colonial organizing. Here, the organization learned the value of organizing through a mutual benefit, *mutualista*, model. Through its human rights defense campaigns and coalitions, MUDP was central to defeating a proposed gang injunction in Fallbrook; in defending day laborers from the San Diego Minutemen vigilante group when they targeted workers throughout the North County; and in forming the first North County rapid response network for Immigration and Customs Enforcement checkpoints and raids through the Alianza Comunitaria. While focusing on local Mexican and Central American communities, MUDP also worked in solidarity with anti-colonial movements across the country and across the Americas, including Union del Barrio, the African People's Socialist Party, the Zapatista Otra Campaña, and the Congreso Nacional Indígena.

More recently in 2018, the organization set its sights on voting rights and the electoral arena. When the Fallbrook Union Elementary School District faced litigation for being out of compliance with the California Voting Rights Act for failing to conduct elections by districts, MUDP membership got involved with community leader Leticia Maldonado in challenging the district's gerrymandered map proposals.²⁹⁵ These maps were overturned at the County level in favor of the map proposed by a new coalition known as VOCES de Fallbrook.²⁹⁶ This victory

²⁹⁵ Jeff Pack, "FUESD approves trustee redistricting map, critics vow to keep fighting," *Village News*, February 9, 2019, <https://www.villagenews.com/story/2019/02/07/news/fuesd-approves-trustee-redistricting-map-critics-vow-to-keep-fighting/55307.html>.

²⁹⁶ Jeff Pack, "San Diego County Board of Education rejects FUESD map in favor of alternate," *Village News*, May 17, 2019, <https://www.villagenews.com/story/2019/05/16/news/san-diego-county-board-of-education-rejects-fuesd-map-in-favor-of-alternate/56200.html>.

then signaled to the rest of Fallbrook's governing boards to get in compliance. In the following election, three MUDP-affiliated candidates filed to run for seats on the Fallbrook Union Elementary School Board, the Fallbrook High School Board, and the Fallbrook Regional Health District. Motivated by the momentum, a fourth candidate stepped forward to run for a seat on the North County Fire Protection District. Facing no opposition, 23-year-old Cindy Acosta won her seat on the fire protection board; 27-year-old Stephanie Ortiz won her seat on the Health District; 29-year-old Oscar Caralampio won his seat for the high school board, and at 43, I won my seat on the elementary board. Altogether, these actions would break a long-standing legacy of all-white governance.

Chapter 5 Conclusion: A Public Reckoning

In Texas, driven by anamnesis, the praxis against forgetting, Historian Monica Muñoz Martinez describes a public reckoning taking place in which researchers with the *Refusing to Forget* project have mobilized to push state institutions to acknowledge the violence committed by the Texas Rangers and other authorities during the early 20th century. According to their website, refusingtoforget.org, the researchers aim to raise public awareness about the period of anti-Mexican violence that rocked South Texas between 1910-1920. Working with the Texas Historical Commission, local officials have approved historical markers to commemorate lynchings and massacres. In collaboration with the Bullock Texas State History Museum, the *Refusing to Forget* team also organized an exhibit called, “Life and Death on the Border,” centered on the vernacular histories of the descendants of those affected by the violence.²⁹⁷

“Vernacular history-making,” according to Martinez is, “an effort to participate in shaping popular understandings of the past by making histories of racial violence, preserved in community memory, available to the public. Through blogs, poetry, historical essays, websites, digitized archives, and documentaries, residents are contending with the power of mainstream histories.”²⁹⁸ This vernacular-history making in South Texas preserved family stories as collective memories, which allowed for these histories to be transcribed more than 100 years after the fact. Vernacular histories also keep the hope for some type of justice alive and demand a public reckoning.

In Fallbrook, vernacular history-making in response to violence and political whiteness can be told through the experiences of the various Mexican organizations that transformed into a

²⁹⁷ Martinez, *The Injustice Never Leaves You*, 80.

²⁹⁸ Ibid.

political self-defense organization in 1993. Members who joined these organizations held stories of discrimination and violence which motivated them to get involved. The new organization that formed in direct response to an act of police brutality was a crystallization of a history of organizing spanning two generations of Mexican working-class families. The confines of struggle within the socially acceptable framework of political whiteness were shattered when community youth leader Guillermo Covarrubias was beaten by Sheriffs in front of his grandparents in 1993. After this brutal beating, a new era of resistance and organizing unfolded, characterizing itself as an anti-colonial movement, which has contributed to successive struggles for human rights and political power to this day.²⁹⁹

A reckoning in Fallbrook must take an unflinching look at what took place during Tom Metzger's era and understand how this was part of an ongoing racial formation that has shaped political whiteness to this day. This history is not just a matter of a few racist acts or poor race relations, nor did political whiteness come and go with one person. Neither Fallbrook High School, nor the city of San Diego, nor the State of California, successfully diagnose the problem, and much less did they provide a remedy. What can be historically analyzed as a racial formation and racial rearticulation should also be summarized in the words of the perpetrators, a low-intensity race war to uphold white settler colonialism, and a white revolution to overturn the few gains won by the civil rights movement.³⁰⁰ The perpetrators were veterans who organized and trained their membership according to paramilitary strategies based on guerrilla and counter guerrilla training.³⁰¹ Their racial rearticulation included a rearticulation of violence described as bashings and leaderless lone wolf attacks, while at the same time maintaining

²⁹⁹ Higinio, "Resistir Para Existir," 56.

³⁰⁰ Belew, *Bring the War Home*, 9.

³⁰¹ *Ibid*, 25.

traditional colonial forms of violence such as beheadings and strangulations. This renewed racial violence was not a means to an end; its goal was to polarize white people to wage race war and to turn against the federal government, which brings us to our current Make America Great Again (MAGA) moment.³⁰²

Kathleen Belew argues that “there are no lone-wolves,” and critiques journalists and scholars who often portrayed acts of white supremacist related violence as “driven by grievance and mental illness.” She states that the clandestine nature of the strategy and the historic Klan mode of operating covertly, lends to a “deliberate obfuscation” of this organized form of violence.³⁰³ While she points specifically to the Oklahoma City bombing in 1995 and other cases of “spectacular violence” that characterized the 1990s, we must take another look at the largest mass murder to have occurred in its day, which took place at the San Ysidro border. Such is the case of what is known in San Diego as the San Ysidro McDonald’s Massacre of 1984, where twenty-one people were killed and nineteen were injured by a heavily armed gunman. The victims were mostly Mexican.³⁰⁴ To this day, reporters state that the motive was unknown and that the attack was not racial.³⁰⁵ San Diego Police Chief Kolender claimed that the shooter just did not like people much. The shooter, James Huberty, was seeking counseling before the shooting and his struggle with mental health has often been the focus for explaining his motive. At that time, it was the deadliest mass shooting in U.S. history.³⁰⁶

³⁰² Kathleen Belew & Ramon Gutierrez, “There are no lone wolves,” in *A Field Guide to White Supremacy*, 321.

³⁰³ Belew, *Bring the War Home*, 12.

³⁰⁴ Salvador Rivera, “Border report, 1984 massacre at border McDonald’s a distant memory for community,” May 26, 2022, <https://www.borderreport.com/regions/california/mcdonalds-massacre-near-border-is-nearly-forgotten-38-years-later/>.

³⁰⁵ Debbi Baker, “Daughter of McDonald’s killer has advice for San Bernardino shooters’ baby,” *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, August 23, 2016, <https://www.sandiegouniontribune.com/opinion/the-conversation/sdut-daughter-mcdonalds-killer-james-huberty-interview-2015dec15-story.html>.

³⁰⁶ Salvador Rivera, “Border Report,”.

Yet, Huberty's wife described him as hating Mexican immigrants, and explained that he was not simply a racist, he was a Nazi.³⁰⁷ She also stated that he was obsessed with ideas about war, claiming to be a Vietnam veteran despite having never enlisted. Huberty's coworker said he was a survivalist who believed that nuclear war and the breakdown of society was imminent, and that the government was conspiring against him. A neighbor claimed he could be heard late at night working on his home computer.³⁰⁸ These were all ideas espoused by paramilitary trainer and Klansman Louis Beam in his *Essays of a Klansman*, and since 1983, these ideas were accessible to anyone with a home computer.³⁰⁹ Belew points out that the Vietnam War narrative was so pervasive in the white power movement that some activists claimed to have served when they did not. Additionally, the apocalyptic imaginary was deeply embedded in the movement.³¹⁰ Having a clearer understanding of the white power movement of the 1980s, it is evident the influence and reach of the movement should be considered as part of the motive that led to the McDonald's Massacre. This tragedy followed the white power movement's declaration of war. This massacre should also be included as part of the legacy stemming from Tom Metzger's race war.

While the white power movement failed to expel all Mexicans, it led the charge for the anti-immigrant policies and border militarization that are in effect today. Racial formation has historically been institutionalized by law or policy. Tom Metzger pioneered vigilante border patrols in 1974, even before he was a member of the Ku Klux Klan, calling for border

³⁰⁷ Charlie Minn, 77 Minutes: The 1984 San Diego McDonald's Massacre, 2016, video:1:03:46; Bill Cardoso, "Mass murderer: 'always very sad and lonely'," July 22, 1984, UPI archives, <https://www.upi.com/Archives/1984/07/22/Mass-murderer-always-very-sad-and-very-lonely/4891459316800/>.

³⁰⁸ Jay Mathews and Tom Sherwood, "Death, Blood in a Place of Laughter," *The Washington Post*, July 19, 1984, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/politics/1984/07/20/death-blood-in-a-place-of-laughter/a5bb422b-fc48-4289-ab47-0f63d88676cd/>.

³⁰⁹ Belew, *Bring the War Home*, 3, 40.

³¹⁰ *Ibid*, 25, 105, 188.

militarization.³¹¹ Citizens for a Safe North County, a front organization created by Metzger's White American Political Association in 1984 launched a petition drive for another Border Patrol checkpoint between Temecula and San Diego.³¹² Border Patrol commander Mike Connell describes Metzger's efforts as, "noble," and that he very much agreed with the need, but simply did not like to see a white supremacist group associated with the effort. Two decades later, in 2004, police checkpoints became controversial in Escondido when a collaboration with ICE effectively converted DUI and driver's license roadblocks into de facto immigration checkpoints.³¹³ White supremacist associations with border and immigration enforcement should clearly indicate that these measures are strategies for maintaining white settler colonialism and white power.

During his run for Congress, Metzger proposed "establishing a militarized zone from the ocean to the Otay Mountains and shooting any illegal aliens who attempt to cross it."³¹⁴ David Duke in 1984 called for the creation of a "no man's land" on the southern border where Mexicans would be "shot on sight." Operation Gatekeeper, a border militarization project launched in 1994, has effectively created a "no man's" land and has led to thousands of deaths and disappearances as a result of steering migration towards the harsh deserts of California and Arizona.³¹⁵ Killings and beatings of migrants by border agents occur regularly, and to this day no

³¹¹ Langer, *One Hundred Little Hitlers*, 129. Ronnie Dugger, "1984: David Duke: In His Own Words," *The Texas Observer*, January 17 & 31, 1992, p.11, <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2019/05/17/white-shadow-david-dukes-lasting-influence-american-white-supremacy>.

³¹² Laura Kaufman, "Supremacists open checkpoint drive," *The Times-Advocate*, January 14, 1986, A1.

³¹³ Maureen Cavanaugh, "Escondido Police Checkpoints Controversy," [kpbs.org](https://www.kpbs.org/news/border-immigration/2010/11/02/escondido-police-checkpoints-controversy), November 2, 2010, <https://www.kpbs.org/news/border-immigration/2010/11/02/escondido-police-checkpoints-controversy>.

³¹⁴ Mark Beckington, "Election runs gamut from Y to KKK," *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, October 30, 1980, A1; Ronnie Dugger, "1984: David Duke: In His Own Words," *The Texas Observer*, January 17 & 31, 1992, p.11, accessed from <https://www.splcenter.org/hatewatch/2019/05/17/white-shadow-david-dukes-lasting-influence-american-white-supremacy>.

³¹⁵ Kristina Davis, "Operation Gatekeeper at 25: Look back at the turning point that transformed the border," *The San Diego Union-Tribune*, September 30, 2019, <https://www.latimes.com/california/story/2019-09-30/gatekeeper-anniversary-25-san-diego-border>.

on-duty agent has been successfully found guilty of a killing since the founding of the agency in 1924.³¹⁶ As of February 28, 2024, House Bill 2842, which allows ranchers in Arizona to shoot at migrants for trespassing, passed in the Arizona House of Representatives.³¹⁷ When Donald Trump was president, he called for this kind of violent border enforcement.³¹⁸

The radicalization of the white power movement contributed to the groundswell for the popular voter support of the racial propositions of the 1990s. The impact can be seen in California politicians such as Pete Wilson and Diane Feinstein. In the 1970s and 1980s, Pete Wilson was a politician for agribusiness and even called for a racial probe of Klan activities.³¹⁹ Yet, following the lead of Democrats like Diane Feinstein, starting in 1992, Wilson became a leading voice for expulsion during his gubernatorial re-election campaign and endorsed support for the racial anti-Mexican measure known as Proposition 187.³²⁰ Ironically, Feinstein related her new anti-immigrant position during her re-election campaign as a measure to “forestall more extreme proposals emanating from the far right.”³²¹

The historical record demonstrates that a history of ethnic Mexicans in Fallbrook cannot be told without the history of racial formation, violence, and settler colonialism. Efforts to do so sanitize colonialism and produce a mythical account of history. Understanding the malleability of political whiteness and racial rearticulation is critical to understanding the political voices and

³¹⁶ Southern Border Communities Coalition, “Fatal Encounters with CBP Since 2010,” accessed May 27, 2024, https://www.southernborder.org/deaths_by_border_patrol.

³¹⁷ Laurie Roberts, “A bill allowing Arizona ranchers to kill border crossers? Has it really come to this?” *azcentral.com*, February 28, 2024, <https://www.azcentral.com/story/opinion/op-ed/laurieroberts/2024/02/28/arizona-bill-rancher-kill-trespassing-border-crossers/72776544007/>.

³¹⁸ Yamiche Alcindor, “WATCH: Trump asks what to do about migrants crossing border. Rallygoer suggests ‘shoot them,’” *pbs.org*, May 9, 2019, <https://www.pbs.org/newshour/politics/watch-trump-asks-what-to-do-about-migrants-crossing-border-rallygoer-suggests-shoot-them>.

³¹⁹ Metro News, “Racism probe urged by city,” *The Fallbrook Enterprise*, June 30, 1977, A13.

³²⁰ Daniel HoSang, *Racial Propositions*, 170-171.

³²¹ *Ibid*, 172.

formations that followed Metzger's movement in North San Diego County. Politicians and candidates such as Assemblymember Marie Waldron, Congressman Darrell Issa, and Republican leader Carl Demaio, have all continued to espouse the expulsionist narrative. After WAR declined in San Diego, the San Diego Minutemen followed in their footsteps, espousing the expulsion of Mexicans in the era of neoliberalism and colorblindness.³²² Then, the Tea Party followed, and now the pro-Trump MAGA movement. From this MAGA moment emerged the Fallbrook Freedom Fighters, who uphold political whiteness based on a colorblind racial ideology.

Historians Kathleen Belew, Matthew Dallek, Daniel Martinez HoSang, Martha Menchaca, Tomas Almaguer, Monica Muñoz Martinez and Natalia Molina, among others, all present evidence to state that our current historical moment, molded by the insurrectionist Trump administration, has its roots in white supremacy, racial formation, and settler colonialism. When Tom Metzger spoke to his supporters in 2004, he also called them freedom fighters and encouraged them to infiltrate local governments and school boards, just as the Fallbrook Freedom Fighters have done.³²³ These are hardly new tactics nor different from previous manifestations of political whiteness. The approach today, repeats the same efforts of the John Birch Society, which was marked by explicit racism, conspiracy theories, anti-communism, and culture wars.³²⁴ Metzger's definition of fighting for freedom is essentially the same as the

³²² Omi & Winant, *Racial Formation in the United States*, 212. Colorblind racial ideology is described as a refined racial rearticulation in defense of political whiteness. Whereas resistance to civil rights and affirmative action was articulated as, "reverse discrimination," the language in defense of political whiteness consolidated around colorblindness. This idea is based on the assumption that civil rights legislation leveled the playing field and any subsequent inequalities in living standards and conditions of racialized people is the result of their own inferiority.

³²³ SPLC, "Former Klansmen Tom Metzger and Bill Riccio Encourage Skinheads to Cooperate," SPLC, October 19, 2006, <https://www.splcenter.org/fighting-hate/intelligence-report/2006/former-klansmen-tom-metzger-and-bill-riccio-encourage-skinheads-cooperate>; In the 2022 election, the Fallbrook Freedom Fighters ran four candidates for high school and elementary school board seats, winning all. As of this writing, less than halfway through their terms, three of these four have already resigned from their seats.

³²⁴ Dallek, *Birchers*, 4-5.

Fallbrook Freedom Fighters, which is to uphold the right of white people to be isolated and free from being held accountable to universal human rights standards. Political whiteness continues to be upheld as a wall of resistance against the civil liberties and human rights of those who are perceived as an existential threat to whiteness, capitalism, and Christianity. During the latter half of the 20th century, Fallbrook crowned itself as the “avocado capital of the world.” It also branded itself as the *Friendly Village*, two characteristics that negate the value of Mexican labor and the violent racial formation that took place. Not only were avocados packaged and shipped across the country, so was the policy for racial formation and terror, which was developed in theory and practice here against brown bodies. I also refuse to forget.

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