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**The Nazi Next Door: Memories of Nazism in
Chilean Politics and Public Discourse (1970-
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Introduction

*'Everything happens here and now: the horror inherent in the Reich is not a fiction filmed by Spielberg. It is, on the contrary, much darker and closer. It is piled up in the intricacies of local power, in the euphemistic language of diplomacy and suspicion regarding how local memory is constructed.'*¹

In May 1984, a funeral was held in Chile's largest city, Santiago. The coffin was taken from the luxurious home of the deceased in Los Pozos' neighbourhood and driven by motorcade to Santiago's Lutheran Church. Military guards surrounded the funeral, and a cemetery cortege of flower carts followed the coffin carried by pallbearers. This was no ordinary funeral. In attendance was the son and grandson of one of the Nazi's most significant war criminals, SS Colonel Walter Rauff. Responsible for the deaths of nearly 100,000 Jews as commander of the Gestapo's technical department that directed and developed the mobile gas vans, Rauff had died a few days earlier of a heart attack.² Alongside Rauff's close family was the famed Chilean diplomat, oculist and Nazi sympathiser Miguel Serrano. His cries of "Heil Hitler, Heil Rauff" reverberated across the city and sat uneasily with the dictatorship of the Pinochet Government, more often in the international limelight recently.³ The funeral of Walter Rauff typifies several fundamental tenets of this dissertation. Firstly, it is an example of the public memorialisation of known Nazi war criminals and their nationally renowned sympathisers in late twentieth-century Chile. Secondly, it is an example of the *acceptance* of this memorialisation by the head of state, the Chilean authorities and the ecclesiastical body. Thirdly, its timing is situated within a broader moment in Chilean national history, in which the forces of antisemitism, neoliberalism, and national human rights abuses overlapped to produce an ongoing complicated and uncertain relationship between the Chilean public and the memories of Nazism.

Analysing the memory of Nazism through physical sites and Chilean public discourse historically, this dissertation argues that the relationship of the Chilean authorities – the press, the Church and the state – with Nazis, and subsequent memories of this, have been influenced by Chile's unique political history since 1970, often used as leverage against, or for, particular

¹ Alvaro Bisama, 'Mala memoria' *La Tercera*, April 25, 2003.

² Robert D. McFadden, 'Walter Rauff, 77, Ex-Nazi, Dead', *New York Times*, 15 May 1984, Section B, p. 8.

³ 'Chile: Former top Nazi Walter Rauff buried in Santiago to fascist salutes', *Reuters*, 17 May 1984.

political objectives. This dissertation deals comprehensively with the period beginning with the start of Salvador Allende's presidency in 1970, through Pinochet's dictatorship (1973-1990) and the post-dictatorial reconciliation era right up to recent years, since the present constructs and contains memories of the past. Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning's broad definition of cultural memory as "the interplay of present and past in socio-cultural contexts" will be utilised to this end.⁴ Erll and Nünning have argued that such an understanding of the term allows for 'an inclusion of a broad spectrum of phenomena as possible objects of cultural memory studies', ranging from individual acts of remembering in a social context to group memory to national memory with its "invented traditions", and also to transnational 'lieux de mémoire' such as the Holocaust.⁵ Following this definition, this dissertation will also draw on the idea of multidirectional memory, coined by Michael Rothberg, which explores how different histories of extreme violence confront each other in the public sphere.⁶ In Chile, the broader forces of human rights activism and public memory initiatives of the dictatorship by major Chilean institutions that developed in the 1990s have galvanised interest in the legacies of Nazism.

This dissertation sits at the intersection of memory studies of the history of the Pinochet dictatorship in Chile and Nazism in South America. Therefore, it is meaningful to consider the historiography of both areas. After the end of the Second World War, Nazis found refuge in several countries in South America, including Chile, Argentina, and Brazil, through ratlines. These ratlines were organised chiefly by the Argentine government and the Vatican, with historians estimating that as many as 9000 Nazi officers and collaborators escaped to South America in this way following the German surrender at the end of the Second World War.⁷ Due to the absence of exact figures and clear information, Nazi immigration to the continent has been the subject of popular imagination, and of fascination and lifelong investigation by Nazi hunters such as Simon Wiesenthal. However, academic studies of Nazis in South America have devoted considerable attention to Argentina and Brazil and stories of

⁴ Astrid Erll and Ansgar Nünning, *Cultural Memory Studies: An International and Interdisciplinary Handbook* (Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2008) p.2.

⁵ Erll and Nünning, p.2.

⁶ See Michael Rothberg, *Multidirectional Memory: Remembering the Holocaust in the Age of Decolonization* (Stanford University Press, 2009) and James E. Young, *The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meaning* (Yale University Press, 1994).

⁷ This figure is subject to much debate, and includes those that were not officially under investigation by the European Judicial Authorities. See Daniel Stahl, *Hunt for the Nazis: South America's Dictatorships and the Prosecution of Nazi Crimes*, (Amsterdam University Press, 2018) p.10.

the 'hunt', neglecting the lived experience of Nazis and their neighbours. The German historian Daniel Stahl revealed how key South American officials supported Nazi immigration and actively hindered the reparations process. In a similar vein, Maria Tucci Carneiro has explored the culture of silence surrounding Brazil's welcoming of Nazis, yet, again, these studies have not situated the legacies of Nazism in South America within the particular localised history of Chile.

Chile is a unique case study since, officially, there remains very little recognition and reconciliation towards this episode of their history. Instead, it has been overshadowed by Chile's ongoing complex relationship with the memory of Pinochet's dictatorship of 1973 to 1990. In 1970, Allende came to power in Chile as the world's first democratically elected socialist. Although there was a strongly established leftist movement in Chile, the country remained fractured, and Allende's right-wing opponents, many of whom had benefitted from the liberal economic policies of Allende's predecessors, quickly moved to discredit the president, launching a virulent media campaign, financially and politically backed by the US within the wider climate of the Cold War.⁸ On September 11, 1973, after months of deep division and calls by the opposition majority for his removal, the military ousted Allende and instated Augusto Pinochet as commander-in-chief of the army in his place, in what was described as a necessary act to "save the nation".⁹ When Allende refused to surrender, the military bombed La Moneda, the presidential palace, as Allende made his last radio address from within the building, before taking his own life. The military coup went unchallenged for the next fifteen years, as the junta ushered in a period of terror, rounding up, detaining, torturing and killing tens of thousands of Chilean leftists and supporters of Allende.¹⁰

In 1978, Pinochet declared amnesty for all crimes committed by the military in the years following the coup, and a major economic boom followed. Pinochet continued his rule for eight more years through a plebiscite, until a lagging economy, the democratisation of Chile's neighbours and a growing domestic and international human rights movement created

⁸ Simon Collier and William F. Sater, "The Pinochet Years." *A History of Chile, 1808–2002*, 2nd ed. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004) pp. 359–389.

⁹ Amy Sodaro, 'The Museum of Memory and Human Rights: "A Living Museum for Chile's Memory"' in *Exhibiting Atrocity: Memorial Museums and the Politics of Past Violence* (London: Rutgers University Press, 2018), p. 113.

¹⁰ Sodaro, p. 114.

a strong enough opposition to vote against the renewal of Pinochet's rule in 1988.¹¹ Pinochet was removed from power, and democratic elections were held in December 1986. The center-left coalition, Concertación de Partidos por la Democracia (Coalition of Parties for Democracy, referred to as Concertación) won the presidency, ruling until 2010 and overseeing ambitious publicly-funded memorialisation projects for those lost to the dictatorship, such as the Museum of Memory and Human Rights in Santiago.¹²

Due to the ensuing national trauma of this recent political history, and despite Chile's progression from dictatorship to democratic rule, studies of Chilean society have found that a 'conspiracy of consensus' remains, originating among political elites and permeating society more broadly. Marta Lagos, a leading national expert on public opinion, found that Chileans appeared to exhibit 'a widespread aversion to open conflict, related to low levels of interpersonal trust, openness about politics and 'satisfaction with democracy'.¹³ The Commission for Truth and Reconciliation attempted to tackle this 'conspiracy of consensus'. Beginning in 1991, the commission was the first national state-led initiative to investigate human rights abuses under the dictatorship.¹⁴ Since then, memory studies in Chile have been dominated by this episode of their history, spearheaded by Katherine Hite and Alfredo Joignant's *The Politics of Memory in Chile: From Pinochet to Bachelet*. Their work focuses on the dictatorship, however much of the key message overlaps into the terrain of this dissertation – most pertinently, their conclusion that the recall and expression of conflictive memories may not simply be 'catharsis', but itself an intrinsic and necessary part of Chilean politics for the future.¹⁵ Alexander Wilde has explored Chile's political memory as 'irruption', further analysing the 'conspiracy of consensus' and emphasising memory's evolution – reconstructed over generations to fit (as well as to shape) particular social and political contexts.¹⁶ In view of this, it is understandable why scholars have overlooked the presence of Nazis. Nevertheless, this topic deserves equal attention to explore how the public and officials have remembered second-hand trauma in Chile. These two episodes of memory are interlinked, and therefore

¹¹ Collier and Sater, pp. 359–389.

¹² Sodaro, p. 121.

¹³ Alexander Wilde, 'Irruptions of Memory: Expressive Politics in Chile's Transition to Democracy', *Journal of Latin American Studies* (1999) Vol. 31. No. 2, p. 476.

¹⁴ Wilde, p. 482

¹⁵ Katherine Hite, Alfredo Joignant, *The Politics of Memory in Chile: From Pinochet to Bachelet* (Colorado: First Forum Press, 2013), p.2

¹⁶ Wilde, p. 478.

Chile's relationship with the legacies of Nazism is synonymous with memories of the dictatorship.

In recent years, however, Chilean historians have begun to explore this topic, documenting the Chilean state's relationship with Nazi Germany during the Second World War and revealing an, until recently, secretive relationship between Chilean's highest figures and Nazis in Chile. Jaime Antonio Etchepare's 1995 article on fascism in Chile was the first to tackle this topic head-on. However, his study's remit was limited to the small-scale political constructions of Nazism in Chile, thereby failing to acknowledge the impact of Nazism within society more broadly. In 2016, the German government released declassified archives on Colonia Dignidad, beginning the reparation process for its inhabitants.¹⁷ Since then, broader discussions have begun to occur in Chilean discourse over how Chilean people should remember what Naomi Lindstrom has described as 'the Nazi next door'.¹⁸ Historians such as Rossana Cassigoli, Victor Farias and Maria Soledad have all attempted to revive what they see as an 'unclear' debate – leading to its own political complications – in the hopes of counteracting the tendency of historiography to minimise the 'Nazi factor' in Chile.¹⁹

Despite growing interest, there are several reasons why this field of study remains in its infancy and which mean conducting a study of this kind has limitations. Nazism remains a sensitive and current point of contention in Chile, as shown by the intermittent resurgence of Neo-Nazi rallies and ongoing efforts to turn Colonia Dignidad into a memorial site.²⁰ As such, gaining access to archival material proved challenging. Issues such as translation and access rights also surfaced several times. The declassification of the Colonia Dignidad files in 2016 reveals information about the Nazi presence, but also demonstrates how little historians have access to evidence to support this. Files have been destroyed, evidence tampered with, and individuals' identities hidden. For this reason, the legacies of Nazism in Chile remain heavily censored. However, it is possible to overcome these obstacles by revealing the ways in which

¹⁷ 'Transfer of files from Department 50 of the General Directorate of Investigations' *Archivo Nacional De Chile*, <https://www.archivonacional.gob.cl/sitio/Contenido/Institucional/77097:Transferencia-de-Archivos-del-Departamento-50-de-la-Direccion-General-de-Investigaciones> [Accessed on 15 March 2021]

¹⁸ Naomi Lindstrom, 'Recent Tendencies in Latin American Jewish Studies'. *Shofar* (2001) Vol. 19, p. 3.

¹⁹ Rossana Cassigoli, 'On the Nazi Presence in Chile', *Sociological Act*, (2013) Vol. 61, pp. 157-177.

²⁰ **Margarita Romero**, 'Reclaiming Colonia Dignidad', *Sites of Conscience* (d.u) <https://www.sitesofconscience.org/en/2016/04/colonia-dignidad-declared-national-monument/> [Accessed 20 February 2021]

the legacies of Nazism have manifested themselves in physical sites of memory and cultural constructions, despite attempts to conceal them.

Chilean public memory of this particular history remains elusive. Instead, it is woven into the physical fabric and the multiplicity of complicated public discourses of Chilean society. This project will draw on James Young's methodological analysis of 'textural memory' in relation to the Holocaust to analyse Chile's physical sites of memory, such as memorials, plaques and the funeral of Walter Rauff. Young argues that physical sites such as monuments emit messages that express ideas current in each society and that these messages change both in time - influenced by later events - and according to the diverse experiences of the spectators. As such, memory is plural, caused not only by the event itself but by the multitude of 'collective' and 'collected' experiences, as each site invites different interpretations that become additively attached to it.²¹

Equally, the utilisation of print media across the period offers a methodological approach in which it is possible to reach new conclusions about the varying ways in which the media responded to such sites and political discourses, itself one arm of a far-reaching political establishment. Chile's five major newspapers, *El Mercurio*, *La Tercera*, *La Nación*, *La Segunda* and *Las Últimas Noticias*, have historically been associated with the political right.²² Under Pinochet, the DINA destroyed dissident news publications, arrested journalists and sometimes tortured and killed them. Whilst the transition to democracy reintroduced freedom of the press, in 1998, Human Rights Watch reported that "freedom of expression and information is limited in Chile to an extent possibly unequalled in any other democratic society in the Western Hemisphere."²³ In May 2001, President Lagos signed the Law on Freedom of Opinion and Information and the Practice of Journalism, or the Press Law, finally eliminating many of the legal loopholes the dictatorship had been able to use against the opposition press.²⁴ Nevertheless, structural conservatism and a strong legacy of the

²¹ Ziva Amishai-Maisels, 'James E. Young, The Texture of Memory: Holocaust Memorials and Meanings' (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1993), p.248.

²² Simon Collier and William. F. Sater, *A History of Chile, 1808–2002*, 2nd Ed. (Cambridge University Press, 2004), p.328.

²³ Rosalind Bresnahan, 'The Media and the Neoliberal Transition in Chile: Democratic Promise Unfulfilled', *Latin American Perspectives*, Vol. 30, No. 6 (2003), p. 44.

²⁴ Bresnahan, p.45.

dictatorship have resulted in the development of a right-of-centre monopoly that has informed the trajectory of political coverage of Chilean Nazism.

This project begins with an exploration of the ways in which physical sites of memory have been understood and responded to by the public and the state to construct a tangible analysis of the memories of Nazism. Occupying a long narrow strip of land between the Andes to the east and the Pacific Ocean to the west, Chile has lent itself to an abundant variety of lived experiences. Communities of German settlers have lived in the southern cone since as early as 1846, whilst the indigenous Atacameño have occupied the northern tip, sprawled across the sparse Atacama Desert, until recently having little contact with the rest of Chile's population.²⁵ Many of the sources in this project take us to the heart of Chile's population, the heaving metropolis of Santiago, home to Chile's largest municipal body, the Parliament of Galicia, and as such, will reveal the extent to which the legacies of Nazism were not only tolerated but accepted by both judicial and cultural institutions.

I will then turn my attention to the ways in which the memories of Nazism have been treated in popular discourse, demonstrating how the Chilean press constructed a particular narrative of Nazism in Chile based on changing political agendas and, in doing so, allowed Nazi ideology to permeate respected institutions and organisations. As this is a memory study, this dissertation will travel across political contexts as memories evolve. I will also emphasise how the legacies of Nazism are ongoing in the neo-Nazi movement today - evidence not just of the decaying remains of a movement, but instead an attempt to instil within it new energy for the modern age. This will be the first study of this kind and hopes to reveal the disruptive memory of Nazism. Ultimately, this essay concludes that to engage in a constructive national conversation about the memories of Nazism in Chile, the press, the state and broader society must disentangle this from the complex web of its political history.

²⁵ Max Paul Friedman, *Nazis and Good Neighbors: The United States Campaign against the Germans of Latin America in World War II* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2003), p. 83.

Chapter One

Material politics: contested memories of Nazism in physical sites

This chapter will briefly outline the origins of Nazism in Chile before turning to three specific memory sites in Chile: firstly, the memorialisation of the 1938 Seguro Obrero Massacre in Santiago General Cemetery; secondly, the evolution of the Colonia Dignidad commune, run by Nazi medic Paul Schafer from 1961-1996; and thirdly, the funeral of Walter Rauff in Santiago in May 1984. These case studies demonstrate how the political sphere has shaped memories of Nazism in Chile.

To understand how Nazism has resurrected itself in physical sites across Chile today, it is essential to understand how Nazism came to Chile in the first instance. Many Germans had been living in Chile since as early as 1846.²⁶ In the 1930s, the growing Nazi movement in Germany utilised contact with unassimilated German communities in Chile to attract supporters transnationally.²⁷ The racialised theories of Nazism aligned with pre-existing eugenicist theories in Chile, thereby enabling Nazi race theory to flourish in certain circles, bolstering theories of racial hierarchies within Chile, particularly towards the indigenous Mapuche population in the Southern region.²⁸ Eugenicist ideas that mirrored those of the Nazis were seen in the popularity of works such as *Raza Chilena* (1918) by Chilean physicist Nicolás Palacios, which emphasised the elevated status of mestizo Chileans, a mix of European and indigenous Mapuche ancestry.²⁹

Nazism as an ideology was confined to marginalised communities before the Second World War. German-Chilean culture flourished more broadly in Chile's southern regions, which had benefited from the extensive trade developed with Germany. During the war, Chile continued its ties with the Axis covertly whilst appearing neutral officially.³⁰ Unlike Chile's neighbours who closed German schools, they remained open in Chile throughout the war and

²⁶ Graeme Mount, *Chile and the Nazis* (London: Black Rose Books, 2002) xvii

²⁷ Jean Grugel, 'Nationalist Movements and Fascist Ideology in Chile', *Bulletin of Latin American Research*, vol. 4, no. 2, (1985), p. 112.

²⁸ Grugel, p. 112.

²⁹ Nicolas Palacios, *Raza Chilena: Un libro escrito para los Chilenos* (1904) in Grugel, p. 112.

³⁰ Mount, pp.64-99.

continued into the post-war period.³¹ In this way, material connections between German Chileans and Germans in Europe persisted despite the changing political landscape globally. Documents released by the Patrimonio Documental Investigaciones (PDI) in 2015 demonstrated that a counterintelligence unit known as Department 50 was created in 1941 after several National Socialist groups with ties to German Nazism were discovered in the country.³² Whilst Chilean authorities ensured the threat of Nazism in Chile remained low, this did not completely stop political groups such as the National Socialists from organising. Throughout the war the National Socialist Party in Chile remained in contact with the Nazi Party in Germany.³³

One physical example of the enduring memory of such groups is in Santiago's General Cemetery. The site stretches across 86 hectares of central Santiago and houses many of Chile's most influential political figures (excluding Augusto Pinochet), as well as memorials to those "disappeared" and politically executed by Pinochet's regime. It stands as a physical manifestation of Chile's national identity since its construction in 1821. Collins and Hite have suggested that physical spaces and the city are live social and historical constructions 'subjected to, and being shaped by, shifting discourses that make physical space instrumental to memory narratives'.³⁴ In the case of Santiago's General Cemetery, Wilde has distilled this into one in which longstanding republic political institutions, official commemorations and expressive politics have overlapped to produce a contested national narrative.³⁵ Designated a monument in itself in 2010, the cemetery symbolises the state and non-governmental organisations' efforts to create an inclusive memorialisation of Chilean history. The country has more than two hundred memorials to the victims of the military dictatorship, some well-known whilst others are smaller, local memorials.³⁶ Despite this, here in Santiago's cemetery, successive governments have used the site to carve out their visions of national identities based on changing personal and political ideologies.

³¹ H. Glenn Penny, 'Material Connections: German Schools, Things, and Soft Power in Argentina and Chile from the 1880s through the Interwar Period', *Comparative Studies in Society and History*, 59, 3 (2017) p. 544

³² 'Nazi Networks in Chile: Declassified Documents', *National Cultural Heritage Service, Chile* <https://www.patrimoniocultural.gob.cl/englishoverview/site/Contents/Article/89083:Nazi-Networks-in-Chile-Declassified-Documents> [Accessed 12 January 2021]

³³ Grugel, p. 112.

³⁴ Hite and Joignant, p. 169.

³⁵ Wilde, p.137

³⁶ Sodaro, p.118.

Within the cemetery stands the Monument to the Martyrs of the Seguro Obrero massacre that reads:

‘This monument was built in homage to the young martyrs of the Seguro Obrero on September 3, 1938. Of the 58 who died, only 25 are buried in this place, the others are family graves.’³⁷

The official cemetery guide includes limited details of the 1938 Seguro Obrero massacre, an attempted coup by the National Socialist Party in 1938, which ended in 58 of its members being sentenced to death by the Chilean government authorities.³⁸ The monument itself is basic, with just a short description (see Figure 1).³⁹ There is also no available information about when the monument was erected and who erected it. However, the monument's power is not in its physical condition but in what it represents. Every September, groups of young men make a pilgrimage to this monument to hold what is, in effect, a remembrance service for those killed in the massacre. The first evidence of this remembrance service appears in 1990 in the newspaper *Las Últimas Noticias*, which records that the ceremony was led by diplomat, writer and fascist activist Miguel Serrano, one of the most prominent figures in the neo-Nazi movement in Chile. One man at the service, Jorge Vargas, told the newspaper that this group had been meeting every year to wait for the "return of our ideals".⁴⁰ Chilean journalist and film-maker Lygia Navarro documented this service more recently for PBS Frontline.⁴¹ Similarly, in Valparaíso city, about 121 km northwest of Santiago, a group of Chilean Nazis belonging to the "Forefront of National Order" (FON) have also taken part in a similar ceremony inside the city's cemetery for decades. Photographer Eliseo Fernandez captured the ceremony in 2006 and 2010 for *Reuters*.⁴² These remembrance services signify the enduring impact of the National Socialist Party even today and suggest that, despite national efforts by political parties to shape the narrative of Santiago's Cemetery away from

³⁷ Wilde, p.151

³⁸ Memoria Chilena, "Matanza del Seguro Obrero", *National Library of Chile*, <http://www.memoriachilena.gob.cl/602/w3-article-94573.html> [Accessed 12th April 2021]

³⁹ Wilde, p.149

⁴⁰ 'Nazis chilenos recordaron a muertos del Seguro Obrero', *Las Últimas Noticias* (6 September 1990), p. 6.

⁴¹ Lygia Navarro, 'The Rise of Neo-Nazism in Chile', Center for Latin American Studies, *Student Research Reports* (2007)

⁴² Eliseo Fernandez, *Reuters*, Image ID: 2D1AP1A, Image ID: 2D0C654 <https://www.alamy.com/a-group-of-chilean-nazis-takes-part-in-a-ceremony-inside-a-cemetery-in-valparaiso-city-some-85-miles-137km-northwest-of-santiago-september-9-2006-the-annual-ceremony-marks-the-execution-of-63-members-of-the-chilean-nazi-movement-in-santiago-in-1938-during-a-protest-against-the-government-reuterseliseo-fernandez-chile-image379479558.html> [Accessed 21st December 2020]

fascism and towards a memorialisation of human rights abuses committed under the dictatorship, the legacies of Nazism remain a firm fixture within its walls.

Etchepare and Stewart have argued that the only remnants of the National Socialist Movement of Chile, which fell apart in 1941, are ‘small romantic groups of an ‘esoteric character’.⁴³ Writing in 1995, they may have been alarmed to see the rise of organised Neo-Nazi groups gaining traction more recently, especially amongst Chile’s disenfranchised youth. As Navarro has noted:

‘These often were not blond, blue-eyed Aryans, but Chilean teenagers and 20-somethings who, like the majority of their compatriots, bore the clear physical markings—brown skin, angular indigenous cheekbones—of a long-ago mestizaje.’⁴⁴

Navarro has attributed Nazism's growing popularity today to increasing disenfranchisement and inequality. Physical sites of memorialisation such as these offer historical remnants within which young Chileans can situate their own personal and cultural experiences, belying a seemingly glaring cognitive dissonance. Furthermore, the rise of neo-Nazi groups more recently is not an isolated phenomenon but a continuation of an historically hospitable climate for Nazis, therefore situating memorialisation of Nazis in Chile today at the forefront of a longer trajectory that can be traced back to the dictatorship.

⁴³ Etchepare and Stewart, ‘Nazism in Chile’, p.599.

⁴⁴ Lygia Navarro, ‘The Rise of Neo-Nazism in Chile’, Center for Latin American Studies, *Student Research Reports* (2007).



Figure 1: Monument to the Martyrs of the Seguro Obrero in Santiago General Cemetery in Wilde, 'Avenues of Memory' 2008



Figure 2: Monument to the Seguro Obrero massacre in Val Paraiso in Lygia Navarro, 'The Rise of Neo-Nazism in Chile', 2007

The political evolution in the memorialisation of Nazis in Chile's most significant cemeteries has parallels with the history of Colonia Dignidad, a commune founded by the Nazi medic Paul Schäfer in 1961, located in the remote Maule region of central Chile. The history of Colonia Dignidad is symptomatic of the history of Nazism in Chile more broadly. The colony began as a small scale unassimilated German community, to which access was severely restricted, and those that did know about it turned a blind eye. During Allende's socialist government, Schäfer grew more concerned about the colony's privacy in the wake of agrarian reforms, and began to acquire armament and establish ties with extreme-right wing groups, wealthy landowners and the military.⁴⁵ Thus, by the time of the coup in 1973, Schäfer had acquired considerable connections and government-backed support under Pinochet to enable the colony's continuation. Indeed, such was the close relationship between Pinochet and Schäfer that the colony became a close collaborator with Pinochet's secret police (DINA) and was used as a centre for torture, extermination and disappearance of political opponents to the regime.⁴⁶

Patricio Aylwin succeeded Pinochet as Chile's newly democratically elected President in March 1990. However, his reparatory efforts were hindered by the fundamentally undemocratic system Aylwin's government had inherited. This was due to a set of "tie-up laws" which ensured that Pinochet's power and impunity would remain intact after his departure.⁴⁷ Despite this, Aylwin succeeded in introducing the Commission for Truth and Reconciliation, beginning in 1991. In response to this new climate of reparatory justice, the colony changed its name to 'Villa Baviera' in an attempt to remodel itself as a tourism site.⁴⁸ This began the reopening process of the colony to the general public to transform memories of the colony as a place of torture to one in which tourists could 'enjoy rest and silence in the midst of surprising nature'.⁴⁹ Tripadvisor reviews of Villa Baviera mention the 'excitement' of learning about this place of 'pure history', with 'emotional stories'.⁵⁰ One review from 2019 refers to the hotel as a memorial site, stressing the need for visitors to 'be aware [of]

⁴⁵ E. Hevia and J. Stehle, *Colonia Dignidad: Discourses in truth, justice and memory* (Santiago: 2016) 4

⁴⁶ Hevia, Stehle, 4

⁴⁷ Sodaro, p. 114.

⁴⁸ Wilde, p. 489.

⁴⁹ In 'About' section, *Tripadvisor* [HOTEL VILLA BAVIERA - Lodge Reviews & Photos \(Parral, Chile\) - Tripadvisor](#) [Accessed 2 April 2021]

⁵⁰ 'Pure History!' review, *Tripadvisor*, May 2017 [HOTEL VILLA BAVIERA - Lodge Reviews & Photos \(Parral, Chile\) - Tripadvisor](#) [Accessed 2 April 2021]

what you [are] visiting and make sure you learn from it'.⁵¹ A member of the colony, Michael Muller, told the *Guardian* in 2005 that "[the] colony has reorganised itself as an open free colony, fully integrated into Chilean society."⁵² Yet the Chilean press continues to refer to the community by its old name, fixing its place in historical memory.⁵³

Relatives of those that disappeared during the Pinochet dictatorship have also expressed their dismay that Colonia Dignidad has been able to remodel itself as a leisure centre and instead have called for it to be shut down and replaced with a memorial. Speaking to *the Guardian* in 2018, Margarita Romero, president of the Association of Memory and Human Rights, said: "It is not possible that a place where serious violations of human rights such as torture, murders and disappearances should function as a tourist destination."⁵⁴ Similarly, in 2018, Chilean artists Cristóbal León and Joaquín Cociña created the film *La Casa Lobo* (The Wolf House) using stop-motion. The film was inspired by the stories of escapees from Colonia Dignidad. Speaking about *La Casa Lobo*, León described how Colonia Dignidad has come to be seen:

"This very eccentric cult or religious sect became very powerful in Pinochet's time. The reason why they became so successful is still sort of a mystery. It's a national trauma that we need to talk about, and it's still very current because we have a right-wing government in Chile today."⁵⁵

Artists like León and Cociña demonstrate how Chile's ongoing political climate has impacted memories of trauma in Chile and hindered the process of reparations for those affected by the intersection of Nazism and the dictatorship. Their work is part of a wider network of activists in Chile attempting to break the silence and mystery surrounding this. The artists created each image of the film using life-size models and sets that are in a constant state of evolution, aptly reflecting Chile's relationship with the legacies of Nazism more broadly. Separating the hotel's

⁵¹ 'This is a memorial site' review, *Tripadvisor*, August 2019 [HOTEL VILLA BAVIERA - Lodge Reviews & Photos \(Parral, Chile\) - Tripadvisor](#) [Accessed 2 April 2021]

⁵² Luke Harding, 'Fugitive Nazi cult leader arrested', *The Guardian*, 12 March 2005 <<https://www.theguardian.com/world/2005/mar/12/warcrimes.chile>> [Accessed 12 February 2021] (para 13 of 13)

⁵³ Wilde, p. 480.

⁵⁴ Marella Oppenheim, 'Excavations at Chile torture site offer new hope for relatives of disappeared', *The Guardian*, 2 May 2018

⁵⁵ Nina Siegal, 'A Film's Horrors Evoke a Dark Era in Chile's Past', *The New York Times*, 4 December 2018.

dark history from its present paradisiacal image, therefore, remains a complicated and profoundly political endeavour.

On July 9, 2014, a prime-time TV broadcast 'En La Mira' aired an episode entitled 'Las ficas del horror' (The files of horror), exposing the colony's links with the dictatorship and the crimes committed therein using over 40,000 files found by the PDI in the colony in 2005.⁵⁶ The veil of secrecy surrounding the colony had now been removed, revealing to a national audience the connections between Nazis living in Chile and the dictatorship. Nevertheless, there remains work to be done. Catalina Gaete Salgado has described the case of Colonia Dignidad as an active process in transitional justice, with 'ongoing memory negotiations between victims, human rights organisations, journalists and two states [Germany and Chile]'.⁵⁷ Her study on journalistic memory work found that many journalists in 2018 recognised 'open wounds' in Chilean society, with trials and judicial investigations of members of the dictatorship and leaders of Colonia Dignidad still in progress. Paul Schäfer was arrested in 2005 in connection with child abuse charges, not for his complicity in Nazi war crimes.⁵⁸ Schafer's Nazi past was acknowledged only minimally by the authorities and the press, both in the lead up to his trial and the trial itself, suggesting a conflicting narrative over the memorialisation of the dictatorship and the legacies of Nazism. The press overlooked Pinochet's offer of protection to Nazis in favour of scandalous reporting of child abuse charges and the cultish nature of the colony in press reports.⁵⁹

It is tempting to see Colonia Dignidad as a project of an *ex*-Nazi, as the colony did not explicitly express and practice Nazi ideology. However, there is a clear link between the colony's development in Chile, the ease with which Nazis were able to settle in the country in the first instance and their subsequent protection by the dictatorship. For this reason, the case of Colonia Dignidad and the funeral of Walter Rauff sits at the intersection of memories of Nazism in Chile and Pinochet's dictatorship, demonstrating the inextricable links between these two episodes of terror and complicating the ways in which subsequent generations have

⁵⁶ Catalina Gaete Salgado, 'Journalistic memory work and transitional justice in Chile: The case of the declassification of the Colonia Dignidad archives in Berlin' *Journalism* (2018) p. 7.

⁵⁷ Salgado, p. 7

⁵⁸ Harding, (para 1 of 13)

⁵⁹ See: Alexei Barrionuevo, 'Paul Schaefer, 89, German Guilty of Chile Child Abuse' *New York Times*, 26 April 2010, p. 15; Clinton Porteous, 'Fugitive Chile cult leader held', *BBC News*, 11 March 2005; 'Former Nazi Pedophile Nabbed in Argentina', *DW News*, 11 March 2005; Harding, (para 1 of 13)

memorialised the legacies of Nazism within broader processes of transitional justice in Chile. The difficulties of bringing figures such as Paul Schäfer to justice are directly related to the continuing arduous process of justice for those affected by the terror of Pinochet's dictatorship and complications within the political entanglement of justice movements. Expressions of memory in Chile therefore operate within both the political and physical boundaries of its past, holding this process back further still.

The funeral of Walter Rauff in 1984 typifies the relationship between the legacies of Nazism and the changing political sphere in Chile since 1970. As Stahl summarises, 'American negligence in the immediate post-war period; active assistance from certain officials of the Catholic church; and longstanding protection by several different Chilean governments' allowed Walter Rauff to live out his last days free.⁶⁰ Rauff had lived freely in Chile since 1958, protected by a 15-year statute of limitations.⁶¹ Despite repeated requests by the West German Government for Chile to extradite Rauff, and numerous international efforts to bring him to trial, all requests were rejected by Pinochet's government, for whom Rauff represented an important figure in the military dictatorship. Pinochet considered Walter Rauff a loyal soldier, and Rauff had built up a network of contacts in the navy. His sons attended the Chilean naval academy.⁶² Rauff also worked with DINA, Pinochet's secret police.⁶³

In the early 1970s, an international movement, the Chilean Solidarity Front, began an International Commission on the Investigation of the Junta. In 1976, lawyers and human rights activists compared human rights abuses committed by the dictatorship with those of Nazi Germany to appeal to the anti-Nazi consensus across the East and West. The aim was to discredit the fascist dictatorship and garner support from the world's superpowers. In the early 1980s, the Pinochet government came up against increasing international condemnation by leaders worldwide to return Rauff to West Germany where he could be tried. From 1983, German journalist Beate Klarsfeld repeatedly protested outside Rauff's home and the Presidential palace with 30 or 40 family members of the disappeared. She was arrested every time but was never kept in custody for a prolonged period.⁶⁴ Commenting on the protests,

⁶⁰ Richard Breitman, Norman J. W. Goda, Timothy Naftali and Robert Wolfe, *US intelligence and the Nazis*, (Cambridge University Press, 2005) p. 156.

⁶¹ Stahl, p. 319.

⁶² Stahl, p. 322.

⁶³ Stahl, p. 208.

⁶⁴ Stahl, p. 321.

Klarsfeld explained: 'The problem was that I could introduce my cause, but these groups had other problems with the regime. These were people whose family members had disappeared. It was a big mix'.⁶⁵ Klarsfeld's comments illustrate the complex relationship between international efforts to bring Nazis to justice and the localised human rights abuses within Chile.

Rauff's death in May 1984 left a bittersweet taste in the mouths of transnational justice groups. In Paris days after his death, Klarsfeld said that "It was God that made justice", adding: "It is unfortunate that it was not German justice. But the problem is now resolved."⁶⁶ However, in Chile, Rauff's funeral seemed to suggest otherwise, its decadence symbolising his loyalty to the dictatorship. Reporters surrounded the funeral, and military guards circled the event. Miguel Serrano told one of the reporters: 'Rauff is a symbol for us and we congratulate our government for not giving in to Jewish pressures'.⁶⁷ Foreign Affairs Minister Jaime del Valle stated after the funeral that the Nazi war criminal's death had put an end to the Rauff Affaire, "eliminating a point of friction in the foreign relations" of Chile.⁶⁸ In this respect, Rauff's death had solved a political rift becoming increasingly tense by the day. Even Pinochet's ally, the British Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher, had made a statement in 1984 declaring, 'Her Majesty's Government would respond positively to any request for assistance in bringing Walter Rauff to justice'.⁶⁹ Walter Rauff's funeral was a symbolic public memorialisation of a contested figure on the international stage. It demonstrated that despite repeated requests, the dictatorship struggled to separate itself from the benefits reaped by Rauff's legacy, offering instead only a fixed visual memory that was permanently etched into Chile's national consciousness.

⁶⁵ Interview Stahl with Beate Klarsfeld, 25 May 2010, in Stahl, *Hunt for the Nazis*, p. 251.

⁶⁶ McFadden, p. 8.

⁶⁷ 'Youths shouted 'Heil Hitler' and raised their arms in...', *UPI Archives*, May 15 1984.

⁶⁸ 'Falleció el jefe nazi Walter Rauff,' *El Mercurio*, May 15, 1984' in Gustavo Guzman, 'Miguel Serrano's Antisemitism and its Impact on the Twenty-First-Century Countercultural Rightists', *Analysis of Current Trends in Antisemitism*, vol. 40, no. 1, 2019.

⁶⁹ Stahl, p. 252.

Chapter Two

Politicising discourse: Memories of Nazism in the public realm

So far, this dissertation has focused on the complex relationship between the textural memory of Nazism and Chile's changing political landscape. This next section will analyse how memories of Nazism have been constructed and influenced by competing political agendas within established public discourse. 'Established public discourse' in this context refers to the popular press, media, and influential figures in Chile. This chapter will analyse three particular case studies that are positioned somewhere between individual acts of remembering in a social context; group memory; national memory with its "invented traditions"; and transnational 'lieux de mémoire': firstly, the debate surrounding allegations of Salvador Allende's relationship with Nazis by Chilean press and politicians; secondly, the public fanaticism towards the presence of Nazis within popular Chilean literature; and thirdly, the works of the Chilean Jewish writer Marjorie Agosín in imparting a Jewish voice onto a deeply political narrative.

In 2000, Chilean historian Victor Farias's book, *Los Nazis En Chile*, was published in Chile in response to a thesis written by Salvador Allende in 1933 entitled 'Mental Hygiene and Delinquency'.⁷⁰ Farias claimed that Allende held racist, homophobic and anti-Semitic views and accused him of harbouring Nazi war criminals.⁷¹ The allegations ignited a fierce debate over the legacies of Allende on both sides of the political spectrum. The press and the papacy also quickly became involved in the process. The book's reception was indicative of a broader revival in Chilean public conversation over the presupposed binary opposites of Allende and Pinochet's presidencies. Added to this, the book's arrival chimed with a new impetus of transnational efforts to extradite Nazis living freely around the world and served to complicate reparatory justice efforts within Chile and abroad.

This section does not seek to refute or confirm the claims made by Farias but instead demonstrate how the memory of Nazism in Chile is an ongoing negotiation between current and historical Chilean politics. Two dominant groups in Chile characterise this challenge. On

⁷⁰ Gonzalo Vial Correa, 'Miscelanea', *La Segunda*, 2 August 2000, 1, p. 11.

⁷¹ 'Diplomacia chilena apoyó a los nazis', *La Nación*, June 2000, 4, p. 31.

one side were civil society groups who had fought Pinochet's dictatorship and campaigned for reparatory justice in Chile. On the other side were Chile's 'pinochetistas', many of which, Amy Sodaro has argued, retained positions of influence and therefore saw memory and memorialisation as a political tool of the left.⁷² The debate centred primarily around Farias' claim that Allende had rejected a request by Nazi hunter Simon Wiesenthal for the extradition of Walter Rauff. Every major newspaper subsequently reported heavily on Farias' claim. In response, many of Allende's supporters, including the President Allende Foundation and Allende's goddaughter, Isabel Allende, voiced their support for the ex-President, denying his ties to Nazism and publishing documents of their own to prove so. On June 6 2000, the state-run Chilean broadcaster, TVN, chose to broadcast Salvador Allende's letter rejecting Wiesenthal's request on Channel 7, whilst giving minimal airtime to the links between Pinochet and Walter Rauff.⁷³ In a public letter to the president of TVN's board of directors, Isabel Allende wrote that such a move was "slander" and constituted a lack "of journalistic ethics, levity and frivolity".⁷⁴ Allende then met with the Secretary-General of the Government, Carolina Toha, who responded that the government was not responsible for intervening in a public channel.⁷⁵

The broadcast also provoked condemnation by those on the left more broadly for the prioritisation of right-wing views. Despite requesting the resignation of Rene Cortazar, director of Channel 7, the broadcasting station stood by its decision to air the letter. It later alleged that it had left out the references to the former dictator due to space reasons and that they had based the decision on justifiable journalistic criteria.⁷⁶ Farias had also commented in an interview that 'It seems that in Chile there was no obvious resistance to Nazism, except in the case of [Gabriela] Mistral and [Pablo] Neruda'.⁷⁷ Allende and the Foundation responded by releasing documents demonstrating the origins of Allende's Socialist Party as a mechanism to confront Nazi groups emerging in Chile. This debate, therefore, was not about which leader had sympathised and worked with Nazis but instead an opportunity for political elites to

⁷² Amy Sodaro, 'The Museum of Memory and Human Rights: "A Living Museum for Chile's Memory" in *Exhibiting Atrocity: Memorial Museums and the Politics of Past Violence* (London: Rutgers University Press, 2018) p. 119.

⁷³ Faride Zerán, 'New controversy between the PS and Channel 7 over a note on Allende's attitude towards the Nazis', *La Segunda*, 6 June 2000, p. 14.

⁷⁴ Zerán, p. 14.

⁷⁵ Zerán, p. 14.

⁷⁶ Gustavo González, 'RIGHTS-CHILE: Allende Faced Dilemma Similar to Pinochet Affair', *IPS News*, 11 June 2000.

⁷⁷ Ximena Póo, Victor Farias, 'Chile was key in Latin America', *Rocinante*, August 2000, no. 22, p.32-34.

engage in a polarised smear campaign. Indeed, as Gustavo Guzman has pointed out, anti-Semitism had become a dividing line within the Chilean right after the dictatorship. Whilst the right-wing establishment abandoned it and moved towards a more positive approach toward Jews and Israel, minority actors had adopted anti-Semitism as a 'central identity marker'.⁷⁸ Similarly, not all leftist Jews were for Allende, and not all Jews were against him.⁷⁹ Instead, Victor Farias' book offered those on the right, including the Chilean press, an opportunity to shift the narrative away from Pinochet's collusion with Nazis to Allende's complicity.

This politically charged shaping of memory is further evidenced by the contrast between the Chilean press's reporting on Allende's links to Nazism in 2000 with the platform given to Miguel Serrano both during and after the dictatorship. Miguel Serrano, the figurehead of Chilean Nazism, had even alluded to Allende's "Jewishness" in his writings and speeches.⁸⁰ The University of Chile invited Serrano to speak in 1978 and after releasing numerous books, he was interviewed at length by influential right-wing newspapers such as *Las Ultimas Noticias* and *La Segunda*, where he could express his anti-Semitic ideas freely to a substantial readership.⁸¹ As Guzman has argued, the consistent coverage of Miguel Serrano's works by the press increased his credibility and garnered popularity in some right-wing circles.

The institutional credibility of Nazism in the public sphere influenced the trajectory of long-established political parties in Chile, such as the Partido Renovación Nacional (National Renewal Party), whose current leader, Sebastián Piñera, is the President of Chile at the time of writing. In 1995, its then-leader, Alexis Lopez, decided to split from the party to organise a new Nazi Party.⁸² The PRN subsequently decided to expel Lopez. However, in April 2000, Lopez and his supporters attempted to organise a congress of all the Nazi Parties in Latin America. The request was rejected officially by the Socialist government of Ricardo Lagos. In response, Lopez accused Lagos of blocking free expression "for which they fought [General

⁷⁸ Gustavo Guzman, 'Miguel Serrano's Antisemitism and its Impact on the Twenty-First-Century Countercultural Rightists', *Analysis of Current Trends in Antisemitism*, vol. 40, no. 1 (2019).

⁷⁹ Paulina G De Almosny, 'Chile.' *The American Jewish Year Book*, vol. 74, (1973), p.358.

⁸⁰ Guzmán, p. 5.

⁸¹ Guzmán, p. 5.

⁸² Jonathon Franklin, 'Row over Nazi conference splits Chile', *The Guardian*, 14 April 2000. <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2000/apr/14/jonathanfranklin> [accessed 25 February 2021] (para 7 of 13).

Pinochet's regime] for 17 years".⁸³ By referencing Pinochet's time in office, Lopez aligned Lagos with the dictatorship and manipulated the remit of freedom of expression as understood in post-Pinochet Chile. The Chilean sociologist Thomas Moulian argued in *El Sur* that Chilean Nazism could be linked to a broader surge in nationalist parties across South America and that Alexis Lopez was alluding to Nazi symbolism within this more popular rhetoric of nationalism.⁸⁴ Debates over TVN's decision to air Allende's letter to Wiesenthal and the organisation of a Nazi congress in Chile occurred within months of each other. Their coverage suggests that the ongoing political divisions absorbed the attention of the mainstream press, neglecting a much more complex but necessary debate about the memory - and potential revival - of Nazism.

The reaction of politicians to Victor Farias' claims contrasted with that of the Catholic Church. Alongside his claims directed at Allende and Pinochet, Farias made allegations towards the Catholic Church that it had 'offered' 479 orphaned children to a doctor in Concepción, Chile, for racial studies, the findings of which would be sent to the universities of Prague and Berlin. In response, the Church promised an investigation into the allegations.⁸⁵ The bishop of Punta Arenas, Monsignor Tomás González, said in response that the issue must be 'thoroughly analysed' and that if the complaint is true 'we must repent'.⁸⁶ It's important to note briefly the role of the Catholic Church in contributing to this paradigm of memories of Nazism in Chile. The Catholic Church has played a complex role in Chilean politics for years. Once the dominant religion in Chile and the ardent supporter of right-wing presidents in Chile historically, the Catholic Church in Chile formed strong connections with the Vatican after the Second World War, facilitating the process of 'ratlines' that was to ensure the escape of Nazis to South America.⁸⁷ Later on however, the Catholic Church was instrumental as a key voice of dissent in the latter years of the dictatorship. The Santiago radio stations of the Christian Democrats (Radio Balmaceda and Cooperativa) and the Catholic Church (Radio Chilena) were two in a handful of radio stations allowed to remain on the air.⁸⁸ The Church became increasingly separate from the state after the dictatorship. Although it's not clear

⁸³ Franklin, (para 7 of 13).

⁸⁴ Thomas Moulian, 'Banning congress of Nazis does not limit free expression', *El Sur*, 2 April 2000, p. 20.

⁸⁵ 'Diplomacia chilena apoyó a los nazis' June 2000, *La Nación*, No: 4, p. 31; 'They link Arrau, Allende and Pinochet with the Nazis', *La Tercera* 4 June 2000, p. 17; 'Chilean children donated for Nazi study', *La Nación*, 9 June 2000, p. 8.

⁸⁶ *La Tercera*, p. 17.

⁸⁷ Ralph Blumenthal, 'New Charges made on Nazi' *New York Times*, 10 May 1984, Section A, p. 10.

⁸⁸ Bresnahan, p. 51

whether or not an investigation was ever held, the Catholic Church's public response to Farias' findings represented a stark contrast to Chilean politicians, for whom the immediate response was denial. This conversation shifted the public memorialisation of this 'chilling' past onto the victims rather than the Nazi perpetrators.

Public interest in accusations of Nazi collusion also filtered into popular literature. Several Chilean novels have been released to widespread acclaim in recent years, contributing to the construction of a popular narrative surrounding the memories of Nazism in Chile. Francisco Ortega's *The Kaifman Number* (2006), in which the protagonist, Kaifman, becomes embroiled in a conspiracy involving the US intelligence, the Vatican and the neo-Nazi groups in Chile, was described as Chile's version of *The Da Vinci Code*, combining 'intrigue, history and secrets'.⁸⁹ The novel reached the top ten in Chile's bestselling books in January 2015, explained in part by the ongoing interest in relations between the Catholic Church and the Nazis.⁹⁰ In a similar vein, Miguel Vera Superbi's 2015 novel, *1946: Nazis in Chile*, transports the reader to Quellon, an island off the coast of Chile, immediately following the Second World War. In the novel, it is here that Hitler has chosen to be the centre of operations from where he would relaunch the Reich to conquer the world. The novel is aimed at young teenagers, and reviews described it as an 'adventure novel', that is 'read with pleasure' and 'can be an excellent gift for adolescents'.⁹¹ Promoting the novel to an adolescent audience depoliticised the nature of Nazism in Chile, reducing it to a fictional phenomenon rather than a force that has influenced and been influenced by recent political divisions in Chile.

Since the end of the Second World War, interest in escaped Nazis' whereabouts received attention transnationally, not just in Chile. Most recently, Amazon's 2020 series drama *Hunters* tells the story of a group of Nazi hunters in seventies New York fighting a war against a network of high-ranking Nazi officials working to create the Fourth Reich. Traversing between myth and truth, the series portrays South America as a safe haven for Nazi fugitives. Littered with violence and moral righteousness, *Hunters* reflects a broader trend in recent years towards the portrayal of Nazism in literature. Richard Evans has attributed this literary obsession with Nazis to a collective societal desire for symbolic representations of

⁸⁹ Roberto C. Careaga, 'Thriller about Nazi secrets is released in southern Chile', *La Tercera*, 26 August 2006, p. 90.

⁹⁰ Careaga, p. 90.

⁹¹ Antonio Rojas Gomez, '1946: Nazis en Chileó', *Revista Occidente*, October 2015, 63, p. 455.

good and evil.⁹² Such representations foster a binary understanding of the nature of good and evil. In Chile, this has contributed to a narrative of Nazis as peripheral and ephemeral rather than central and material in Chilean public life. By fixating on an inherent evilness of the Third Reich, memories of their presence are simplified and pushed to the side-lines, too barbarous to enter into 'normal' society.

Recent novels alluding to the residency of Nazis in Chile contrasts with attempts to fictionalise this during Pinochet's dictatorship. The television screenwriter, Maria Elena Gertner, wrote several soap operas for the Chilean broadcasting service TVN during the Pinochet dictatorship. However, her 1985 show, *La Dama del Balcon* (The Lady on the Balcony), was censored by the dictatorship for including several Nazi characters and alluding to genetic experiments carried out by the Nazis.⁹³ Less than a year before TVN cut Gertner's soap for confronting Nazi war crimes, Miguel Serrano had successfully published *Adolf Hitler, el Ultimo Avatãra* (Adolf Hitler, the Last Avatar), the second instalment of his three-part series, the 'Hitler Trilogy'.⁹⁴ This double standard symbolised the acceptance of Pinochet's government of anti-Semitic literature and, in doing so, the perpetuation of memories of Nazism in a Chilean context, whilst those that attempted to subvert this were silenced.

It is critical to situate memories of Nazism not just within the general public and political discourse, where competing political agendas interfere, but also within the localised Jewish community in Chile. The presence and subsequent memories of Nazis have remained a constant for these communities, especially in the Southern region, where closed German communities have resided for over a century. The Jewish experience is woven into the literature of Chilean writer Marjorie Agosín. Her 1979 work, *A Cross and A Star*, follows her mother, Frida, who grew up as the daughter of European Jewish immigrants in the small town of Osorno in the south of Chile during and after World War Two. In the novel, Agosín described how the presence of a substantial German community that retained its loyalty to Hitler made life unsettling for her mother. At the very beginning, the heroine writes: 'In

⁹² Richard J. Evans, *The Third Reich in History and Memory* (Oxford University Press, 2015), p. 401.

⁹³ 'Writer, María Elena Gertner dies in Isla Negra', *La Tercera*, 27 January 2013 <http://papeldigital.info/lt/2013/01/27/01/paginas/065.pdf> [Accessed March 23 2021]

⁹⁴ Nicholas Goodrick-Clarke. *Black Sun: Aryan Cults, Esoteric Nazism, and the Politics of Identity*, (New York University Press, 2001) p.191.

Osorno, Chile, the Nazis were the great feudal lords of the south and being Jewish was like possessing a savage and dangerous scar.⁹⁵

Agosín explains that Jewish and Indian girls attended public school together and were both excluded from the German and Catholic schools. However, far from being equal, indigenous women work as servants in Jewish homes. The heroine's preferential treatment is only added to as a blue-eyed child with curly blonde hair.⁹⁶ I witnessed this racialised hierarchical dynamic first hand when visiting Chile in 2018. We stayed with a woman of German heritage in her late seventies called Noni, who lived in a secluded cabin on Todos Los Santos lake, a twenty-minute drive from Osorno. Noni kindly invited us into her home and introduced us to members of her family and her maid Suzi, an indigenous Chilean woman. It was here that I found a booklet about Pinochet, written during the dictatorship. I never asked Noni about her feelings towards the dictator, but I sensed from hearing about her family that his time in office had never harmed them directly. This dynamic between indigenous Chileans, the Jewish community, and the German community could operate within a hierarchical structure, and memories of Nazis after the Second World War increased tensions in many towns in southern Chile.

The later arrival of Colonia Dignidad, which Agosín recalls her mother remembering in the novel, increased the spectre of tension and division between these communities. Indeed, anti-Semitic attacks were not uncommon. In January 1958, Franz Pfeiffer, former leader of the Chilean Nazi party, and his top aide, Luis Lázaro Maluenda, assaulted several Jewish stores and homes. They were later sentenced to 20-day jail terms in September 1964.⁹⁷ However, just three months later, Franz Pfeiffer reopened the party under the name of the National Socialist Workers Party, although the party never reached a level of real political influence.⁹⁸

Agosín's vivid recollections of her mothers' memory transcend time and offer a glimpse into the realities of living with the memories of Nazis so soon after the Third Reich

⁹⁵ Marjorie Agosín, *A Cross and a Star*, (Maryland: The Feminist Press, 1979) p. 2.

⁹⁶ Agosín, p. 80.

⁹⁷ '2 Chilean Nazis Sentenced', *The New York Times*, 4 September 1964, p. 9.

⁹⁸ 'Chilean Nazi Party Resumes Activity; Was Dissolved by Government Order', *Jewish Telegraphic Agency, Daily Bulletin*, 17 December 1964.

in a country seemingly miles apart. As memories of Nazis are in a state of constant flux, and more evidence continues to be divulged within the political sphere, historians can neglect such lived experiences of this memory. Political contention over the memorialisation of Nazis has risked diverting attention from the genuine atrocities of Nazism and its ongoing influence on the Jewish community transnationally.

Conclusion

This dissertation has explored how memories of Nazism in Chile have been shaped by a history of political conflict from 1970 to the present day. In doing so, it has constructed an image of Nazism in which it no longer stands on the periphery but whose memory is contested and influenced by Chile's powerful institutions and leaders. Despite this, Nazism remains a somewhat marginalised movement in Chile, and it would be wrong to overstate its place in Chile's national memory. Nevertheless, Chile's political climate and the continuing legacies of the dictatorship have created a complex concoction of political and public memory of the 'Nazi next door'. By analysing physical sites, a contested memory is revealed, in which the histories of Nazism intertwine with the very fabric of Chilean society, from the Santiago General Cemetery to the funeral of Walter Rauff. These physical sites, and the public's relationship with them, have changed over time based on the political agenda of the Allende presidency, the Pinochet dictatorship, and the following reconciliation period. Memories of the Nazi presence in Chile post-1990 are therefore one part of a broader national memory-building endeavour over the history of the dictatorship. This endeavour has evolved and transformed depending on those in power's political ideologies and aims. As such, the textural manifestations of political conflict have influenced the broader public memory of Nazism in Chile and have recurrently overlapped with memories of the dictatorship specifically.

Such contested and evolving histories of these physical sites driven by profound political divisions have informed public discourse surrounding Nazism in Chile. The debate over Victor Farias' publication highlights the ongoing conflict between Chile's right and left and revealed how such polarised divisions overshadowed a more complex but necessary debate over Nazi involvement in Chilean political and public life. The failure to come to terms with this has engendered a societal cognitive dissonance, in which young working-class indigenous men offer their allegiance to a racist and authoritarian ideology, and popular literature infuses Nazism with mystique and literary evil, away from the very real memories of Nazism in Chile. The Chilean Jewish community has endeavoured to share such memories, putting pen to paper to make sense of these clashes of personal and national memory. Ultimately, until Chilean authorities separate the public memory of the Nazi presence from competing political agendas, Nazism in Chile will continue to live on, ignoring the deeper social and cultural scarring of an ongoing movement, both in Chile and abroad. How the country will go about resolving these issues remains to be seen.

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