

Grounds for Goodness

Readings & Resources

compiled by Ruth Howard, assisted by Eli Howard

(for students at Queens and Brock Universities and anyone else interested)

I would tell them, and this is my perhaps idealistic view of the world, that even in the bleakest situation there are always some people who might be good, but very very few, that cruelty can be much worse than we imagine, that human beings have much more strength than most people believe, and that people really should do the right thing, that they should speak up when they see that things are wrong. That's about it!

-Reinhardt Frank, Shoah

Foundation Interview

Below is an assortment of excerpts and links centred around the theme of 'social goodness': historical instances when social groups came to the aid of those outside their groups, with little or no direct benefit to themselves.

The first reading, from *Saving Bulgaria's Jews*, examines how Bulgarians saved their Jewish population from extermination by the Nazis, using group theory from the field of Social Psychology to explain why this happened in Bulgaria but in few other nations. The author (Stephen Reicher) proposes three interlinked causes: 'group inclusion', 'group norms' and 'group interests'. He concludes, in a shift from theory to action, by hoping that his findings might provide "tools" for "architects of rescue" to construct "more inclusive and humane communities". His paradigm can be kept in mind while engaging with the subsequent excerpts and links.

The next reading is a 2020 newspaper article recounting the pandemic-time story of a Nashville community's show of solidarity in response to a black resident's feelings of insecurity in his neighbourhood. Following this is an article by Yvonne Mokgoro, former South African supreme court justice, in which she advocates for the integration of the humanistic philosophy of *Ubuntu* into the legal and social framework of post-apartheid South Africa. *Friendship Through Famine: A Letter of Gratitude to the Choctaw Nation*

tells the story of the Choctaw people's donation across the world to the Irish people in the midst of the potato famine of the 1840's, and the *Choctaw and Ireland History* page tracks how the relationship between these two colonized peoples has borne fruit up until our present time as a result of this initial act of kindness. The final reading, excerpted from Bo Lidegaard's book *Countrymen*, recounts the actions of the residents of one Danish fishing village, Gilleleje, who worked tirelessly and at personal risk in 1943 to ferry hundreds of Jews to nearby Sweden under the noses of the occupying Gestapo.

A short excerpt from a Terry Pratchett novel, provides a comedic counterbalance.

And at the end you'll find a list of books that informed the Grounds for Goodness research and creative process.

Enjoy!

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Excerpts from Reicher, Stephen, et al. "Saving Bulgaria's Jews: An analysis of social identity and the mobilisation of social solidarity." *European Journal of Social Psychology* 36.1 (2006): 49-72.

Throughout the Nazi empire, people retained some autonomy in how they responded to the Holocaust. As Gross (2001) observes in his account of the destruction of the Jewish community in Jedwabne, Poland by their non-Jewish neighbours: 'a number of those actors could have made different choices, with the result that many more European Jews could have survived the war'. The implication... is that we cannot fully understand the Holocaust by focusing on the Nazis and the Jews alone. We must always consider the moderating role of bystanders. How they chose to act made a critical difference.

The significance of these choices is underscored by considering those cases where people did help Jewish populations. In recent years, increasing attention has been devoted to such cases... Consider the case of Poland, which is often thought of as most complicit with the Holocaust. After the liquidation of the Warsaw Ghetto a leading official of the World Jewish Congress reflected on how such a thing could have happened without any local opposition. He concluded that it was due to the Poles' blind hatred for Jews which made them co-responsible for the slaughter. Yet even here there were two organisations devoted to helping the Jews. One was a civilian Council for Aid to Jews (Zegota), the other was organised by the Armia Krajowa (an underground resistance movement attached to the Polish Government in Exile in London).

In Romania, Jews may have been expelled from the occupied territories... but the German request to deport the Jews of 'Old' Romania was refused. In Denmark and Finland the Jews survived unscathed—the Danes arranged for the entire Jewish population to be transported to safety in Sweden. However, perhaps the most remarkable example of rescue occurred in Bulgaria where a series of petitions, individual letters of protest and public demonstrations against anti-semitic measures ultimately prevented the deportation of the indigenous Jewish population. Various commentators have pointed out that this was the only case where Jews largely survived within a country that was in the pro-German...

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Most directly, work in the social identity tradition proposes that group relations are critical to the way in which we respond to the plight of others. Indeed, it is built into the premises of this tradition that we will be more concerned with the fate of ingroup members and more likely to respond to the needs of those who share a common group membership with ourselves... that we are more likely to aid those who we categorise as ingroup members and therefore who we aid will vary as a function of how we identify ourselves.

However, it is important to recognise that the drawing of ingroup–outgroup divisions is only one part of the argument. For social identity theory, behaviour can never be derived simply from the fact of group membership. Rather one must take into account the content of the specific identity that is made salient. That is to say, our actions depend upon the beliefs and norms of the groups with which we identify. So, while we may be generally inclined to help ingroup members, that does not mean we will always neglect outgroup members. Whether we do so or not depends upon what our group norms have to say about our obligations to others. For certain groups, there may be strong injunctions to 'look after our own' while, for others, the need to attend to those in need, irrespective of whether they are members of our group or not, may define who 'we' are. Indeed in certain cases, pro-social behaviour such as charity and helping may be the dimension along which we differentiate our group from others.

Analytically, then, we need to distinguish between helping based on ingroup inclusion and helping based on ingroup norms. In general, the focus of the former is on who the victim is ('I helped her because she was one of us') whereas the focus of the latter is on who the helper is ('I helped her because we are concerned with everybody's welfare'). To put it slightly differently, this argument suggests that there are two dimensions of social

identity which impact upon helping and social solidarity. The first relates to the category boundaries. The second concerns the meanings associated with group membership...

In the case of helping, then, we might expect that those who wish to create social movements in favour of intervention might do so, firstly, by construing social categories in such a way that victims and potential helpers form a single ingroup and/or, secondly, by construing norms in such a way that humanitarian action is a central tenet of the group. The implication is that helping is neither a fixed function of personality nor automatically invoked by context. Rather it is something that can be actively created. Helping is not something individuals come to alone through internal processes. It is something that can be publicly mobilised.

It is therefore critical to understand how it is possible to mobilise significant portions of a population—including those who have not been socialised into... a ‘virtue ethic’ of seeing oneself as having an obligation to humanity as a whole—against genocide. To the extent that a rhetorical social identity perspective can help explain such mobilisations then it may not only contribute to an understanding of rescue during the Holocaust but also of how to avoid atrocities in the future. The aim of this paper... is to contribute towards such an understanding by analysing the means by which Bulgarians were mobilised to oppose anti-semitic measures during the Second World War.

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Following Italy’s defeat by Greece in December 1940, Hitler felt it necessary to move his troops through Bulgaria to assist Mussolini. King Boris III faced a choice between occupation or alliance and opted for the latter. On 20 January 1941 his Council of Ministers approved the German passage and on 1 March 1941 the Prime Minister formally signed a treaty of adherence to the Axis Powers. On the same day Southern Dobroudja was returned to Bulgaria and shortly afterwards it gained Thrace, Macedonia and parts of Eastern Serbia, thus realising the longstanding nationalist dream of a ‘Greater Bulgaria’.

Over the following two years the conditions for Jews gradually deteriorated. A critical point was reached with the arrival in Sofia of Adolf Eichmann’s special envoy, the SS Officer Theodor Dannecker. On 22 February 1943, he signed an agreement with Aleksander Belev, the Bulgarian Commissioner for Jewish Questions, to deport 20 000 Jews ‘as a first step’. Originally the text referred explicitly to Jews from Thrace and Macedonia, but these words were struck out. In fact, the deportation of Jews from these

occupied territories went ahead between 20 and 29 March 1943. In total 11 343 people were taken to Auschwitz and Treblinka. Twelve survived.

Belev, however, was still short of his target figure and hence targeted the population of 'Old Bulgaria'. He chose to start with the Jews of Kyustendil, a town near the old border with Serbia. The town sent a delegation to Sofia to oppose the deportation. It was joined by Dimitar Peshev, Vice- President of the Subranie and member for the town. He organised a letter of protest signed by 42 other parliamentary representatives of the majority party. Although government pressure forced 13 to withdraw their signatures, and although Peshev himself was subjected to a vote of no confidence and forced out of his post as Vice-President, the deportation was suspended and Belev resigned.

Shortly afterwards, a new plan was devised which involved the expulsion of Jews from Sofia, pending their deportation from the country. The plan was published on 22 May 1943 and on 24 May a demonstration of several thousand Jewish and non-Jewish Bulgarians marched to the royal palace in protest. The event has been described as second only to the Warsaw ghetto uprising as an act of resistance to the Holocaust and it was at least partially successful. Although 19,153 Jews were driven from the capital, this was the climax of their persecution. Henceforth the King categorically refused any deportations from Bulgaria. In August 1943, the King died shortly after visiting Hitler. This led to persistent rumours that he had been poisoned for defying the extermination policy... By October 1943, Sofia's Jews were allowed to return. In August 1944 the 'Law for the Defence of the Nation' was rescinded. The next month, the regime collapsed and the Soviet army occupied the country.

(A) Category Inclusion

Extract 1: 'the bill's objective is to deprive a Bulgarian national minority of its civil rights Our legislature must not approve a law that will enslave one part of Bulgaria's citizens, and leave a black page in our modern history.' ...

Extract 3: 'I will refute the claim that the Jewish minority threatens the nation, and, consequently, that measures must be taken to defend it ...Bulgaria's Jews ...speak and think in Bulgarian... They sing Bulgarian songs and tell Bulgarian stories. Their private selves are modelled on ours—in the street, on our playing fields, at school, in the barracks, in workshops and factories, in the mountains and the fields, our sufferings are their sufferings, our joys their joys too.'

Extract 4: ‘And so, gentlemen, we come to the bill’s second clause, which sanctions a number of important restrictions to which Bulgarian citizens of Jewish origin are to be subject ... In singling out a group of people in order to assign them a particular status, and in restricting their basic rights, this bill... relies, as I said, on a sui generis racism, one based on birth and blood. I do not subscribe to racial theories. Racial purity is a fairy tale. I do not believe in fairy tales and I am not about to draw conclusions of inequality amongst our citizens on the basis of an ill-founded theory of racism and racial purity, no matter how it is presented here. The term “pure race” is a fiction. Who among us, knowing the history of this land, can say ‘I am racially pure?’”

These extracts are presented at the start of our analysis... because, alone and in combination, they allow us to make a number of important points. First, and most fundamentally, all of the extracts presuppose a national framework and include the Jews as part of the national ingroup... After stressing how Jewish culture and thought is Bulgarian, the text continues ‘Their private selves are modelled on ours ...our sufferings are their sufferings, our joys their joys too’. This only makes sense if ‘ours’ and ‘our’ refers to Bulgaria and hence the audience are presupposed to have a national identity.

(B) Category Norms

In Document 5, Dimo Kazosov addresses the Prime Minister and notes his various group memberships: as head of the national educational system, as President of the Bulgarian Academy of Sciences, as Professor at Bulgaria’s only university, as president of the Bulgarian Pen Club. He then continues:

Extract 10: ‘Everyone also has the right to expect you to show a heightened sensitivity to any attempt to condemn defenceless citizens to a moral death, incite the young generation to shameful violence, falsify historical facts, blacken the reputation of writers, political figures, scholars, and soldiers, and question the loyalty of any and all who are proud enough not to think like your friends’ In other words, the Prime Minister’s various group memberships are invoked in order to represent anti-semitic measures as anti-normative to each of them. An educationalist should not corrupt the young, a scientist should not distort facts, a President of the Pen Club should not disparage his members—and so on... However, these extracts can also be read on another level. That is, they are intended to put indirect pressure on political leaders by mobilising the broader (national) population against them for supporting the proposed law. Any leaders who attack ‘defenceless citizens’ reveal themselves to be unworthy of their position...

(C) Category Interests

As with inclusion and norm arguments, interest arguments were generally presented in categorical rather than individual or general terms. The first and simplest argument was in fact a counter-argument. Given that the legislation was labelled a ‘Law for the Defence of the Nation’, thus implying that Jews had to be constrained because they threatened Bulgarian interests, it was frequently asserted that there was no such threat and hence the law did not benefit the nation...

However, as well as contesting the notion that legislation supports the national interest, a number of arguments are used to suggest that it actively endangers Bulgarian interests. As ever, there are times when it is simply asserted that the law will ‘be very harmful to our people.’ Others spell out some of these dangers. These include the danger of destabilizing the country at a time when unity is crucial; the danger of weakening the Bulgarian economy; and the danger of exposing Bulgarian minorities living in Thrace and Macedonia to greater oppression...

... This is a context that, in its general features, is extremely common not only in the Nazi Holocaust, but also in other cases of genocide. Nazi anti-semitism was premised upon characterising the Jews as ‘community aliens’ who endangered the German nation. Similarly, the Rwandan genocide was premised upon the notion that Tutsis were outsiders who dominated and polluted the country. Solidarities always exist in response to exclusions and, since exclusions are so often based upon nationhood, then our findings may well have wider applicability than the specific case under consideration.

This argument is supported by considering some of the texts relating to later waves of repression in Bulgaria. Thus, in response to the evacuation and internment of Sofia’s Jews in May 1943, a letter to King Boris from a number of public figures asserts that: ‘In subjecting our innocent fellow citizens to this cruel and pitiless measure, not only are we squandering a vast moral capital of which our generous and tolerant people had every right to be proud, we are also harming Bulgaria’s reputation in the eyes of the world and compromising its future national interests.’

In this single sentence we can see all three types of argument—category inclusion (‘our innocent fellow citizens’), category norms (‘our generous and tolerant people’) and category interest (‘harming Bulgaria’s reputation’)...

What we have shown in the present analysis is that arguments concerning category inclusion, category norms and category interests were present, indeed prominent, in the documents that appealed for opposition to the bill...

We have previously shown that the architects of genocide have been all too skilful as entrepreneurs of identity' who define categories and category relations such that the ingroup is imperilled by an outgroup whose destruction then becomes an imperative of (collective) self-defence. Architects of rescue need to become equally adept entrepreneurs who construct more inclusive and more humane communities whose interests are served by acts of rescue. A social identity account, we hope, will help to provide them with the tools for the job.



Page, S. (2020, June 3). A black man was afraid to walk in his gentrified community. So 75 neighbors walked with him.

<https://www.washingtonpost.com/lifestyle/2020/06/03/black-man-was-afraid-walk-his-gentrified-community-so-75-neighbors-walked-with-him/>



Mokgoro, Yvonne. "Ubuntu and the Law in South Africa." *Buffalo Human Rights Law Review* 4.1 (1998): 15-23.

<https://digitalcommons.law.buffalo.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1183&context=bhrlr>

“To realize the peaceful co-existence recognized by the Interim Constitution, despite the injustices of the past, there is a need for understanding, not vengeance, and a need for reparation, not retaliation. Specifically, that constitution recognized the need for ubuntu and not victimization.” (18)



“A person with Ubuntu is open and available to others, affirming of others, does not feel threatened that others are able and good, based from a proper self-assurance that comes from knowing that he or she belongs in a greater whole and is diminished when others are humiliated or diminished, when others are tortured or oppressed”

- Desmond Tutu

“One of the sayings in our country is Ubuntu – the essence of being human. Ubuntu speaks particularly about the fact that you can’t exist as a human being in isolation. It speaks about our interconnectedness. You can’t be human all by yourself, and when you have this quality – Ubuntu – you are known for your generosity. We think of ourselves far too frequently as just individuals, separated from one another, whereas you are connected and what you do affects the whole World. When you do well, it spreads out; it is for the whole of humanity.”

-Desmond Tutu

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Friendship Through Famine: A Letter of Gratitude to the Choctaw Nation
(Anonymous, March 2019). <https://www.choctawnation.com/Irish>

Choctaw and Ireland History. Choctaw Nation.

<https://www.choctawnation.com/history-culture/history/choctaw-and-ireland-history>

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Excerpts from: Lidegaard, Bo. *Countrymen*. Signal, 2013. 274-277, 297-300.

The Influx into the small town (*Gilleleje*) was hard to keep a secret. At the butcher’s on Vesterbrogade there were about thirty Jews, and the fishmonger also had a house full of refugees. It was clear that they had to be dealt with as soon as possible--preferably shipped out...

... A visiting helper, assistant professor Mogens Schmidt from Helsingør, cycled down to the harbor early in the morning, where he had spotted a dozen “wind drivers,” many of them large schooners, which were moored one next to the other along the piers. If their sails could be raised it would do the trick. Schmidt made several unsuccessful attempts to get in touch with the skippers, and finally made contact with a captain from Fyn, Gunnar Flyvbjerg. He hesitated. He was not the sole owner of the schooner, and would also be putting his brother’s share at risk if he ventured to transport a boatload of Jews. Eventually Schmidt persuaded skipper Flyvbjerg and the two young men who constituted the crew. At the control post on the centre pier they got the coastal police officer’s approval of the plan. The sailing was scheduled for 1 p.m., and preparations for the quick departure were made on board the schooner.

The *Flyvbjerg* could take several hundred refugees, and the message that there was a new possibility of a ship spread by word of mouth among the helpers, who each had knowledge of small groups of refugees hiding in various locations in and around the town...

... Although great efforts were made to manage the influx of Jews to the harbour, the situation with so many refugees in the tense atmosphere could not be kept under control. Only a few hours after Gestapo-Juhl had left the port area, men and women, young and old, children, and luggage, all flocked down to the centre pier where the *Flyvbjerg* was moored. The helpers were not organized or coordinated, and they all wanted their own groups to reach the boat. The rush was at once a moving and deeply disturbing sight, as Vilhelm Lind, participating in the futile attempts to control the situation, amply described:

The departure was originally intended for 12:30 p.m. but already by 10 o' clock the coastal police gave the ready signal, and because it was important to use the time while the Germans were not around, it was determined that it should sail immediately. At the same time the message was given throughout the town, and the scenes there could not be depicted more dramatically in any film. The once peaceful seaside resort, now sitting there quietly in autumn, with almost empty streets, was suddenly full of life. In a moment all the house doors sprang open and Jews flowed out of almost every house. In an instant the whole main street was full of people, women and men, from the youngest toddlers to the gray-haired old men, poor and rich--all on the run from the barbarians. The entire town's population helped, and all kinds of vehicles were used. Old gouty women were carried by weatherbeaten fishing hands, while others were rolled off by wheelbarrows and other odd transport devices. I found a little girl who seemed to have become separated from her family. I got her up on my bicycle bar and rode at full speed toward the harbour. She cried when I picked her up, but gradually as I was yelling and screaming in Norwegian, pushing myself forward through the crowd on the pier, her fear turned into enthusiasm, and it was a very excited little youngster I delivered on board the ship. It was a strange sight to see all these people who had done nothing wrong but whose only sin was to be Jews. They were now being chased away with empty, expressionless, or resigned faces, without understanding a bit of it all. As for myself, having handed over the little one, I... found it hard to hold back the tears, whether it was the joy that everything seemed to go so well, or ... the bitterness of having to witness that kind of thing in a Nordic country in the year 1943--or maybe because of both.

The tension was constantly at the breaking point, for the Germans could get there at just any moment. But everything went well until suddenly there was a cry: “The Germans are coming!” and in an instant the moorings were cast off and schooner sailed toward Sweden and freedom with 210 Jews on Board.[\[1\]](#) (274-277)

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Now, in the early hours of the morning, some ten citizens of Gilleleje got together at the mechanic Peter Petersen’s place. Here they set up what amounted to a conspiracy, later to be known as “the Jewish Committee.” At first the men suggested that the local police officer act as their chairman, but he declined, citing the fact that it was too dangerous for him to undertake this duty. He would, however, remain a member and do whatever he could to sustain the efforts to avoid further arrests. The group then turned to the local elementary school consultant, L. C. Jensen, who accepted the “nomination” and immediately emerged as the committee’s dynamic leader. Other members were the local parish council chairman who had housed Meyer and his group the preceding day, the cabinetmaker, the teacher, two grocers of the village, as well as a local manufacturer and the town physician. With the exception of one person, grocer Lassen of the nearby settlement of Smidstrup, none of the ten men had any prior experience with illegal work or active resistance. Half of them had engaged in the relief effort for less than a day, prior to their gathering at Petersen’s house this early Thursday morning. The ten men had little in common but they shared a strong determination spurred by the tragic events of the past night: something had to be done to organize help for the many remaining refugees. And if nobody else would undertake this task, they would.

We have several later accounts of the discussions within this self-appointed action group, and the driving motivation of the men is worth noting. It was Gilleleje’s reputation that was at stake. The honour of the local community--and thus that of its inhabitant. “History will be written these days in this town,” the school consultant is quoted as having said that morning. And the group agreed, sharing a sense that somehow they had been called upon to stand up and do their part in a big struggle that so far had seemed very remote from their village. Also there was no disagreement about the task at hand: The Jews who had not been found by the Gestapo the night before had to be saved at any price. The first step was to get them out of town. Food also had to be provided for everybody. Longer term, the committee had to set up a system for transfer to Sweden. Contacts had to be established with the fishermen on the boats, money was to be collected among the refugees, transfer prices negotiated, and arrangements made for those who had no means to pay for their escape. All this had to be accomplished within

hours and under great uncertainty as to the further plans and intentions of the Gestapo. Strangely, the members of the conspiracy do not seem to have been concerned with their own fate, should their activity be disclosed. They seem to have trusted that no member of the community would betray the activities of the helpers--or the hundreds of refugees still hiding in almost every house and stable.[\[2\]](#) (297-298)

For the ten men now forming the Jewish Committee as well as for all the inhabitants of Gilleleje, the events of the preceding day and night had completely changed their perception of the occupation. It had dawned on them that Denmark was not only occupied by neighbouring Germany but ruled by a criminal regime that arbitrarily perpetrated violence against the defenseless. It was the first time since the occupation of April 9, 1940, that ordinary citizens were directly confronted with Nazism's ugly face. Yes, one had heard and seen things, and the occupation forces were not popular even if they behaved correctly. But by and large one's life could continue relatively undisturbed, and the Danish social order prevailed. Now, from one day to the next, the Nazis had shown what it meant when the rule of law and humanism were cast aside and a group of criminals persecuted and terrorized Danish citizens who had done nothing to provoke the occupying power's anger. To the villagers of Gilleleje this was a dramatic turning point, and it seemed to most of them that standing by passively would somehow damage their reputation and indeed that of their village. Suddenly it became imperative to take action and to demonstrate that Gilleleje did not take part in the crime but--very much to the contrary--took action to stop it. Seen this way, there was no going back: The fate of the refugees now crowding the town had been inseparably linked to the town itself.

Also, something else was at stake. The refugees hiding in Gilleleje were anything but an abstraction, a story, or an anonymous group. These were real, ordinary men, women, and children, families with the old and the fragile, the magnanimous and the petty, everyday people who were hurting--frightened and desperate to get away to safety. They had descended upon Gilleleje in great numbers, forcing every citizen of the village to look into the eyes of misery and to realize that these wretched refugees might as well be themselves. It was impossible to look the other way and pretend not to see...

If everything the Gilleleje citizens believed in and what the minister--literally--preached in the church were to have the slightest credibility, this was the moment when the town had to step up. If they did not do so, it was not only their reputation that was at stake: It was the very social order the ten citizens represented, in their different ways.

from *Guards! Guards!* by Terry Pratchett

... They avoided one another's faces, for fear of what they might see mirrored there. Each man thought: one of the others is bound to say something soon, some protest, and then I'll murmur agreement, not actually *say* anything. I'm not as stupid as that, but definitely murmur very firmly so that the others will be in no doubt that I thoroughly disapprove, because at a time like this it behooves all decent men to nearly stand up and be almost heard...

But no-one said anything. The cowards, each man thought.

'Taxes is one thing, but eating people is another.'

'Well said!'

'If we all say we won't put up with it, what can the dragon do?'

....Colon raised a triumphant fist in the air.

'It's just what I've always said. The people united can never be ignited!'

'Hang on a minute,' said a small man, slowly. 'As far as we know, the dragon's only good at one thing. It flies around the city setting fire to people. I'm not actually certain what is being proposed that would stop it doing this.'

'Yes, but if we all protest –' said the first speaker, his voice modulated with uncertainty.

'It can't burn *everyone*', said Colon, and added again proudly, 'The people united can never be ignited!' There was rather less of a cheer this time...

The dragon shifted its position on the ridge of the nearest house, flapped its wings once or twice, yawned, and then stretched its neck down into the street.

The man blessed with daughters stood, with his fist upraised, in the centre of a rapidly expanding circle of bare cobbles... It suddenly seemed that no man in the entire world was so lonely and without friends.

"I see," he said quietly. He scowled up at the inquisitive reptile. In fact it didn't seem particularly belligerent. It was looking at him with something approaching interest.

“I don’t care!” he shouted, his voice echoing from wall to wall in the silence. “We defy you! If you kill me, you might as well kill all of us!”

There was some uneasy shuffling of feet amongst those sections of the crowd who didn’t feel that this was absolutely axiomatic.

“We can resist you, you know!” growled the man. “Can’t we, everyone. What was that slogan about being united, Sergeant?”

“Er,” said Colon, feeling his spine turn to ice.

“I warn you, dragon, the human spirit is –“

They never found out what it was, or at least what *he* thought it was...

The dragon flame caught him full in the chest. For a moment he was visible as a white-hot outline before the neat, black remains spiralled down into a little puddle of melting cobbles.

The flame vanished.

The crowd stood like statues, not knowing if it was staying put or running that would attract more attention.

The dragon stared, down, curious to see what they were going to do next.

Colon felt that, as the only civic official present, it was up to him to take charge of the situation. He coughed.

“Right, then,” he said, trying to keep the squeak out of his voice, “If you would just move along there, ladies and gentlemen. Move along, now. Move along.”

He waved his arms in a vague gesture of authority as the people shuffled nervously away. Out of the corner of his eye he saw red flames behind the rooftops, and sparks spiralling in the sky.

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