

‘Substitute the Word Jew for Negro’: An Analysis of How United States Newspapers
Covered Local Discrimination and Nazi Discrimination

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'Substitute the Word Jew for Negro': An Analysis of How United States Newspapers
Covered Local Discrimination and Nazi Discrimination

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Abstract

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'Substitute the Word Jew for Negro': An Analysis of How United States Newspapers Covered Local Discrimination and Nazi Discrimination

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This thesis examines three United States newspapers' (the *New York Times*, *Chicago Defender*, and *Montgomery Advertiser*) coverage on race issues within the United States, and their coverage on discrimination and race issues from the Nazis from 1933 to 1945. It compares and contrasts how these influential newspapers covered these two country's discriminatory laws and ideologies. James Q. Whitman argued in his book, *Hitler's American Model*, that leading Nazis and Hitler himself looked at the United States for inspiration for discriminatory methods.

After performing a textual analysis of over 140 newspaper articles, this thesis argues that there were differences in how the journalists covered Nazi issues versus local issues. The journalists were quick to be critical of the Nazis, but often shied away from criticizing American racism.

Dedication

*To my grandpa Mac,
For pushing me forward*

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Table of Contents

	Page
Abstract.....	3
Dedication.....	4
Acknowledgments.....	5
List of Tables	8
List of Figures	9
Introduction.....	10
Purpose of this Study	12
Chapter Breakdown	17
Chapter 1: Literature Review.....	19
Alternative Press	22
Eugenics.....	23
Nuremberg Laws.....	25
Lynching in the United States.....	32
The “New South”	33
The Southern Press	47
Montgomery Advertiser.....	52
Post-World War II.....	59
Previous Analysis.....	60
Methods.....	79
Recommendations for Further Research.....	83
Chapter 2: General News Coverage.....	85
<i>New York Times</i>	85
<i>Chicago Defender</i>	90
<i>Montgomery Advertiser</i>	102
Chapter 3: Eugenics	118
<i>The New York Times</i>	118
<i>Chicago Defender</i>	134
<i>Montgomery Advertiser</i>	139
Chapter 4: Miscegenation	150

<i>New York Times</i>	150
<i>Chicago Defender</i>	158
<i>Montgomery Advertiser</i>	164
Chapter 5: Direct Comparison	168
<i>New York Times</i>	168
<i>Chicago Defender</i>	172
<i>Montgomery Advertiser</i>	187
Chapter 6: Conclusion.....	191
References	201

List of Tables

Page

Table 1 Search Terms 81

List of Figures

	Page
Figure 1. Graph of coverage area.....	192

Introduction

A group of Black Americans petitioned the United Nations in 1951 to act against the United States, accusing the country of committing genocide against Black people.¹ The authors of this petition said the “oppressed Negro citizens of the United States, segregated, discriminated against and long the target of violence, suffer from genocide as the result of the consistent, conscious, unified policies of every branch of government.”²

It is not a coincidence that this paper was written only a few years after the end of World War II. There are several references to the Holocaust, Adolf Hitler, and Nazi Germany within the petition. In the first reference to the Nazis, the authors wrote how Robert H. Jackson, a U.S. Supreme Court justice, described the Holocaust. The petition states that “every word he voiced against the monstrous Nazi beast applies with equal weight, we believe, to those who are guilty of the crimes herein set forth.”³ Jackson was appointed by President Harry Truman to help codify the legal actions required to try key officials in the Nazi regime during the Nuremberg Trials.⁴ Jackson gave the opening statement, which introduced new concepts of international law. In his statement he said:

The privilege of opening the first trial in history for crimes against the peace of the world imposes a grave responsibility. The wrongs which we seek to condemn and punish have been so calculated, so malignant, and so devastating, that civilization cannot

¹ The Civil Rights Congress, *We Charge Genocide* (International Publishers, 1951), XIV.

² *Ibid.*, XIV.

³ *Ibid* XVI.

⁴ “‘The Grave Responsibility of Justice’: Justice Robert H. Jackson’s Opening Statement at Nuremberg,” The national WWII Museum, Nov. 20, 2020.

tolerate their being ignored, because it cannot survive their being repeated. That four great nations, flushed with victory and stung with injury stay the hand of vengeance and voluntarily submit their captive enemies to the judgment of the law is one of the most significant tributes that Power has ever paid to Reason.⁵

The petitioners were appealing to the United Nations Convention on the Prevention and Punishment of the Crime of Genocide. This United Nations committee defined genocide as:

 killing members of the group, causing serious bodily or mental harm to members of the group, deliberately inflicting on the group conditions of life calculate to bring about its physical destruction in whole or in part, imposing measures intended to prevent births with the group, or forcibly transferring of the group to another group.

This petition was signed by well over fifty people, including historically-important figures, such as civil rights activists W.E.B. Du Bois, Claudia Jones, and Paul Robeson.⁶

There were over 4,400 Black Americans lynched in the United States between 1880 and 1940.⁷ These events, which were called terror lynchings, were “violent and

⁵ Ibid.

⁶ Ibid., XVII-XVIII. W.E.B. Du Bois was an American civil rights activist and historian. Claudia Jones was a political activist, advocating for communism, feminist ideologies, and Black rights. Paul Robeson initially became famous with his entertainment skills of singing and acting. He became a political activist and advocated for the rights of Black people. His son, Paul Robeson Jr., published a book titled “The Undiscovered Paul Robeson” about his father’s activities as an entertainer and a political advocate.

⁷ Equal Justice Initiative, “Lynching in America: Confronting the Legacy of Racial Terror,” accessed Oct. 9, 2022., <https://eji.org/reports/lynching-in-america/>

public acts of torture that traumatized Black people throughout the country and were largely tolerated by state and federal officials.”⁸ Black Americans also had to deal with racism in the legal system. At least 30 U.S. states had anti-miscegenation laws, which banned marriage between white and non-white people. After Reconstruction, the segregation movement took over, barring people of different races from attending the same schools or using the same public transportation.⁹

Purpose of this Study

The author conducted this study to understand how newspapers in the United States discussed discrimination between 1933 and 1945, specifically comparing coverage of the Nazis with articles about Jim Crow laws and other American discrimination. The main research question of this thesis is: did these American newspapers cover Nazi discrimination differently than they covered American discrimination, and if yes, how so?

This thesis follows work done by James Q. Whitman, author of *Hitler’s American Model*, which focuses on the Nazi’s leadership’s racist ideologies as well as some of their actions.¹⁰ This book, as the name suggests, shows that Hitler and other leading Nazis based some of their racist ideologies on the United States’ treatment of Black people throughout American history, from slavery up until the Jim Crow-era of the 1930s.

⁸ Ibid. 3.

⁹ “From Slavery to Segregation,” Equal Justice Initiative, Accessed Oct. 9, 2022, <https://segregationinamerica.eji.org/report/from-slavery-to-segregation.html>.

¹⁰ James Q. Whitman. *Hitler’s American Model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Race Law* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2017),

With the steady rise of Neo-Nazi groups in the United States (and internationally), the analysis of the United States' role in inspiring the Nazi behavior remains relevant in 2022. White nationalism has had a resurgence in the last few years, and the role of journalists is just as vital to democracy as it once was. This thesis is also important with the high levels of attention police violence against Black Americans has garnered since the Black Lives Matter movement came into being in 2014 with the killing of another Black man in an American city. The United States has not directly taken responsibility for slavery up until the Jim Crow-era racism and even today, going so far as to ban the teaching of critical race theory in American schools. Germany, on the other hand, has taken a different approach: covering its tragedies repeatedly in the education system.

This study found that there was hypocrisy among the American media. The Nazis were portrayed as terrible and ridiculous while similar and arguably worse discrimination laws in America were seen as sophisticated and necessary. It cannot be stated outright why this instance occurred, but I hypothesize that Americans just didn't care about Black Americans and thus ignored national issues. American nationalism likely also led to the belief that the United States was a perfect country and couldn't be capable of doing any wrong.

Method

This thesis has a historical analysis model to review newspaper clippings from 1933 until 1945. This range allows for a few months before the Nazi party rose to power in Germany, as well as a few months after World War II ended. This slightly extended

range should allow for a better understanding of what United States newspapers reported about Germany and the Nazi party (or if the newspapers covered them at all) .

There are three main groups of American newspapers I will analyze for this study: national, southern, and Black newspapers. These three areas provide a representation of what the United States audiences were reading at the time. The national newspaper I analyzed is the *New York Times*, as it is and was one of the most influential newspapers in the country. I will analyze the *Montgomery Advertiser* as a representative southern newspaper because the racial ideologies and beliefs in the Jim Crow South were generally different from the North, which is where many of the national newspapers were located. The *Advertiser* was not just a southern newspaper, but it was a newspaper for white people, as Black issues were not covered. Finally, I will analyze the *Chicago Defender's* archives. The *Defender* was one of the most important and powerful Black newspapers at the time. It provided a much-needed voice to Black Americans during a time when news about Black people was not covered as much in the mainstream white press.

As Brennen stated in her book, *Qualitative Research Methods for Media Studies*, historical research is not just a collection of facts. It is the evidence and interpretation of the author.¹¹ These articles are not just singular events. Consistencies within these artifacts can show broad patterns. These artifacts provide insight into the values, beliefs,

¹¹ Bonnie S. Brennen, *Qualitative Research Methods for Media Studies*. (New York: Routledge, 2013), 103.

and experiences of a society. While this all may be true, Brennen describes that historians are not perfect and cannot know what information was true at the time it was written. For this analysis, the three newspapers were deemed to be trustworthy overall. It is difficult, as Brennen describes, to understand the motivations behind people's actions and beliefs when reading historical artifacts. When analyzing historical newspapers, it also is impossible to understand the relationships between the journalists and the issues they covered.

This historical analysis has been conducted using online archives of the three newspapers. During this historical period, the *Chicago Defender* had different editions printed at the same time. This thesis will focus on the national edition, which has the most complete archives and was the most widely circulated at the time of printing. These archives are keyword searchable, making it possible to locate any information. I have accessed these archives through Ohio University's Alden Library website. The archive is on ProQuest and is titled "The Chicago Defender (National Edition) (1921-1967). *The New York Times* runs its archive, which is intuitive and complete. Through the archive, newspapers.com, I found the pages from the *Montgomery Advertiser*.

As stated previously, this thesis is inspired by Whitman's work, analyzing areas where the Nazis saw the United States as a leader in discrimination and racism.

The 1951 petition "We Charge Genocide" was largely ignored and forgotten by the public and historians. A few journal articles have been published on the petition, including one published in 2022, discussing one woman's experience with gender

violence and the petition.¹² Leaders of the petition argued that the racist methods in the United States didn't just affect Americans, but all of mankind. The author of the petition wrote:

It is our hope, and we fervently believe that it was the hope and aspiration of every black American whose voice was silenced forever through premature death at the hands of racist-minded hooligans or Klan terrorists, that the truth recorded here will be made known to the world; that it will speak with a tongue of fire losing an unquenchable moral crusade, the universal response to which will sound the death knell of all racist theories.

While this thesis is not analyzing articles from the time when this petition was written, the authors of the petition were experiencing this discrimination during the 1940s and earlier. I located and studied 2,590 articles for this thesis, however only 140 met the requirements of being either about racism and discrimination in the United States or in Nazi Germany, and thus were included in the thesis.

While analyzing the collected articles, I identified four main categories that are useful in helping better understand how journalists at three key publications presented these issues. The four themes that were developed were general news coverage, eugenics, miscegenation, and direct comparison, which all became the main content chapters of this thesis. Some of the articles could be placed in multiple categories. In those instances, the

¹² Denise Lynn, "Gender violence as genocide: the Rosa Less Ingram case and *We Charge Genocide* petition," *Radical Americas* 7(1)2022.

articles were analyzed in the theme that was most appropriate. The general news coverage theme was the last to be developed as it includes all coverage about any racial or anti-Semitic discrimination. Some of this coverage focused on acts of violence either from racists in America or Nazi Germany. Eugenics is the idea that people can reproduce in a more efficient way, often leading to racist and discriminatory practices. Miscegenation was separated from eugenics as significant attention was given to the relationships between different races. Finally, the direct comparison theme was developed after finding that many journalists were discussing the comparisons between Nazi Germany and the United States during this period.

Chapter Breakdown

The first chapter serves as the literature review. This examination covers relevant topics for context, including racism in America, the Nazi's laws and goals, and how scholars have previously analyzed newspapers. It will include the history of the Black press for context of the *Chicago Defender*, the *New York Times*, and the Southern press for context of the *Montgomery Advertiser*, along with details on what others have written about the comparison between the racism of the United States and Nazi Germany. It will also provide more information on the research methods used.

The second chapter analyzes category one, the newspapers' coverage of general reports of racism, discrimination, and anti-Semitism. Many of these articles' topics called into question the citizenship status of Black Americans or Jewish Germans.

Chapter three will focus on category two, coverage of eugenics in these two countries. As eugenics was a popular pseudo-science during this period, many of the

comparisons in this chapter are between how the eugenicists in America viewed the eugenicists in Nazi Germany.

While miscegenation is a part of eugenics, it is covered within its own chapter, category three, because it was such a large portion of both the Nazi's plans as well as laws of American states. A significant number (around 30) of American states had anti-miscegenation laws in the early part of the 20th century that prevented interracial couples from marrying.

Chapter five shows the last category studied, instances of how these newspapers compared Nazi Germany to the United States or vice versa. There were many examples of this comparison in these newspapers.

The final chapter will contextualize all the previous chapters and demonstrate how these texts help historians view the perceived similarities between the Nazis' and the United States' treatment of Jews and African Americans respectively.

Chapter 1: Literature Review

As Sid Bedingfield and Kathy Roberts Forde wrote in their award-winning 2021 edited volume, *Journalism and Jim Crow*, journalists are deeply engaged and engrained in the culture of their local communities.¹³ Not only are reporters observers, but they are participants in their communities. Journalists “have often used their status and influence on shape outcomes, particularly during transformative moments of heightened political and cultural tension.”¹⁴ Therefore, studying newspaper articles of an era allows a peek into what local, state, or even national societies were thinking, doing, and valued.

Historians Bruce J. Schulman and Julian E. Zeiler argued that journalists and newspapers have had “an enormous role in American politics,” however there has not been enough discussion on journalists’ political influence that comes from their coverage.¹⁵ One of the reasons these historians believe that journalistic influence is not taken seriously enough is that journalism is “too common” to earn attention.

This chapter will review the literature about journalism during the 1930s and World War II. It will also include writings pertaining to civil rights-related journalism. Finally, it will look at scholarly work comparing the United States and Nazi Germany. This chapter is constructed with a chronological approach broken into subheads for ease.

¹³ Kathy Roberts Forde and Sid Bedingfield, *Journalism and Jim Crow: White Supremacy and the Black Struggle for a New America* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2021), 1.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Bruce J. Schulman and Julian E. Zelizer, eds., *Media Nation: The Political History of News in Modern America* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2017), 2. (Note: this source was quoted in *Journalism and Jim Crow* on page 4.)

Jefferey Herf wrote about the comparison between anti-Semitism in the Holocaust and American white racism in *the Journal of Genocide Research*. In this study, he shows the similarities as well as some of the differences between anti-Semitism and American racism against Black people.¹⁶ The Holocaust is the definitive modern example of genocide and evil. The slave trade that started Black suffering in America was also deeply vile. The historical records are not perfect, but some historians estimate that around five million Africans died while on the slave ships en route to the Americas.¹⁷ One basic difference between these two events is the time when they each occurred: the Holocaust took place over about four years, while the deaths of enslaved people in America took place over three centuries. The other main difference is that the Nazis' main goal was the elimination of Jews, while America's goal was free labor.¹⁸ It might be easier to compare these two topics when looking at American racism a bit later, post-slavery. Herf wrote "racial biology led in both cases to absurd views of white and/or Christian superiority which led, in turn, to suffering and gross injustice suffered by blacks and Jews."¹⁹

Germany

To say that leaders in the Nazi Party took some of the United States' racist ideologies and used them for their own is controversial. But in the 2017 book, *Hitler's*

¹⁶ Jeffrey Herf, "Comparative perspectives on anti-Semitism, radical anti-Semitism in the Holocaust and American white racism," *Journal of Genocide Research*, (2007): 575-600.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid., 576.

American Model, Whitman explained what leading Nazis were influenced by the United States and how the Nazis implemented these ideologies. The Holocaust is *the one event* that everyone can look at as being a crime that was more heinous than any other, so when it is shown to have some connection with the United States, Americans may be dismissive by the idea. Many Americans believe, even in the face of the country's flaws, that the United States is a place of democracy and freedom, especially during World War II in the early 1940s. But the United States is not free from stain, especially in the Jim Crow South.²⁰

In the 1930s, German Jews were “hounded, beaten, and sometimes murdered” by both mobs and the state itself. During the same time, Black Americans were being treated similarly by extra-judicial entities such as the Ku Klux Klan at the height of the KKK's reign of terror.²¹ Before and during Hitler's rise to power in the 1920s and 1930s, many leading Nazis, including Hitler himself, studied the racist laws that were in place in the United States.²² Hitler even wrote in *Mein Kampf* that the United States was “the one state” that had made the most progress in creating exclusionary laws that Nazi lawyers wanted the Nuremberg laws to be.²³

While this thesis is focused on comparing the treatment of Black Americans and Jews in the press, it is worth noting that Hitler and the Nazis were not just looking at how

²⁰ James Q. Whitman. *Hitler's American Model: The United States and the Making of Nazi Race Law* (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 2017), 2-3.

²¹ *Ibid.*, 3.

²² *Hitler's American Model*, 2.

²³ *Ibid.*

the United States treated Black people. In a speech as early as 1928, Hitler spoke about how he admired how the Americans “gunned down the millions of Redskins to a few hundred thousand, and now keep the modest remnant under observation in a cage.”²⁴ So while the United States was not focused on the genocide of Black people, Hitler saw another dark point in the United States’ history: the widespread slaughter of Native Americans. For further reading on the relationship between Nazi Germany and the genocide of Native Americans, please read Kakel, *The American West and the Nazi East* and others.²⁵

Alternative Press

Hitler didn’t need to look far back to find examples of the United States’ racist history. In the 1930s, lynching seemed to be becoming less of an issue as anti-lynching campaigns and activist-focused black journalists such as Ida B. Wells helped change the legitimacy that lynchings had been given.²⁶ By the end of World War II, lynching had essentially disappeared, but there was still violence against Black people.²⁷

²⁴ Ian Kershaw. *Fateful Choices: Ten Decisions that Changed the World*. (New York: Penguin Books, 2008) 386-387. Taken from *Hitler’s American Model*. 9.

²⁵ Along with Kakel’s work, Mailer’s *Remembering Histories of Trauma: North American Genocide and the Holocaust in Public Memory*, Penny’s *Kindred by Choice: Germans and American Indians since 1800*, and Westermann’s *Hitler’s Ostkrieg and the Indian Wars: Comparing Genocide and Conquest* are all fantastic works in this field of study.

²⁶ *Ibid.*, 105.

²⁷ *Ibid.*, 108.

Eugenics

One of the main topics that both the Nazis and American racists discussed and believed as a scientific truth is eugenics, which is “the idea that the human race could be modified through artificial selection.”²⁸ This idea first started in the early 1900s and by 1907, the first eugenics law was established in the United States.²⁹ This was not people on the outskirts of society who believed in this idea. It was “scientific,” or it was at least thought of in that way.

Grant and Mislán argue that during the early years of the 20th century, local reporters, instead of setting the record straight, seem to serve as the reinforcers of “oppressive attitudes and practices, through their media coverage despite the cherished norm of objectivity.”³⁰ Eugenics advocates also supported anti-immigration and anti-miscegenation laws. By 1933, eugenics was firmly established in international popularity.³¹

Eugenics was a central point in the Nazis’ ideologies in the 1930s as well. At this time in the twentieth century, the idea that “superior” and “inferior” races should not mix was popular with eugenicists, but actual laws that banned it were rare.³² The Nazis looked for examples of these laws outside of the U.S., but they found few. Prior to the 1967 U.S.

²⁸ Rachel Grant and Cristina Mislán, “‘Improving the Race’: The Discourse of Science and Eugenics in Local News Coverage, 1905-1922,” *American Journalism* Vol. 37, No. 4, 2020, 476-499.

²⁹ *Ibid.*, 477.

³⁰ *Ibid.*, 478.

³¹ *Ibid.*, 482.

³² *Ibid.*, 78.

Supreme Court landmark civil rights case, *Loving v. Virginia*, which struck down laws banning interracial marriage, thirty of the forty-eight states had laws, which deemed interracial marriage civilly invalid in the mid-1930s.³³

Quickly after taking power, the Nazis passed the Law to Prevent the Birth of the Offspring with Hereditary Defects, which was designed to make the population “healthy” and free of any “defects.”³⁴ By the end of the 1930s, there was systematic euthanasia, which is defined as “the act or practice of killing or permitting the death of hopelessly sick or injured individuals (such as persons or domestic animals) in a relatively painless way for reasons of mercy.”³⁵ This process was put into place using gas chambers, which was a predecessor to the Holocaust. But, behind the scenes, there was communication, which was not always direct, between American eugenicists and the Nazis. The Nazis saw the United States as a “model” in terms of eugenics.³⁶ Eugenics was a respected area of study at the time, and it was an international movement started by Sir Francis Galton, who was one of the first and most influential early eugenicists.³⁷ Galton and others took Charles Darwin’s concepts of evolution and attempted to use quantification, which meant attaching numbers to studies, with the hope of making them scientific.³⁸ Galton, who was Darwin’s cousin, didn’t coin the term eugenics until 1883. He was first discussing the

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid., 8.

³⁵ *Merriam-Webster.com Dictionary*, s.v. “euthanasia,” accessed September 28, 2022, <https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/euthanasia>.

³⁶ *Hitler’s American Model*, 8.

³⁷ Ibid., 8-9.

³⁸ Lee Ann Martínez, “Eugenics,” *Salem Press Encyclopedia of Health*. (6) 2022.

ideas in 1865. It must be noted that these were not the only two countries interested in practicing eugenics at this time in history. Britain, Australia, Canada, and New Zealand all began screening immigrants for “hereditary fitness.”³⁹ All of these countries, of course, were colonies through the British monarchy.

Nuremberg Laws

As mentioned, the Nazi party wasn’t started until the 1920s and continued to grow. By 1932, the party had the largest representation in the German legislature. In January 1933, Adolf Hitler was appointed chancellor. At this point, Hitler and the Nazi party quickly moved to consolidate power, suspend civil liberties, take control of state governments, and convinced the German government to let him rule without consultation.⁴⁰

The most extreme Nazis were the ones pushing for the use of American models of legalized discrimination.⁴¹ However, some Nazis rejected American laws and principles because they thought it was too extreme or too racist. At the beginning of the Nazis’ rise to power, they did not view the United States as an ideological enemy.

During a 1934 meeting that focused on what would become the Nuremberg Laws, leading Nazi lawyers engaged in lengthy discussion about laws in the United States. One justice presented a detailed description of the American race law, which was “carefully

³⁹ Ibid.

⁴⁰ Laurel Leff, *Buried by the Times: The Holocaust and America’s Most Important Newspaper* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2005), 2.

⁴¹ *Hitler’s American Model*, 4-5.

prepared by the officials of the ministry for purposes of the gathering.”⁴² The discussion repeatedly returned to the United States. The most radical Nazis were the most “ardent champions” of the racist ideologies in the United States.

Another one of the specific inspirations the Nazis took from the United States was from Franklin Roosevelt’s New Deal during the 1930s. The New Deal government received positive coverage from the Nazi press until about 1937. FDR was seen as a man who had taken “dictatorial powers” that he used to make “bold experiments,” in the spirit of the Führer.⁴³ While the New Deal relied heavily on the support from the segregationist South, Hitler had no inspiration from FDR.⁴⁴

Another instance, with undeniable proof, of the Nazis taking discrimination policies from the United States was during another planning meeting for what eventually became the Nuremberg Laws.⁴⁵ These consisted of two well-known laws, which were adopted in 1935: the first was the Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor.⁴⁶ This banned marriages and extramarital intercourse between Jews and Germans. If someone broke the marriage law, they were punished with imprisonment by hard labor. The law also banned the employment of German women under the age of 45 to work in

⁴² Ibid.

⁴³ Ibid., 6.

⁴⁴ Ibid., 7.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 1.

⁴⁶ The Nuremberg Laws: Law for the protection of German blood and German Honor, September 15, 1935. Retrieved from Jewish Virtual Library.: <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/law-for-the-protection-of-german-blood-and-german-honor>.

Jewish households.⁴⁷ It barred Jewish people from displaying the national flag or national colors.⁴⁸ If someone broke either of these two laws, they would be punished with either imprisonment for up to a year or with a fine, or both.

The other Nuremberg Law, the Reich Citizenship Law, declared that only Germans, or those with related blood, were eligible to be citizens. All other people would be classified as state subjects who lived without citizenship rights.⁴⁹ The Nazis defined people as Jewish if they had three or four Jewish grandparents. The Nuremberg laws, which were signed by Hitler and other leading Nazi officials, was a “crucial step” in Nazi race laws, which “led to the marginalization of German Jews and ultimately to their second-class citizenship status, confinement, and extermination.”⁵⁰ The Nazis used laws to “legally” attack and persecute the Jewish population.

The Nuremberg Laws were not aiming to set up a system of segregation. It was, however, looking to create new citizenship levels, alongside miscegenation laws.

Citizenship was one of the key points in Nuremberg laws. In his book, *Mein Kampf*, Hitler praised the United States’ Immigration act of 1924, which made entry into the

⁴⁷ Cina Coren, Nürnberg Laws, (Massachusetts: Salem Press Encyclopedia), 2020.

⁴⁸ *The Nuremberg Laws: Law for the protection of German blood and German Honor*, September 15, 1935. Retrieved from Jewish Virtual Library.:

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/law-for-the-protection-of-german-blood-and-german-honor>

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Greg Bradsher, *Archives Receives Original Nazi Documents That “Legalized” Persecution of Jews*, 2010. Retrieved from:

<https://www.archives.gov/publications/prologue/2010/winter/nuremberg.html>

United States conditional on the point of “national origins.”⁵¹ Only emigrants from certain countries were permitted to enter into the United States. The law specifically barred Asian immigrants. In other statutes, the United States made many groups, including Chinese, Filipino, and Black people (among others) second-class citizens. These laws and ideas were used as a kind of template for the drafting of the Nuremberg Laws. Whitman even says that the similarities are not a story of “astonishing insignificance.”⁵²

One of the most interesting parts of the Nazi’s racism toward Jews is their classification. Judaism is a religion, not a race. The Nazis, however, treated Jews as a race or ethnicity. The Nazis thought Jews were somehow related by blood, in a community, as Whitman states, “that is worlds apart from the German Volk,” (German for people).⁵³

United States

As Bedingfield and Forde wrote, there were two different journalisms during the start of the Jim Crow era. There was the mainstream, white press, which was “Dedicated to building an anti-Black, antidemocratic America.”⁵⁴ Simultaneously, there was Black journalism, or the Black press, which was “dedicated to building a multiracial, fully democratic ‘New America.’”⁵⁵

⁵¹ *Hitler’s American Model*, 12.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 13.

⁵³ *Ibid.*, 49.

⁵⁴ *Journalism and Jim Crow*, 1.

⁵⁵ *Ibid.*, 1-2

While some may argue that alternative, advocacy-focused newspapers are biased and unnecessary, there are many benefits to these alternative publications. In Milton's marketplace, "all ideas—good or bad, truth and lies—could battle one another," then truth would end up being triumphant.⁵⁶ The marketplace of ideas is, generally speaking, a basic idea, but when implemented, there can be many difficulties, especially getting people who disagree to read and understand. The philosopher John Stuart Mill discussed the idea of tolerating contrary opinions: "If all mankind minus one, were of one opinion, and only one person were of the contrary opinion, mankind would be no more justified in silencing that one person than he, if he had the power, would be justified in silencing mankind."⁵⁷

As this thesis analyzes, the white mainstream media covered these racially charged events differently than the Black press. The Black press had been developing for over 100 years before Hitler took control of Germany. The first Black newspaper was *Freedom's Journal*, created in 1827 with the motto "no longer shall others speak for us." Before the civil war, abolitionists, both Black and white thought it necessary to create their own newspapers to spread the ideas of equality.⁵⁸ After the Civil War, the problem of access remained, so Black newspapers remained relevant and necessary to that

⁵⁶ Ibid. 9.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Lauren Kessler, *The Dissident Press: Alternative Journalism in American History* (Newbury Park: Sage Publications Inc., 1984), 17.

population. This remained until after World War II, when Black voices started to shift into the popular media when more black journalists were hired by the mainstream press.⁵⁹

One of the most important and influential Black newspapers was the *Chicago Defender*. The *Defender*'s founder and first publisher was Robert S. Abbott. Before Abbott became one of the most renowned people in the Black newspaper industry, he faced a difficult life. He was born in 1868 to former slaves and raised in Georgia. He experienced discrimination not only from White people but also from some Black people, who valued a lighter complexion.⁶⁰ Therefore, he was fighting racist discrimination coming from all areas, which made him a passionate advocate for Black people. Abbott worked as a publisher but found little success until he opened the *Chicago Defender* at a time when Chicago already had three Black newspapers.⁶¹ The 40,000 Black people in Chicago had the option to read the *Broad Ax*, the *Illinois Idea*, and the *Conservator*. According to his friends, Abbott had a desire to start a newspaper that would allow him to express his views on the question of race.

Abbott was searching for more circulation in 1910, as the newspaper had little advertising revenue. He found this success by following William Randolph Hearst's newspapers in writing "Yellow Journalism," which was sensationalized journalism developed in the early 1900s with the goal of selling more newspapers. Then, the

⁵⁹ Ibid.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 78.

⁶¹ Ibid., 81.

newspaper took off.⁶² Once they saw Abbott's success, other Black publishers followed his lead, changing the model of Black journalism completely, becoming outspoken advocates for Black people.⁶³ At this time, White newspapers had begun discussing objectivity-focused journalism, rather than Yellow Journalism. Abbott dug his heels in and explained that while the newspaper must be accurate, it had to continue to be an advocacy press.⁶⁴

The *Defender* was not a standard newspaper, and readers enjoyed it. For example, a promotion on the front page of the *Defender* read that the newspaper was not a "lifeless, spineless, inorganic thing of mere ink and paper, made just to sell, but the embodiment of all that is nearest the heart and most welcome to the mind of the American."⁶⁵

Circulation is a difficult number to quantify for Black newspapers, as they were likely read several times before being thrown away. It was estimated that each copy of the *Defender* was likely read by five to seven people.⁶⁶ It is reported that in 1915, the *Defender* had over 200,000 subscribers, who lived in both the North and the South.⁶⁷

⁶² Ibid., 6.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Patrick S. Washburn, *The African American Newspaper: Voice of Freedom* (Chicago: Northwestern University Press, 2006), 84.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 82.

⁶⁶ Ibid., 83.

⁶⁷ *The Dissident Press*, 39.

Lynching in the United States

Lynching was seen as an event, and while this was before the beginning of Hitler's and the Nazis' power in Germany, between 1890 and 1920, American newspapers included articles about lynchings on almost a daily basis. These stories legitimized lynchings and pushed stereotypes of "Black Brutes" and white victimhood.⁶⁸ Meanwhile, the Black press was fighting back, against this damaging practice by documenting lynchings and exposing racist lies that were used to justify them.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, there was a shift in the thoughts behind the coverage of lynchings. The spread of communication became faster with the spread of telegraph lines, railroads, and wire services, opportunities arose for coverage of lynchings. This led to lynchings becoming more newsworthy around the turn of the century.⁶⁹

Instead of trying to write fairly or simply report the news, white reporters praised lynchings for their actions. Journalists wrote how lynchings were civil and there was no rash emotion.⁷⁰ During the late nineteenth century and into the twentieth century, regional cities were not only reporting original content. These newspapers served as "news aggregators," which collected stories from more rural weeklies and republished them.⁷¹

⁶⁸ *Journalism and Jim Crow.*, 18.

⁶⁹ *Ibid.*, 86.

⁷⁰ *Ibid.*, 90-91.

⁷¹ *Ibid.*, 85.

Black people were aware of the role that White newspapers played in “legitimizing lynching between 1890 and 1920.”⁷²

The “New South”

There seemed to be a desire from the South to appear not racist. One example cited in *Journalism and Jim Crow* happened in 1886, long before the rise of the Nazi party, shows how the South was trying to put a blanket over what was occurring to Black people. D’Weston Haywood stated that in 1886, Henry Grady, editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, announced that there was a “New South” that had moved past slavery and “undemocratic regimes vesting political and economic power in an elite planter class.”⁷³ Grady spoke about how Black people were involved in a prosperous laboring population that was a land-owning class. Grady’s goal was to promote to Northern businessmen that the lives of Black Southerners were completely positive. Essentially, Grady’s message was that racism had been solved in the South and there were no more issues. He said the tensions between Black and White people had been solved and that “the free Negro counts more than he did as a slave.”⁷⁴

Radicalism is an interesting topic that fits into the narrative of Black Americans during this time. During the early twentieth century, many of the ideas that can be seen as

⁷² Ibid., 95.

⁷³ Ibid., 57.

⁷⁴ Henry Grady, “The New South,” in *American Public addresses, 1740-1952*, by A. Craig Baird 183-186 (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1956); Harold E. Davis, *Henry Grady’s New South: Atlanta, A Brave and Beautiful City* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990), 34 (Note: These documents were cited in *Journalism and Jim Crow*).

given were initially seen as radical. An example of this is Black and White people sharing the same water fountain. In the Jim Crow south, this would have been seen as a radical thought, while today it is a certainty. One quote that summarizes this is from *Journalism and Jim Crow*. The author states, “to (Booker T. Washington), many Black journalists appeared even more militant, despite their demands being fully consistent with the promise of American democracy and constitutional rights.”⁷⁵

When the United States colonized new territories in the 19th and 20th centuries, those living in the area were supposed to become American citizens. But there was resistance; not everyone wanted the people in these territories to become American citizens. The Philippines was home to a population that the United States referred to as belonging to an “inferior” or at the very least “hopelessly backward race.”⁷⁶ In decisions known as the Insular Cases, the Supreme Court allowed the creation of a form of second-class citizenship, and they were referred to as “non-citizen nationals.”⁷⁷ This should have been prevented by the Fourteenth Amendment, which holds that states should not enforce laws that abridge rights of citizens of the United States.⁷⁸

In another instance, the United States put into place the Asiatic Barred Zone Act of 1917, which excluded individuals from a large section of Asia from entering the

⁷⁵ *Journalism and Jim Crow*, 66.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 40

⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

⁷⁸ U.S. Const. amend. XIV

United States, and they were referred to as the “undesirables.”⁷⁹ This also barred “homosexuals, idiots, anarchists, and more.”

Racist Americans were focusing specifically on the creation of second-class citizenship in the latter half of the nineteenth century. At this time, Black Americans were denied citizenship in the 1857 court case *Dred Scott v. Sandford*, which was crucial at the start of the American Civil War.⁸⁰ The decision, which held that the rights guaranteed under the U.S. Constitution did not apply to people of African descent of course, was null and void at the end of the war. This didn’t stop southern states from implementing literacy tests as well as other unfair and racist techniques to stop Black Americans from voting. While the Nazis took note of this, other countries also looked at the United States as a model. Australia specifically had its own version of literacy tests to block indigenous Australians from voting.⁸¹

President Abraham Lincoln’s Emancipation Proclamation that freed the enslaved Black people in 1863 was not as simple as it may have originally seemed. Only a few years before in 1858, Lincoln stated that he would not “interfere with slavery and that he had no inclination to do so.”⁸² Lincoln referred to Black and white people as being “superior and inferior,” claiming white people were superior. Lincoln was much more focused on the reunification of the United States and the Confederacy than he was with

⁷⁹ *Hitler’s American Model*, 35.

⁸⁰ *Hitler’s American Model*, 38.

⁸¹ *Ibid.*, 39.

⁸² Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Movements in America*, (New York: Routledge, 1997) 70-71.

slavery. In an August 1862 meeting, he stated “not a single man of your race is made the equal of a single man of ours.”

Leading Nazis didn't need to look as far back as the American Civil War, though. They were looking as recently as the late 19th and early 20th century United States, but the Nazis were not exclusively studying Jim Crow-era racism. They were looking to the founding of the United States. Specifically, Nazi lawyers looked at when the first congressional meetings were held. The Naturalization Act of 1790 was put into place, which stated that naturalization was permitted to “any alien, being a free [SIC] white person. One Nazi commentator mentioned in 1934 that this was interesting because racial restrictions were not common at this time. They existed, but were not common.⁸³

An example of one of the previously mentioned eugenics-based American laws is the 1924 law that the Virginia General Assembly introduced, titled: “An Act to Preserve Racial Integrity.” This law required Virginians to fill out a form of racial composition to be collected by the State Registrar of Vital Statistics.⁸⁴ This certificate was required to get married in Virginia, and it was illegal for a white person to marry any nonwhite. The law defined “white” as a “person who has no trace what soever (sic) of any blood other than Caucasian.” The punishment for willfully or knowingly entering the wrong race was a felony that led to one year in prison. The law also stated that if there was reasonable

⁸³ Ibid.

⁸⁴ An Act to Preserve Racial Integrity, 1924, Accessed via http://www2.vcdh.virginia.edu/lewisandclark/students/projects/monacans/Contemporary_Monacans/racial.html

cause to disbelieve that applicants “are of pure white race,” the clerk could withhold the license until there is “satisfactory proof.” The *New York Times* wrote that, at this time in 1924, this was the only law of its kind in the world.⁸⁵

The Bureau of Vital Statistics in Virginia, which was under the State Board of Health, issued a booklet in 1924 titled, “Eugenics in relation to The New Family and the law on Racial Integrity.”⁸⁶ The booklet gave information about eugenics to “all who can profit by this knowledge themselves or who can pass it on to others.”⁸⁷ The booklet defined eugenics as “the science of improving stock whether human or animal, ” and explained that physical “deformities” such as harelip, clubfoot, six fingers, and other physical characteristics like eye, hair, and skin color are passed down from parent to child. It also stated that “insanity, tendency to crime, and immorality are almost surely transmitted to their children.”⁸⁸

The worst forms of undesirables born amongst us are those when parents are of different races. Stockbreeders have learned that the offspring of greatly different breeds are inferior to either parents, and that it is not wise to perpetuate such strains. This is likewise true with man.⁸⁹

⁸⁵ Virginius Dabney, “Virginia Takes up Racial Integrity,” *New York Times*, (New York, NY) Feb. 16, 1930.

⁸⁶ Bureau of Vital Statistics, State Board of Health, *Eugenics in relation to The New Family and the law on Racial Integrity*. 1924. Retrieved from VCU Library: <https://images.socialwelfare.library.vcu.edu/items/show/540>

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 3.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*, 6.

⁸⁹ *Ibid.*, 6.

The booklet quotes Dr. Frederick L. Hoffman, who wrote *Race and State*. In this book, a University of Minnesota professor, A.E. Jenks studied a group of about 200 people in St. Paul and Minneapolis, Minnesota, who intermarried. According to the booklet, Jenks said the only objection to this “horrible situation” came from Black women, who were against Black men marrying white women because they are deprived the opportunity to marry a Black man. Hoffman stated: “The white women associated with this society do not constitute a social loss to the white population, for they are a worthless and degraded set of human beings, mostly Swedish or German, or otherwise foreign born.”⁹⁰

The United States, especially in the Southern states, had a myriad of laws banning anything interracial.⁹¹ These segregation laws were telling of how Southern states thought about the status of races. With segregated hospitals, schools, public accommodations, workplaces, and recreational facilities, nearly everything in the South was segregated.⁹² The comparison between the Nuremberg Laws with the Jim Crow Laws in the South are what historian Dan Puckett calls “startlingly similar.”⁹³

Then, in the mid-twentieth century Jim Crow South, it seemed that race relations might have even been improving. One example that Harvard Sitkoff, author of the book *The Struggle for Black Equality*, points to is the example of Jackie Robinson playing

⁹⁰ Ibid., 6-7.

⁹¹ Harvard Sitkoff, *The Struggle for Black Equality* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 5.

⁹² Ibid.

⁹³ Dan J. Puckett, “Reporting on the Holocaust: The View from Jim Crow Alabama,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 25, no. 2. 219-251.

Major League Baseball in 1947, when he started at first base for the Brooklyn Dodgers – just three years after World War II.

Sitkoff wrote that many were loudly cheering because the first man broke the color barrier in American professional sports. This cheering overshadowed the quiet discussion of Robinson not being able to stay in the same hotels as his white teammates.⁹⁴ Another example is Dr. Julian Perry, a Black scientist, who received plenty of attention for receiving honors and awards rather than the firebombing of his house by white people who did not want Perry living in their neighborhood.⁹⁵

When the United States entered World War II in 1941, Black people were not allowed to join the Marines, Coast Guard, or Army Air Corps (now known as the Air Force).⁹⁶ In the Navy, Black people were restricted to working in the kitchen in the Navy. Only ten percent of the Army could be made up of Black people as well. So, the Black press immediately ramped up its campaign focusing to end discrimination in the military. This, along with discrimination and nearly all other areas of life, led to the creation of the Double V campaign in February 1942. The Double V campaign stood for victory over totalitarian forces overseas as well as victory over the same types of forces in the country.⁹⁷

⁹⁴ *The Struggle for Black Equality*, 13.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ David A. Copeland, Ed, *The Greenwood Library of American War Reporting: Vol. 5: World War I & World War II, The European Theater*, (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press) 317.

⁹⁷ *Ibid.*

While this thesis does not analyze the *Pittsburgh Courier*, a Black newspaper that was popular and influential at the time, it was one of the most important Black newspapers. By the end of the 1940s, the newspaper had a circulation of over 350,000, which made it the largest Black newspaper ever.⁹⁸ The *Courier* is probably most known for its “Double V” Campaign that has been mentioned previously. This campaign was incredibly popular. The idea of a victory overseas against totalitarian forces as well as a victory at home against racist ideas was an idea that many got behind.

Within six months of the beginning of the Double V campaign, there were over 200,00 card-carrying members.⁹⁹ The campaign was somewhat successful as well. Black people received rights they had not yet had, including job-related gains, admission to all branches of the military, the first Black White House correspondent, and more.¹⁰⁰ Patrick Washburn, author of *The African American Newspaper*, cited Joseph Bibb, a columnist for the *Courier*, on the changes that the war had brought to the Black American population: “When the war ends the colored American will be better off financially, spiritually and economically. War may be hell for some, but it bids fair to open up the portals of heaven for us.”¹⁰¹ During World War II, the Double V campaign was a monumental success, as Black people made enormous gains during the war up until Germany and Japan surrendered in 1945.¹⁰²

⁹⁸ *The African American Newspaper*, 3.

⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 4.

¹⁰⁰ *Ibid.*

¹⁰¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁰² *Ibid.*, 145.

When the *Courier* started the campaign, it received letters from readers about the importance of the campaign. One Texas woman said the campaign was important “because many Americans are more dangerous to us [blacks] than some of our enemies abroad.”¹⁰³

The Black press, an advocacy press focused on lifting up the Black population, also tripped on several occasions. One example Sitkoff points to is the number of Black people who were registering to vote. There was a celebration for increasing the voting numbers from 250,000 in 1940 to over one million in 1950 in the U.S. While this seems great, and it is great progress, Sitkoff argues that there was not enough attention on other places in the American South where over 75% of Black adults were not allowed to vote.¹⁰⁴

Some of the white mainstream press was advocating for Black and white people to work together. In another of Dr. Seuss’ political cartoons, there is a man with the label “War Industry” playing the piano while Uncle Sam says “Listen, maestro... if you want to get real harmony, use the black keys as well as the white!”¹⁰⁵ Similarly, there is another cartoon titled “The Old Run-Around” which is a maze with the title “Negro Job-Hunters Enter Here.”¹⁰⁶ Both of these cartoons show the racial discrimination that was

¹⁰³ Ibid., 150.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid.

¹⁰⁵ *Dr. Seuss Goes to War*, 59.

¹⁰⁶ Ibid., 58.

taking place and how some questioned why the United States was not changing policies to help end the war faster.

Black soldiers faced racism not only from their own army, but also from the enemy. It should be no surprise that Hitler and the Nazis despised Black people, but during World War II, Black people were used for propaganda purposes: to rile up Germany. The Nazis saw Black people as an inferior and alien race that threatened the future of Western society.¹⁰⁷ The Nazi military would drop leaflets onto the battlefield, hoping Black Americans would pick them up to read: “There have never been lynchings of colored men in Germany. They have always been treated decently.”¹⁰⁸

Black activists and journalists back home started to become indistinguishable as they worked “to illuminate the realities of Black life, resist the erosion of Black people’s rights, end racial violence, and challenge prevailing racist ideologies that figured Black people as simpletons content.”¹⁰⁹ The Black Press was a critical place for Black people to communicate about politics, democracy, and questions of race.

The United States government was critical of the Black Press during difficult times for the country. The federal government grew increasingly concerned about any

¹⁰⁷ US Holocaust Museum, *How Nazi Germany Weaponized the Race Card Against the US Army* February 13, 2017. Retrieved from: <https://us-holocaust-museum.medium.com/the-nazi-plan-to-divide-and-conquer-the-us-army-296a3c97fb54>

¹⁰⁸ Ibid.

¹⁰⁹ *Journalism and Jim Crow*, 69.

subversives in the United States. Because of this, the government started to keep an eye on the Black press. This was because of its sharp outspokenness on racial inequality.¹¹⁰

During the war, the Black press took advantage and highlighted the stories of Black people and their sacrifices to show that Black people deserved the same rights as White people. This was helped, according to Clarence Page, when the Black press took an advocacy approach to journalism and reporting while the mainstream white press was focused on fairness, balance, and objectivity.¹¹¹

This was not easy, though. A major issue with American media was that many stories were left hidden, including most stories that involved race. Historians Gene Roberts and Hank Klibanoff wrote: “The mainstream American press wrote about whites but seldom about Negro Americans or discrimination against them; that was left to the Negro press.”¹¹² Part of the reason behind this was the United States War Department’s policy, which was built from segregation ideas, means that only Black reporters would be assigned to Black units in the war, more or less eliminating interaction between White reporters and Black soldiers.¹¹³

¹¹⁰ William G. Jordan, “Preparing America for War,” *Black Newspapers and America’s War for Democracy, 1914-1920* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001.) (Note: this chapter was cited in *Journalism and Jim Crow*.)

¹¹¹ Ibid.

¹¹² Gene Robert and Hank Klibanoff, *The Race Beat* (New York: Random House, 2007), 5. (Note: this was cited in *The War Beat: Europe*, 313)

¹¹³ Fitzgerald, Memo for Chief PRO, “Negro Correspondents for Attachment to Units on Far Shore,” (Note: this was cited in *The War Beat: Europe*, 314)

The United States government was not completely sold on the idea of Black newspapers advocating for the rights of Black people during wartime. The *Defender* and other Black newspapers had published articles discussing “clashes between whites and blacks in Army camps.”¹¹⁴ An official said these articles were hurting the war effort, and if the newspapers did not change their coverage, they would be sued for sedition. The newspaper was being closely watched by the Justice Department.

Black publishers did agree to somewhat tone down their articles to show support for the war effort. This did not stop seven government agencies from investigating these newspapers. The agency that was most involved in these searches was the U.S. Post Office, which inspected close to 16,000 issues of Black publications to search for anything that went against the Espionage Act.¹¹⁵

The Black press and Black Americans widely knew that to overcome the opposition abroad and at home, they would need to work together. While there is a common occurrence of scholars talking about “the media,” it is unlike newspapers and other outlets to work together. In this instance, however, the Black press and Black community became unified.¹¹⁶

Before the age of the internet blog and social media, where anyone can essentially be a reporter, the freedom of the press was restricted to the elite, who were media owners.

¹¹⁴ Ibid., 157.

¹¹⁵ Ibid., 164.

¹¹⁶ Ethan Michaeli, *The Defender: How the Legendary Black Newspaper Changed America* (New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2016) 242-243.

A.J. Liebling, a journalist for the *New Yorker*, once said “There’s freedom of the press for the guy who owns one.”¹¹⁷ One of the issues with the media is that journalists and publications can halt and avoid unpopular ideas. This tends to be minority groups who are working for social and political change.¹¹⁸

The mainstream media was not always reporting accurate information about what was happening in the war. War correspondents often wrote about battlefield news in an easy to read and “palatable” form.¹¹⁹ Journalists reported that American bombers were “precision bombing” German factories. This information is based on official reports coming from the United States government. Reporters saw that American bombers were “indiscriminately targeting German civilians,” but many of them looked away and wrote nothing of it, sticking to the official reports.¹²⁰ One historian argued that if reporters had been accurately reporting on the happenings of the war, “there would have been a public outcry to stop ‘the senseless slaughter.’”¹²¹

Dan J. Puckett wrote an article titled “Reporting on the Holocaust: The View from Jim Crow Alabama.”¹²² In this article, he analyzes how journalists, editors, and newspapers reported on the Holocaust while living and working in the Jim Crow South.

¹¹⁷ *The Dissident Press*, 12.

¹¹⁸ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁹ *The War Beat: Europe*, 2.

¹²⁰ *Ibid.*

¹²¹ Sherry, *Rise*, 132-133; Gay, *Assignment*, 218. (Note: this quote was cited in Steven Casey’s *The War Beat: Europe*.)

¹²² Dan J. Puckett, “Reporting on the Holocaust: The View from Jim Crow Alabama,” *Holocaust and Genocide Studies* 25, no. 2. 219-251.

The essential takeaway is that Alabama's white-run press, not dissimilar to the *Times*, failed to present the information of the Holocaust as a Jewish Tragedy.¹²³ The southern Black press, on the other hand, used the Holocaust and other racial violence as a warning of the dangerous idea of racial superiority. There were no war correspondents from any of the newspapers in Alabama, so the papers used wire services like the Associated Press and the United Press.¹²⁴ These newspapers also relied on large, influential national newspapers, like the *Times*, Puckett wrote, to lead the conversation about the war. Then, most of the original content on the war and its related events were editorials.

Puckett wrote that white journalists needed to write in a specific way that could criticize Nazism as being a “brutal, undemocratic, and ‘abhorrent to every instinct of decency and justice’” while avoiding any critique of the Jim Crow South.¹²⁵ Reporters knew of the central role that anti-Semitism and racism played in the rise to power and policy of Hitler and the Nazi party. These journalists condemned and ridiculed the Nazi idea of racial superiority, but these white journalists kept their own idea of racial superiority to Black people.

On the other end of the spectrum was the Southern Black press, which made the connection and comparison between Nazi racism and American Southern racism. The Black press pointed at the threat that Aryan superiority beliefs and the mass killings of Jews to show the real threat that can come from racist beliefs.

¹²⁵ *Ibid.*, 219.

The Southern Press

An important journalist for this thesis is Grover C. Hall, who was the editor of the *Montgomery Advertiser*. Puckett called Hall an example of a “crusading editor” who shaped the newspaper’s voice, but also utilized the editorial page to promote issues he thought were important.¹²⁶ In 1928, Hall was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for Editorial Writing for¹²⁷ his editorials focused on condemning the Ku Klux Klan and the group’s racial violence.¹²⁸ This, Puckett wrote, helped “shift public opinion against the Klan, which in the 1920s gradually lost power and influence in Alabama.” Hall, however also said “the vicious and the useless should not be allowed to reproduce their kind ... no means of ensuring that only the best in society shall reproduce. It is possible to assure society that the worst elements in it shall not reproduce. Civilization can do no less.”¹²⁹

In Birmingham, many of the Jews who lived there thought that the city’s newspapers were a “friendly press,” and Puckett supports this idea in Birmingham as well as Mobile and Montgomery.¹³⁰ Puckett wrote that many of Alabama’s Jews did not see any danger in discussing and publicizing the Nazi’s anti-Semitism.¹³¹ At the time, Jews

¹²⁶ *Ibid.*, 219-220.

¹²⁷ “The 1928 Pulitzer Prize Winner in Editorial Writing,” The Pulitzer Prizes, Pulitzer, <https://www.pulitzer.org/winners/grover-cleveland-hall>

¹²⁸ *Reporting on the Holocaust*, 220.

¹²⁹ *Ibid.*, 223.

¹³⁰ *Ibid.*, 221.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 222.

had the benefit of living in the South because they were not Black. They were not part of the majority, though, which came with an “otherness.”¹³²

Journalists and editors wrote extensively on Nazism, focusing on the repressive nature of the German government. Then, talking about “aggressive foreign policy” in the mid 1930s. One of the consistencies between these articles, Puckett says, is that they mostly all discuss how there is an incompatibility between Nazi Germany and the United States. One article in the *Birmingham Age-Herald* in 1934 discussed how this rift was more so in the anti-democratic ways of Nazi Germany, rather than any type of persecution.

Many articles were written and published by newspapers outside of the South about how the Nazis followed anti-miscegenation rules and statutes, as well as other eugenics-based ideas. While these ideas were criticized, few of the reporters mentioned how the state of Alabama was one of 29 states that had anti-miscegenation laws in place. These laws were in place before the Nazi Party itself. Eugenics was relatively popular in the southern part of United States as well as the world, but the connection between eugenics and the Nazis was one of the reasons that people’s perceptions on the matter changed.¹³³

¹³² Ibid., 226.

¹³³ Ibid., 222-224.

When Alabama's white press saw attacks by Nazis against Jews, they compared the incidents to attacks on Black people that were carried out by the Ku Klux Klan. The Nazis and the Klan were compared fairly regularly in the press, Puckett wrote.¹³⁴

The Southern Black press is a unique entity addressed in Puckett's article. While this thesis does not analyze a Southern Black newspaper, it is worth noting that the idea was considered and was ultimately determined to be outside the scope of this particular study.

Southern Discrimination

A few years after the fall of the Nazi regime and the end of World War II, the Duke University School of Law published a compilation of 29 of states that had anti-miscegenation laws. While there is not space to include all of the states and their laws, there is some information that is worth including in this thesis. Most, if not all, of the Southern states had anti-miscegenation laws.¹³⁵ The most specific of these laws stated that anyone who has "1/8 or more Negro Japanese or Chinese blood" cannot marry a White person. Many states had either 1/8 or 1/4 of "Negro blood." Some states' laws only say that people of color are forbidden to marry white people.¹³⁶

Matthias Reiss found in his article "Fellow Sufferers" that during World War II, the German prisoners of war who were held in America were treated better than Black

¹³⁴ Ibid., 225.

¹³⁵ James R. Browning, "Anti-Miscegenation Laws in the United States," *Duke Bar Journal*, (March 1951) 26-41.

¹³⁶ Ibid., 27-30.

American soldiers. More than 371,000 German soldiers were held captive in the United States during the war.¹³⁷ The POW camps were mainly located in rural areas of the south, because of a lower cost of building and a high demand for unskilled labor in the region.

There were several examples of how the German prisoners were treated much better than the Black soldiers. For example, in April 1945, German prisoners reported that a few POWs traveled in sleeper trains where Black porters were on call to serve them.¹³⁸ Reiss found that because the German soldiers were obviously white, “their whiteness gave them certain privileges in American society.” The Black soldiers wrote letters where they stated, “even the German prisoners are treated better than we are, how could this be?”¹³⁹

Another example of this discrimination came in 1944 when a group of Black soldiers was denied access to a restaurant in a train station in El Paso, Texas. Then, a group of German POWs and their guards entered the dining room and were served without problem. In short, the “New Deal administration has treated prisoners of war ... far better than it has treated Negro boys who are shedding their blood on far-flung battle fields in defense of America’s Constitutional guarantees.”¹⁴⁰

¹³⁷ Matthias Reiss, “Solidarity Among ‘Fellow Sufferers’: African Americans and German Prisoners of War in the United States During World War II, *Journal of African American History*, 98. No. 4 (2013): 531-561.

¹³⁸ *Ibid.*, 538.

¹³⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 540.

The American POW system was run by a man named Allen Guillon, who was also the head of the military police. Guillon struggled to staff enough guards for the German POWs, but he refused to staff Black soldiers. He believed that Black soldiers would “invite enemy reprisals.” This refusal violated a military rule that stated Black Americans would be able to serve in the military at the same number as the population of 10%.¹⁴¹

However, while in the United States, German POWs were performing the same roles that Black Americans were thought of as performing. One German POW said “While we were in America, we did the Negrowork. The slavework. We replaced the Negroes, nothing else ... we were treated like the Negroes over there.”¹⁴²

Some of the Germans found the white Americans to be “’soulless,’ superficial, materialistic in short ‘cultureless ... The Negro in contrast had a soul and was creating a culture.’” POWs sometimes portrayed Black Americans as victims of the American systems of capitalism and hypocrisy.¹⁴³ A few historians wrote that while the fight against German racism took place in Europe, the United States had the “global racial contract of white supremacy.”¹⁴⁴ Black Americans were able to use these examples as material to protest against their mistreatment.

¹⁴¹ Ibid., 534.

¹⁴² Ibid., 543.

¹⁴³ Ibid., 536.

¹⁴⁴ Ibid., 531.

Montgomery Advertiser

On April 21, 2018, the *Montgomery Advertiser* published the first article in a series that was titled “Legacy of Lynchings: America’s Shameful History of Racial Terror and Justice.” On the front page of the Saturday newspaper read: “‘There Will be Lynchings’: How the Advertiser failed victims of racial terror.”¹⁴⁵ Alongside regular coverage, the *Advertiser* published cover stories on lynchings and other racial injustices that had been carried throughout the Jim Crow era and before. This modern series tells the history of the newspaper perhaps better than a historian could. The *Advertiser* started in 1829, under the name *The Planter’s Gazette*, but it became the *Advertiser* in 1833.¹⁴⁶ It was “the leading newspaper of the new Confederate states by 1861.” The newspaper is now owned by Gannett.

The 2018 series was published in conjunction with the National Memorial for Peace and Justice and the Legacy Museum in Montgomery.¹⁴⁷ Between 1877 and 1950, more than 360 Black Americans were killed by mobs in Alabama and over 4,000 in nationwide. The first article describes how a mob kidnapped two Black men, who were being transported for allegedly assaulting white women in two separate incidents. The mob took the men to a wooded area and instructed the men to run, while they shot them multiple times. One of the men was killed on the scene and the other died in the hospital.

¹⁴⁵ Brian Lyman, “‘There Will be Lynchings,’” *Montgomery Advertiser*, (Montgomery, AL), April 21, 2018.

¹⁴⁶ “History of the *Montgomery Advertiser*,” *Montgomery Advertiser*. Accessed October 13, 2022. <https://static.montgomeryadvertiser.com/about/>

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

The next day, a group of white men broke into a hospital where a man named Will Temple was being treated for a head wound after allegedly killing a police officer. The white men overpowered the on-duty police officers and shot and killed Temple.

The *Advertiser* published an editorial a few days later that said, “as long as there are attempts at rape by black men, red men, or yellow men on white women there will be lynchings.” This editorial contained no evidence that the men who had been killed were guilty of the crimes they had been charged with. The *Advertiser*’s 2018 staff analyzed early (1883-1904) issues of the newspaper and how editorials discussed lynchings. One of these editorials said

To take the life of a human being in any manner, other than by due process of law is violation of the commandment, which says ‘thou shalt not kill’ and it is therefore murder, and the man or men who participate in it, no matter what excuse they may please, will find their portion in the world to come, without the kingdom of grace and glory, along with ‘the dogs, sorcerers and whoremongers.’

The editorials consistently contradicted themselves, as they placed blame on the alleged murderers without any evidence. In an 1896 example, the newspaper wrote “There is nobody who did not want to see the negro hanged, and there is not the least doubt he would have been, but that he should have been forcibly taken from officers of the law and mobbed is to be regretted.” The author who covered this lynching was not given a byline in the newspaper, but he called the man a “cowardly, murderous negro.”

The next article in the series, which was published the next day, April 22, 2018, describes Montgomery, Alabama, as the “birthplace of the Civil Rights Era and Cradle of

the Confederacy.”¹⁴⁸ This article describes the work of noted African American attorney Bryan Stevenson, who founded what became the Equal Justice Initiative in Montgomery. Stevenson’s latest project was opening the National Memorial for Peace and Justice and the Legacy Museum, both of which “trace the roots of inequality and racism through slavery, lynching and racial segregation.” These were the first memorial and museums on lynching in the United States.

The article discusses and defines terror lynchings, which was a method of spreading fear in Black people, especially after the reconstruction period. The idea was that if Black people saw other Black people being lynched, they would think to themselves “that could happen to me.” Lynchers had little to no fear of repercussions. The article details a few examples of these lynchings: “In 1934 in Newton, Texas, John Griggs was hanged and shot 17 times and his body was dragged behind a car through town for hours after he was accused of ‘associating with a white woman.’” Another example is “In 1940 in Luverne, Jess Thornton was lynched for referring to a white police officer by his name, without the title ‘mister.’”

People were not just killed; they were tortured. Lynching victims were often shot and stabbed numerous times. They were burned alive, while being hanged. Their bodies were then dragged through the streets of Black neighborhoods. The white crowds would often cut off fingers or “hunks of flesh” to save as souvenirs.

¹⁴⁸ Marty Roney, “Pioneering Montgomery Museum is Culmination of a Six-Year Effort,” *Montgomery Advertiser*, (Montgomery, AL), April 22, 2018.

The article details that the actual lynching was disturbing, but the reaction of the residents was sometimes just as disturbing. There were large groups of white people who gathered to watch the lynching, as seen in newspaper reports and photographs. People would wear their “Sunday best” and bring their children. Families would take photos with the body of a lynched Black person in the background. This article also raises and attempts to answer the question: “Why Montgomery?” Montgomery played a large part in the slave trade. In 1860, over two-thirds of the county were enslaved. The author noted that there were “dozens of markers” commemorating the Confederacy.

The next article in the 2018 series discusses the neighborhood of Cottage Hill, where the memorial was built.¹⁴⁹ One resident, who grew up in the neighborhood and whose story the article follows, remembers walking toward downtown Montgomery through white neighborhoods. She had to deal with racial slurs and insults as well as rocks being thrown at her. With the memorial’s construction, the neighborhood has become more of a place to be in Montgomery. Some residents even complained that real estate agents would go door-to-door asking to purchase homes on sight.

The next day’s article was titled “Lynching Memorial’s path of Reconciliation.”¹⁵⁰ The article describes the contents of the experience of the lynching memorial. There are 800 columns for more than 4,000 known Black Americans who

¹⁴⁹ Brad Harper, “Memorial Brings Hope to Neighborhood,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), April 23, 2018.

¹⁵⁰ Andrew J. Yawn, “Lynching Memorial’s Path of Reconciliation,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery AL), April 24, 2018.

were lynched and “the countless whose names may never be printed.” The authors mentioned that on Monday (the day before this article was printed) the Alabama capital building was closed in observance of Confederate Memorial Day.

Wednesday’s article covered how convicted lynchers were treated. The article “A Lynching, A Conviction, Still Justice is Denied” is about a Black man, Robin White, who was mobbed.¹⁵¹ White was dragged into a swamp and murdered. Seven weeks later, one of the people who mobbed White was on the stand in a courtroom. At the time, the *Advertiser* described him as “one of the best known and most highly respected planters of Elmore County.” His name was George Howard, and he told the judge that he killed White, and he named twelve other members of the mob. This testimony led to a white jury convicting four white men of the lynching. The 2018 article described this as “almost unheard of in the United States in 1901.” The *Advertiser*’s reporters found documents at the courthouse, which described the lynching.

Not all the details are clear in this case. It is not even conclusive if White’s name really was Robin. But on July 1, 1901, an arrest warrant was published for White and his brother Abe on charges of assault with intent to kill. This followed an event, of which the details are not completely known. It is speculated that White and his brother had two shotguns with birdshot, and accidentally shot at a white man’s bird or shot at his house. In 1902, Abe White said that the brothers were standing 165 yards from the house,

¹⁵¹ Brian Lyman, “A Lynching, A Conviction, Still Justice is Denied,” *Montgomery Advertiser*, (Montgomery AL), April 25, 2018.

“wholly incapable of doing any great damage.” The white man, John Thomas, told his neighbors that the White brothers attacked him and let his chickens roam free.

After the warrant was published, a white mob formed. The bailiff was part of the crowd. Some of them brought dogs. The White brothers fled and were chased at least seven miles. Abe White escaped for the moment, but there were plans to hunt for him and lynch him. The county jail was at least 20 miles away, so the mob decided to hold Robin White at John Thomas’ store. While travelling down the road in a mule-pulled buggy, a group of the white mobbed appeared behind the buggy and took White. He was beaten with a gun while they attempted to get him out of the buggy. None of the men with White tried to stop the assault. One of the men tied a rope to a tree and created a noose with the other end. A group of the men lifted White up and dropped him. The fall didn’t kill him; he strangled to death slowly.

The story of the lynching became a big story in Alabama at the time. One newspaper, the (Wetumpka, Alabama) *Herald* wrote “The black race as individuals bring the punishment on their own heads, by their own individual acts. ... The Negro must in some way be taught that the wages of sin is death, and the same is true with his physical life as with his spiritual life.” In the court case, Abe, nor any of the White brothers’ family was ever called to testify.

The Thursday edition of the series allowed the *Advertiser* to apologize on April 26, 2018.¹⁵² The article, credited to the *Montgomery Advertiser* editorial board, said the *Advertiser* “recognizes its own shameful place in the history of these dastardly, murderous deeds.” The *Advertiser* included examples of how the newspaper covered lynchings, placing the blame on the victim. Oliver Jackson’s case is another example. He was accused of killing someone in 1894. A group of masked men took him and shot him on the side of the road. The *Advertiser* wrote that Jackson was a born murderer, even though his parents were quiet and hardworking.

This editorial explains that several readers called the newsroom, some being complimentary, while others wished the past was left there. The *Advertiser* responded: “We can’t do that. There are thousands of names on the memorial of people we don’t know enough about. People who never received a change to live their lives free from the feat of being killed just because someone else didn’t like the way they looked.”

Two more articles were published on Friday in this series. The first was titled “A Place of Healing in the Heart of Dixie.”¹⁵³ The article opens by talking about James Williams, a Black man whose grandfather was a slave and his father a sharecropper. The article describes how he feared white people from the age of seven, when he first saw Black people being beaten and being bit by dogs in Alabama. Williams was born in 1953.

¹⁵² *Montgomery Advertiser* editorial board, “Our Shame: The sins of our past laid bare for all to see,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery AL), April 26, 2018.

¹⁵³ Andrew J. Yawn, “A Place of Healing in the Heart of Dixie,” *Montgomery Advertiser*, April 27, 2018.

His father told him to not go to white neighborhoods. He no longer fears white people as he opened a diverse church in St. Louis.

Post-World War II

Lynchings didn't stop immediately after World War II. Maybe the most famous lynching happened in 1955, when Emmett Till was killed. Till, a 14-year-old boy from Chicago, was in Money Mississippi visiting family members when he was accused of wolf whistling at a 21-year-old white woman.¹⁵⁴ Local, national, Black, and international newspapers all covered the murder, but all of their coverage had different angles and specifics.¹⁵⁵ The case was reopened by the U.S. Justice Department in 2018.¹⁵⁶

In 2005, Till's body was removed from his casket for an autopsy report. It revealed that there were "extensive and dramatic fractures of the skull." There were also metallic fragments found in his head and possible fractures in his wrists. These deposits were noted in his head. It was very accurate with a .45 caliber pistol. There was a gunshot wound to the head, multiple comminuted skull fractures, multiple lead fragments recovered from head and skull, fractures of the left femur, an embalmed body with numerous incisions in the skin and mouth.¹⁵⁷

¹⁵⁴ "Synopsis," Federal Bureau of Investigation. Accessed October 13, 2022. Emmett Till's case was reopened in the early 2000s. The FBI released hundreds of pages about the details of his case.

¹⁵⁵ M Spratt et al, "News, Race and the Status Quo: The Case of Emmett Louis Till," *Howard Journal of Communications* 18(2) April 2007: 169-192.

¹⁵⁶ Alan Blinder, "U.S. Reopens Emmett Till Investigation, Almost 63 Years After His Murder," *New York Times* (New York: NY), July 12, 2018.

¹⁵⁷ "Synopsis," FBI Investigation. February 9, 2006.

Another anonymous source said Till was “beaten with fists, an anvil was used to strike his head, his skin was pierced at multiple places with an awl.” A drill was used to drill a hole in Till’s head. Drilling wounds were located on his head about one inch above his ear as well as other parts of his body. Another redacted source said the killing had been approved by the local Ku Klux Klan leadership.¹⁵⁸ When his body was recovered, there was barbed wire wrapped around his neck, attached to a cotton gin fan. One of Till’s eyeballs was dangling from its socket.¹⁵⁹ World War II hadn’t removed the racism from the south.

Previous Analysis

There have been criticisms about the comparison of the United States and the Nazis in terms of their views on race and discrimination. One legal historian, Richard Bernstein, wrote: “The few and fleeting references by Nazi polemicists and ‘jurists’ to Jim Crow laws were, as far as I can tell, simply attempts to cite vaguely relevant precedents for home-grown statutes and policies.”¹⁶⁰ Another scholar, Marcus Hanke, wrote that segregation laws played little-to-no role in the Nazis’ agenda. Whitman agreed that the Nazis really were not very interested in the segregation of the Jim Crow South, because it was not a key point in the Nuremberg Laws.¹⁶¹ Nazis were primarily focused on citizenship and reproduction rather than separation of groups of peoples. Another

¹⁵⁸ Ibid.

¹⁵⁹ *The Race Beat*, 87.

¹⁶⁰ Ibid., 4.

¹⁶¹ Ibid., 11.

point Hanke makes in his writing is that the Nazis were focused on the elimination of the Jews, while Americans were still focused on the idea of “separate but equal” in the Jim Crow South. This, Whitman states, is one of the biggest flaws in this scholarly approach to the issue, because it assumes that the Nazis were looking for the final solution that was the Holocaust the entire time.¹⁶² The Nazis first wanted to exile the Jews and marginalize the group within Germany.

The *New York Times* was likely the most influential newspaper in the country at the time, but it was only influential to people who read the paper. Many people only read their local newspaper, which was the newspaper of record for them. In the American South, Black newspapers were “perturbed” by the militarization and state of Nazi Germany.¹⁶³ Despite this condemnation in newspaper editorials, there was never a conclusion drawn that the Nazi practices and southern segregation should be abolished. Many people, both Black and white, between 1933 and 1945 compared racial prejudices in Nazi Germany with those in the south. The southern black press had published information about the Nazi’s anti-black racism in 1932, before Hitler had taken power.

Grill argued that black newspapers wanted to “keep the spotlight on their own suffering rather than divert attention to the pain of another minority far away in Germany.”¹⁶⁴ W.E.B. DuBois, the American civil rights leader, visited Germany in 1936

¹⁶² Ibid., 13.

¹⁶³ Johnpeter Horst Grill, “The American South and Nazi Racism” *The Impact of Nazism: New Perspectives on the Third Reich and its Legacy* (Lincoln, Nebraska: University of Nebraska Press, 2003), 19-38.

¹⁶⁴ Ibid. 26.

to learn about the German apprenticeship program to help Black American schools. He said he didn't experience "a single instance" of discrimination while in Germany. DuBois described the racial prejudice that Jews experienced as surpassing "in vindictive cruelty and public insult anything I have ever seen" and that the policies meant "world war on Jews."¹⁶⁵

A German naval officer, Felix Von Luckner, traveled to the United States and found that Nazi propaganda would be the most effective in the American South and West.

Another work by Grill, coauthored with Robert L. Jenkins was titled "The Nazis and the American South in the 1930s: A Mirror Image?"¹⁶⁶ The authors make the great distinction between the similarities between the Southern United States and Nazi Germany by discussing both perspectives of citizens as well as the laws put in place. The focus for this study, and for the majority of studies, is how the Nazis viewed Jews, but Jenkins and Grill clarify that the Nazis were "viciously antiblack."¹⁶⁷ Despite the similarities between these areas, the American south didn't embrace the Nazis.

Another book that identifies and discusses how Americans dealt with and thought about the "German problem" is Michaela Hoenicke Moore's book *Know Your Enemy*.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁵ Ibid. 26.

¹⁶⁶ Johnpeter Horst Grill and Robert L. Jenkins, "The Nazis and the American South in the 1930s: A Mirror Image," *The Journal of Southern History* 58, no. 4 (Nov. 1992): 667-694.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid. 668

¹⁶⁸ Michaela Hoenicke Moore, *Know Your enemy: The American Debate on Nazism, 1933-1945* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2010)

While this book isn't specifically looking at newspaper coverage, Moore includes information about newspaper reporting. In the early 1930s, most Americans were not getting their information about Germany from the American government, but rather newspaper reports. There were 40 accredited foreign correspondents in Germany, giving the American press corps the largest reach of any foreign country.¹⁶⁹ There was ample differences between responses to the news on Nazi Germany. As Moore wrote, "American news consumers were offered a whole range of responses between outright condemnation of undemocratic and illiberal measures and appeals to 'give the new regime a chance.'"¹⁷⁰

This thesis is not focused on analyzing editorials, as I wanted to focus on what reporters deemed important enough to cover. It is worth noting a few details of what the *Times'* editorial writers focused on while discussing Hitler and the Nazis. These editorialists consistently claimed that Hitler would not succeed in taking over Germany and that the Weimar republic, which was the governmental system before the Nazis, would survive.¹⁷¹

American media outlets were not alone in the problematic discussion of the Nazis. The owner of London's *Daily Mail*, Lord Harold Rothermere, published a story in late 1934 that said Hitler had rekindled Germany, who were now "full of vigor" and had a

¹⁶⁹ Ibid. 42-43.

¹⁷⁰ Ibid. 44.

¹⁷¹ *Buried By the Times*, 134.

“zest for work.”¹⁷² As Olmsted wrote in her book, *The Newspaper Axis*, Rothermore was not alone in this type of opinion in the United Kingdom, claiming that this opinion pressured the government from responding to Hitler’s fascist state. In the book, Olmsted analyzes Rothermore, Lord Max Beaverbrook, William Randolph Hearst, Robert McCormick, and Joseph and Cissy Patterson. These were some of the most powerful people in the newspaper industry at the time, both in the United States and United Kingdom.

Hearst was one of, if not the, biggest media moguls in the world in this period, or ever. He owned 28 newspapers, 13 magazines, and a news syndication business at his peak. He was also incredibly controversial. He did “do business” with the Third Reich and some believed that the Nazis bribed him in return for favorable news coverage. Hearst even praised Hitler’s “enormous energy, intense enthusiasm ... and great organizing ability.”¹⁷³ He made these claims in private, though. Hearst was concerned that the white race would be “destroyed by ‘savage races’ if European nations fought one another.”¹⁷⁴

Much work has already been done largely analyzing the United States’ and Americans’ views on the ongoings in Europe. These works are not just concerned with newspaper coverage, but with the societal discussions as a whole. One of these works is

¹⁷² Kathryn S. Olmsted, *The Newspaper Axis: Six Press Barons who Enabled Hitler* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2022), 1.

¹⁷³ *Ibid.* 5.

¹⁷⁴ *Ibid.*

Hitler's American Friends by Bradley W. Hart.¹⁷⁵ There were many popular and influential people who were anti-Semitic and shared those beliefs with the rest of the world, like Charles Lindbergh and Henry Ford.

A debate in the 1940s was whether the United States should enter the war. Many isolationists believed that this would not benefit America and that Europe ought to be left alone. Hart's book shows the different groups of people who were, as the title says "*Hitler's American Friends*." One may not need to look further than Hart's table of contents to see who supported the Nazis. From the "Silver Legion and the Chief" to the "Religious Right," "The Senators," "The Businessmen," and "The Students," we can see that there was not just one group of people advocating for the Nazis. While Hart did not solely focus on the press, he makes clear just how important the press and media was to sharing the message of Naziism. He counted the approximate number of readers and listeners to different pro-Nazi and anti-Semitic media entities and found that nearly 60 million Americans were exposed to and followed this rhetoric.

The importance of newspapers and the control of the media was again covered in Heidi J.S. Tworek's book *News from Germany: The Competition to Control World Communications, 1900-1945*.¹⁷⁶ Tworek concluded that the fight between the Allied and

¹⁷⁵ Bradley W. Hart, *Hitler's American Friends: The Third Reich's Supporters in the United States* (New York: Thomas Dunne Books, 2018).

¹⁷⁶ Heidi J.S. Tworek, *News from Germany: The Competition to Control World Communications, 1900-1945* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2019), 1, 224-5.

Axis powers was also a fight over the communication networks, as the influence of these mediums could and would garner support for either side of the fight.

While there is somewhat of a paucity of scholarly work on the comparison of media coverage between Nazi Germany and Jim Crow America, there has been research conducted on the United States' coverage on Nazi Germany. There are no more notable research studies than Laurel Leff's book: *Buried by the Times: The Holocaust and America's Most Important Newspaper*, which analyzes the *New York Times*' coverage of the Holocaust.

Leff demonstrates why "The *New York Times* and other mass media treated the persecution and ultimately the annihilation of the Jews of Europe as a secondary story."¹⁷⁷ Leff reported that the *Times* published a total of 1,186 articles about what was happening to the Jews between September 1939 and May 1945, which is about 17 articles per month. Only 26 articles, however, made the front page of the newspaper. At this time, Leff states, the *Times* reached around 485,000 people and carried more than 100,000 words of news copy per issue. On Sundays those numbers doubled.¹⁷⁸ Within those front-page stories, Jews were identified as the primary victims only six times.¹⁷⁹ The *Times* referred to those suffering in the Holocaust as refugees or minorities, but rarely as Jews.

The *New York Times* knew that it was an overwhelming Jewish population that was being persecuted as, despite difficulty obtaining information from Nazi Germany,

¹⁷⁷ Laurel Leff, *Buried by the Times*, 2.

¹⁷⁸ *Ibid.*, 19.

¹⁷⁹ *Ibid.* 2-3.

there was still information that got to the Allied powers and Jewish relief organizations.¹⁸⁰ The *Times* staff trusted the information given to them by government officials. Some historians who believe the newspaper did, to an extent, doubt the reports. One historian, Walter Laqueur, wrote that the *Times* published these reports in a somewhat conspicuous place and not on the front page, indicating that the *Times* editors had reservations about the report.¹⁸¹ In 1942, the Allied governments confirmed the Holocaust,¹⁸² but Leff found no change in the *Time*'s coverage. Leff argues that if the editors really didn't believe the reports, they would not have pushed them as fact on the editorial pages.¹⁸³

Klein analyzed the *Times*' coverage of Hitler's first two months in power, noting that the *Times* had intensive coverage on Hitler and the Nazis. In this content, however, the newspaper "tended to misinform and confuse readers by discounting, ignoring, and even withholding disturbing facts and ominous signs that most other major publications included in their analyses."¹⁸⁴

¹⁸⁰ Ibid. 3.

¹⁸¹ Walter Laqueur, *The Terrible Secret: Suppression of the Truth about Hitler's "Final Solution"* (New York: Penguin Books, 1982) (Retrieved through *Buried by the Times*. 3)

¹⁸² David Engel, *Facing a Holocaust: The Polish Government-in-Exile and the Jews, 1943-1945*, Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press (1993), 15. (Quoted in *Buried by the Times*)

¹⁸³ *Buried by the Times*, 4.

¹⁸⁴ Gary Klein, "When the News Doesn't Fit: The New York Times and Hitler's First Two Months in Office, February/March 1993," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly* 78, no. 1, Spring 2001 127-149.

The *Times* was also somewhat unique in the fact that such little attention was given to what eventually became known as the Holocaust, as Deborah Lipstadt wrote: “By the later stages of the war virtually every major American daily had acknowledged that many people, Jews in particular, were being murdered... They lamented what was happening, condemned the perpetrators, and then returned to their practice of burying the information.”¹⁸⁵ So, what was it that made the *Times* seemingly walk on eggshells?

The *Times* had decided that the newspaper would not include any letters to the editor about the rise of Nazism in Germany. The officially published reasoning was that the *Times* simply received too many letters on the subject and it would be redundant.¹⁸⁶ The real reason, however, was that the paper did not want to open the world of commentary on the situation for German Jews. The *Times* did not want to run anti-Semitic letters, nor did it want to include the exact opposite, as leadership did not want the newspaper to get a reputation as it was owned by Jews.

Just as it is today, the *Times* was an influential newspaper, not only for the public, but also for other media outlets. It impacted influential political figures as well. It was, in all areas, the newspaper of record. Journalists and other influential figures thought that if the *Times*, which was owned and published by Jews, was not covering the Holocaust extensively, then why should they?¹⁸⁷ They thought the *Times* would be even more

¹⁸⁵ Deborah Lipstadt, *Beyond Belief: The American Press and the Coming of the Holocaust 1933-1945* (New York: Touchstone, 1993. 275. (Quoted in *Buried by the Times*)

¹⁸⁶ *Buried by the Times*, 32.

¹⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 5.

sensitive to these stories because of that. “The *Times*’ judgment that the murder of millions of Jews was a relatively unimportant story reverberated among other journalists trying to assess the news,” Leff wrote.¹⁸⁸

There were several reasons that the press, and the *Times* specifically, downplayed the news of the Holocaust. The first, and probably easiest to overlook, is that newspapers had the biggest war in world history to cover. As Leff states, “The war also produced global carnage on an unimaginable scale, making it harder to recognize the suffering of one minority group.”¹⁸⁹ Historian Peter Novick stated in his book that the Holocaust and the build-up to the Holocaust was just one of the parts of the war that “consumed the lives of tens of millions around the globe.”¹⁹⁰ It must be noted here that news eventually made its way into the press, though coverage was not always consistent.

One example of a journalist downplaying Hitler and the seriousness of the Nazi regime is by the *Times* Managing Editor Edwin James, who focused little attention on any anti-Semitic information coming from Germany in a series of articles.¹⁹¹ He instructed the journalists working at the *Times*’ Berlin bureau to send “a little less Jews and a little more Socialists and Communists” because “if there are six hundred thousand Jews getting a raw deal, there are some millions of Socialists and Communists who are

¹⁸⁸ Ibid.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. 6.

¹⁹⁰ Peter Novick, *The Holocaust in American Life* (Boston: Mariner, 2000) 29. (Quote in *Buried by the Times*)

¹⁹¹ *When News Doesn’t Fit*, 136.

also getting a raw deal. Maybe not as raw [as the Jews] *but the numbers make up the difference.*"¹⁹²

In the early days of Hitler's rise to power, the American people were getting mixed messages about the Nazis. One example that Klein cited of Fred Birchall, who had assumed the role of chief Berlin correspondent for the *Times*.¹⁹³ Birchall agreed to speak to a national audience on CBS radio. In this 1933 broadcast, though, he appeared to be endorsing Hitler and the Nazis. He had no criticism and did not reference the anti-Semitic situation, which is something that Klein argues anyone in Berlin would have been aware of at this time. Birchall "urged Americans to dismiss any thought that the present rules of Germany desire to go to war with anybody."¹⁹⁴ Klein wrote that Birchall was being, at least partially, sincere, as he believed that Hitler wanted to bring "tranquility to Germany."¹⁹⁵

Another reason that the Holocaust was overlooked is that World War I had stories of atrocity not totally dissimilar to the Holocaust. The difference was that the stories from World War I were not true. There were stories told to newspapers of death factories and mass gassings. When World War II occurred, many of the editorial leaders covered World War I as young journalists and did not want to repeat the same mistakes as their former editors.

¹⁹² Ibid., 136.

¹⁹³ Ibid., 137.

¹⁹⁴ Ibid., 138.

¹⁹⁵ Ibid., 138-139.

A smaller, yet important reason of note, is that reporting from Nazi Germany was difficult for correspondents. The government censored radio reports but newspaper stories were rarely banned. This meant reporters had to call other European bureaus, like London or Paris. The United States government also tightly controlled information.¹⁹⁶ While the *Times* did have a great foreign presence, better than any competitor, the *Times* still did not have enough manpower to cover a several-front war.¹⁹⁷ In 1942, a few years into the war, the Nazis made it much more difficult for reporters to work in Germany, and eventually reporters were not able to cover the war from the inside.¹⁹⁸

Around the same time, Hitler had put in place the “Final Solution” of the Holocaust and it was underway. The World Jewish Congress in New York received a “constant stream” of information about the mass murder taking place. During the first half of the year, Leff writes, the congress was attempting to verify that this was true. During the second half of the year, the group was trying to convince the world of the severity and truth.¹⁹⁹

The United States government also did not want to put too much attention on the plight of Jews. Political leaders thought that if emphasis was placed on the Jews, American citizens would not care to fight in a war to save the Jews. The press corps looked to the United States government to set an example for what is important to the

¹⁹⁶ Ibid., 50.

¹⁹⁷ Ibid., 63.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 136.

¹⁹⁹ Ibid., 135.

public, and since the government was quiet on the subject, there was no focus put into place for journalists to follow. While the United States government was not showing the Holocaust front and center, it also did not censor any information that journalists or others obtained about the situation. However, there were a few select cases, according to Leff, that the government directly suppressed the information.²⁰⁰

It was not as if the *Times* ignored the Holocaust completely, though. The first story the *Times* published on the Holocaust described the situation in 1942 as “the greatest mass slaughter in history.”²⁰¹ But it did so on the bottom of the fifth page of the paper.²⁰² The *Times* also had the largest commitment to international news than any other news outlets. The publication employed over 30 European correspondents.²⁰³ Other authors have stated that while the *Times* didn’t feature complete coverage of the Holocaust, it was still the most comprehensive and complete coverage of the Holocaust in the United States.²⁰⁴ This comprehensiveness, Leff speculates, is possibly awarded to the *Times* because of the reach and resources of the newspaper in comparison to any other newspaper at the time.

Leff cites one example of an American Jew who clung to the *Times*’ coverage. The American-born woman learned in 1944 that her husband was in the Bergen-Belsen concentration camp. She scoured the *Times* for coverage of the Holocaust and cut out any

²⁰⁰ *Ibid.*, 7.

²⁰¹ *Ibid.*, 6-7.

²⁰² *Buried by the Times*, 6-7.

²⁰³ *Ibid.*, 9.

²⁰⁴ David Wyman, *The Abandonment of the Jews* (New York: The New Press) 2007. 62.

articles she found. She kept those articles and after she died, her family found the clippings in several shoeboxes in her attic. Many American Jews, possibly even a majority, lost relatives in the Holocaust.²⁰⁵ The *Times* was also deemed as an important part of the United States by the Nazis, when the newspaper was criticized for having Jewish ownership.²⁰⁶

American Jews did not want to be seen emphasizing the struggle of the Jewish people, because there were people from all backgrounds who were fighting and dying for democratic freedoms.²⁰⁷ The *Times*' leadership was also concerned about this and deliberately downplayed the reality of what was happening to the Jews of Europe. The *Times*' publisher, Arthur Hays Sulzberger, thought of Judaism exclusively as being a religious orientation, rather than a racial or ethnic category. With that, Sulzberger thought that the Jews were not deserving of any special coverage.²⁰⁸

The *Times*' readers had a legitimate argument that they were not aware of what was occurring, as the coverage that the newspaper provided was buried within a huge broadsheet. It was also not a given, Leff states, that the *Times* wrote a story every day that mentioned, or even focused, on the Holocaust.²⁰⁹ Leff argues that because of this neglect, the *Times* is at least partially responsible for the inaction of Americans, including public

²⁰⁵ *The Political World of American Zionism* (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1961) 35. (Quoted in *Buried by the Times*)

²⁰⁶ *Buried by the Times*, 13.

²⁰⁷ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁸ *Ibid.*

²⁰⁹ *Ibid.*, 15.

officials. As mentioned previously, the *Times* was the go-to newspaper to determine what was important in the world. Leff doesn't argue that if the *Times'* editors and leadership acted differently fewer people would have died in the Holocaust. It's impossible to know what would have gone differently if the *Times* was more focused on the plight of the Jews.

The imbalance of the *Times* avoiding Jewish topics did not go unnoticed. Rabbi Stephen S. Wise, who was a Jewish leader in New York at the time, would often get into verbal fights with Sulzberger, saying "The Times seems to consider nothing as news which originates from and through the Jews."²¹⁰

As mentioned previously, one of the interesting parts of Hitler and the Nazi's leadership was defining Jews as a race or an ethnicity, but not as a religion. This was something that Sulzberger wanted to counter. When the Nuremberg Laws were enacted, Sulzberger was, of course, appalled by these laws, especially defining Jews based on if they had a single grandparent who was Jewish. This, Leff writes, pushed Sulzberger to deny this idea even more.²¹¹ While the *Times* was one of the largest and most influential newspapers in the world, there was still an audience that was not yet captured.

Once the United States officially joined the war in 1941, there were two wars to fight for the United States, the war between the Allies and the Axis powers, and another war: between the American media and Nazi Germany. This was not the first time that

²¹⁰ Ibid., 20-21. (This quote was found by Leff in letters between Sulzberger and brown in December 1941.

²¹¹ Ibid., 30.

American reporters had worked as war correspondents, but it was unique in that war reporters were “fully enlisted in the military team,” giving them more access. The war correspondents were not soldiers themselves, but they were embedded with the military. This was also the first war where radio and television were a bigger part of people’s lives, giving the public in the United States access to visuals from the war. This, of course, would greatly widen people’s perceptions of war.²¹²

An argument that is sometimes made in the modern world is that the racist past of the United States “is just how it was” or “part of the time.” This is somewhat accepted, however, not all countries in the early 20th century acted with such racism. Left-leaning Europeans “deplored the American developments.”²¹³

While Nazi Germany was taking inspiration from the United States, these countries were not always seeing eye-to-eye. As mentioned, the Nazis looked to the United States for inspiration less and less during the latter half of the 1930s and into the 1940s. It was a complicated relationship; there were times when the Nazis thought there could be some kinship between Germany and the United States. There were times when the Nazis criticized America’s constitutional values.²¹⁴ Nazis were against the liberal democratic systems of the United States and hated American Jews. One historian, Phillip

²¹² Steven Casey, *The War Beat: Europe* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017).

²¹³ *Ibid.*, 36.

²¹⁴ *Hitler’s American Model*, 18.

Gassert, estimated that Nazi Germany stopped looking at the United States as a model in 1936 or 1937.²¹⁵

While Nazi officials were championing some of the United States' models, this relationship was two-way, as Whitman points out. In a 1938 debate on eugenics, Mississippi Senator Theodore Bilbo "took a page from Hitler's *Mein Kampf* to assert that merely one drop of Negro blood placed in the veins of the purest Caucasian destroys the inventive genius of his mind and palsies his creative faculty."²¹⁶ At this time in the twentieth century, the idea that "superior" and "inferior" races should not mix was popular with eugenicists, but actual laws that banned it were rare. The Nazis looked for examples of these laws outside of the U.S. but found few.

It cannot be overstated that the Holocaust was *not* the Nazi's initial plan or goal. In private, Hitler stated that "The main thing is that the Jews are driven out."²¹⁷ Hitler said because the Jews did not have a Jewish state to call home, they were the opposite of Germans. When the Nazis invaded Poland, the troops immediately started shooting Jews, but when that seemed "too slow," they converted trucks to mobile gas chambers.²¹⁸ It is hypothesized that around July 1941 is when Hitler decided to round up and murder all the Jews of Europe.

²¹⁵ Ibid., 25-26.

²¹⁶ *Hitler's American Model*, 77.

²¹⁷ *War! What is it good for?*, 266.

²¹⁸ Ibid.

There are few examples of comparing the Nazis and their racist ideas to those of white supremacists in the United States and its racist policies and ideologies at the highest level of government. These comment on the similarities. The children's book cartoonist popularly known as Dr. Seuss, or Theodore Seuss Geisel, got his start creating political cartoons. In a book titled *Dr. Seuss Goes to War*, Richard H. Minear has collected political cartoons about the Nazis and has written brief descriptions.

The first relevant cartoon is two men standing on a stage, one with a swastika on its chest and one labeled "America First" that are connected by the same beard. There is a man dressed as Uncle Sam addressing a crowd with the quote "And on this platform, folks, those most perplexing people... the Lads with the Siamese Beard! Unrelated by blood, they are joined in a manner that mystifies the mightiest minds in the land!"²¹⁹ This cartoon is from July 8, 1941 and is about America's similarity to the Nazi regime being isolationists. Seuss himself was an American of German descent who also created propaganda documentaries for the United States military.

Another cartoon is from June 11, 1942, captioned "What This Country Needs Is a Good Mental Insecticide." The photo shows a line of people waiting for Uncle Sam to blow the insecticide into their ear, which is happening to one man. What comes out of the man's ear is a bug with the line "Racial Prejudice Bug."²²⁰

²¹⁹ Richard H. Minear, *Dr. Seuss Goes to War* (New York: The New Press, 1999), 38.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, 57.

Even Japan, another Axis power, was critical of the United States' racist treatment of nonwhites.²²¹ This treatment was the center of Japan's propaganda against the United States. The goal of this was to gain the trust and loyalty of people from countries such as China, India, and Latin American countries.²²² The propaganda was not exclusive to Japan though, as other Axis powers were taking hold of the message against America. Lynchings committed in the United States were publicized by the Axis powers as proof that the United States, and President Franklin Roosevelt specifically, was hypocritical.²²³ Ian Morris explains in *War! What is it good for?* how the Japanese saw other groups of people, specifically the Chinese:

When a Tokyo journalist recoiled at seeing men hanging by their tongues from hooks, an officer explained things to him. 'You and I have diametrically different views of the Chinese. You may be dealing with them as human beings, but I regard them as swine. We can do anything to such creatures.'²²⁴

Americans, not dissimilarly, saw Black people as less than human. People were not just killed; they were tortured. Lynching victims were often shot and stabbed numerous times. They were burned alive, while being hanged. Their bodies were then dragged through the streets of Black neighborhoods. The white crowds would often cut off fingers or "hunks of flesh" to save as souvenirs.

²²¹ Harvard Sitkoff, *The Struggle for Black Equality* (New York: Hill and Wang, 1981), 16.

²²² *Ibid.*

²²³ *Ibid.*

²²⁴ *War! What is it good for?*, 262.

While both the United States and Japan used propaganda about the other country, it is noteworthy to see the Japanese treat Chinese people so poorly, yet still have room to critique the United States and vice versa.

Methods

Three very different newspapers were analyzed to in an effort to determine how American newspapers were viewing Nazism, including the *New York Times*, *Chicago Defender*, and *Montgomery Advertiser*. These publications represent three disparate areas of journalism: a national newspaper, Black newspaper, and southern newspaper.

These three general categories were chosen because they represent the general heart of the content I am attempting to analyze. A national newspaper should show what most people were reading about and were aware of. The *New York Times* was specifically selected as it was at the time, and still is, one of the most important and influential newspapers.⁴⁴² The *Times* had a far greater reach than the other newspapers discussed here. It was also seen as the news of record then and now, winner of 132 Pulitzer Prizes, by far the most of any American newspaper.

A Black newspaper shows what the Black population of the United States was reading during this time. The *Chicago Defender* was similarly selected as it was one of the largest and most widespread and read Black newspapers of its time.⁴⁴³ The only real competitor to analyze was the *Pittsburgh Courier*, which started the Double V campaign

⁴⁴² *Buried by the Times*.

⁴⁴³ *The Defender: How the Legendary Black Newspaper Changed America*.

for victory at home and victory abroad. The *Defender*, however, is one of the most widely known and respected Black newspapers.

Finally, a southern newspaper, that is infamous for being led by racist editors and reporters, shows another perspective into this analysis. The *Montgomery Advertiser* was selected as it had a reputation for being indifferent to the lynchings and racial violence.⁴⁴⁴ Most any southern newspaper could have worked but this is likely the closest to the opposite of the *Defender* for its beliefs, situated in the former capital of the Confederacy. One of the biggest draws to the *Advertiser* is that it has been archived online. This is also the case for the *Times* and the *Defender*, but since the *Advertiser* is a small newspaper in comparison to the other two, it is important that these archives are easily accessible.

Other categories were considered for this analysis, such as a southern Black publication and a Jewish publication. While these would be valuable additions to a wider analysis, these categories did not fit exactly into this research.

For this thesis, I used the *New York Times*' own archives, the "TimesMachine," accessed through the *Times*' website and included in a digital subscription. The *Defender*'s archive was accessed through Ohio University's Library Website. The archive, titled "The Chicago Defender (National edition) (1921-1967)" is made available through Ohio University's ProQuest Subscription. Finally, the *Advertiser* was accessed

⁴⁴⁴ Brian Lyman "There Will be Lynching," *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery AL), April 21, 2018.

through the archive conducted on Newspapers.com, which is a website dedicated to archiving newspapers.

To start my search, I used stringent date requirements of January 1, 1933, to December 31, 1945, for my searches. This encapsulates all of the time Hitler and the Nazis were in power in Germany as well as a few months before and after. This is important to see how the world and reporters reacted to the rise of Nazi power and post-World War II.

The search terms I used remained the same throughout the process of searching, though the results, of course were different. Many searches were about laws as both the United States and Nazi Germany had their own sets of racist, discriminatory laws.

Search Terms

Below is the list of search terms and how many articles resulted from them. There are a couple instances of terms that were not used for a specific outlet as there was too large of a pool to search from. These instances are explained.

Table 1

Search Terms

Search Term	<i>New York Times</i> <i>Results</i>	<i>Montgomery</i> <i>Advertiser Results</i>	<i>Chicago Defender</i> <i>Results</i>
Nazi AND America	177	11,111 (not used)	425
Eugenics	52	70	8

Eugenicist	0	0	0
Race Mixing	0	3	120
Race Inferiority	0	0	7
Miscegenation	0	12	41
Inter marriage	0	10	52
Marriage AND Nazi	28	3	36
Marriage AND Hitler	12	2	70
Marriage AND Jew	8	0	36
Jewish laws	33	10	226
Negro Rights	11	20	191
Negro laws	0	0	0
Hitlerism	297	295	193
Eugenist	4	1	0
Jim Crow	31	62	3,404 (not used)
Southern Race Law	0	0	0
American race law	0	0	0
Southern racism	0	0	0
Marriage AND Jew	8	0	36
American Miscegenation	0	0	0

Total (not including unused terms)	661	488	1,441
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I read 2,590 articles this thesis. Only 141 met the requirements of being either about racism and discrimination in the United States or Nazi Germany, and were included in the thesis.

Recommendations for Further Research

This research is not all-encompassing. Many other newspapers could and should be analyzed for their coverage comparison. I would like to see scholarly work relating to these events in Southern Black newspapers, Jewish newspapers, western United States newspapers, and other countries' newspapers. A Southern Black newspaper would likely be the most important of these categories to analyze, as the journalists working for these newspapers were living in a part of the country that is, as discussed, was infamous for its treatments toward Black people.

The American Jewish press would provide a great insight into the comparisons between Nazi Germany and American discrimination and racism. As mentioned previously, many Jews living in America were, of course, from Europe and still had friends and family members suffering and dying because of the Nazi regime. The Jewish press would focus on how a group, which was still oppressed in America, reacted to Jim Crow laws and Nazi laws in real time.

Analysis on the American Jewish Press' coverage of the Holocaust has been conducted previously. Alex Grobman wrote in 1979 about what the Jewish Press, and therefore the Jewish American population knew about the Holocaust.⁴⁴⁵ In as early as 1939, the Jewish press were aware of what was referred to as the "solution of the Jewish problem." Another scholarly work was published in 2011, titled *The Jewish Press and the Holocaust, 1939-1945*.⁴⁴⁶ This book not only analyzes the United States' Jewish press, but also Britain's, Palestine's, and the Soviet Union's press.

A Western United States newspaper, I believe, may have had a different outlook on the world and local situation, as the media markets were still centered in the Eastern United States. This could lead to some bias between these media outlets. A foreign country's newspaper would also offer an important, and possibly less biased, view into how non-Americans viewed American racism, and if comparisons were made to Nazi Germany in real time. The easiest country of analysis would likely be Canada since it is a neighbor of the United States and English-speaking. Other countries could be Mexico, Great Britain, Australia, Poland, or Russia.

⁴⁴⁵ Alex Grobman, "What Did They Know?," *American Jewish History*, 68(3) 1979 327-352.

⁴⁴⁶ Yosef Gorney, *The Jewish Press and the Holocaust, 1939-1945*. (Cambridge University Press, 2011).

Chapter 2: General News Coverage

The Suffering and Disdain of Humans

General reports on racism and the events in Nazi Germany are the focus of this chapter. Of the articles between 1933 and 1945 that are the focus of this study, more than one-third were categorized under General News Coverage. These are day-to-day instances of discrimination. This is generalized racism within the context of this thesis, so not all the articles in these three publications printed about race are included.

New York Times

The *Times* did not cover American racism and Nazi Germany as much as the other two publications during the period under study, only publishing ten articles at this time based on my search terms.

In April 1933, early in Hitler's Germany, the *Times* published "10,000 Jews Flee Nazi Persecution."⁴⁴⁷ This article explains that refugees had gone to Katowice, Prague, Rotterdam, Antwerp, Paris, Spain, and Portugal. Some of these refugees were German-born citizens, while others were citizens of different countries but had been living in Germany for some time. The third group of refugees had no national status and therefore had a difficult time leaving Germany. Many of these refugees decided to settle in nearby countries in hopes that the climate in Germany would change. The article ends with an announcement about an Anti-Hitler protest that was scheduled.

⁴⁴⁷ "10,000 Jews Flee Nazi Persecution," *New York Times* (New York, NY), April 15, 1933.

Hitler assumed power of Germany in early 1933, and this article was published that same year, showing the *Times* saw the German situation as an important news story early on. It wasn't just that Hitler had assumed power, this article was specifically about how the situation was so bad that about 10,000 Jews had already fled the country. The announcement about the anti-Hitler protest does likely show how the *Times* leadership felt about the Nazis, that this party was dangerous. There were pro-Nazi Americans with at least two instances of a pro-Nazi rally occurring in Madison Square Garden in New York City in 1939.⁴⁴⁸

The next article features another instance of a protest in Madison Square Garden. The article is a huge spread, covering a protest against Nazism. The article, titled "'Love of Justice' Basis of Protest," was published in March 1934.⁴⁴⁹ This was a protest featuring many speakers who were against the rise of the Nazis. The article includes a large photo of the audience, which does not have much detail, but thousands of people can be seen. This is not the standard news article, however, featuring transcripts of each of the speeches that were given.

The first speaker, Bainbridge Colby, who was a co-founder of the United States Progressive Party, said: "America is speaking tonight— not only for herself, but for civilization and human brotherhood." He continued, "A great oppression has descended

⁴⁴⁸ "When Nazis Took Manhattan," *NPR*, February 20, 2019: <https://www.npr.org/sections/codeswitch/2019/02/20/695941323/when-nazis-took-manhattan>

⁴⁴⁹ "'Love of Justice' Basis of Protest," *New York Times* (New York, NY), March 8, 1934.

upon mankind. A grievous affront to the world's sense of justice and to humanity has been committed by the infatuated usurpers of public power in Germany." Several religious leaders spoke, as well as editors and academic officials. The article not only took up a spread of two full pages inside the newspaper but continued onto another page.

The large photo of the crowd at the protest is not insignificant. Photos were not standard in the *Times* during this period. The *Times* was committed to showing just how many people protested the Nazis. While not all the content of the speakers' transcripts were the most ground-breaking, the fact that the *Times* published a large amount of them shows that the journalists wanted to portray how several important people, mostly politicians and religious leaders, in New York were speaking out against Nazism. The transcripts allowed readers to view the situation through few different perspectives.

The next article discusses the rights of Black Americans. This is an Associated Press article that was syndicated for usage in the *Times*. The article, "High Court States Negro Rights a New" was published in May of 1935 and is about how the United States Supreme Court ruled that Black Americans cannot be excluded from juries.⁴⁵¹ The article continues to discuss other Supreme Court cases, specifically the case of Jess Hollins, a Black American from Oklahoma, whose was found guilty of murdering a white woman. The Oklahoma court sentenced Hollins to death. The article also states that the case would be sent back down to the Oklahoma court and a new trial will commence. Justice

⁴⁵¹ "High Court States Negro Rights a New," *New York Times* (New York, NY), May 14, 1935.

Charles Evans Hughes, who wrote the opinion, said the trial was not fair because Black people had not been included on the jury.

The contents of the article are not indicative of the *Times* since it was an Associated Press article, but the fact that the *Times* chose to include this article in the newspaper shows that this topic was important to the journalists. This is a standard news article about a court case that does allow readers to peek into the world of Black Southern Americans. A Black person was sentenced to death by an all-white court for allegedly attacking a white woman, and the nation's high court required that Hollins be tried by a jury of his peers, not an all-white jury.

The next article the *Times* published was also about the judicial system, specifically about the American Bar Association.⁴⁵² The article featured criticisms of the Bar by Stanley M. Isaacs, who was the president of the Bar Association. At a luncheon for the New York City chapter of the National Lawyers Guild, he said the Bar was indirectly harming America through its racist policies. Isaacs said: "I don't believe in segregation by race or creed, so it is unfortunate that an organization like the National Bar Association has to exist. It is a lasting disgrace to the American Bar Association that they have set up the color barrier." He, somewhat indirectly, spoke about how the association didn't allow Black attorneys.

⁴⁵² "BAR Group Scored for Color Barrier," *New York Times* (New York, NY), Aug. 19, 1939.

Isaacs continued, saying all Americans should be worried about the future, both at home and abroad, as Americans needed to be united. “The rights and privileges of minority groups will survive only if they stand together. That is one reason the policy of the American Bar Association is so harmful to America,” he said.

The emphasis on the last two articles on the judicial system is a progressive choice by the *Times* as there were not many articles in this search that specifically spoke about the racist and discriminatory laws in the United States. It is also peculiar that one of the main points in the latter article is that Americans need to come together against racism and discrimination locally and abroad, as the Double V campaign had not yet been created. The author does not detail what was being referenced. Journalists, typically, are good at covering events and being able to capture the information presented. Reporters are not always as poignant when covering more abstract issues.

Not dissimilar to the story on the Bar Association meeting, the next article features religious leaders urging for Black Americans to have full rights in December 1942, a year after the United States had entered World War II.⁴⁵³ This event took place at the Fellowship of Southern Churchmen in Black Mountain, North Carolina where clergy advocated for “complete social, political and economic emancipation for the Negro in a world that is seeking true democracy.” Leaders declared that democracy and Christianity needed to become colorblind, calling upon “all men and women as we do upon ourselves,

⁴⁵³ “Churchmen Urge Full Negro Rights,” *New York Times* (New York, NY), Dec. 26, 1942.

to bring forth these works of justice which shall break down the barriers between groups in our land and make in the desert of freedom's betrayal a highway for our God."

The article also discusses how the group, which seems to be made up of white members, decided that "race superiority" is false. "We who deny and defy the boastful claim of racial superiority by the dictators must stop asserting this claim by word or by deed amongst ourselves. But we in America sanction its continuance through our irresponsible and callous indifference to the legitimate claims of our own." One man, Howard Kester, who was a Southern social justice advocate, said that the "true test of democracy rested in the treatment of the most humble in its midst."⁴⁵⁴

Some religious-based organizations are infamous for being discriminatory. The Ku Klux Klan is one example of such extremism. The *Times*' focus on covering religious groups that were in Southern states and against racism may have been surprising for some readers at the time. It was likely that many northerners just assumed that a devoutly religious person living in the South would be racist. This article also talks about eugenics indirectly, saying that race superiority is a false construct, which, as discussed later in the Eugenics chapter, which focuses on the popular pseudo-science during this period.

Chicago Defender

As an advocacy press, the *Defender* was much more likely to cover race-based issues, publishing seventeen articles discussing racial discrimination within the context of this thesis and in this time.

⁴⁵⁴ Ibid.

The first of these articles was published in late April 1933. The article, which was titled “Say Hitler is Dooming Germany to Ruin” criticizes the Nazis, asserting in the opening paragraph: “To attack judges, lawyers, doctors, and to ill-treat respectable citizens in the 20th century, is beyond human imagination.”⁴⁵⁷ Even in early 1933, the author, Frank Goldman, wrote that “to detail the atrocities that have been committed could fill innumerable columns.” Goldman cited Goebbels, the Nazi propaganda minister, who said that no violence had been committed against the Jews. The author continued by discussing how the world had reacted to the situation in Nazi Germany. Goldman said what the Nazis were doing was not real nationalism, but terroristic brutality.

Like the *Times*, the *Defender*’s coverage of the Nazi’s discrimination was highlighted early. The author discussed nationalism and terrorism in the latter half of the article. According to this article, the United States was a proud nation, but could see that what the Nazis were doing was not quite the same and bordered on terrorism. But leaders in the United States acted in ways not dissimilar to this era of the Nazis, claiming racial separation was key to America’s success.

The next article that discussed the atrocities of Nazi Germany was published in June of 1933.⁴⁵⁸ The article is primarily about Joe T. Robinson, the U.S. Senate leader, who was from Arkansas. Robinson spoke for America, sending the sympathies of the

⁴⁵⁷ Frank Goldman, “Say Hitler is Dooming Germany to Ruin,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), April 29, 1933.

⁴⁵⁸ “Sen. Robinson Decries Jewish Persecution,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), June 17, 1933.

country to the Jewish people “in their fight against what is termed Hitlerism in Germany.” He continued later, “We are opposed to sham, hypocrisy and false altruism that can see and condemn the acts of others in a distant land when they themselves are permitting the commission of the same things as a part of their life at home.”

The unnamed author of the article talked about America specifically: “White men cannot march into the palace of justice gushing with high sounding words and critical analysis of other nations and their cruelty toward their subjects, when they themselves are unable to conceal their own hands stained with the blood of our defenseless people and against which they have uttered no public word of complaint.” The author wrote that it would be interesting if Hitler made Robinson look at his own country, concluding:

We as a nation are little prepared to speak disparagingly of other with respect to their dependent nationals, especially when our land of the brave and home of the free in many instances throws the mantel of protection around and permits to go unpunished perpetrators of lynchings, burnings at the stake, peonage, concubinage and murdering of women and children without even a respectable attempt made to apprehend those responsible for the crimes.

It must have been difficult for many Black people reading this article to see how the United States could condemn the actions of any other country in terms of racism, as the racist actions in the United States were some of the worst in the world. The final quote in the article explains that the author knows about this hypocrisy. The part of the quote that is most striking is the last line, focusing on American racism: “without even a respectable attempt made to apprehend those responsible for the crimes.” This shows that

at this time, writers and readers of the black advocacy press focused on the fact that the United States didn't even try to condemn the people who committed racially based crimes.

The next article was published that same year, 1934, under the title "How Jews Fare Under Hitler Regime."⁴⁶² This article did not originally appear in the *Defender*, though. There is an editor's note at the beginning of the article informing that the article was originally written for the *Daily Express* in London. The article was written by Pembroke Stephens, who was a famous correspondent. Stephens had visited several areas of Germany and was reporting what he saw. He reported that about 100,000 Jews had emigrated to the other parts of Europe or Palestine or the Orient. Stephens also mentioned that obtaining accurate numbers of murdered Jews is "exceedingly difficult" as people didn't want to share what they knew and the secret police helped keep it this way.

Stephens reported that the Nazis saw the Jews as colored people, "something between a Negro and a Chinese." Divorces are also being given to Christians who married Jews "in error." Stephens explained that Jews would not be allowed to have traditional meals on holidays. They also were not permitted to use public swimming baths. Nazi officials had raided homes, synagogues, and stores. Stephens said, quoting German officials: "The best thing [Jews] can do is to die."

⁴⁶² Pembroke Stephens "How Jews Fare Under Hitler Regime," *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), June 16, 1934.

The inclusion of this article in the *Defender* is unique in the articles analyzed for this thesis. The article does not seem to be syndicated, though it could be. One of the key points of this article discusses how the Nazis viewed the Jews. As mentioned in previous discussions, the Jewish population was seen as a race more than just a religion. This shows that the Nazis saw the Jews, according to Stephens, as “something between a Negro and a Chinese.” This is such an abstract comparison, but provides insight into the shifting definition of Jewishness, that Jews were “othered” in a myriad of ways during the period under study.

The next article was a July 1934 editorial written by Robert S. Abbott, the founder and editor of the *Defender*.⁴⁶³ Abbott opens: “In the history of things he who seems to be wrong today may be right tomorrow.” He said that social opportunities and civil rights establish a social identity. Abbott explained that the country needed to hear of Black Americans’ plight. “I was not always admired for my courage, nor have I been snowed under with messages of felicitations for the success which has attended my efforts. I care not about that. My principal interest lies in bringing the masses to the full realization of their claims on the body politic of which they form an indispensable segment.”

Abbott’s writings only appear a handful of times within this thesis, but he was an influential person for the Black community. His main message in this article is that white America and the rest of the world needed to see just how poorly Black Americans were

⁴⁶³ Robert S. Abbott, “‘Civilization Feeds Upon Freedom,’ Says Editor R.S. Abbott,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), July 14, 1934.

treated to understand their situation. This may show that some people in white America didn't believe or didn't know just how badly Black people were treated, especially in the South. This topic is explored thoroughly in the "Race Beat," as there was not a full understanding of the plight of Black Americans until the mainstream white press began covering issues most notably in 1955 with the brutal murder of 14-year-old Emmett Till in Mississippi.⁴⁶⁴

The next general news coverage article returns to the issue of the Nazis in November 1937. The article "Jews Wait to Rule World Germans Say," is written completely as a news article, without any dissent of opinion or editorial comment.⁴⁶⁸ The opening line of the article is a quote from Julius Streicher, who was an "eminent Aryan of Nuremberg and close friend of Reichsfuhrer Adolph Hitler." It reads: "'The Jewish people is a mixed race with the blood of 'Negroes,' Mongols and Nordic elements.'" This quote comes from Streicher's speech in Munich. Joseph Goebbels, the propaganda minister, also spoke, saying: "The liberal world's criticisms of Nazi anti-Semitism are too 'dumb' to be worth answering." Streicher said the most startling statements:

As the embodiment of sin against blood, the Jewish mixed race was destined from its birth to be unable to make itself constructively effective. At all times the Jewish race has been a destroyer of what is good. Anyone who believes that the Jewish peril has been eliminated by the exclusion of Jews from the leadership of

⁴⁶⁴ *Race Beat*, 85-90.

⁴⁶⁸ "Jews Wait to Rule World Germans Say," *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), Nov. 27, 1937.

the state and the Nuremberg laws have assured the maintenance of the German people for the whole future does not know Jews.

This article is peculiar, as it gives a full platform for the Nazi messages to be spread throughout another audience, but the *Defender* seems to be quite anti-Nazi, generally. Maybe this article was included in the newspaper because readers were supposed to judge it for themselves. This is similar to some of the content in the *Times*, which would provide a platform for a person to spread their opinion about any subject, sometimes being racist and anti-Semitic.

In another article covering the Nazis, a United States senator, Thomas C. Desmond, appealed to Americans to oppose “attempts at racial and religious discrimination of the Hitler pattern.”⁴⁶⁹ He was speaking to the Daughters of the American Revolution in October 1938. He said: “Only a few years ago Adolf Hitler, with his crack-pot anti-Catholic and anti-Jewish ideas, shared by a handful of fanatic followers, was regarded as a joke. Now he holds despotic power over a helpless Czechoslovakia and is a dread menace to the peace of the world.” The author, who was not named, concluded the short article reporting that Desmond said he would make a “strong anti-prejudice platform plank.” This article is almost a complete 180-degree turn from the previous, saying how Americans needed to oppose Hitlerism and his “crack-pot” ideas.

⁴⁶⁹ “Warns U.S. of Hitler’s Race Policy,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), Oct. 1, 1938.

The next article was published in November of 1941 under the headline “Should the Negro Hate the Jew?”⁴⁷⁰ The author, Chandler Owen, who was a Black author and early member of the Socialist Party opened the article by saying:

Despite the fact that the Negro is the butt of the Nazi race inferiority program, it is commonplace to hear Negroes say: ‘Well, Hitler did one good thing: he put these Jews in their place.’ Indeed the anti-Semitism program has probably been pushed more vigorously among the Negroes than any group in the nation.

Owen provides different examples of interracial work including music created by both Black and Jewish people and similar civil rights struggles. Owen said that Jews have been active in fighting for civil rights for Black Americans. Owen concluded the article by saying:

Certainly the facts herein cited should generate a measure of gratitude, quicken and stimulate reasonable appreciation among Negroes as to their Jewish brethren. IT should also induce Negroes to be fair enough to refrain from judging all Jews by the worst just as they constantly protest against judging them by the worst of the Negroes.

“Should the Negro Hate the Jews?” is a surprising headline to read as many in the modern day often pair minorities together. Throughout much of this analysis, Black

⁴⁷⁰ Chandler Owen, “Should the Negro Hate the Jew,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), Nov. 8, 1941.

people and Jewish people were considered as one group: minorities. This fact doesn't instantly bind them together.

The next article is a warning to the readers about Nazis. The article "No Compromise with Hitlerism" was also published in September of 1942.⁴⁷² The article opens by stating "It is possible for America to lose this war for democracy." The author wrote that fascism could be brought into the United States and would destroy democracy. The article reports that "The League for White Supremacy" program was already beginning to take hold in the South as well as some sections of the North. It is made clear that this program is not just fighting against Black Americans. "It is directed against our government and democracy. Its fascist propaganda against Negroes should fool no thinking person."

The author points to two governors and one lawyer: Frank Dixon, Alabama, Eugene Talmadge, Georgia, and Horace Wilkinson, who was the "would-be-fascist-storm-trooper" and "lynch-minded Birmingham lawyer" as people who are the racist faces that "appear before the public." The league must be destroyed, the author said. He called upon the government to act against this. He warned that Europe was watching: "Certainly Hitler is watching this campaign of race hatred and lynch incitement. He better than all knows that this can literally tear our country apart and bring about bloody internal clashes."

⁴⁷² "No Compromise with Hitlerism," *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), Sept. 19, 1942.

This is another article that warns readers about the danger of white supremacy, Naziism, and racism that had long been living within the United States. This, again, may have been an article that stemmed from the Double V Campaign, discussing how Hitler was watching the United States.

The next article also discussed the Nazis within the United States. “Let’s Stop the Enemies Within” was published in October of 1942.⁴⁷³ This article was written from the perspective of the *Chicago Defender* as a whole, likely being an editorial. The *Defender* endorsed President Franklin Roosevelt’s message, which is mostly about unifying as one country to “stop the enemies from within.” The *Defender* also calls for all anti-fascist people, especially Black Americans, to look at the president’s message as a battle cry. The author discusses poll taxes and the reality for Black Americans: “Negro America knows the fascist-like character of the dominant poll tax clique in Congress. Its failure to act to win the war by curbing the profits of a small group of industrialists, and an outrageously rapacious and unpatriotic farm bloc is carrying us with express-train speed toward inflation and through inflation to a military defeat.” The article concludes with the simple line: “Stop the enemies within!”

This editorial was again likely a Double V campaign article, specifically talking about how to stop the racists and white supremacists from within America before attempting to stop anti-Semitism and fascism abroad. The last few articles analyzed have

⁴⁷³ “Let’s Stop the Enemies Within,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), Oct. 3, 1942.

all had very similar elements: warning about how something like the Nazi's rise to power could happen here, so Americans need to eradicate racism locally.

The next article follows a *Defender* columnist who traveled abroad to report on how Black American soldiers were being treated during the war. This article was published later into the war, in May of 1945, about Walter White, who was the head of the NAACP and who was abroad in the spring of 1944.⁴⁷⁴ The author of this article, Ben Burns, wrote that White was not just another war correspondent as “To many Negro soldiers he was a whiff of home – someone to whom they could tell their troubles and woes. To them, he was identical with the NAACP – the relentless champion of Negro rights at home.”

Burns said White was able to get a much more complete and accurate account of the war and the status of Black soldiers than other reporters. Burns said White mixed humor with tragedy in his writing. For example, Americans told British soldiers that “Negroes have tails and bark,” which the Black soldiers first disliked, but eventually began barking when they met British soldiers. Then, the English soldiers eventually began barking back. His articles also covered the hypocrisy in the military. For example, an officer told White: “I can't go along with you on social equality; that will never be possible.” Later, the officer invited White to share his quarters. White found this amusing and wrote: “A little while ago you told me that social equality was impossible but now

⁴⁷⁴ Ben Burns, “Off the Book Shelf: Report on Negro Troops,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), March 10, 1945.

you are inviting me, a Negro, to be your guest.” The officer then said, “You’re different.” In the last paragraph, Burns reveals the meaning of this story, almost a year since the initial reports came out. White had published a book, which included some of these excerpts, titled “A Rising Wind” about his time spent with the troops.

World War II was not as visual as later wars for civilians in terms of photography and imagery, but there was more of a connection between the civilians back home and the soldiers fighting abroad than previously. This article provided insight into the lives Black soldiers led while fighting overseas, which is not a common insight as there were not many Black soldiers. There were 125,000 African American soldiers, comprising 6.25% of American forces overseas. That, on top of the fact that white war correspondents would not be placed with Black units, made these stories rare outside of the black press.

The coverage of the Nazis did not cease when the war ended. On May 12, 1945, four days after the war ended, the *Defender* published “Hitler is Dead But Not Hitlerism.”⁴⁷⁵ The author wrote that Hitlerism is still alive in the form of white supremacy and “haunts the world like the ghost of Hamlet.” The author continued: And strange it is that the specter of Aryanism, the doctrine of the superior races should find its best spawning grounds in the nation that contributed so much to the defeat of the German super-race.

Hitler is dead in Germany but Hitlerism goes marching on in the United States.

⁴⁷⁵ “Hitler is Dead but Not Hitlerism,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), May 12, 1945.

Wherever a Negro is forced to take a back seat in a bus, wherever a black man must pay a tribute on his right to vote, wherever color is the criterion for admission to a theater or restaurant, Hitlerism is still alive. Hitler's body may be interred somewhere in a secret Nazi grave but his spirit is alive in the hearts of men like Bilbo, Rankin and others of the Dixie ilk. Hitlerism is dead in Germany but not in Dixie."⁴⁷⁶

The author pointed out how ironic it was that the United States, which was infamously racist, defeated another infamous country and system of power. Saying Hitlerism was still alive and well in the United States is a notable and relevant thing to read in modern time, let alone four days after the United States and the Allies defeated Hitler.

Montgomery Advertiser

The first article published in the *Advertiser* regarding these specifications was titled "Silly and Brutish," and reported on Gerald W. Johnson, an author and editor who initially wrote a piece about Hitler in the *Baltimore Evening Sun*.⁴⁷⁷ In the story published in April 1933, Johnson said Americans needed to stamp Hitlerism as a "silly and brutish negation of civilization" and "a long stride backward toward the mentality of the ape."

⁴⁷⁶ Theodore Bilbo served as the governor of Mississippi twice and also served as a senator. He was part of a filibuster synonymous with white supremacy. John Rankin was a representative in the House for sixteen terms, representing Mississippi. He was similarly racist, proposing bills to prohibit miscegenation and also being a proponent of the poll tax.

⁴⁷⁷ "Silly and Brutish," *Montgomery Advertiser*, (Montgomery, AL), April 10, 1933.

Johnson also said: “It is hard enough for civilization to maintain itself under the best conditions, for there is only too much monkey blood in the population of every country under the sun.”

One of the *Advertiser*'s first articles about Hitlerism is solely talking about how terrible Hitlerism is. This should be noted for the articles that are to come. It is also interesting that Johnson used the phrase “monkey blood,” which has racist implications. He could have not meant the phrase to be about race, but it reads that way.

Five days after the *Advertiser* published the piece by Johnson, the newspaper published “Rights of Negroes Subject of Paper.”⁴⁷⁸ The article follows how two academic papers were read before the University of Alabama's Research Council. An assistant professor, E. Baskin Wright, said Southern States “have run afoul of the thirteenth amendment in respect to peonage laws.” Wright continued, “These laws were aimed primarily at the negro who is notoriously lax in his contract obligations.” The Supreme Court of the United States ruled that laws that constituted peonage violated the thirteenth amendment. Wright added: “Most of the methods employed by the Southern States to disfranchise the negro have been declared not in violation of the fifteenth amendment. The literacy test, property qualifications, residence requirement, debarment for having committed certain crimes, and the poll tax have all been upheld.”

⁴⁷⁸ “Rights of Negroes Subject of Paper,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), April 15, 1933.

This article is racist, as the source of the article generalizes Black Americans, saying they are “notoriously lax” about contract obligations. The article is illustrative of one of the common findings within newspapers in this analysis: giving one person free rein to discuss their opinion without a fact check or balance.

About a month after that article was written, the *Advertiser* published another piece about Hitlerism, titled “An Amusing Hitlerism.”⁴⁷⁹ In the lead of the article the author, who is not named, called Nazi anti-Semitism “tragic in its effects.” The author then talked about how official terminology had been changed in the Nazi telephone systems. Before the change, operators would say “D for David” or “Z for Zacharius.” After the change, phone operators would be required to say “D for Deutschland,” “N– for National,” “S–for Seigfried,” “J–for Joachim,” and “Z–for Zeppelin.”

The next article was written by Atticus Mullin in December of 1933 and covered a Virginia court case that gave Black Americans more rights. This article features the headline “Virginia Ruling Increases Worry of Party Chiefs,” and several subheads, including “Democratic Judge of Old Dominion Says Negro Has Right in primary,” “Safeguards Urged,” and “North Alabama Seething With Condemnation of Plan to Write Platform.”⁴⁸² Atticus Miller, the author of the article, reported that a judge, who was a Democrat, ruled to allow Black Americans to vote in the Democratic primary election.

⁴⁷⁹ “An Amusing Hitlerism,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL) May 15, 1933.

⁴⁸² Atticus Mullin, “Virginia Ruling Increases Worry of Party Chiefs,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), Dec. 8, 1933.

This decision followed closely to and was in line with a similar case from Texas, according to the article.

Miller wrote that these decisions added interest to the Alabama Democratic Executive Committee. One member of this committee, George Bondurant, said it would be foolish for the state to change the primary system. The chairman of this committee was Edmund W. Pettus, whom the Edmund Pettus bridge in Selma, Alabama was named after. Pettus was a United States senator, Ku Klux Klan leader, and Confederate General. The bridge was named after Pettus, in part, to commemorate his commitment to imprisoning Black people after the Civil War.⁴⁸³ Miller wrote that Pettus thought there was a “necessity of doing something to prevent Alabama’s primary from being subjected to the same attack as was made in the Texas case.” The article concluded:

The Anniston Star is of the opinion that it is untimely and unwise. There are many thoughtful persons who believe there is a ‘nigger in the woodpile’ of the proposed negro exclusion measure. As a consequence, if it be carried out, it would tend to divide the Democracy of the State at a time when we are just beginning to heal the wounds that resulted from the candidacy of Al Smith for the presidency and the subsequent bolt of Senator J. Thomas Heflin.⁴⁸⁴

⁴⁸³ Errin Whack, “Who was Edmund Pettus?” *Smithsonian Magazine*, March 7, 2015. <https://www.smithsonianmag.com/history/who-was-edmund-pettus-180954501/>

⁴⁸⁴ Smith served four terms as New York’s governor and ran for president in 1928. Heflin served as a representative and senator for Alabama who argued for completely excluding Black Americans from voting.

The next article is an Associated Press story that was published in the *Advertiser* on November 16, 1935. This article, like the previous, talked about the political rights of minorities, specifically Jews in Germany.⁴⁸⁵ The article said Jews had all their political rights taken by Nazis and were forbidden to marry “Gentiles.” This article discusses the Nuremberg Laws as well as citizenship and racial laws. The language in the article was to-the-point and matter of fact about these laws.

Germany’s Jews could no longer vote, hold office, or be employed by the government. Female “Aryan” servants under the age of 35 were also forbidden from working in Jewish households. The article pointed out that Hitler could exempt Jews from these restrictions. At this time, “part Jews may retain full citizenship unless they are members of the Jewish faith and married Jews.” The article concluded by stating the first people who violated these laws were arrested. An Aryan man and a Jewish woman were jailed for having intimate relations.

It is ironic that the previous two articles appeared next to one another in this analysis. The first article discusses the political and voting rights of Black people in the southern United States, with an undertone that the main sources in the article didn’t want Black people to vote. Then, the *Advertiser* published another Associated Press article talking about similar issues Jews were facing in Germany. The Associated Press article included much less opinion.

⁴⁸⁵ “Nazi Decree Strips Jews of Political Rights, Forbids Gentile Marriages,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), Nov. 16, 1935.

The next article was also about the Nazis, specifically new laws against Jews.⁴⁸⁶ This was an Associated Press article written after the winter 1936 Olympics in Garmisch-Partenkirchen. The author, Melvin K. Whiteleather, wrote that the Nazis had not introduced any new Jewish-based laws or made any actions because they did not want to upset foreign visitors during the Olympics. Whiteleather was a foreign correspondent for the Associated Press.⁴⁸⁷ The article does not specify what these actions were but reiterates the passage of the Nuremberg Laws and anti-miscegenation laws.

This article shines a light on the Olympics, which is certainly one of the most important worldwide competitions. This article showed just how active the Nazis were in planning how they would react to certain situations.

The next article returned to United States race issues, with the article “Lynch Law to Offset Wagner Bill Proposed.”⁴⁸⁸ Published in August of 1936, this article was again by the Associated Press. A congressional candidate, J. Wade Drake, proposed a “lynch law” that would “offset what he termed racial equality under the Wagner labor disputes act.” This, essentially, would have been a law that legalized and enabled people to lynch Black people. Drake was a farmer from South Carolina.

His opponent, John C. Taylor, also from South Carolina, said the Wagner act would place both white and Black people on equal footing in collective bargaining.

⁴⁸⁶ Melvin K. Whiteleather, “Nazis Start New Drive on Jews,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), March 2, 1936.

⁴⁸⁷ “Melvin Kerr Whiteleather,” *New York Times*, (New York, NY), Nov. 23, 1976.

⁴⁸⁸ “Lynch Law to Offset Wagner Bill Proposed,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), Aug. 19, 1936.

Wagner said in a political meeting: “We’ve had lynch law in South Carolina ever since I’ve been here, and if it becomes necessary, you can lynch that darkey.”

Taylor then directed a question at Drake: “I want to ask my friend if he is in favor of the Wagner bill, would he also be in favor of repeal of the Jim Crow laws which separate white people on trains and in restaurants, and then want to cure it by lynching.”

This article of course shows just how openly racist politicians were in Alabama at this time, proposing a law that would legalize the extra-judicial act of lynching. A key question throughout this thesis is: how could individuals be so hypocritical? It is not reported in this article if Taylor or Drake opposed or favored the Nazis and what they stood for. Thus far, many of these articles have shown that there was hypocrisy by Americans and the American media specifically.

The next article is an editorial written by Judge Walter B. Jones of Montgomery.⁴⁸⁹ Jones’ column regularly appeared in the *Advertiser* glorifying the Confederacy. He also famously banned the NAACP from Alabama. He was the judge on the NYT v. Sullivan case and wouldn’t allow white and Black people to sit together in his courtroom.⁴⁹⁰ Jones was an “avowed white supremacist and segregationist” who “presided with a Confederate flag displayed behind him.”⁴⁹¹

⁴⁸⁹ Walter B. Jones, “Off the Bench,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), April 11, 1938.

⁴⁹⁰ Aimee Edmondson, *In Sullivan’s Shadow: The Use and Abuse of Libel Law during the Long Civil Rights Struggle.* (Boston: University of Massachusetts Press) 2019.

⁴⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 86.

The start of the article is about how the United States presented the Nazi government with a bill for \$65 million, demanding Germany assume Austria's war debts from World War I. Jones said this was a useless endeavor as he said Hitler's government would not pay anything. He continued,

The less the United States has to do with Hitler's government, the better off America will be. The German dictator holds in the highest contempt and scorn our democratic republic and about the best thing we can do is to give him a rap whenever the opportunity presents itself, and to strike with all our might whenever the ugly and hideous head of the snaky Nazis raises itself in America. Our government has nothing in common with Hitler's government. Naziism is the foe of liberty and decent government. It is the foe of every right that mankind regards as sacred and inviolable.

Jones said the only positive effect of this situation is that people are looking at the United States to be an example and are studying the United States form of government. Jones said: "I don't understand the German people of recent years and why they permit Hitlerism and Hitler to dominate and control them as they do is a mystery to me. Perhaps the explanation lies in the fact that a small and powerfully organized minority is running the country and doing it by means of a reign of terror and persecution." This is another incredibly hypocritical piece, especially coming from the previous article.

The next article is another Associated Press piece, which discusses a conference refusing to host any meetings in cities that enforced Jim Crow laws.⁴⁹² The Southern Conference for Human Welfare, which was studying the area's "economic and social ills," voted to condemn the South's Jim Crow laws. The decision "irked" Birmingham city officials. Alabama's governor, Bibb Graves, was present at one of the meetings (it is not explicitly stated if he was at one of the meetings discussing the meeting cities), and he said he was "surprised and shocked by the resolutions passed." Another public official, Senator Ellison D. Smith, a Democrat from South Carolina, said in a statement that race relations create "an extremely dangerous situation."

This was not the only race-based resolution passed at this meeting, however. Another resolution urged the federal government to pass anti-lynching legislation and to give "full citizenship for all persons, regardless of race." The resolution also called for the abolition of poll taxes and equal education for children.

The facts of this article show progress being made in the South in the late 1930s, as human rights activists called for poll taxes to be removed as well as other race-based discrimination policies. It, of course, is also indicative of how the other side of the aisle felt. Clearly there were many people against these ideas, or they would have already been passed.

⁴⁹² "Conferees On Welfare Knife Hosts," *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), Nov. 24, 1938.

The next article, also published in November 1938, discussed why the South “needed” segregation between Black and white people. Printed only two days after the previous piece, the article, titled “No Anachronism,” opened with commentary about First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, describing her as “extremely cagy in the matter of segregation of whites and blacks at the conference she attended in Birmingham.”⁴⁹³ The author of the article, who is not named, presumed she was trying not to tell the people of Alabama what to do. The author wrote: “the point is that the law in Alabama imposes segregation, and the conference authorities could not override the law.” The author continued:

The law imposed segregation merely to prevent something worse. The evil is not Jim Crow laws, but the spirit that makes Jim Crow laws necessary to preserve the peace. These laws have not always existed in the South. They were enacted gradually, State by State, for the purpose of trying to put a stop to continual disturbances, frequently involving murderous assaults and occasionally mounting to regular pogroms, which arose from the indiscriminate mingling of white and black. Jim Crow laws in the South are not an anachronism, and will not be, as long as the spirit of racial intolerance remains stronger than respect for peace and order.

The argument that the South needed to have segregation really shows just how white people saw Black people in southern America. The notion that Jim Crow laws were

⁴⁹³ “No Anachronism,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), Nov. 26, 1938.

put into place for anything other than controlling and torturing Black southerners is ridiculous, especially the idea that the laws were preventing something worse. In modern journalism, a quote like the one above may have only made the news to show how ridiculous it is, but this quote, written by the author, was his/her opinion. Modern journalists would likely not include this, because it is known to be opinionated and unnecessary.

The *Advertiser* published another article from the Associated Press in December 1938, titled “Nazis tighten Anti-Jew Laws Still Further.”⁴⁹⁴ This article reports how Jewish storeowners had their stores taken from them. The new owners were instructed to make the stores completely void of the “Jewish origins.” The official order stated: “The transfer from Jewish to Aryan hands marks a definite break with the past. The new owner starts afresh and must not refer to the previous standing of his business.”

In other anti-Semitic actions, according to this same story, the German cities of “Nuernberg”⁴⁹⁵ and Fuerth warned that new Jewish arrivals would be imprisoned, unless those who intended to stay more than 48 hours reported to the police. The article said “Neurnberg” had been attracting Jews from smaller towns in Franconia. Meanwhile, “Neurnberg” opened a historic children’s paradise, which was a fairground or amusement park area.

⁴⁹⁴ “Nazis Tighten Anti-Jew Laws Still Further,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL) Dec. 5, 1938.

⁴⁹⁵ It’s assumed that the author was referring to “Nuremberg.”

Back in the United States, the *Advertiser* published an article only about ten days after the previous article was published. This article was titled “Sheriffs Urged to Fight Tax Ban.”⁴⁹⁶ The December 1938 Associated Press article covered how sheriffs in Alabama were urged to fight abolition of the poll tax law and enforce racial segregation. Harry Smith, who was president of the Alabama Sheriffs and Peace Officers Association, said, “We were told it couldn’t happen here in the South, but we woke up one morning and found negroes and whites going down the street together into a church to ask that the Jim Crow law be done away with.”

The next article covering these topics was published in October 1939, titled “A History-Making Speech.”⁴⁹⁷ The lead of the article praises Hitler’s recent speech: “As its readers will attest The Advertiser has not heretofore been profuse in its compliments to Chancellor Hitler, but it must be said in candor that his address to the Reich yesterday was a truly great speech.” The author of this article, who is not named, wrote from the perspective of the *Advertiser*.

The author said the speech will have far-reaching consequences and may mean the end of the war “if only Hitler had any integrity of character.” The author said Hitler made impressions upon the British government as it announced that Hitler’s peace offerings would be “subjected to careful examination in collaboration with the

⁴⁹⁶ “Sheriffs Urged to Fight Tax Ban,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL) Dec. 15, 1938.

⁴⁹⁷ “A History-Making Speech,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), Oct. 7, 1939.

governments of the Dominions and the French republic.” The article continues by analyzing the statement made by the British government, which said that the Allies would not agree to peace until “the menace of aggression is removed.”

The next year, in March 1941, the *Advertiser* published a four-paragraph article from the Associated Press about discrimination in the military draft.⁴⁹⁸ The civil rights committee of the National Lawyers Guild said the United States armed forces were using “Jim Crow discrimination” against Black Americans. They called this a “denial of the very essence of democracy.” The committee urged for the Selective Service Act to be amended to prohibit discrimination.

The discrimination present in the selection process and within the military was an important issue that Black Americans fought for during this time. This led to the Double V Campaign being picked up by the Pittsburgh Courier and Black people across the country.

The next article begins an unofficial series of articles detailing how southern states were fighting to keep their Jim Crow laws.⁴⁹⁹ The focus of the story was an Arkansas court case, which had risen to the U.S. Supreme Court and southern states’ resistance “the threat to their racial segregation laws.” The article specifies, “Five Southern states, in addition to Alabama, were represented at the conference.” This

⁴⁹⁸ “Discrimination Charge in Draft Quota,” *Montgomery Advertiser*, (Montgomery, AL), March 17, 1941.

⁴⁹⁹ “Agree to Push Jim Crow Fight,” *Montgomery Advertiser*, (Montgomery, AL), March 21, 1941.

conference was to discuss how best to legally fight to keep their Jim Crow Laws. Several other states, both in and out of the South, endorsed such racist resistance.

The Supreme Court issued Arkansas, whose segregation law was specifically being fought, an additional thirty days to construct their case. Four attorneys general attended the conference, including Alabama's as well as Governor Frank Dixon. The specifics of the legal fight were not detailed in this article, or the next. "10-state Front Formed Behind Jim Crow Laws" was published in April of 1941.⁵⁰⁰ These ten states presented to the Supreme Court "against the menace to their racial segregation laws."

The *Advertiser* covered race and discrimination again in September 1941 with an editorial calling war isolationists "short-sighted" and "grabbing at straws" including the "good, old slimy straw, the racial issue."⁵⁰¹ The author's main point is that military action is going to be needed by the United States soon in Europe. This, of course, was before the United States joined the war effort in late 1941. The author covered several subjects within this opinion piece, but concluded with what seems to be his original and major point: "The American public has a reputation for gullibility in some quarters, but it is not likely to be deceived by any such double shuffle as a claim on the one hand that Jews are the main proponents of war in the United States and on the other that Britain refuses to treat Jews in minor clerical positions."

⁵⁰⁰ "10-state Front Formed Behind Jim Crow Laws," *Montgomery Advertiser*, (Montgomery, AL), April 16, 1941.

⁵⁰¹ "A Stupid Contradiction," *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), Sept. 27, 1941.

The next relevant article was “Poll Tax Bill’s True Nature,” published in late 1942, more than a year after the United States entered the war.⁵⁰² The author, who argued in favor of a poll tax bill stated that the poll tax will “die with this Congress.” While it was in the House and the Senate, the poll tax was “grossly misrepresented.” The author blamed the public pressure put on the adoption of the poll tax for such misrepresentation, writing: “The poll tax requirement for voters in eight Southern States does not discriminate against Negroes. All qualified electors who choose to cast a ballot are required to pay.”

The idea that the poll tax wasn’t racially based is just incorrect. Of course, the point that all people needed to pay to cast a ballot may be true, but these laws were designed to prevent poor Black people from voting in elections. The author wrote that the poll tax was “grossly misrepresented” in the federal government, which is a choice of words that echoes today’s politics.

The next article, published in November 1943, shines a light on what Southern people thought about the Nazis. The article, which appears to be another editorial, “Crime Incorporated” said: “No aspect of Hitlerism is more terrible than its deliberate policy of infecting the German people with the moral leprosy of its own hideous creed.”⁵⁰³ The author, who is not named, stated that Nazi leaders went after easily impressionable people to fight for them, turning them into “cold-blooded” murderers, arsonists, rapists,

⁵⁰² “Poll Tax Bill’s True Nature,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), Dec. 24, 1942.

⁵⁰³ “Crime Incorporated,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), Nov. 13, 1943.

and other types of criminals. The author is specifically discussing the Hitler Youth societies throughout Germany. Each young German, the author states, was taught to enjoy suffering and disdain of humans as well as a disbelief in God.

The main question after reading this article is: how is this any different than the recruitment of white people into the Ku Klux Klan or any other racist ideologies? The suffering and disdain of human beings is echoed in the lynchings that had been occurring in the United States for years. A few editorials were covered in this chapter, which were determined to be important enough to analyze.

Chapter 3: Eugenics

A Champion of Nazi Racial Principles

This chapter analyzes the pseudo-science of eugenics, which was quite popular during the period under study. I analyzed more than 25 articles on the topic published in all three publications during Hitler's time in power, including articles discussing the specifics of the eugenics-based laws in the Nazi regime as well as the eugenics laws and conversation within the United States. These three newspapers were focused on covering the Nazi's eugenics-related laws when news hooks drove the coverage.

The New York Times

The *Times* offered a variety of topics while discussing eugenics, including articles that had content praising the Nazis, covering breaking news about laws within Germany, and attempting to explain eugenics and the concept to readers. Given the staff size and circulation of the *Times* at the time, there were only ten articles published about eugenics that were located for this study, as many of the other articles just briefly mentioned the word "eugenics" but were focused on other subjects.

Instead of focusing on tangible actions at home in the United States or abroad in Nazi Germany or elsewhere, the *Times* continued to publish pieces that focused on the racist and discriminatory paranoia of a few people. Nothing better demonstrates this focus than an article in a 1933 issue titled, "Eugenist Predicts Alien Rule Here."⁵⁰⁴ A common feature of this era of *Times* articles features a main headline and several

⁵⁰⁴ "Eugenist Predicts Alien Rule Here," *New York Times* (New York: NY), June 4, 1933.

subheadlines before the bulk of the story began. The subheads for this article were “Dr. C.G. Campbell Says Birth Rate Shows American Stock is Dying Out.” Then, “He Appeals to Women.” The final title is “Assorts Future of Their Sex and of Nation Depends Upon Their Reaction to the Problem.” Before the article has even begun, readers can get a sense of the author’s paranoia and what the article will cover. While it is impossible to know the reading habits of people at this time, it is possible that some readers only read these headlines and subheads, without ever reading the articles in their entirety.

The article cites Clarence G. Campbell, who was president of the Eugenics Research Association. He insinuates, that “an alien race will supersede the American people in a few generations unless the present trend is reversed.” This statement was made at the twenty-first annual meeting of the Association. Campbell said in his speech that the American population would flatline and then begin to decrease. Because of this, he said, “This in the American nation today, the eugenicist’s hope and effort for possible future improvement in the quality of the racial stock might be seen to have become quite secondary to the more vital question of the ultimate dominance and survival of that stock.” Through this article and all other articles discussed, we see a view into someone’s belief that eugenics is possible.

Campbell then discussed the physical climate of North America and how it is one of the “most desirable human habitats.” He stated that if the reproduction rate doesn’t improve, a race from elsewhere will take over the area. The author of the *Times* article, who again is not named, concludes the article with a subhead titled “Appeals to American

Women.” This section discusses how Campbell hopes that “some at least of the American womanhood who felt it to be their function to participate in public affairs would be able to see how vitally this question involved not only the national future but that of their own sex as well.” During the early 1930s, American women had only fought and won the right to vote just over a decade before, in 1920. Women were still early on in their fight for their individual rights. Campbell is attempting to say that women can help out in this eugenics-based fight by reproducing and having American children. He somewhat disguised that idea by language like the “national future but that of their own sex as well.”

One of the benefits of having several headlines in an article is that a reader can feel they know about the main ideas of the article, without having to think critically, and without needing to read the entire text. If a reader only saw that the “American Stock” was dying out and that he is appealing to women, they may believe these statements blindly. This may seem to be a pro-women eugenicist. Campbell seemingly had a connection with the *Times*, as he is cited more than once. He is given a place of authority by the *Times*, since he is cited in several pro-eugenics articles.

The next article that appears in this time range about eugenics is titled “The Week in Science: German Eugenics,” published in July 1933.⁵⁰⁵ This was part of the “Books in Miniature” section, which was an area for long-form articles explaining a specific

⁵⁰⁵ Waldemar Kaempffert, “The Week in Science: German Eugenics,” *New York Times* (New York, NY), July 23, 1933.

subject. The article was written by noted science writer Waldemar Kaempffert, who served as the *Times*' science editor for 26 years. He was one of the first science journalists and a few of his stories are included in this thesis.⁵⁰⁶ The article opens with him discussing how the Nazis had expanded their efforts, not just by “eliminating ‘non-Aryans,’” but the Nazis were also attempting to purify the Aryans. When discussing the science of eugenics, Kaempffert writes that “The whole ‘Aryan’ movement is based on a theory which was regarded as unscientific a generation ago.”

It is difficult to tell in the early lines, however, whether the author supports the Nazis or disdains them. As mentioned, there are several articles written by Kaempffert analyzed in this thesis, and in all of them, it is difficult to tell his stance on these subjects. He wrote that “There are great possibilities here,” but added a few sentences later, saying that not letting “non-Aryans” procreate would be the “crowning blow in a campaign of persecution which scarcely has a parallel in history.” Some may see this as balanced reporting, as both sides are represented here. But the author is making these statements, he is not quoting a source.

The article continues by discussing how Black Americans fit into the idea of eugenics, under a subhead titled “Whence Our Negroes?, West Coast of Africa Is Thought to Be Their Place of Origin.” This section opens with “Slave traders and plantation owners cared little whether their slaves came from this part of Africa or that. But Dr. Melville Herskovits (Northwestern University) cared so much that he found out

⁵⁰⁶ “Waldemar B. Kaempffert Dies,” *New York Times* (New York: NY), Nov. 28, 1956.

what he could from old men still living in Africa and from customs that have survived.”

Kaempffert is seemingly interested in the geographic location in Africa where Black Americans originated. He does not mention why this is such a big issue for him.

While Kaempffert does not explicitly state what his opinions are by writing in the first person, he wrote that it was “strange how West African customs” continued within the United States among Black Americans. He quotes Herskovits, who said Black Americans are Christians, but they still follow some of the traditions of West Africa. These, as well as other instances, seem to display a theme of talking for Black Americans rather than hearing from Black American leaders or citizens. There are no Black Americans quoted in this article about their culture, or their ancestors’ cultures.

This article is another example of the *Times*’ journalists not explicitly stating their opinion. Based on whom they used as sources, however, as well as who they are not interviewing, is likely revealing their biases. Another part of this article that is difficult to explain is how there is a section of the article that states that eugenics was disproved a generation ago. The questionable part of this is the *Times*’ decision to report on eugenics at all, especially if it had been disproven. It could be that because eugenics was still such a popular pseudo-science, the *Times*’ editors believed it would still be worthwhile to cover. The article’s headline (“The Week in Science: German Eugenics”) indicates that the article will focus on Nazi eugenics, but only the first five paragraphs are discussing Nazi beliefs, while the rest of the article is talking about the science of eugenics. Many of these articles explain what the study of eugenics is and how it has been studied and implemented within the United States, Nazi Germany, or even the world as a whole.

Nearly all the *Times* articles discussing eugenics are in the first half of the 1930s, with only two articles published in the first half of the 1940s. In a 1942 article titled “Nazified Medicine,” the author describes how German doctors are using the Nazis’ ideas of eugenics in the medical field. This article follows Hans Reuter, a professor who helped spread and implement these new ideas. He urged doctors to “stop treating disease and concentrate on improving the health of the nation as a whole by applying eugenic principles.” The article read, “in other words, the sick should simply be ignored.” Reuter then said that “racist measures,” particularly sterilization, need to be implemented on a large scale. The author cites another person who is referred to as an “authority” in quotation marks. This “authority,” Kippe, claimed that not treating epidemics is a gift because this helps “get rid of surplus populations.”

The author of this article seems to not believe in the words that these experts were saying, which gives the reader a slightly more balanced range of opinions to read. The problem discussed many times still remains: there is no real expert negating the Nazis’ claims, just the unnamed author. There is, again, no direct dispute of these remarks by the author, or an opposing authority. The *Times* was giving a voice to these Nazi ideologies, whether that was their goal or not.

While there are longer stories that give the stage to an “expert” to rant and rave about their eugenics beliefs, there was also more regular news coverage, specifically about legislation. In June of 1934, the *Times* published an article titled “Law Urged to

Bar ‘Inferior’ Aliens.”⁵¹⁰ This is a story discussing how “feeble-minded” and “mentally inferior” immigrants should be excluded from entering the United States. The psychologist for the Children’s Court, Clairette P. Armstrong, spoke at the Eugenics Research Association meeting, held in the American Museum of Natural History. She said that “although immigration has been limited quantitatively by law, no step has been taken toward a better qualitative selection of aliens.”

Armstrong said that there is evidence that children’s intelligence will be similar to their parent’s level of intelligence. She went further, saying that child immigrants, because of the “clash of civilizations due to the inability of immigrants of inferior biological and social heredity,” have a difficult time adjusting to a new civilization.

The author of this article, who is not credited, cited two other speakers at the meeting, the director of vocational guidance at Stanford University and a person from Swarthmore College. These two reported on marriage rates between western and eastern United States colleges. They found that marriage was more popular among students on the West coast. This article suffers from many of the ethical and accuracy-based issues that previous articles discussed did. There are seemingly three “experts,” with Armstrong being the main voice in the story. There is no explanation, however, as to why she is a leading voice when it comes to eugenics as a psychologist. The other two experts also are not given relevant titles, which makes the reader either question why these people should

⁵¹⁰ “Law Urged to Bar ‘Inferior’ Aliens,” *New York Times* (New York, NY), June 3, 1934

be listened to, or makes the reader blindly believe what these people are saying, just because they are cited in this article and work at a university.

As stated previously, the *Times* seems to be supporting the idea of eugenics, even if it is indirect, as they are giving large spaces of the page for pro-eugenics articles. It is impossible to know who wrote this article. It appears that it was a *Times* reporter and not a syndication-based publication, like the Associated Press, as AP articles are labeled as such. There is not a byline on this article, which is common for the time. If the *Times* did write this article in-house, then it means they valued this eugenics-based story so much that they were willing to pay a reporter to cover this event and give space in the newspaper.

A small, but important detail of this article is the headline. The word “inferior” is placed into quotation marks in the headline, indicating that the *Times* is not labeling these people as “inferiors,” and that the source is the one making this judgment. Not all *Times* articles make this distinction, so it is worth noting in this instance.

The *Times* published a short article on June 24, 1934, about what was happening in Germany with the aforementioned eugenics courts. This, however, was not originally published by the *Times*; it was an Associated Press article. The short report stated that there were local eugenics courts in the Hamburg area.

While the *Times* should not be judged on the content of this piece, it is worth noting that *Times* editors found this article worthy of appearing in the newspaper, as they would have selected it for publication from the Associated Press. The article reports that of the 770 cases, sterilization had been ordered in 761 of the cases. At the time the report

was written, 555 cases were still undecided. More women were operated on than men. At this time, 209 women were sterilized while 155 men had been. The court's report did not specify the sexes of the people who had not yet been sterilized.⁵¹¹

This is one of the few articles the *Times* published on eugenics that was focused on actual events that were ongoing in Nazi Germany or in the United States on eugenics or sterilization. The *Times* staff clearly valued this report, or the story would not have been published in the newspaper, but it is peculiar that one of the few stories focused on the tangible actions of the Nazis was a syndicated article. This article was placed at the bottom of page four in the *Times*.

Another *Times* article gives a platform to the American professor who celebrated the Nazi's racial and eugenics policy mentioned earlier. Clarence G. Campbell, a New York professor who was president of the Eugenics Research Association, spoke at the World Population Congress in Berlin "as a champion of Nazi racial principles."⁵¹² He said in his speech that having a "consanguineous racial group" would provide a high survival rate. Campbell said that anthropologists, eugenicists, and philosophers have constructed a "comprehensive racial policy of population development and improvement that promises to be epochal in a racial history." The article continues, quoting Campbell's speech: "It sets a pattern which other nations and other racial groups must follow if they

⁵¹¹ "Eugenics Court Reports," *New York Times* (New York: NY), June 24, 1934.

⁵¹² "U.S. Eugenist Hails Nazi Racial Policy," *New York Times* (New York, NY), Aug. 29, 1935.

do not wish to fall behind in their racial quality, in their racial accomplishments and in their prospects for survival.”

A large majority of this page five article is directly quoting Campbell’s speech, giving him a wide audience among the *Times* readers. He also addresses how other races have gone extinct because they were interbreeding. Finally, the article concludes with Campbell discussing how anti-miscegenation is patriotic because it requires people to act selflessly by contributing to the greater good of the population. The *Times* is not directly stating its own opinions on the matter, but by carefully ensuring that all quotes appear as such, the paper seems to be giving Campbell and his ideologies a platform within the publication again, as there is no rebuttal or any type of debate from people who do not believe in eugenics. As stated previously, eugenics was not seen as an outsider science or even a pseudo-science. It was widely popular in the 1930s, which may indicate why articles like this would have been published without any criticism.

In another article by Kaempffert, titled “The Week in Science: Theories of the Eugenists,” he wrote in the lead of the story that “eugenics is likely to fall into disrepute if social reformers persist in using it to justify ancestor worship and race prejudice and to obstruct anthropological, and even social progress.”⁵¹³ Kaempffert was clearly aware of the critiques of eugenics. He wrote that some of these observations were initially made by the president of the Eugenics Research Association, C.M. Goethe, who in 1936 defended

⁵¹³ Waldemar Kaempffert, “The Week in Science: Theories of the Eugenists,” *New York Times* (New York: NY), June 7, 1936.

the Nazi's "honest yearnings for a better population."⁵¹⁴ Throughout the 1930s, Goethe was a supporter of the Nazi eugenics.

The overarching topic of the organization's meeting was "Patriotism and Racial Standards." Kaempffert discussed how Goethe thought highly of immigration quota laws, which were U.S. laws that specified how many immigrants from certain countries would be allowed into the United States. More people from desirable countries would be allowed to immigrate. Kaempffert wrote that these laws were similar to eugenic principles, but said they were "uneugenic" because they allowed people from Greece, Romania, and other countries, that Goethe deemed "objectionable." The article stated that countries like Switzerland would allow people from the "objectionable" countries to live in Switzerland, and so their children would be considered Swiss. Then these children originally from "objectionable" origin would be able to enter the United States under the Switzerland quota. Kaempffert also wrote that "similarly approved, blue-eyed flax-haired German children, born in Greece or Rumania [sic], might be excluded under the corresponding quotas."

In the next part of the "The week in Science" section, Kaempffert refers to Goethe's ideas as a "strange conception of eugenics." This section, having the subhead "Professor Hooton on Race," is about Earnest A. Hooton's ideas on race. Hooton was most well-known for his book *Up from the Apes*, where he discussed the "primary" and

⁵¹⁴ Tony Platt, "Engaging the Past: Charles M. Goethe, American Eugenics, and Sacramento State University," *Social Justice* 32(2) 2015, 17.

“subtypes” of race.⁵¹⁵ A brief section of an article Hooton had recently written is quoted in full in the article. Hooton discussed how hereditary variations have been made the basis of charges of racial inferiority. Hooton wrote that because of this inferiority, “our European ancestors justified their enslavement of the Negro and their virtual extermination of the Indian and of so many other primitive peoples.” Finally, Hooton concludes that “each racial types runs the gamut from idiots and criminals to geniuses and statesmen.” He added that races may have different abilities or disabilities, but they have not been discovered yet.

One reason that the public may have believed in eugenics for such a long period of time is because people, including newspaper editors and writers, continued to make eugenics seem like a credible area of science. Even the headline “The Week in Science: Theories of the Eugenists” makes it seem like eugenics is a science and that there are different theories surrounding the main idea of eugenics. Kamepffert also seems to indicate in his articles that eugenics is not true science, or that he at least does not believe in it, however, he continues to devote large portions of the science section of the *Times* to eugenics. This undoubtedly makes it appear more credible.

The comment made about less desirable countries is reminiscent of former President Donald Trump’s comments about Haiti, El Salvador, and African countries. On

⁵¹⁵ “Eugenics and Physical Anthropology,” *Understanding Race*, Accessed October 22, 2022. https://web.archive.org/web/20070810204659/http://www.understandingrace.org/history/science/eugenics_physical.html

January 12, 2018, he said “Why are we having all these people from shithole countries come here.”⁵¹⁶ The similarity of these comments from over 80 years apart shows how, for some, very little has changed in how non-white Americans are seen.

Another important issue is that the *Times* had not yet given a platform to a scientist who reliably discredited the idea of eugenics. In this article, Hooton provides somewhat of a counterargument to Goethe’s idea of eugenics. Goethe’s qualifications, as the reader is informed in the article, are only that he is the president of a eugenics-focused organization. The reader does not know if he is a scientist or a professor, but he is given authority because he is named as the president of this organization. Goethe’s counterargument is weak, as he does not get to his main point until the final paragraph of his section, where he discusses how all races have “idiots and criminals” and “geniuses and statesmen.” Similarly to Goethe, the reader is aware that Hooton is a professor, but not at what college or in what field. Hooton taught at Harvard until his death in 1954.⁵¹⁷

As mentioned previously, cracks started to form in some of these arguments about eugenics. In this transition period, there were discussions about how eugenics didn’t need to be bogged down with racism or discrimination against certain countries. This, of course, indicates that eugenics needed to be exclusive to discriminating against disabled

⁵¹⁶ Josh Dawsey, “Trump derides protections for immigrants from ‘shithole’ countries,” *Washington Post*, January 12, 2018. https://www.washingtonpost.com/politics/trump-attacks-protections-for-immigrants-from-shithole-countries-in-oval-office-meeting/2018/01/11/bfc0725c-f711-11e7-91af-31ac729add94_story.html

⁵¹⁷ *Ibid.*

or “feeble-minded” people and criminals. But the idea of eugenics and racism wasn’t removed.

The discussion of race and eugenics continues to the next section of the article, titled “Outbreak of Plague.” This section tells how there were reports of the plague in the “Mexican quarter” of Los Angeles. Kaempffert then says “Goethe, who has a low opinion of Mexicans, implies that this is evidence of Mexican inferiority.” Kaempffert attempts to play the other side of the argument, but it is still unclear what his intentions or beliefs are. Kaempffert wrote: “The purely social iniquity of tolerating slums is not dwelt upon. Similarly, the high birth rate of those on relief is quoted against them, as if all were of poor stock and as if technological unemployment and the world-wide depression played no part in their plight.”

In those lines, Kaempffert seems to be debating with Goethe’s ideas, but in the next paragraph, he said that what is needed is research into eugenics, rather than “chauvinism as eugenic.” He continued, “Genetic research must teach us to identify the hereditary defectives in our midst, whether they are Americans or Chinese, black or white.” He added that research needed to be done into how much the environment plays into social behavior.

This seems to be a great defense of someone who is against eugenics. He is talking about nature versus nurture and how eugenics cannot be proven just because people contract a virus, like the plague. He doesn’t seem, however, to be against eugenics, saying that eugenics should not just be chauvinism, indicating that eugenics does have a place in the world. If a person was only to read the *Times*, he or she may

come away with the idea that eugenics has not been completely perfected, but it is truthful and a valid form of research. There is no real argument for eugenics being false in this study. The argument that is made comes from the author, who is not given as much clout as someone like a professor or the president of a research organization. As mentioned, Goethe was a proponent of eugenics and Nazi race policy.

There are a few articles the *Times* published with the angle of “here is what to know about eugenics.” The timing of these articles doesn’t make much sense, as they are mostly published well into the 1930s or the early 1940s. As stated previously, eugenics had been a popular idea that had been developed and spread in the early 20th century. So why did journalists at the *Times* decide to profile this ideology thirty or forty years later? The rise of Naziism certainly should be pointed to as a reason, as their usage of eugenics was, and remains, infamous.

There was one article, also written by Kaempffert, that was aptly titled “What You Should Know About Eugenics,”⁵¹⁸ This was another lengthy article, taking up a good portion of four columns on page 27. This article is a preface to the book *Eugenics* by Frederick Osborn, who was a founder of several eugenics organizations and helped reorient eugenics after World War II.⁵¹⁹ Another example of the *Times* taking sections of

⁵¹⁸ Waldemar Kaempffert, “What You Should Know About Eugenics,” *New York Times* (New York, NY), March 30, 1941.

⁵¹⁹ “Frederick Henry Osborn Papers,” American Philosophical Society Accessed Oct. 11, 2022.
<https://web.archive.org/web/20050928195833/http://www.amphilsoc.org/library/mole/o/osborn.htm>

books and reformatting them into long-form articles. While this article is clearly not a traditionally reported article, it is also not an editorial or an opinion article. It lies somewhere in the middle. This article was included in this study because of its prominence within the newspaper and its presentation as a news story.

In the very first line of the article, Osborn states that “eugenics has been a cloak for race prejudice, ancestor worship, class snobbery [sic].” While in the context of this thesis, the conversation of eugenics is focused on race and ethnic origin, eugenics was also focused on the “poverty-stricken and the feeble-minded.” There was an idea, as the author articulates, that poor people or less intelligent people should not reproduce to avoid the possibility of creating more people who were less intelligent or poor. Another idea was that less desirable people, as eugenicists titled them, were reproducing much faster than people of higher regard, like college professors.

Again, it is difficult to know what the author believes about eugenics, as he states in the next paragraph: “there can be no question that we are largely what our ancestors made us” on both a physical and mental level. Osborn calls for a book to be written including all factors that go into whether people should be sterilized, including economic status, health, and education. The author then mentions that there had not been scientific studies about intelligence being passed down through generations. Again, it is not discussed where certain information has come from. The author states that about 18 million people are “normal” but hold the feeble-minded gene. To prevent these unwanted attributes to be passed down, Osborn, implied that people need to segregate.

It seems that this article was written at a time of transition, not quite to the point where the general population had disregarded eugenics as a racist, discriminatory, and false science. These ideas were obviously still being discussed in the context of science, while not really being scientific. There were hints that eugenics was starting to be exposed or recognized for what it really was. There were no articles directly stating that eugenics was a heavily flawed ideology, or any scientists interviewed, who believed that it was a false notion.

The *Times* did not, in any of these articles, feature a scientist who believed and argued that eugenics was wrong and immoral. As stated above, the large majority of these articles were coverage of a pro-eugenics meeting where one person spoke about their seemingly paranoid idea of what the United States is coming to. Eugenics was an incredibly popular topic that many people followed and truly believed at this time, but scientists were disproving eugenics-based thinking at a similar time and the *Times* wasn't covering it.

Chicago Defender

The *Chicago Defender* had a limited number of articles covering eugenics. There were four that were deemed relevant for this thesis. These articles differed heavily from those of the *New York Times*. While the *Times* focused on pro-eugenics "experts," the *Defender* published articles that featured scientists who disproved eugenics. Three of the four articles analyzed in this thesis were specifically attacking eugenics through these scientists.

One of these articles was published in the *Defender* in 1939 with a large headline stating “‘No Pure Races!’ Says German Scientist.”⁵²⁰ The *Defender*’s subtitle is “Miscegenation Started with Earliest Man.” The article discusses Professor Franz Weidenreich, who is identified as a noted German anthropologist from “Aryan blood.”⁵²¹ Weidenreich earned a medical degree from a German university in 1899, then he was an anthropology professor for a few years and was a visiting professor at the University of Chicago in 1934. Weidenreich noted that, after studying fossils, “mixing of the races” has been part of the evolutionary process since the dawn of mankind. The fossils that Weidenreich studied show that three distinct racial types were living together. Before his study, people believed that “racially pure human stock” could be traced through history. The article stated that anthropologists had found evidence of people with characteristics of Melanesian, Eskimo, Neanderthal, or Upper Paleolithic features living together in the same location. The article does not discuss what the features are that indicate that these fossils are from different races.

The headline of this article is telling. It is appealing to an audience who likely are anti-eugenics. It shows that even a scientist from one of the most racist and discriminatory countries knows eugenics is false. A natural part of articles that go against eugenics is that there requires an explanation of the argument of eugenics in order to refute these claims. Therefore, this article, among others, appears to be more balanced in

⁵²⁰ “‘No Pure Races!’ Says German Scientist,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), Feb. 4, 1939.

⁵²¹ *Ibid.*

its news coverage, because in order to explain that eugenics is false, one must explain why people believe it to be true, to an extent.

Another article that calls the Nazi ideas of eugenics and race incorrect was published in the first quarter of 1939. The article is short, with only two paragraphs of about seven lines each. It is titled “Nazi Racial Theories Called Unscientific.”⁵²² This article is about Maurice Sheehy, who was the head of the Department of Religious Education at the Catholic University of America. Sheehy said that the Nazi racial theories were “unscientific if not demented,” condemning the “anti-Jewish lynch pogroms in Italy and Germany” in his address that was broadcast, likely by Sheehy himself, as he managed the radio station. Sheehy eventually joined the United States Navy as a chaplain in 1941.⁵²³

It is unclear if the author of this article or Sheehy himself compared the Nazi’s actions to America’s actions with the word “lynch.” Lynchings were of course a noted element of the racist southern United States. The word does not seem to make an appearance in German legislation or much of the German coverage. The *Defender* is also using other religious leaders (and the Nazis were discriminatory against Catholics as well) to discuss the Nazis’ decisions.

⁵²² “Nazi Racial Theories Called Unscientific,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), March 25, 1939.

⁵²³ “Fr. Maurice Sheehy, n.d.,” American Catholic History Classroom. Accessed Oct. 11, 2022. <https://cuomeka.wrlc.org/items/show/126>

Another article from the *Defender* titled “D.C. Scientist Proves Race Inferiority A Myth,” discussed Dr. W. Montague Cobb, who was a professor of anatomy at Howard University.⁵²⁵ Cobb was one of the first Black Americans to earn a doctorate degree, receiving his Ph.D. in anthropology. He was also one of the founders of the NAACP in 1909, eventually becoming the first Black president of the NAACP. Montague was also a physician.⁵²⁶ This article begins by discussing how there is a “small but skilled group of well-trained Negroes who quietly and painstakingly add to the knowledge that scientifically disproves the fallacies on which race prejudice thrives.” Cobb is the example the *Defender* uses.

Unlike some of the *Times* articles, the *Defender* details Cobb’s research process as well as his qualifications to be discussing the matter. He accessed and used over 2,500 individuals from a database about genetic information to study the race of this group. There were certain biological differences put forward between Black and other races. This article praises Cobb, discussing his work with the National Research Council as well as his time at Howard University. The *Defender* was focused on uplifting and spreading positive information about Black Americans as well as news coverage. This article discusses how Cobb plays violin in a string quartet as well as other details about his

⁵²⁵ Alfred E. Smith, “D.C. Scientist Proves Race Inferiority A Myth,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), June 26, 1943.

⁵²⁶ James G. Spady, “Medical History: Dr. W. Montague Cobb,” *Journal of the National Medical Association* 76(7): 739-744.

personal life, information that is completely irrelevant to the main point of the headline.

These details indicate

Cobb's main "prescription for the Negro," as the author, Alfred Smith, detailed is that "He should maintain his high birth rate. He should make a fetish of health. He should cultivate excellence in sports. He should assiduously pursue education. He should effect integration into all phases of civilization. He should insist on full constitutional rights."

While it is apparent here and throughout the *Defender's* catalogue, there is a much more focused effort on building up Black people within these articles. Cobb was a Howard scientist who was not only arguing on behalf of himself or his family. He was arguing on behalf of an entire group of people. As stated in previous chapters, the Black press is known for advocating for Black people, because the white mainstream press ignored them unless they committed a crime or were an outstanding athlete or notable entertainer. Therefore, these articles come from a completely different perspective than the *Times* or the *Advertiser*. This advocacy does not sacrifice the reporting, however. There is certainly the risk of sacrificing journalistic integrity by advocating for a certain group. But at this time, Black people were not receiving coverage in the mainstream newspapers, so Black journalists were fighting for their spot in the media landscape.

The *Defender* is the only newspaper in this study that allowed a view into the lives of Black Americans at this time. Even so, the *Defender* did not cover as many eugenics issues as the *Times* or the *Advertiser*. Since eugenics had been a popular ideology for many years, it is possible that there was more coverage earlier in the century. It is also possible that the *Defender's* staff and editors were more focused on

more visible and obvious racism, such as lynchings, at this time. Whatever the reason that eugenics was not a prominent topic, the *Defender* was the only newspaper that focused its coverage on the falsities of eugenics, unlike the *Times* or the *Advertiser*.

Montgomery Advertiser

The biggest difference between the *Defender*'s and the *Times*' coverage of eugenics and the *Advertiser*'s coverage of eugenics is that the *Advertiser* focused much more heavily on actual newsworthy events, rather than speculation about the state of eugenics or a eugenics conference. The newspaper seemed less inclined to make direct comments on the debate of eugenics, but it covered the news in a much more traditional sense. This is also possible because of the *Advertiser*'s reliance on the Associated Press for eugenics coverage. The *Advertiser* published ten stories in this period that fit the criteria of this chapter.

The Nazis and eugenicists were not just focused on sterilization and the separation of different races. They believed that a woman's body belonged to "society" as a way to increase the population, according to the first *Advertiser* article in this section.⁵²⁷ This is another Associated Press article. One German woman wrote that "no German woman, whether young or old, and no German girl of today has the right to consider herself a private person who can do with herself and her health what she pleases." This *Advertiser*

⁵²⁷ "Nazis Believe a Woman's Body Belongs to All," *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), Dec. 22, 1935.

article also asserts that the Nazis, and eugenicists, believe that the lessons learned by farmers in animal and plant biology is how mates should be selected.

At a discussion at a “national peasants” convention, speakers stressed the importance of eugenics. The author did not say when or where this occurred. The group agreed that farmers need to be the leaders and decision-makers when it comes to eugenics.⁵²⁹ The article includes this quote, which is not attributed directly to any speaker: “Without able women, who are willing to sacrifice, to procreate children for the people, to bear them, and to establish and maintain family life in its richest and best sense, our people is nothing, the military ability of our husbands is nothing, and all our efforts to reconstruct the reich are in vain.”⁵³⁰

There is no explanation as to why farmers needed to be leaders in eugenics decisions. Perhaps because Alabama is a more rural state than New York or Illinois, and had a larger percentage of farmers. This article could have been published in the *Advertiser* as a way to praise farmers and give them some type of credit in the area of eugenics. A significant part of the argument for eugenics was that humans are no different from animals, so they need to be of pure stock.

Articles covering eugenics-based sterilization make up a large majority of the *Advertiser's* coverage on the Nazis. This next article is unique as there is no Associated Press attribution, indicating that this article was written by a journalist specifically for the

⁵²⁹ Ibid.

⁵³⁰ Ibid.

Advertiser, though the origin of this article is difficult to determine, as there is no byline at all. The article, simply titled “German Sterilization” was published a few days after the previous articles. The article states: “The Nazis made ready to execute this most significant step in Chancellor Hitler’s program to make the Reich physically fit.”

It again mentions the 1,700 German eugenic courts opening at the start of the new year. When describing the process of the court, the author wrote “If the judgment is ‘thumbs down,’ they will be deprived of reproductive power.” If this was written by someone in-house at the *Advertiser*, this phrase of “thumbs down” is quite minimizing and insensitive to the horror that was about to occur with the Nazi sterilization process. Whoever wrote this could not have predicted the complete atrocities that would come from Nazi Germany, but the sterilization courts should have been brutal enough. This perspective also comes from the modern-day viewpoint. Expectations were certainly different nearly one hundred years ago.

On January 1, 1934, the *Advertiser* published an Associated Press article about the sterilization courts opening.⁵³² The article addresses many of the same points that the previous articles touched upon, including how 400,000 “mental and physical hereditary defectives in German asylums and prisons” would be on trial for sterilization, which is detail that was not seen in the first few articles. Brockmann describes how this law is the most “sensational” of all the laws that went into effect at the beginning of 1934. He also

⁵³² W.E. Brockmann, “German Sterilization Law, Affecting 400,000 Persons, Operative Today” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), Jan. 1, 1934.

details how medical authorities within prison and nurses, midwives, and welfare workers have all been under threat of a 150-mark fine (which the article states equated to about \$55.50) to create all-encompassing lists of patients with medical ailments and incurable diseases. Similarly, all state justice administrators were required to create lists of all criminals “who seem hereditarily endowed with a penchant for committing crimes.”

The article details a procedure of how German officials would deal with any reported cases. Once a case is reported to the court, it issued a warrant for the reported person. The court itself is made of a judge and two physicians can ask for “immediate detention of defectives.” The article states that it has been computed that to make its way through all 400,000 cases, the courts all needed to work for at least two years. Finally, the article concludes by detailing that the operations are estimated to cost about 14 million marks (or about \$5 million).

This detailed article answers many of the questions that readers may have been thinking about while reading the previous articles on the subject. The content of these Associated Press articles is not indicative of the *Advertiser's* newsroom or strategies, but it does again show that the editors and reporters thought this was news and important information for their readers to have. In the span of about a week, the *Advertiser* published three articles discussing the Nazi's eugenic-based sterilization program. It is impossible to know why these journalists believed that their audience needed to read about these issues in their local newspaper. Maybe the editors valued the international reporting that was occurring. It's also possible that the journalists thought about these

stories as a way to shame the Nazis, while removing blame from the South and its racist ideologies. This was not the end of the *Advertiser's* coverage on this topic.

This was not far from the truth, as a March 1936 article showed that more than 23,000 American residents deemed “insane and feeble-minded” had been legally sterilized.⁵³⁶ This sterilization started as early as 1907, with Indiana introducing the first sterilization law. The article details the list of 28 states that had these laws in place (Alabama was one of them). The author, who is not listed, wrote that “the sterilization prevents parenthood without unsexing the patient. Primarily, it is a eugenics measure to prevent birth of defective children.” Finally, the article concludes with a brief line about a 1927 Supreme Court decision that upheld compulsory sterilization in Virginia. Justice Oliver Wendell Holmes said that “three generations of imbeciles are enough.”

Another article was published in 1934, discussing how Nazis want “Blue-Ribbon Babies.” The Associated Press article, again written by Brockmann, begins by saying that Nazi leaders will not be happy until “Nazi Germany succeeds in producing a maximum of blue-eyed, blue-ribboned babies.”⁵³⁷ The article continues to discuss the Nazis’ goal of “sprucing up the race.” The article also discusses how Nazis view America: “Nazis point a reproving finger at nations indifferent to racialism. American negro lynchings are reported with much zest: and many other things are done to disparage the ‘melting pot’

⁵³⁶ “23,092 Sterilized by Legal Decree,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), March 30, 1936.

⁵³⁷ Walter Brockmann, “Nazis Want More ‘Blue-Ribbon Babies,’” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL) August 8, 1934.

principle.” Brockmann wrote that “anti-semitism is just a phase of the Nazi campaign for more and better babies.” Nazi Germany, Brockmann writes, goes from one radical enlightenment campaign after another, attempting to improve racial heredity.

The article’s lead, talking about blue-eyed babies read in a mocking way. It is difficult to tell if those quoted in this article are looking at the United States with “zest” or with “reproving,” as they are said in the same line. It is undeniable, though, that the Nazis viewed “American negro lynchings” with zest and great interest. Brockmann’s quote about anti-Semitism being a “phase” for “better babies” can either be in one of two ways: the first in a mocking, disproving way. The second is a more serious and grim way. It almost seems like Brockmann has bought into the Nazi ideology.

This article leans more to the positive side than the previous articles about Nazi sterilization. The author only cites one report in the first paragraph of the article. The quote from Holmes and the explanation of why sterilization is a necessity is written in a much lighter way than how the same topic in Nazi Germany was written. The articles discussing Nazi Germany are critical, but a majority of U.S. states had similar laws at the time.

There also were a few articles the *Advertiser* published about specific states’ sterilization laws and statistics. One article, originally published by the United Press or UP (another wire service) is about how North Carolina reported having 1,000 sterilization

cases for the “socially unfit.”⁵³⁸ This information came from a report from the State Eugenics Board. The statute was passed in 1929, and this article was published on February 23, 1941. The article details how the state’s original law was deemed unconstitutional by the Supreme Court, but a new law was drafted and passed that was based on Virginia’s statute.

This short article is difficult to analyze as it is facts driven. It could have been written and placed into the *Advertiser* for any number of reasons. The bottom line is that the journalists deemed this information important for the readers of the *Advertiser*.

A 1935 article titled “Sterilization in Alabama” is the most descriptive article under study as it directly states the view of the *Advertiser*’s employees. Most of the article is the transcript of a speech from J.N. Baker, the state health officer.⁵³⁹ In the preface to the article, the author, who is not named, wrote that Baker spoke “as a statesman and a philosopher.” The transcript begins with “all legislation seeing to deal with eugenics and sterilization should rest upon a scientific bedrock of biology and medicine.” He cited “early Chinese literature: as well as Plato, claiming both of these sources believed that humans need to breed as animals and plants do. Eventually, Baker discusses Germany, saying “the entire civilized world is watching the bold experiment in mass sterilization recently launched by Germany. It is estimated that some 400,000 of the

⁵³⁸ “North Carolina Reports 1000 Sterilization Cases,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), Feb. 23, 1941.

⁵³⁹ “Sterilization in Alabama,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), Feb. 6, 1935.

population will come within the scope of this law, the larger portion of whom fall into that group classed as inborn feeble mindedness.”

Baker then claimed that over several decades “hundreds of millions of marks will be saved each year as a result of the diminution of expenditures for patients with hereditary diseases.” After the end of Baker’s transcript, the author wrote:

The vicious and the useless should not be allowed to reproduce their kind. No other class, under the bill of Dr. Baker, would be affected. No injury would be inflicted upon those denied the privilege of reproduction would be imposed. There is no means of insuring that only the best in society shall reproduce. But it is possible to assure society that the worst elements in it shall not reproduce.

Civilization can do no less.

This study is not focusing on editorials or letters to the editor, as the focus of this thesis is to better understand what journalists deemed important enough to cover in the area of racism and discrimination. But this piece needed to be included as the newspaper discussed its views on sterilization. The articles previously discussed can now be viewed in a new light. It seems like many of these articles were likely published in the *Advertiser* because the newspaper’s staff or leadership believed in sterilization and eugenics. It is assumed that those articles were spreading information about these topics in hopes that more people would accept these ideas as truthful.

An article, cited as a *Washington Post* article, published a few months later, titled “Propaganda and Science” is about how Nazis invited eugenicists to Berlin for a

conference on sterilization and eugenics.⁵⁴⁰ However, “they discovered that the convention was not at all what is purported to be. Its chief purpose seems to have been the promotion of medieval prejudices that have been incorporated into the Nazi creed.” Many of the speakers who were scheduled to present did not appear, as they thought the conference would be more political than scientific. One American scientist is quoted saying, “scientifically minded students of population in the United States could not be expected to support (sic) an organization which was exposed to exploitation first in one country and then in another for the promotion of a political policy concerning which people feel deeply.” The relationship between American and Nazi eugenicists reveals an incredible double standard. The author of this article was upset that the meeting included medieval prejudices, but the American author seemingly sees no issues with discussing eugenics as a whole.

The last article relevant to this study was published in May 1945, titled “Living Today: Alabama’s Proposed Sterilization Law.”⁵⁴¹ The article began by discussing how 29 states had sterilization laws in place, and some for more than thirty years. This article discussed a proposed law for Alabama’s sterilization practices. The author, Arlie B. Davidson, wrote that “when understood by the people of Alabama, there should be no serious opposition to this move, both from the standpoint of the intent and the rested results of such a law in other States.” He continued, “the necessity of safe-guarding future

⁵⁴⁰ “Propaganda and Science,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), Sept. 6, 1935.

⁵⁴¹ Arlie B. Davidson, “Living Today: Alabama’s Proposed Sterilization Law,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), May 27, 1945.

generations from the consequences of the reproduction of the mentally unfit of our population demands that action not be further delayed.” The author added that this law protects the individual.

This last article reads very much like an editorial or a letter to the editor, but it is not labeled as such, which is why this was included. There is not much to analyze about this article as, even after the atrocities of World War II, people still believed that eugenics and sterilization were the correct way forward.

There are only a few articles by the *Advertiser* that aren't syndicated. It's unclear why the *Advertiser's* staff didn't cover some of these issues themselves. An argument could be made that they didn't have the manpower to cover these articles, which makes sense. But it is also unlikely that Associated Press reporters were witnessing all of these events first-hand. Another possibility is that the *Advertiser* saw this as an issue that wasn't local, so it didn't deserve the personalized coverage. This is also odd as the journalists still deemed the content important enough to be included in the newspaper. A local newspaper like the *Advertiser* was likely the only place people were able to get their news at this time, but it doesn't quite make sense why there was a fairly large focus on Nazi race policy. There seem to be two options: The *Advertiser* saw what the Nazis were doing and covered it because it was inspirational to them, or it was terrible in their eyes.

All three of these newspapers covered eugenics in very stark ways. The *Times* gave a platform to beliefs in eugenics while the *Defender* gave a platform for people against eugenics. The *Advertiser's* staff or leadership was in support of eugenics and sterilization. While there were a good number of articles analyzed, not all of them touch

upon race or ethnicity. Eugenics, of course, was not solely focused on race, with hereditary “defects” and illnesses being a major issue for eugenicists.

Chapter four will expand on eugenics, specifically discussing miscegenation. As mentioned before, these chapters were broken up because there was such a heavy focus on anti-miscegenation issues and laws.

Chapter 4: Miscegenation

‘I’d Make it a Law that No Two People of the Same Race Could Marry’

As mentioned in previous chapters, miscegenation was important to both the United States and Nazi Germany. Individual states had miscegenation laws within the United States while Nazi Germany had country-wide bans on relationships between Aryans and Jews during the period under study. Anti-miscegenation laws barred people of different races from marrying and interbreeding. In total, there were 18 stories in the three publications under study.

New York Times

The *Times* published six articles between 1933 and 1945 on anti-miscegenation laws and discussions. Five of the six articles were focused specifically on the Nazis, with the final article discussing miscegenation in a broader sense. The first article on miscegenation the *Times* published is from the summer of 1933 and it provided an overview of the Nazi’s plans for the implementation of anti-miscegenation laws.

The article, titled “Nazis Plan Campaign on Miscegenation,” appears to have originally been written in Germany, or in Europe, by one of the *Times*’ many foreign correspondents.⁵⁴² This is seen at the top of the article with a line reading, “Wireless to The New York Times.” The author reported that the “race hygiene” in Germany had not progressed past the “problematic stage.” The author reported that departments had been

⁵⁴² “Nazis Plan Campaign on Miscegenation” *New York Times* (New York, NY), June 12, 1933.

established in the government and those had begun communicating the aims of the Nazi government.

The unnamed author reported that the Nazis wanted to increase the birthrate of “socially desirable” people as well as proceed with “the elimination of the undesirable and the prevention of miscegenation.” The author cites a Prussian doctor, who defined miscegenation as “marriage of a person of ‘pure German stock’ with a person of a ‘distant race’ – such as a Semite.” Interestingly, the author quoted the Prussian doctor, saying: “Legislation can be effectual only if the masses are convinced of the usefulness and necessity of such laws—else they only offer resistance in ignorance.” The doctor continued, saying that “the Jewish question” needed to be handled “soberly and in a matter-of-fact way.” He continued, “To be considered a German, however, a person must be actually of German stock and not simply happen to be a citizen of Germany.”

This article is an eye-opening example of how the Nazis were attempting to convince the German public and the world of German racial superiority. As mentioned, this is the first article that discusses miscegenation during the period under study, meaning this was likely the introduction to some of the Nazi’s viewpoints for many of the *Times’* readers. The doctor quoted in the article talks about the importance of propaganda and communicating the Nazi’s ideologies to the people of Germany before committing the atrocities that were to come. Another large part of the text is the fact that the Nazis were again telling the Jews that they were not from Germany just because they were citizens, again bringing up the issue of defining Jews as a race instead of as a religious group. This article is a fine example of foreign reporting at the time.

The topic was clearly given a certain level of importance as a foreign correspondent was reporting on it, and this was not the case for most of the *Times*' coverage. The newspaper mostly relied on wire services such as the Associated Press. It is difficult to tell with any of these articles the reason why the author typically only cited one person, who was usually in favor of discrimination. An argument could be made that the *Times* wanted to spotlight how racist these people were.

The next instance of Nazi marriage laws being covered by the *Times* came in December 1933 in an article titled "Nazi Court Annuls a Mixed Marriage."⁵⁴³ The article's subtitle reads "sustains 'Aryan' Husband on the Ground That it Violates the Dogma of Blood Kinship." This article was also a "Wireless to The New York Times." This article is a standard event-based news article about a Berlin court nullifying a mixed marriage based on the Nazi's new rules about "blood kinship as the foundation of the new State." This was the first case like this decided in Berlin. It was the plaintiff, an "Aryan," who wanted the annulment because "racial extraction constituted the decisive personal qualification in an individual." The defense contested, but the court ruled that under the new German law, "It is self-evident that an Aryan would not have contracted marriage with a member of an alien and anti-German race had he been thoroughly conscious of the facts in the situation." The very next sentence contradicts the previous statement, however, saying: "The plaintiff was aware that his wife was a Jewess, but to

⁵⁴³ "Nazi Court Annuls a Mixed Marriage," *New York Times* (New York, NY), Dec. 18, 1933.

him that suggested something purely external. He could not have understood the essential implication involved in such a union at a time when the significance of race, blood kinship and folkdom was recognized by a small minority only.”

Finally, the article concludes by saying that after the March 1933 election, the petitioner joined the National Socialist, or Nazi, party. This article again shines a light on the beginning of the Nazi regime and the construction tools used to build up the dictatorship. This court statement assumes that if any German was made aware that his or her spouse was a Jew, they would immediately want out of the relationship. This, of course, is not the case, but from the modern perspective, statements like this make it easy for people to begin to believe in the Nazis’ plans. It is also worth mentioning that this article and case happened nearly two years before the passage of the infamous Nuremberg Laws, which specifically banned miscegenation.

The next article published on miscegenation was “‘Aryan’ Can’t Wed Jew,” printed in June 1935.⁵⁴⁴ This is a short article of only three paragraphs about how marriages between “Aryan” men and Jewish women were illegal under the new conscription law. The article is specifically about Pforzheim, a town in Baden, identified in the article as a jewelry manufacturing town. Specifically, this article discusses how Aryan members of the armed forces were forbidden from marrying any non-Aryans. The last sentence of the article says that one “Aryan” requested permission to marry a Jewish woman, which was denied.

⁵⁴⁴ “‘Aryan’ Can’t Wed Jew,” *New York Times* (New York, NY), June 2, 1935.

This article may seem odd for the *Times* to include in its coverage, since it is such a specific town and one instance of a couple getting denied the right to marry. Since the *Times* is an international newspaper, one may think that the coverage would be at a higher level, rather than in the minutia of the law. This article, however, shines a light on the day-to-day life of a city and how these new laws affected people. The article offers minimal detail and covers information that the *Times* had already covered, though it was months before.

Another article whose main source disagrees with the Nazis' anti-miscegenation laws was initially published by the Associated Press, but the *Times* syndicated the piece in April of 1942.⁵⁴⁶ The United States was now at war with Nazi Germany. This is an article that features a main headline, followed by several subheads that are worth quoting. The headline is "Scientist Derides Nazi Racial 'Myth.'" The subheads are "He Declares Evidence Shows that Interbreeding Brings Superior Generation," "Jews Could Aid Germans," and "Marriage Would Give Latter Fare Better of Bargain, Says Dr. Ashley-Montague."

The article states that M.P. Ashley-Montague, who was an anthropologist, described how "half-castes" were "for the most part superior biologically to their parents." Ashley-Montague was famous for developing and using the term "ethnic

⁵⁴⁶ "Scientist Derides Nazi Racial 'Myth,'" *New York Times* (New York, NY), April 18, 1942.

groups.” He published over 60 books during his life on a variety of topics.⁵⁴⁷ This particular information was delivered in a speech to the American Association of Physical Anthropologists at Harvard University. Ashley-Montague described how the Nazis used their idea of eugenics and anti-miscegenation as a political doctrine. He said that “the truth is that ethnic (racial) mixture, far from causing impurities, produces a purifying effect in that many defective traits of the parents are eliminated in the offspring as a result of crossing the group as a whole becomes purified.”

Ashley-Montague took on Hitler and the Nazis, saying “as for the Nazi assault on Jews in this respect, it should be pointed out that the Jews are not a single race, but a number of races, and that they exhibit in perhaps preeminent degree the biologically good effects of race mixture.” He concluded that based on his data, human “hybridization” is a positive thing.

This is another article that discusses the false belief of eugenics in a scientific way. This is done through adding information about how intermarriage between different races leads to “better” or stronger children, rather than weaker children. The most stunning part of this article is that Ashley-Montague discussed how Jews are not made up of just one race. As discussed previously in the literature review, the Jewish population was purely a religious one, not one based on a specific race.

⁵⁴⁷ Anthony Ramirez, “Ashley-Montagu, 94, Anthropologist and Popular Author,” *New York Times* (New York, NY), Nov. 29, 1999.

One feature some of the *Times* articles have is several headlines and subheads. These allow readers to see the broad strokes of the article, without having to read into the broadsheet. In this instance, there is no information that is only in the headlines and not in the article itself.

The final article discusses anti-miscegenation as a worldwide issue. It is titled “Hardy Half-Castes” and cites Ashley-Montague.⁵⁴⁸ This article’s lead is “Cracker-barrel science has it that the half-caste inherits all the bad and none of the good qualities of his parental stocks.” He wrote (originally in *Psychiatry* magazine): “Hybridization is one of the most fundamental processes of evolution. In lower animals it is perhaps not as frequently observed, but in man it is an age-old process which was unquestionably operative among his proto-human ancestors.” The article discusses a few examples of inter-breeding and the effects. The final section of the article, titled “Negroes Are Studied” discusses how Black people have differences in features such as “pigmentation, hair color and form, nose form, eye color and several other characters,” which allows researchers to study the descendants of these people, because the physical differences are more obvious.

The *Times* may have had a connection with Ashley-Montague for him to be cited in two articles, about a year apart. This article, like many from this period on this subject, was not much of a news article as it was a space for a person to discuss his or her beliefs on a subject. One of the major takeaways from this article is that Ashley-Montague views

⁵⁴⁸ “Hardy Half-Castes,” *New York Times* (New York, NY), April 4, 1943.

Black Americans as a race that would be preferred to be studied. The United States has a history of testing on and studying Black Americans without their consent. While there is no direct discussion about any experiments, the idea is implied.

Of these articles, only the first is specifically addressing newsworthy events, the passing of anti-miscegenation laws in Germany. The other articles are written more as opinion pieces. The articles are structured like standard news articles, but the difference is that there is only one source. This source seemingly has free reign throughout the articles. There would be no issues if these articles were structured like opinion columns. The issue is that they are written as news stories. The author is, of course, analyzing these articles from a modern ethical perspective. The *Times* and other publications certainly didn't have the same ethical standards as publications do now.

Luckily, the sources in these articles are against anti-miscegenation laws. Issues arise when the sources in articles argue for racist or discriminatory policies. In these cases, it would be helpful if the authors interviewed another source to disprove or disagree with the initial source.

Another issue with most of these articles is that there is almost no reference to the United States' own anti-miscegenation laws. These articles are mostly focused solely on the Nazi's anti-miscegenation laws, without referencing how many states had similar laws, preventing Black and white Americans from marrying. There were as many as thirty states with these laws.

Chicago Defender

Like the *Times*, the *Defender* published few articles discussing anti-miscegenation laws, beliefs, and practices. Only five articles met the requirement for this study. The first article discussing this (within this thesis' timeframe) was written by the *Defender's* editor, Robert S. Abbott, whose writings only appeared a few times throughout the entire article search. I decided to include it because of the importance of Abbott's voice, despite this article not being a news story and leans toward the side of editorial writing.

The article is titled "Race Prejudice Not a Natural State Says R.S. Abbott," with the subhead "Editor Declares Artificial System Creates False Standards."⁵⁴⁹ Abbott opened the article by arguing that miscegenation started in the United States once enslaved Africans were forced into the population. He wrote: "the opposition to intermarriage has merely heightened the interest and solidified the feelings of those who resent the injection of racial distinction into their private and personal affairs." He continued, "This perfectly natural phenomenon is sufficiently recurrent to force out into the open the belief that prejudice is not a natural social order."

After the introductory paragraph, Abbott asserted that "left to themselves the races of mankind would live, love and laugh together without social contravention or legal proscription." He added that the idea of the "preservation of superior stock" has

⁵⁴⁹ Robert S. Abbott, "Race Prejudice Not a Natural State Says R.S. Abbott" *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, Il.) Jan. 5, 1935.

added a “venom of prejudice with toxic effect upon society.” He argued that this idea of superior stock is not about having a superior race or identity. It is about, Abbot wrote, retaining strategic powers and rights from generation to generation.

Abbott discussed that “intermixture” is beneficial to different races. He cites “one authority” who said the mixing of races was beneficial socially and physically. Abbott began to openly question the science and what is correct about breeding, writing that “if the white scientists be correct, and they have adduced convincing evidence to support the view that the blood of Blacks is the most potentially virile of human races.” On the social front, however, Abbott was sure that race mixing was a positive experience culturally and socially. Abbott said he doubted that any legislation could stop interracial marriages.

The article also discussed specific instances of interracial marriage and how related laws work and have been implemented. The start of Abbott’s article almost contradicts itself, as he discussed how interracial marriage should be allowed and how it is a positive thing for society.

Abbott was not a celebrity in the traditional sense, but he certainly was well known in the Black community from his work as editor and publisher of a leading Black newspaper. Abbott and the *Defender* were incredibly influential. It is unclear the intent of the contradictory statements made early in this article. It’s possible Abbott was attempting to provide opposing viewpoints.

The voice of Abbott alone is noteworthy. Abbott’s editorials appear a few times throughout this thesis search. Anti-miscegenation laws obviously affected Abbott and his audience much more directly than they may have affected the *Times* or *Advertiser*.

While it was a small note in the article, Abbott does question how effective anti-miscegenation laws actually are in preventing people from marrying. It is likely that criminalizing marriage between different races forced fewer interracial couples from marrying. Abbott questioned how much these laws would be enforced, though.

The next article published on miscegenation was in October of 1939 in a brief article titled “Arrest Md. Couple For Intermarriage.”⁵⁵⁰ The article, as the title says, is about a couple who was arrested for being interracially married. The lead of the article is particularly relevant given it is appearing in the Black advocacy press. It reads: “The National Association for the Advancement of Colored People is expected to come to the rescue of a couple arrested here last week for violating the inter-marriage law of the state of Maryland.”

The article continues, explaining how the couple’s status was given to police because of one of the woman’s relatives who were displeased about the marriage. The reporter, who was not named, wrote that the husband was still in jail, but the woman had to undergo an emergency operation. The article concludes by saying that the couple met at a restaurant where the woman worked as a waitress.

The lead of this article is not what a reader might expect. There is a role reversal that happens. In many of these articles (not necessarily from the *Defender*) the Black American is portrayed as the villain. This article shows that the NAACP is the savior for

⁵⁵⁰ “Arrest Md. Couple for Intermarriage” *Chicago Defender*, (Chicago, IL) October 28, 1939.

this couple and immediately points that out. This is a prime example of the advocacy journalism the *Defender* was renowned for.

This is another article that allows the reader at the time, or in the modern age, to see the day-to-day results of these anti-miscegenation laws. Many of the articles previously discussed are a larger overview of these laws, but the articles that focus on a specific person or couple can be even more effective, as they illustrate the intimate effects of these laws.

The next news article relevant to this chapter that the *Defender* published in October 1944, titled “Toussaint Author Favors Race Inter-Marriage,” is an interview with Ralph Korngold, author of a book titled *Citizen Toussaint*. Korngold was born in Poland and immigrated to the United States when he was just over 20 years old. His first major publication was in 1936.⁵⁵¹ The journalist, Richard Durham, included quotes from Korngold about the current state of race issues. He said that “Negroes will be freed by Negroes— not white men. White men can help, give support, build morale— but the freeing of Negroes can only be done by Negroes.” Durham asked Korngold why he had never been to Haiti or the deep American South. He said that he never would travel to those areas. “I’d land in Jail,” Korngold said. “I couldn’t stand the disgusting, day by day spiritual lynching of Negroes all around me. I couldn’t take it.”

⁵⁵¹ “Ralph Korngold Papers,” The Newberry Library, Accessed Oct. 12, 2022. <https://archives.newberry.org/repositories/2/resources/226>

The article continues with Korngold talking about what he would do after the war ended, if he had the ability to make change. Korngold said “I’d make it a law that no two people of the same race could marry. If they did, they could not have children. White, black, brown, men and women would intermarry until race was forgotten.” When Korngold explained why he was so interested and concerned with Black rights, he talked about when he was traveling through Oklahoma, he saw a “Negro board a train and get the conductor’s permission to sit down in the lily-white coach.” He asked an attorney why all Black people were not given the rights and privileges as this man. The attorney responded that this person was a “wealthy Creek Indian” which is a group of people who were “not Jim Crowed in Oklahoma.” The man had a pass that “proved” the man was not Black. He discusses another example of this: “Another Negro named Walker also owned valuable property and was allowed to ‘pass.’ But when Walker lost his property— he lost this privilege. He had to go back to being a Jim Crowed Negro.”

After studying many countries, Korngold concluded that America “leads the world in race prejudice.” One of the main differences, Korngold said, was that European race prejudice came from a few governments, but the citizens of that country were innocent. He found that the opposite was true in the United States of America.,

Korngold’s opinions make up this piece, but it is highly beneficial to see an outside perspective of the United States, both during the modern day of 2022, but also during the time this was published. This article was published in the second half of 1944, so many of the Nazi atrocities had been publicized, but Korngold still believed that the United States’ racial prejudice was worse than that of any other country in the world.

One of the standout statements in this study is his quote, “I’d make it a law that no two people of the same race could marry” as well as the idea that white people will not save Black people, but Black people will help one another. This follows the idea of the previous article of switching the standard roles, making Black people the savior. Another idea, which is seen in many other articles, is that people who have traveled outside of the United States saw America as one of, if not the most racist places on the planet. But the newspaper reporters and their sources mostly were still hypocritical.

The final article the *Defender* published on interracial marriage was actually a letter to the editor. As stated, this study focused on news articles rather than opinion articles, but this was given an exception because of its importance. The author of the letter stated that he or she

can’t understand why anyone in our race should object to inter-marriage, because the woman is white. Whether the woman is white or the man a Negro or vice versa, such an act tends to perpetuate our race. If 10,000 Negroes married ten thousand whites, there would be ten thousand more on our side, than we had before not counting the of spring! (sic).

This article was included because of the commentary added to the situation of interracial marriage and the ideas that were prevalent in both Nazi Germany and the United States. Both these countries’ racists had rules like the “one drop” rule, which meant that if a person was overwhelmingly white in their family history, but had “one drop” of Black blood, then they were considered Black. With this idea, interracial marriages could only produce Black children, based on this ideology.

Overall, the *Defender* hardly touched on the Nazis' anti-miscegenation laws, only mentioning the Nazis briefly in a few of the articles discussed above. This could have been because the *Defender* was focusing on United States racism more than racism and discrimination abroad. *Defender* coverage of the Nazis, however, is prevalent within other chapters of this thesis.

Montgomery Advertiser

As seen in the eugenics chapter, the *Advertiser* had a unique relationship with racist ideologies. This is no different in the articles the *Advertiser* published about miscegenation. There were six total articles analyzed. This coverage was balanced between United States-focused miscegenation and Nazi-based miscegenation, as three of the articles were about the United States, while the remaining three covered the Nazi policies and ideologies.

The first relevant article published during this period was simply titled "Nazi Marriage Rules" and was printed on September 5, 1934.⁵⁵² The article opens by normalizing the Nazi's ideas, informing: "The Nazi Government, like various other governments of the past several thousand years, now undertakes to put marriage on a 'rational' basis." The author, who was not named, wrote that these new laws "puts the state first and the individuals second," as young couples must consider "whether their marriage helps the nation." The author described Hitler as "redoubtable," considering the "larger order" that the miscegenation laws will take. The article condenses these

⁵⁵² "Nazi Marriage Rules," *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), Sept. 5, 1934.

miscegenation and reproduction rules to their simplest forms, saying that people who are physically fit should marry and those who are not should not reproduce.

The phrase “like various other governments” seems to normalize, to an extent, what the Nazis were doing. This could put a concerned reader at ease, if they begin thinking that ‘the Nazis are not the first people to take these actions, then it can’t be that bad, right?’ The article steps back and discuss how the government is put ahead of the people.

The next article, which was published in May of 1935, announced that marriages between “Aryans” and Jews would be banned.⁵⁵³ This was an Associated Press article syndicated for the *Advertiser*. This was announced by a leading Nazi at the “Germanic healers exposition.” At the beginning of the article, the author quoted Streicher, a leading Nazi who explained that this law was “the first step the official branding of marriages between Aryans and non-Aryans as miscegenation.” Streicher also declared that “the next move will be to forbid marriages between Germans and Jews altogether,” as every year, 100,000 German girls are “ruined” by working in Jewish households. Invitations to this event claimed that it “united all Germans having interest in the science of health, free from Jewish influences, born in German popular instinct and rooted in the blood and soil.”

⁵⁵³ “Gentile-Jewish Marriages Will Be Outlawed by German Government,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), May 13, 1935.

Like all Associated Press articles, this one's content should affect the *Advertiser*. As stated in other instances, the editors had to decide if the article was relevant for the audience and how relevant the content of the article was. This story was placed on the front page of the newspaper, so the issue of the Nazis clearly seemed quite relevant to the editors.

The next article was a brief three-paragraph story titled "Nazi Marriage Laws Deny Jews Rights."⁵⁵⁵ This article was published on New Year's Eve 1939 by the Associated Press. The article's lead states that "mixed marriages between Aryans and Jews are contrary to Nazi ideology and therefore Jewish partners of such marriages cannot benefit from Nazi laws protecting matrimony, a court here held." The German case related to a Jew who brought an infidelity charge against his "Aryan" wife. The court stated that the Jewish man was not "entitled to file a charge of infidelity, but observed that the circumstances might give him grounds to start divorce action."

This article is intriguing, as the Nuremberg Laws had been passed years before, but the article presents this anti-miscegenation issue as a new change. This specific instance may be newsworthy, as it is an example of how Jews are treated by the state in comparison to how Germans are treated.

The final article on miscegenation that the *Advertiser* published in this timespan was an April 1940 article, titled "Law of Miscegenation."⁵⁵⁶ This article began by

⁵⁵⁵ "Nazi Marriage Laws Deny Jews Rights," *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), Dec. 31, 1939.

⁵⁵⁶ "Law of Miscegenation," *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), April 25, 1940.

discussing how the Maryland attorney general ruled that marriages between white people and members of the “Malay race” were illegal. The article continues to discuss the intricacies of this case, where a white woman wished to marry a Filipino.

The article mentioned that “at least” thirty states had laws forbidding miscegenation. The article discusses the differences between each state’s anti-miscegenation laws. Georgia’s law, as the article stated, prohibited intermarriage between white people and “a person with an ascertainable trace of African, West Indian, Asiatic Indian or Mongolian blood.” But the law had not been followed meticulously, according to the article. The story also discussed different intricacies in different states’ laws. This discussion on the laws of many states may have indicated to readers that anti-miscegenation laws and beliefs were normal, since it was so common.

The articles in this chapter were, overall, much more against the racist laws than previous chapters. All three of the newspapers had articles denouncing the Nazis’ anti-miscegenation laws. As mentioned, however, there is still a significant lack of discussion about the United States’ anti-miscegenation laws, which were prevalent. This still seems like the United States was eager to critique another country, while having the same discrimination. The hypocrisy of this is substantial. One potential explanation for this is that the anti-miscegenation laws in the United States had been around for a little while, not terribly long, but long enough that maybe they were not newsworthy anymore. This study should be expanded upon by scholars to include the years leading up to Hitler’s rise to power, which encapsulates when these laws would have been passed. The next chapter is focused on how these newspapers all compared Nazi Germany to the United States.

Chapter 5: Direct Comparison

‘Whenever I Cite an Instance of Negro Abuse, Substitute the Word Jew for Negro’

The news outlets under study made comparisons between the Nazi’s race-related and discriminatory laws and the United States’ race-related and discriminatory laws during this period. Most of the comparisons, however, were made by the *Chicago Defender*, likely because of the *Defender*’s interest and focus on civil rights issues, its focus on striving for equality and a society free from discrimination. The *Times* and *Advertiser* only featured three articles each in comparison to the *Defender*’s twenty articles.

New York Times

The first article the *Times* published comparing the United States to Nazi Germany was massive, spanning several pages. “Other Faiths join in” was published on March 28, 1933, on the front page.⁵⁵⁷ The lead of the article was: “Hitlerism with its anti-Semitic propaganda and persecution of Jews must be dragged out into the open and given the same treatment ‘we gave the Ku Klux Klan,’ former Governor Smith told a cheering audience of more than 20,000 Jews assembled in Madison Square Garden last night to protest against Hitler’s treatment of Jews in Germany.” Smith is likely Al Smith, who served as New York Governor for four terms.

The governor, who was the Democratic Party’s candidate for the 1928 election, denounced the Nazi’s “racial and religious bigotry.” The article stated that “Mr. Smith

⁵⁵⁷ “Other Faiths Join in,” *New York Times* (New York: NY), March 28, 1933.

was one of a group of leaders of Jewry and the Christian world who joined in last night's protest." On top of the meeting held inside Madison Square Garden, there were another 35,000 people outside in "overflow meetings." The author estimated that over one million Jews took place in these demonstrations in New York, as well as other parts of the country. One rabbi read a prayer in which he asked for the persecutions to cease. One man, Israel N. Thurman who was a lawyer and with the American Jewish Congress, read a resolution to raise funds to combat anti-Semitism and protect Jews throughout the world. This resolution was unanimously approved.⁵⁵⁸

The article continues onto the twelfth page of the *Times*, which reveals a much longer article as well as a large photo of the crowd in Madison Square Garden. The article continued by noting that there were not "any attacks (sic) directed against Germany and the German people." The criticism was focused specifically on the anti-Semitic propaganda of Hitler and the Nazis. Smith continued, discussing how the Nazi government had not done or said anything to denounce the people's violent actions. Bernard S. Deutsch, who was president of the American Jewish Congress, said:

the time has come when the civilized nations of the world should be concerned not only for the safety and protection of their nationals abroad but should be keenly interested in the preservation of human rights of all minorities wherever they may be. This day of protest throughout this country and in other countries is

⁵⁵⁸ "Israel N. Thurman, 98, Is Dead; Lawyer and Jewish Lay Leader," *New York Times* (New York, NY), Dec. 15, 1982.

also a day of mourning. We are overwhelmed with grief as we behold a situation, which if permitted to continue, would result in the descent of a great nation from a high state of enlightenment of a position of barbaric medievalism.

Another public official, Senator Robert Wagner, said in his speech: “I have not come here to condemn Germany. I come to awaken her, to arouse her to a realization that a few of her children are bringing shame upon her name. Are we to witness a reversion to medievalism in the very centre of civilization?” Wagner said he was “filled with ‘horror and dismay’ as he read ‘reports of the occurrences in Germany that are responsible for this meeting, of the manifestations of intolerance and even violence.’”

At a subhead titled “All Faiths Concerned,” Mr. Tuttle, who was president of the Interfaith Committee, said: “anti-Semitic outbreaks have ‘deeply concerned all men of brotherly ideals.’”⁵⁵⁹ He continued, “the problems of this deeply troubled world can be solved only through mutual good-will and cooperation among all races.” Finally, he said: “In all this we speak with no ill-will for the German people and with no desire to injure them in the slightest degree. We recognize the great contributions which they have made in the past to civilization and to liberty of conscience.” The story continues, quoting other leaders repeating similar statements about the brutality of the Nazis and the desire to correct this flaw with Germany.

⁵⁵⁹ “Charles H. Tuttle, Civic Leader Here for Many Years, Dies at 91,” *New York Times* (New York, NY), Jan. 27, 1971. Tuttle is only referred to by his surname in the article, but he was likely Charles H. Tuttle referenced in this obituary. He served as attorney for New York’s southern district from 1927 until 1930, when he ran against Franklin Roosevelt for the position of New York Governor.

This was clearly a large event in New York City. The newsroom's leadership or reporters believed that the issues discussed here were worthy of being presented in a lengthy story on page one. The key opinion leaders, including politicians and religious leaders who spoke at this event, gave a high level of credibility and clout to the messages portrayed in this article.

The way some of these leaders made comparisons between the United States' racist issues and the Nazi's ideas are self-congratulating. One of the officials said the Nazis needed to be treated like the Ku Klux Klan and be brought into the open. The Ku Klux Klan may have been reduced in capacity, but even in modernity the racist group still exists. Racism in the United States hadn't been solved, of course.

The final article from the *Times* that compared the United States and Germany was published in June 1940, titled "Bar to Hitlerism Urged by Barnes."⁵⁶¹ The article is about Harry Elmer Barnes, who spoke at Virginia University's Institute of Public Affairs about how it was the "duty and high privilege" of Americans to stop totalitarianism. Barnes was a historian who claimed in one of his works that Germany was the victim of violence. He also denied the Holocaust happened. Instead of attempting to stop Hitler, Barnes said, people should be focusing on ensuring that Hitlerism and Nazism do not spread to America. He warned that "the American way of life can be saved and expanded only in the United States, and here only if we keep out of the tragic mess across the sea."

⁵⁶¹ "Bar to Hitlerism Urged by Barnes," *New York Times* (New York, NY), June 19, 1940.

This is a fine example of how American citizens saw the United States as a perfect country, where outside interference would ruin the harmony of the country. This article was published before the United States entered the war, and there was a growing conversation about whether the United States military would join the fight. This article may have been in response to that idea, arguing that the United States should be more worried about itself, rather than helping Germany or Europe.

Chicago Defender

The main difference between the *Times* and the *Defender* is how often they each covered the comparisons made between the United States and Nazi Germany. While the *Times* only noted this comparison in speech coverage, the *Defender* noted this in twenty articles.

The first article printed during the period under study was “German Jews’ Plight Identical with That of Race Here” which was published in September 1935.⁵⁶² Before the article starts, there is a brief line that credits the story to the “(Chicago Defender Foreign News Service).” It is unclear whether that news service was operated by the *Defender*, or if the *Defender* just paid for the use of this news service. The article starts by quoting Winfred Nathan, who was chairman of the education department at Atlanta University. The lead of this article is: “That the wave of Nazi racial oppression and race chauvinism in Germany has a close parallel in America, both ideologically and outwardly, was

⁵⁶² “German Jews’ Plight Identical with That of Race Here,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), Sept. 14, 1935.

expressed by Dr. Winfred Nathan...” Nathan said that like Black people in America, Jews in Germany represent “a distinct racial type.” Nathan said it was easy for Nazis to pick Jews out of a crowd because they are so distinguishable. On top of this, Nathan said, the people of Germany have been trained through anti-Semitic lessons by Nazism.

The article then informed: “the entire Nazi race program represents false psychology, declared Dr. Nathan. While accepted by the Nazis, the German masses do not subscribe in toto to (sic) Nazi doctrine.”

The attribution at the start of the article to the Chicago Defender Foreign News Service is peculiar, as there are not many references like this within the article search for this thesis. It seems unlikely that if the *Defender* had its own foreign news service as it would have been used more than once when the biggest story in the world was happening abroad. This article is also fairly unique as the angle of the story was about the comparison between the Black American and the German Jew. Obviously, a large part of this comparison needed to discuss the mistreatment of these groups. The authors angled it in a way to make the people being discriminated against the main subject of the story. When the *Defender* placed the opinion before any attribution, it is unclear who is saying that information. To an average reader, it seems like the author is stating this.

Another article on this topic printed in 1935 was titled “Scorching Note Scores Nazis, U.S. Jim Crow: Would Correct our Home Affairs First.” The author, who is not named, is reporting on a letter to the editor from a Charles A. Smythwick Jr. to the *New*

York World Telegram.⁵⁶⁴ The entire letter was published and opened with a focus on protests against the United States from participating in the 1936 Berlin Olympics.

Smythwick asks the rhetorical question,

But one wonders if, by chance, the next Olympiad were to take place in, let us say Atlanta, Ga., or almost any one of the states below the Mason and Dixon line, would ‘the power that be’ (sic) remove signs in the railroad stations reading, “White on This Side.’ ‘Colored on That Side’? Would the fine hotels, some of them built especially to accommodate visitors to the games, extend their hospitality to all comers, regardless of race?

Smythwick continues, saying that the main argument against American participation in the Olympics is because the Nazis and Hitler are the ruling people of Germany. He continued:

Our great leaders cry out in stentorian voices that the German government has enacted discriminatory laws and permits acts of violence against a minority race. Have they forgotten that discrimination against the Negro in the South is sanctioned by law? Have they ever heard of Jim Crow? How many years will collapse before we will have an anti-lynch law?

Smythwick closes his letter by saying, “The hardships suffered by the Jews and the acts of violence perpetrated against the acts of violence perpetrated against them in Germany

⁵⁶⁴ “Scorching Note Scores Nazis, U.S. Jim Crow,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), Dec. 14, 1935.

are deplorable and are to be condemned by all human people. But this is to be remembered by all charitable Americans: ‘Clean thine own house before thou cleanest thy neighbor’s.’”

Smythwick asked many thought-provoking rhetorical questions. As stated, there was controversy around the Olympics held in Nazi Germany. By this time, Nazi racial statutes and ideologies had been public knowledge for years. The author asked many questions that are difficult to answer. He discussed how the leaders of the United States had seemingly forgotten about the issues of their own country and the discrimination faced by Black people in their own country.

This is reminiscent of the story of track-and-field legend Jesse Owens at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. Owens, who was a Black American, won four gold medals “and single-handedly demonstrated that Hitler’s myth of Aryan supremacy was a lie.”⁵⁶⁵

The next article in this vein was not published until late into the next year, in October 1936. The article, titled “White Assails Hitler for His Racial Bigotry: Tells Minority Groups to unite Against Fascism,” in an attempt to unite all minority groups to fight against discrimination in Nazi Germany and America.⁵⁶⁶ “White” is Walter White, the NAACP’s secretary, who, as mentioned in previous chapters, was synonymous with the NAACP and spent time in Europe during the war. The information within the article

⁵⁶⁵ Jeremy Schaap, *Triumph: The Untold Story of Jesse Owens and Hitler’s Olympics*. (New York: First Mariner Books, 2008)

⁵⁶⁶ “White Assails Hitler for His Racial Bigotry,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), October 3, 1936.

comes from him speaking on a radio show, responding to propaganda that was published against Nazism. White said such propaganda is fine, but these efforts are futile, “unless fundamental causes of antagonism are ruthlessly wiped out.”

White cites an article from German publication *Der WeltKampf*, in response to a prize fight between Joe Louis and Max Schmeling in New York City in 1938. White noted that the publication either didn’t comment on the prize fight or noted how bad prize fighting was. This, White said, was when everyone thought Schmeling would lose. After he won, the publication hailed Schmeling as “the savior of the ‘white’ civilization.” White urged priests, ministers, rabbis, and the press to band together against Nazism.

The *Defender*’s audience was obviously primarily Black Americans. There were certainly other people reading the *Defender* and the author wanted to unite all minorities. He may have written this article with the intent of hopefully grabbing the attention of the *Defender*’s readership and making them unite with others.

In a rare occurrence in this series of articles, there is a piece where Germans discussed American culture. The article, “Germans Right This Time on U.S. Culture,” features Nazi leaders ridiculing and criticizing American lynching.⁵⁶⁷ The author, who isn’t named, wrote that the Nazi press was close to interpreting American life correctly.

This article was responding to the Nazi newspaper *Scwarzes Korps*, which “unleashed another blast of ridicule and anger at the United States.” The author wrote

⁵⁶⁷ “Germans Right This Time on U.S. Culture,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), March 27, 1937.

that “the newspapers clumsily presented satire deriding American culture and mocking the fate of workers, showed how the lynching curse and kindred evils are viewed abroad.” The article concluded with this paragraph:

In Broadway’s famous night clubs audiences ‘applaud frantically when a Negress appears clad in nothing but a banana peel,’ the paper chuckled: Those not having the money to pay for such entertainment can enjoy themselves in the next street where every so often a Negro is lynched— perhaps a brother to the black dancing star— not because he is black. O, no! Simply because his skin is not white!

It is very likely that this article would have been controversial at the time it was published. Saying that the Nazis were correct about anything, let alone the United States, was likely a discussion faced between writers and editors in the newsroom. The United States clearly was not perfect, and if the Nazis were critiquing the way the country treated a minority group, then it is a difficult phrase to hear. But the headline and article are certainly attention-grabbing. The article seems to be factual in that these Nazi officials did express these views about the United States.

Another article, written by George Padmore, seems like a warning to readers of the *Defender* on the dangers of Nazism. Padmore was a leading Pan-Africanist and journalist.⁵⁶⁸ His vision was of “a world free from the burden of empires and dedicated to equality, solidarity and hope.”⁵⁶⁹

⁵⁶⁸ “About,” George Padmore Institute, Accessed Oct. 13, 2022.
<https://www.georgepadmoreinstitute.org/about>

⁵⁶⁹ Ibid.

In the article, datelined Hamburg, Germany and titled “Hitler Will Treat Jews Like Blacks,” Padmore wrote that he was arrested a few years before because he criticized Hitler’s treatment of Black people from the German African colonies.⁵⁷⁰

This article is told in first person, which is a rarity and followed Padmore’s experiences through Germany and on a tour from Holland to Sweden. During this time, he met with Jewish leaders and discussed the “Jewish problem.” He reported that “the position of the Jews under the Nazi regime is as bad as the conditions of the Negroes in the Southern States of American and South Africa.”

The article informed how Hitler and the Nazis adopted “drastic anti-Semitic methods of terrorism which, Nazi officials declare, will solve the ‘Jewish’ problem in Germany.” To prepare for this, Padmore wrote, leaders were sent to America and South Africa to “study how the blacks in these countries are treated so that similar methods can be applied against the Jews in Germany, who were considered the same ‘inferior’ race as colored peoples.” Padmore also reported that 380,000 Jews will be driven into the ghettos, mentioning that “local police authorities have been given supreme power to deal drastically with Jews without fear of disapproval from their superiors.”

In the final section of the article, Padmore wrote how Jews could be “turned out of a town without any reason” as “Jews declared guilty of some crime – racial crime, profiteering or mere petty crime – can be expelled from provincial towns and villages

⁵⁷⁰ George Padmore, “Hitler will Treat Jews Like Blacks,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL) Nov. 13, 1937.

without appeal.” Padmore also wrote about how all businesses are allowed to refuse to serve Jews and “Anti-Semite placards may be put up anywhere in public.” Jews were also not allowed to enter Aryan hospitals.

Without explicitly comparing Jews and Black Americans, a reader can tell the parallels between the treatment of the two groups. This article may have been a scare tactic to make the *Defender*'s readers aware of just how bad the situation was in Nazi Germany for Jews. Black Americans knew from their own experiences how bad racism and discrimination could be in the United States, so seeing a warning that it could get worse may have been shocking.

The *Defender* also covered comparisons made by other Black publications, including one article the *Defender* wrote, titled “Editor Issues Warning Against Anti-Semitism.”⁵⁷¹ The article the *Defender* is citing was published by *Opportunity* and warned against anti-Semitism amongst Black people. The article cited the editor of *Opportunity*, Elmer Anderson Carter, who wrote: “There is evidence that here in America an acceleration of anti-Semitism through organized groups is taking place and racial antagonism long though dormant are coming to life.” The editor said that some of this propaganda has made its way to Black Americans, some of whom have bought into the ideas of this anti-Semitic propaganda. Carter wrote: “It reveals a pathetic shortsightedness on the part of Negroes who should know better.”

⁵⁷¹ “Editor Issues Warning Against Anti-Semitism,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), Oct. 22, 1938.

Discrimination can happen between any groups, but the author of this article wanted to ensure that readers knew Jewish people should not be discriminated against, as it is similar to what Black people faced.

The next article was written as a warning. “It Can Happen Here” warned that mass murder could happen to Black Americans.⁵⁷² The author, who was not named, wrote that the “violent, sustained and unparalleled wave of inhuman persecution to which Jews of Germany are being subjected, and the apparent indifference of the so-called democratic states to the fate of oppressed minorities are ominous signs of the dangers of Black America.” The author mentioned that some people might think that what is happening in Germany couldn’t happen in the United States, but he countered this point, writing that racist propaganda and mob hysteria can sweep everything in its path aside.

The author wrote that before Hitler rose to power, the German Jews were “respected, admired and were integrated into the cultural, social, political and economic life of the country.” The article states that Black Americans, however, have never seen these privileges and opportunities. “His position in American Democracy has been that of a sick man. Everywhere he turns he meets with discrimination, segregation and antagonism.” The article concluded by stating that Black people need to join with other racial minorities to fight against fascism.

There was serious fear among Black people that the United States might look back on Nazi Germany for inspiration on how to discriminate against Black Americans.

⁵⁷² “It can Happen Here,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), Nov. 26, 1938.

The genocide that the Nazis committed was uniquely horrible and the minorities in the United States, a country proven to “legally” discriminate, may have had real fears about this ideology spreading.

In a front-page story with the most prominent headline on the page, the *Defender* wrote “Hitler Adopts U.S. Jim Crow Laws in Germany.”⁵⁷³ The article was specifically about how Nazi Germany adopted a discriminatory railway system. The lead of the story explains that “the segregation of Jews traveling in Germany in specially designed and marked railway compartments as is done with members of the Race in southern section of the United States, was demanded this week by Das Schwarze Korps organ of Adolf Hitler’s Elite Guard.” The article showed that this was not the first choice of the Nazis, as an official statement said that the initial plan was to ban Jews from using the railways at all. The decision to allow Jews into certain carriages was purely a financial reasoning. The Nazi officials explained this reasoning by talking about the United States: “In the freest country in the world, where even the president rages against racial discrimination, no citizen of dark color is permitted to travel next to a white person, even if the white is employed as a sewer digger and the Negro is a world boxing champion or otherwise a national hero. The democratic example shows us all how we have to solve the problem of traveling foreign Jews.”

⁵⁷³ “Hitler Adopts U.S. Jim Crow Laws in Germany,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), Jan. 7, 1939.

The next article was written by Walter O. Minton in October of 1940, titled “Say Defense Industries Hire Nazis, Bar Race.”⁵⁷⁵ The article discussed how national defense employers would not hire Black Americans, but they would hire members of the Nazi German-American Bund, a pro-Nazi organization in the United States. A Democrat from Alabama, Representative first name Starnes, discovered that “Nazi agents” were being hired by these American companies, concluding that it was unbelievable that private contractors would hire Nazis, but not Black Americans.

This is not dissimilar to the article discussed in the literature review of this thesis, where Nazi prisoners were being treated with more respect than the Black military members who were stationed at the POW camps in Alabama. The United States showed its hypocrisy by hiring American Nazis to work for them in the defense industry, but Black Americans were still barred from assisting in the war cause.

The next article featured a Jewish leader talking about Jim Crow and how Black Americans are treated.⁵⁷⁸ This article includes that it is from ANP, which is the largest news agency in the Netherlands. Rabbi J.X. Cohen discussed how Jim Crow laws are maintained on public transportation. He said: “Just as the Jew considers the treatment of Jews in other lands as the measure of the liberal spirit, so must the treatment of the Negro and other minorities be the barometer of democracy in America.”

⁵⁷⁵ Walter O. Minton, “Say Defense Industries Hire Nazis, Bar Race,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL) Oct. 12, 1940.

⁵⁷⁸ “N.Y. Jewish Leader Scores Treatment of Negro Race,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), Dec. 18, 1943.

Cohen continued the comparison between Jewish and Black American discrimination:

He told his audience to ‘try this psychological trick on yourself. Whenever I cite an instance of Negro abuse, substitute the word Jew for Negro. Notice how your blood pressure raises. That is exactly the way Negroes react to the abuse of Negroes. As Americans we should react with the same indignation over Negro as over Jewish injustice.’

Cohen said that now was the time for Black Americans to seek their rights. He continued: “Anti-Semitism that may exist among Negroes, he said, is the result of Nazi propaganda, which has persuaded some of the Negro population that, if a portion of the persecution to which it is subjected can be sidetracked against the Jews the lot of Negroes might be easier.”

The experiences of different minorities may be similar, but, of course, they are never the same. This article, and Cohen himself, explained well how it is difficult to compare these experiences, but many of them, at least between Jews and Black people, are similar.

The next article “Nazi Brutality Has Analogy in South,” specifically compared Nazi atrocities to American racist discrimination.⁵⁷⁹ The article opened by discussing the “bestly Nazis” who abused children, robbed people’s civil rights and beat, imprisoned,

⁵⁷⁹ “Nazi Brutality Has Analogy in South,” *Chicago Defender*, (Chicago, IL) April 29, 1944.

or killed anyone who disagreed with them. The author, Frank Greenwood, who wrote this article in first person, said he had made these observations after watching an anti-Nazi propaganda film in a movie theater with a Black audience. He noted that audience members said things like “Oh, how awful!” and “Isn’t that terrible?” The author wrote in the next paragraph: “I remembered, however, that I was a Negro. I remembered that the fictitious, brutal, atrocious incidents depicted on that moving picture screen were actually occurring to Negroes in the South at that very instant.”

Greenwood said the Nazi’s abuse of children reminded him of a time when a Black child was hit in the mouth and kicked out of a moving vehicle because he forgot to say “sir” to the white driver. He said: “The Nazi’s robbery of the populace’s civil rights reminded me of the seven southern poll tax states who now rob Negroes of their civil rights.” The killings also reminded the author of lynching and burning of Black people in America. Then, the author said, “The Nazi’s insults and mistreatment of women reminded me of the southern white mob who disemboweled a pregnant Negro woman and crushed the unborn baby’s head with their boot heels.” Greenwood concluded:

We, as Negroes, must all remember that the movies are owned by whites who use this powerful medium to further their own interest. They ignore ours. When they urge us to join the WACs and Merchant Marines, let us remember to join the NAACP and Urban League. When they tell us about the ‘poor oppressed peoples of Europe,’ let us remember the poor oppressed Negro of America. When they urge us to fight Hitler in Europe, let us remember to fight the ‘hatlers’ here in America. Let us not forget!

This was published deep into the war, in 1944. The Double V campaign, for victory at home and victory abroad, against fascism and racism was in full swing. This article may have been part of this campaign, without explicitly mentioning it.

One of the longer *Defender* articles comparing the two countries was written by Eugene Holmes, who was a professor in the philosophy department at Howard University. The article, titled “Spread of Anti-Semitism Seen Menace to U.S. Battle For Racial Equality,” discussed the dangers anti-Semitism brought to Black Americans.⁵⁸⁰ In this article, published in June of 1944, nearing the end of the war, Holmes said that anti-Semitism had on the rise in recent months in the United States. Holmes wrote that a few liberal states have introduced statutes that would make anti-Semitic actions illegal. He said that people, like himself, who teach “the facts about the ‘races of mankind’” know that racism was based completely on false science or no science.

This article was a great example of the dangers of having someone who is seemingly qualified to discuss eugenics or the “science” of racism. Holmes was a philosopher at Howard University. Many of the articles in the *Defender* discuss how Black people should not follow anti-Semitism. This indicates that many Black Americans believed in anti-Semitic ideas.

In an article published after the war in Europe was over, the *Defender* discussed how the idea of a “master race” needed to be eliminated from the American education as

⁵⁸⁰ Eugene Holmes, “Spread of Anti-Semitism Seen Menace to U.S. Battle for Racial Equality,” *Chicago Defender* (Chicago, IL), June 3, 1944.

well as the German.⁵⁸¹ This was written after the Allies had announced that the German people would be “re-educated to a better way of living.” The author, Marie Dowdell, said she agreed that the Germans needed to be reeducated, but she thought that white Americans needed to remember that there was a group of people in the South who thought of themselves as “masters” over Black Americans. She concludes the article by writing: “As the old saying goes, why not kill two birds with one stone, banish the German’s faults, yes, but ignore not your own.”

The final article from the *Defender* on this topic was a front-page article on October 27, 1945, with the massive headline “KKK Crosses Burn Again.”⁵⁸² The author, John LeFlore, referred to the Ku Klux Klan as America’s fascists. The Klan had burned a cross atop a mountain outside of Atlanta, boasting that it could be seen sixty miles away. Black people said they felt both amused and angry at the burning cross, but nobody felt frightened, according to LeFlore.

LeFlore added that neither Catholics nor Jews offered any condemnation of the Klan. The Klan’s grand dragon, Samuel Green, said: “cross burning was halted by the Georgia Klan during the war “because it was necessary that all factions unite to win the war.” The article continued to another page within the newspaper, discussing more information about the Klan in Georgia. The article concluded: “Negro Atlantans,

⁵⁸¹ Marie Dowdell, “Purge ‘Master Race’ Idea from Americans as Well as Nazis,” *Chicago Defender*, (Chicago, IL) Oct. 13, 1945.

⁵⁸² John LeFlore, “KKK Crosses Burn Again,” *Chicago Defender*, (Chicago, IL), Oct. 27, 1945.

however, know that ‘Dr.’ Green, like all of his ilk, could teach Goebbels and other Nazi persecutors the technique of the art of lying and perversion.”

Not long after an article was published about how Nazis and Americans needed to be reeducated about racism and race itself, the *Defender* published this article discussing how the Klan was going to rise again. This may demonstrate just how little overall progress was made in fighting white supremacy.

Montgomery Advertiser

Like the *Times*, the *Advertiser* only ran three articles comparing the United States with Nazi Germany. The first article was published in October of 1933 and was titled “Some German Visitors.”⁵⁸³ Samuel Dickstem, who was chairman of the immigration committee for the U.S. House of Representatives, investigated Nazi activities within America. Dickstem said at least 300 people from Germany came to the United States to “spread dissension and advanced the cause of the neurotic Hitler regime.” The author also said that these agents believed: “America is fertile soil for the spread of their tinsel imitation of fascism.” This was not listed as a wire story. It also does not include a dateline or a byline.

At the end of the article, the author wrote: “Nothing in modern politics, with the possible exception of Russian Communism, is quite so stupid, unimaginative and futile as Hitlerism— nothing, except Communism quite so immoral, indecent, cowardly and unnecessary.”

⁵⁸³ “Some German Visitors,” *Montgomery Advertiser*, (Montgomery, AL) Oct. 13, 1933.

The next article delved into the thoughts of the Ku Klux Klan. The article, “Black Shirts, Brown Shirts and Nighthshirts,” was published in July of 1937.⁵⁸⁴ The article began by quoting Hiram W. Evans, imperial wizard of the Klan, who said: “the Klan will ride again to stamp out Communism.” The author responded to the statement in the next paragraph: “That message is about as welcome as would be the announcement by the U.S. Public Health Service that everybody in this country was to be exposed to tuberculosis in a drive to stamp out malaria.” This article could have been an opinion piece, though it is not labeled as such. There is no byline, wire identification, or dateline. The author cites Herbert Agar, who was a columnist for the *Louisville Courier-Journal*, saying that the idea of getting rid of anything in the name of the United States was hypocritical and that someone like the Russians or Hitler who would agree with the premise of stamping out a political minority.

The fact that a leader of the Ku Klux Klan was given a platform to discuss the Klan’s goals is notable, yet this was in 1937. While Evans wasn’t talking specifically about Black Americans or Jews, it still shows that the *Advertiser* was still willing to promote a group whose ideals were terroristic and discriminatory.

In the final article comparing the two countries, the *Advertiser* published a letter addressing these issues by Raymond Clapper.⁵⁸⁵ Clapper was a well-respected journalist

⁵⁸⁴ “Black Shirts, Brown Shirts and Nighthshirts,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), Aug. 24, 2022.

⁵⁸⁵ Raymond Clapper, “Clapper’s Letter,” *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL) Dec. 30, 1938.

in both the newspaper and radio industries. He wrote that if there is one thing that does “not make friends and influence people in the United States, it is Nazi propaganda.”

Clapper wrote that Germany was trying to explain its anti-Semitic ideas by comparing them to the Jim Crow South. Clapper said:

Actually the policy of our government and public pressure are directed toward improving the condition of the Negro race and have been ever since the Civil War, whereas the policy of Hitler’s regime and all of its pressure are directed at driving the Jews back into a status more cruel than that from which the United States rescued the Negroes 75 years ago. Only a few days ago the Supreme Court ordered the University of Missouri to provide a negro law student with the same educational facilities that it grants white students. Where our public policy is to combat race hatred, public policy in Germany is to inflame it. In racial tolerance, the Nazis and the United States face in opposite directions.

Clapper said that the “most helpless” part of Nazism is the attempt to use the United States as propaganda. He said this because Nazi ideas in America are “self-defeating” and “alien” to Americans.

This is an example of the hypocrisy of Americans at this time. This shows Clapper, a white man who was respected, describing how America’s race laws are beneficial for the Black American and that nothing like Naziism could ever happen in the United States.

The most noticeable difference between these three publications is that the *Defender* made the comparisons between Nazi Germany and the United States much

more than the other two publications. The *Advertiser's* articles are heavily reliant on opinions and may even have been intended to be opinion articles altogether. The most revealing fact about these publications is that much of the comparison is about how something like the Nazi's rise to power could never happen in the United States and something like anti-Semitism could never happen. The next chapter will conclude this thesis by offering a final analysis and discussion of the findings.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

This thesis utilized historical analysis methods to review more than 2,500 articles in the *New York Times*, *Chicago Defender*, and *Montgomery Advertiser*. 141 articles were selected and analyzed for the study. These articles were chosen by utilizing the search terms discussed in the methods chapter, fitting the criteria of being related to discrimination in their respective countries. All three of these publications had distinct styles of covering the topics of Nazi racism and discrimination and American racism and discrimination.

The main research question of this thesis was: how did United States newspapers cover Nazi racism compared to how they covered American racism? As discussed in Chapter 5: Direct Comparison, reporters were indeed making comparisons between the United States and Nazi Germany. Not all of them, however, wrote that they were similar. The *Advertiser* published this quote in 1938: “Where our public policy is to combat race hatred, public policy in Germany is to inflame it. In racial tolerance, the Nazis and the United States face in opposite directions.”⁵⁸⁶ There were several articles where the author wrote that something like Nazi discrimination and laws could never happen in the United States. There was some type of blindness or hypocrisy when it came to such critiques.

This analysis shows that all three of these newspapers were more concerned with coverage of the Nazis than they were about race issues in the United States. This might not be surprising, as World War II and the tragedies happening in Germany and Europe

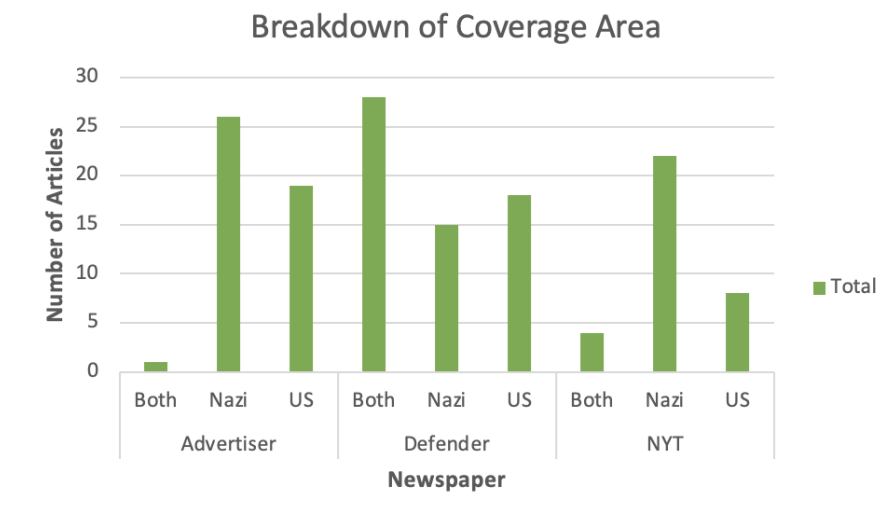
⁵⁸⁶ Clapper’s Letter. *Montgomery Advertiser*.

were the biggest news stories of the century. The hypocrisy, however, is the issue of this finding. Why did newspapers publish stories discussing the atrocities of the Nazis, when discrimination and even murder were happening locally?

The *Times*, *Defender*, and *Advertiser* represent different three areas of the press during the first half of the twentieth century. The *Times* was the most influential national American newspaper at the time, and maybe in the world. The *Defender* was one of, if not the most influential Black newspapers during this time. The *Advertiser* represents a southern newspaper in an area where lynchings and racial discrimination were prevalent – and the newspaper even apologized in 2018 for its slanted anti-Black coverage during the era under study.

Figure 1

Graph of coverage area



The *Defender* was the most critical of the United States and published the most articles comparing the plight of Jews to that of Black Americans. This is not surprising as the *Defender* was the most concerned with race and discrimination issues as an advocacy press for African Americans. It was surprising how much of a difference there was between the three newspapers, however. The *Times* included many articles that gave a platform to racist eugenics “experts” who sometimes defended the Nazi laws and ideologies. The *Times* ran these opinions with no critique and no counterpoint. The *Defender* did the opposite, allowing university professors, or other educated, well-regarded sources to explain why eugenics is wrong and racist.

As mentioned in prior chapters, there was a reliance on Associated Press articles by all three of these publications, but none as much as the *Advertiser*. This allows limited analysis of these articles. It is obvious that these topics were deemed important to the editorial team, or they would not have been syndicated for the newspaper. The content of the articles cannot be analyzed as the newspapers were not responsible for writing the content, the Associated Press was.

A major takeaway I had from this analysis was the difference in writing styles between modern journalists and journalists during this time. The topics the journalists were writing about were very serious, and often tragic and emotional stories, both in the United States and Nazi-occupied Europe. The articles were written in a very matter-of-fact way, without emotion. Modern newspapers and media outlets include much more emotion in their reporting. This comparison can be clearly seen by reading the

Montgomery Advertiser's 2018 articles cited in the literature review of this paper. When talking about similar topics in similar periods, the emotion pours out from the modern *Advertiser*, the coverage of the newspaper's racist history written in modern times. In contrast, the issue was hardly touched in the past, and when it was, it was sterile and emotionless.

Of the three newspapers under study, the editors at the *Times* may have felt the most pressure to avoid or sterilize the real story. The *Times* was owned by a Jewish family and attempted to minimize the situation for Jews in Germany and Europe, so that readers wouldn't think the *Times* was biased in favor of Jews. Because of this, however, the *Times* went in the complete opposite direction, failing in covering the situation. As mentioned before, it was considered the newspaper of record at the time for not only the general public, but public opinion leaders like politicians and government officials. This, in addition to having the largest audience and reach, made the content of the *Times* highly influential. But the *Times* failed in many of its articles to provide good, solid reporting for readers. There were many articles discussing controversial issues, such as eugenics and anti-miscegenation, where only one source was included in an article. While ethical standards were different at this time, there were still implications for having poor judgment. Allowing one person to discuss their opinion on these topics is hardly even a news story, it is just an opinion piece.

Many of the *Times* articles failed in providing adequate journalism to the readers because the reporters were not covering the issues well enough. Speeches and other events were seen extensively in this study, but the discussion of critical issues was not

included in the normal news cycle, at least in the context of this thesis. This is still something journalists struggle with today, in 2022. Events give reporters a predetermined structure to guide their articles. Abstract issues can be presented in events like protests or speeches. But covering an issue without that structure is more difficult for journalists to cover well.

The *Defender* had similar issues but there was one major difference: the people who were given a platform by the *Defender* were almost always disagreeing with someone who was a proponent of eugenics or other discrimination. This, maybe unintended, gives two voices in the story for readers to hear. This is still not ideal, as one voice is largely dominating the article, but it still is better than not discussing different or opposing voices.

The least emotion was portrayed in the *Times*. An example of this is the short 1934 Associated Press article, which was syndicated for the *Times*, “Eugenics Courts Formed.”⁵⁸⁷ The lead of this story is “Thuringian State authorities moved rapidly today and established eighteen courts to handle exclusively the cases of persons suffering incurable ailments who will be subject to sterilization operations under a decree made effective today.” This almost sounds like a press release coming from state-run media. The final sentence of the story is “It was estimated that 400,000 hereditary defectives may come under the jurisdiction of the courts.” The writing is unremarkable, but from a modern perspective, this article has high news value but seems empty. The newspaper

⁵⁸⁷ “Eugenics Courts Formed,” *New York Times*.

missed a prime opportunity to delve into key, related issues. There are no interviews with people who will be subject to the sterilization rules. Americans. The topics of lynching, murder, genocide, deportation, and so many more were written in a way that essentially stated “this happened.” This, of course, was before the civil rights movement that began in the mid-1950s and grew exponentially in the 1960s. As Roberts and Klibanoff discussed in the *Race Beat*, mainstream American journalism did not cover such issues relating to the atrocities in Black American life until the 1950s.⁵⁸⁸

Another one of the overarching and noteworthy issues in these articles is that very few stories featured bylines for the reporters. This, mixed with the articles that only include one source, makes it unclear who the messenger or source actually is. Not having bylines during this period seems to be common when viewed in context, looking through the other articles in the same issues of these newspapers. This does not change, however, the lack of transparency that a byline gives to reporters.

This research was not focused on coverage of the Holocaust deliberately. Comparing the Holocaust to anything committed in the United States is incredibly complex, as there are no obvious events that mirror it. Specific search terms about the Holocaust were not used because of this. Part of the search range was when the Holocaust was happening, but there are little to no mentions of it at all by that name. The Holocaust was not initially called the Holocaust, but the *Times* used the term as early as 1943.⁵⁸⁹ By

⁵⁸⁸ *Race Beat*.

⁵⁸⁹ Julian Meltzer, “Palestine Zionists Find Outlook Dark,” *New York Times* (New York, NY) May 23, 1943.

the last few years of the war, people knew, to some extent, what was happening in the death camps. Maybe these articles were not found because the search terms used in this study were not sufficient to locate these artifacts. Some, however, were broad enough that I initially thought they would be included.

This research was also not focused on people with disabilities or women, who were also greatly affected by Nazi and American discrimination. As written previously, the Nazis, and eugenicists as a whole, were not just focused on sterilization and the separation of different races. They believed that a woman's body belonged to "society" as a way to increase the population, according to the first *Advertiser* article in this section.⁵⁹⁰ This is reminiscent of the 2022 United States Supreme Court decision that overturned *Roe v. Wade*, leading to women not having access to abortions and other health services.

Laurel Leff said it perfectly in *Buried by the Times* when she wrote about *Times* journalists handling of stories: "they dropped it inside the newspaper with a tiny headline and no follow-up, a gesture that probably went unnoticed and unchallenged by all the *New York Times* journalists who came in contact with the story."⁵⁹¹ This conclusion is consistent with the findings of this thesis. The issue was not solely follow-up articles, but rather a lack of seemingly-basic journalism principles and ethics. Many of these stories didn't have enough context to explain the situation in Europe at the time. If someone only read the articles included in this thesis, they would have little-to-no idea of the Holocaust

⁵⁹⁰ "Nazis Believe a Woman's Body Belongs to All," *Montgomery Advertiser* (Montgomery, AL), Dec. 22, 1935.

⁵⁹¹ *Buried by the Times*, 330.

or many of the other tragedies in Nazi Germany. These issues may not have just been the fault of the journalists themselves. This period did not benefit from the same luxuries that journalists have in 2022. Getting information about the ongoings in Germany was not as easy as it would be today.

As discussed, the news coverage changed dramatically after World War II ended. The famous Swedish sociologist Gunnar Myrdal said the nation would be “shocked and shaken” when the press eventually told the stories of the deep south.⁵⁹² The “race beat,” which was the coverage of Black issues by the white mainstream press, began in 1955 with the lynching of Emmett Till.⁵⁹³ Black journalists entered the courtroom to cover the trial and white journalists visited the deep South, writing stories about the treatment of Black Americans that “shocked” northerners.⁵⁹⁴ Both Black and white reporters had, for the most part, the same amount of access for the first time. Till had been brutally lynched, but when his casket arrived back in Chicago from Mississippi, his mother, Mamie Bradley, decided that his casket would remain open, because it would be impossible for her to describe it. Tens of thousands of people saw his horribly disfigured body.

Black Americans were facing the same racism and discrimination after the white mainstream press began covering these issues in the deep South. The Black press’ Double V Campaign fight didn’t stop when the Nazis were defeated. In the 1960s, similar issues were still seen in the United States. With the Vietnam War dominating the news cycle,

⁵⁹² *The Race Beat*, 406.

⁵⁹³ *Ibid.* 85.

⁵⁹⁴ *Ibid.* 86.

the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee, or SNCC, was fighting the same battle as Black Americans in the 1940s. One poster in the SNCC's Atlanta headquarters said "No Vietnamese ever called me nigger."⁵⁹⁵ Similarly, in a 1966 press conference, one person said:

We're in sympathy with, and support the men in this country who are unwilling to respond to a military draft which would compel them to contribute their lives to United States military aggression in Vietnam in the name of 'freedom' we find so false in this country.⁵⁹⁶

Another groundbreaking instance, not dissimilar to Emmett Till's lynching and trial was the 1965 march on Selma, Alabama. The television stations showed "Bull Connor and his dogs" beating up on peaceful civil rights protesters.⁵⁹⁷ Connor was the police commissioner of Birmingham, Alabama, and was "the most powerful racist in Alabama," according to one historian.⁵⁹⁸ He was infamous for siccing police dogs onto protesters. When people saw these horrific images on their televisions, it had the same effect as seeing the photos of Till's body: horror and disbelief.

One of the difficult portions of this thesis was finding the correct search terms, as terminology has changed drastically in the last 85 years. In the *Times*, *Defender*, and *Advertiser*, Black people are referred to as Negroes. There were a few instances where

⁵⁹⁵ *The Race Beat*, 397.

⁵⁹⁶ *Ibid.*

⁵⁹⁷ *Ibid.*, 400-401.

⁵⁹⁸ *In Sullivan's Shadow*, 99.

“Black” was used and of course derogatory terms and racial slurs were included. But the *Times* eventually established a policy for referring to Black people in the 1960s. Many civil rights leaders preferred the term Negro while others preferred Black. The *Times* instructed reporters to ask sources which term they wished to go by.⁵⁹⁹ This may seem like a small detail, and maybe it is. But the *Times* seems to have been more committed to inclusivity for Black people.

If there is one person people identify with the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, it would be Martin Luther King Jr, who, of course, was not discussed until this point in this thesis, because he would have only been 16 years old by the time World War II ended. When King was assassinated in 1968, one reporter wrote: “White slaves killed Dr. King. The moment the trigger fired, King was the free man. The white killer was a slave to fear, a slave to his own sense of inferiority, a slave to hatred, a slave to all bloody instincts that surge in a brain when a human being decides to become beast.”

The rise of anti-Semitism and racism in the United States and the world over the last few years is proof that people have much to learn from the atrocities seen during the World War II-era.

⁵⁹⁹ *The Race Beat*, 401.

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