

UNITED STATES
HOLOCAUST
MEMORIAL
MUSEUM ushmm.org

**RACIAL “SCIENCE”
AND LAW
IN NAZI GERMANY AND
THE UNITED STATES**

BLACK PEOPLE IN THE AMERICAS



- Spanish *conquistadors* brought the first enslaved Africans to the Western Hemisphere in the early 1500s. They were forced to labor for the explorers and to build settlements, including what is now St. Augustine, Florida.
- Enslaved Africans arrived in the English colony of Virginia in 1619, only 12 years after the colony was founded.
- Throughout the Western Hemisphere, white Spanish, English, and French settlers grew wealthy from the work of enslaved Africans and indigenous people. They justified slavery by arguing that Black people were inferior to white people.
- At least 12.5 million African men, women, and children were taken across the “Middle Passage” and enslaved in the “New World.”

1500–1860

SLAVERY IN THE UNITED STATES



- There were nearly four million enslaved Black people in the United States in 1860. The American economy depended on race-based slavery.
- Politicians had argued for decades over the spread of slavery into new US states and territories. Southern lawmakers argued that enslaved people were valuable property and should be able to move between states. Northern lawmakers sought compromises to limit slavery's spread.
- Enslaved people resisted their enslavement. They organized revolts, attempted to escape captivity, and worked deliberately slowly or poorly. This poster advertises a reward for the capture of four Black men and women who escaped enslavement.

1860

AMERICAN CIVIL WAR



- After the Supreme Court ruled in the 1850s that restrictions on slavery were unconstitutional, the new Republican Party argued that slavery should be limited by geography. Its candidate, Abraham Lincoln, won the presidency in 1860.
- Southern states responded by seceding and forming a new nation, the Confederate States of America (CSA), with slavery as its “cornerstone.” According to the US Constitution, waging war against the United States was an act of treason.
- The United States and the CSA fought a bloody war. Once Lincoln decided that the war could not be won without abolishing slavery, he signed the Emancipation Proclamation, which freed enslaved people in the Confederacy.
- Nearly 200,000 Black men, including many who were formerly enslaved, volunteered and fought bravely for the United States.

1861–1865

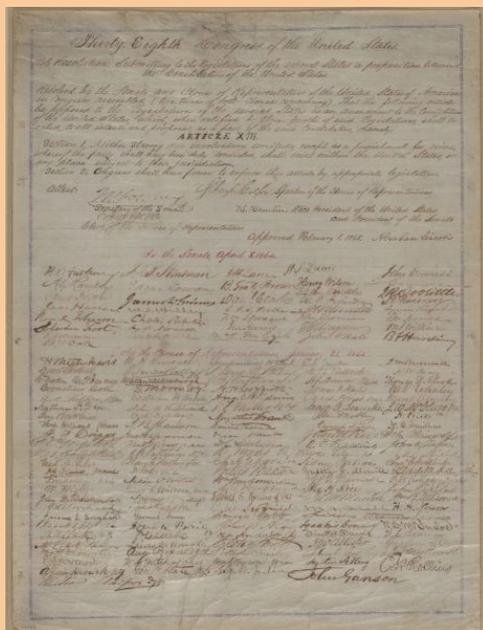
RECONSTRUCTION BEGINS



- “Reconstruction” refers to a 12-year period of laws, recovery from the Civil War, and efforts to make the United States a fairer and more democratic country. The Republican Party held a majority in Congress and in many state legislatures, including in the southern United States. The first Black congressmen, some of whom had been enslaved, were elected.
- Congress established the Freedmen’s Bureau, which provided food, clothing, and medical care for Black people who had been enslaved, in addition to ensuring fair employment. However, the Bureau was not properly funded and failed to grant newly freed Black people ownership of land or the right to make decisions about their own lives. By 1872, white southerners forced Congress to shut down the Freedmen’s Bureau.

1865

THIRTEENTH TO FIFTEENTH AMENDMENTS TO THE US CONSTITUTION RATIFIED



- After the Civil War, Congress passed and states ratified three new amendments to the US Constitution. The Thirteenth Amendment (seen here), ratified in 1865, abolished slavery except as punishment.
- The Fourteenth Amendment, ratified in 1868, affirmed that laws should protect all people born in the United States (or those who immigrated and became citizens) equally. Former Confederate states had to ratify this amendment to rejoin the United States.
- The Fifteenth Amendment, ratified in 1870, stated that the right to vote could not be limited on the basis of a person's race or color.

1865–1870

FIRST BLACK CODES PASSED



The chain gang - Thomasville - Georgia

- The Black Codes were a series of laws passed in the southern United States to limit the rights of newly freed Black people, who were beginning to make social and political progress.
- These laws restricted Black people from being able to vote, to own firearms, or to serve on juries. Interracial marriage was also prohibited.
- The Black Codes established harsh punishments for any violation of the law, even minor or invented crimes. Because the Thirteenth Amendment outlawed slavery except as punishment for a crime, the Black Codes allowed white officials to arrest Black people and sentence them to forced labor, effectively re-enslaving them.

1865–1866

KU KLUX KLAN FOUNDED



- A group of former Confederate veterans founded the Ku Klux Klan (KKK) in Pulaski, Tennessee, as a way to assert white supremacy and deny rights and safety to newly freed Black people who were beginning to make social and political progress.
- The KKK was one of many groups formed at this time that used mob violence. These groups terrorized and murdered Black people and white Republicans throughout the South, destroying their property and intimidating them.
- This 1874 cartoon from *Harper's Weekly* magazine shows a KKK member shaking hands with a member of the White League about the desire to maintain “a White Man’s Government.”

DECEMBER 24, 1865

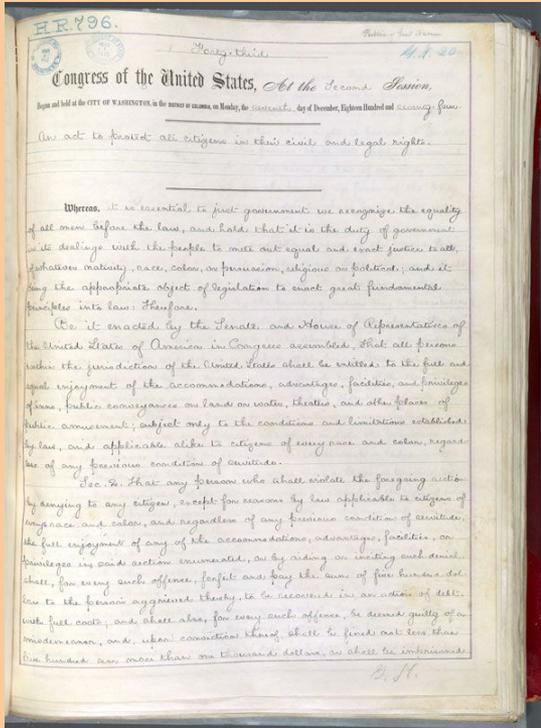
RECONSTRUCTION ENDS



- The presidential election of 1876 resulted in a tie. Members of Congress agreed on a compromise: Republican candidate Rutherford B. Hayes (seen here) would become president, and in exchange, he would end the US Army's military occupation of the southern United States.
- Democrats regained political control in the southern United States and continued to pass and enforce laws that discriminated against Black people. The Supreme Court upheld many of these laws.

1877

SUPREME COURT OVERTURNS 1875 CIVIL RIGHTS ACT



- In 1875, Congress passed the Civil Rights Act (seen here), which stated that all people had the right to “full and equal enjoyment” of public transportation, theaters, inns, and other businesses. It also mandated that all male citizens could serve as jurors, regardless of race or color.
- The act was supposed to be enforced by federal officers and the federal court system, but few people were arrested for violating it.
- The Supreme Court overturned the act by a vote of 8-1, arguing that the Fourteenth amendment (which established equal rights under the law) applied only to state laws, not to restrictions imposed by individuals or businesses.

OCTOBER 15, 1883

UNITED DAUGHTERS OF THE CONFEDERACY FOUNDED



- The United Daughters of the Confederacy (UDC), a women's group, formed in 1894. Members devoted themselves to keeping the memory of the Confederacy alive.
- The UDC fought for textbooks that portrayed the Civil War as a "Lost Cause." These books taught that the war had been fought over states' rights (rather than slavery), that Black people had been happy being enslaved, and that slaveowners were kind and generous toward their captives.
- Members also commissioned statues to publicly honor Confederate soldiers. Speeches at the dedication ceremonies made it clear that the statues were also being placed to intimidate the local Black community.

SEPTEMBER 10, 1894

US SUPREME COURT RULES ON “SEPARATE BUT EQUAL”



- Hoping to challenge Louisiana’s segregation laws in court, a citizens’ committee asked Homer Plessy to purposely break the law by riding in a “whites only” railcar. Plessy had only one Black great-grandparent, but under “one-drop” laws was legally considered Black. The committee arranged for Plessy to be arrested. He was put on trial and convicted.
- In the 1896 case *Plessy vs. Ferguson*, the Supreme Court upheld Plessy’s conviction. The Court stated that the Fourteenth amendment guaranteed only legal equality, not social equality.
- This decision officially legalized segregation. States claimed that segregated spaces, such as schools and railcars, were “separate but equal.”

MAY 18, 1896

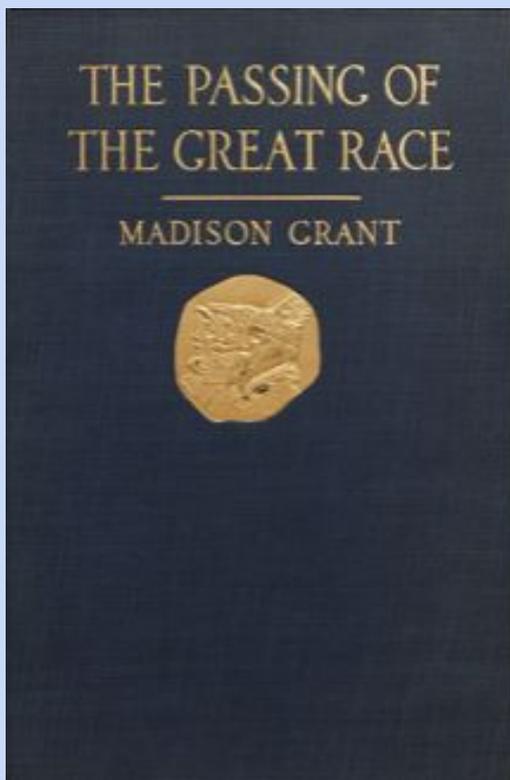
THE BIRTH OF A NATION PREMIERES



- *The Birth of Nation* was an epic historical drama based on the novel *The Clansman*. The three-hour-long silent film, featuring battle scenes and a musical score, told the story of the Civil War and Reconstruction. It depicted Black men as sexual predators and members of the Ku Klux Klan as heroes protecting white women.
- President Woodrow Wilson praised the film and hosted a screening at the White House.
- Although the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP) protested the film's release, *The Birth of a Nation* was a massive box office success.

FEBRUARY 8, 1915

THE PASSING OF THE GREAT RACE **PUBLISHED**



- In *The Passing of the Great Race*, prominent American lawyer and zoologist Madison Grant argued that people could be divided into races, and that some races were biologically superior to others. This is not true, but this pseudoscientific belief, called eugenics, was popular among American and European scientists in the early 20th century. Colleges throughout the United States taught courses on eugenics.
- Grant argued that immigrants to the United States weakened the nation and he pushed for strict immigration laws, particularly to exclude “races” he thought were inferior to white Christians.
- Adolf Hitler praised *The Passing of the Great Race* and echoed Grant’s arguments in his own book, *Mein Kampf*.

1916

GREAT MIGRATION BEGINS



- The “Great Migration” refers to the decisions by millions of Black families between 1916 and the 1970s to leave the southern United States. Many found work in major cities in the North and West, including New York, Detroit, and Los Angeles.
- Although these families tried to escape racial segregation in the South, many areas of the North were also segregated through redlining (a practice that limited where Black people could own property or charged them more money than white people).
- This painting is from a series of paintings by Jacob Lawrence depicting the Great Migration.

1916

HARLEM RENAISSANCE BEGINS



- As Black people settled in cities, a new wave of innovation in art, music, theater, and literature began in these communities.
- Centered in Harlem, a neighborhood in New York City where many Black people lived, these innovations, including jazz music, led many Black people to feel a new sense of ethnic pride. This artistic movement attracted white audiences as well, many of whom held racist fantasies of Black performers as “exotic” and “primitive.”
- Despite recognition, many well-known Black artists still struggled to support themselves.

1918

NAZI PARAMILITARY *STURMABTEILUNG* (SA) ESTABLISHED



- After World War I, many paramilitary (militia) groups formed in Germany and fought against each other in the streets. One group, the *Sturmabteilung* (or SA), supported the new Nazi Party. Members of the SA were also known as “stormtroopers” or “brownshirts” because of the color of their uniforms.
- The SA provided security for Hitler and other Nazi leaders, promoted Nazi ideology, and engaged in street violence against opponents and Jews. By 1934, there were four million members of the SA.

1921

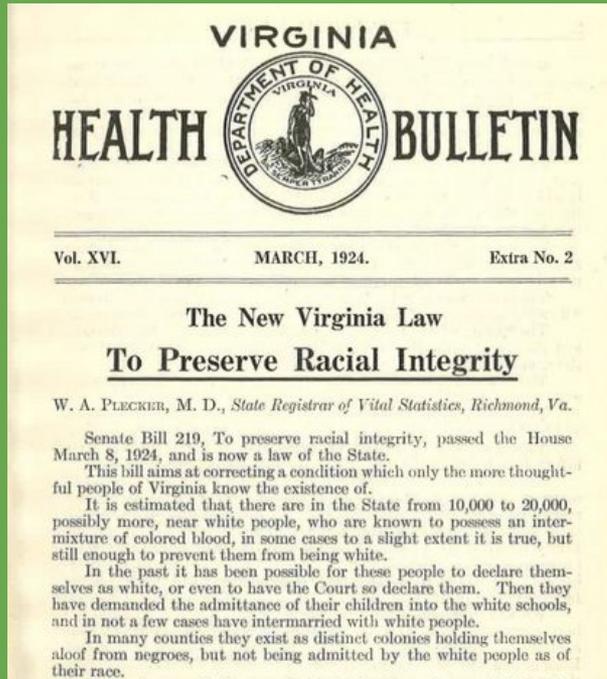
TULSA RACE MASSACRE



- On May 31, 1921, violence broke out in Tulsa, Oklahoma. After years of rising racial tensions and white resentment of Black economic success, rumors flew that a Black teenager had assaulted a white woman.
- Local members of the African Black Brotherhood, which advocated armed defense against racist attacks, attempted to protect the teenager from being lynched. Police deputized and provided weapons to white Tulsans, and shots were fired in the conflict.
- White Tulsans destroyed thousands of homes and hundreds of businesses owned by Black Tulsans in Greenwood, a majority-Black neighborhood, as seen in this picture. An estimated 10,000 Black Tulsans were left homeless and an unknown number were murdered.

MAY 31–JUNE 1, 1921

RACIAL INTEGRITY ACT PASSED



- Many states had laws that defined who was considered Black and that prohibited interracial marriage. Virginia’s “Racial Integrity Act” is an example of one of these laws.
- The law stated that only people with “no trace whatever of any blood other than Caucasian” could be considered white. It made interracial marriage a felony punishable by a prison sentence.
- A supporter of the law told Virginia lawmakers that interracial marriage would “spell the downfall of our civilization. . . . This is a matter of both national and racial life and death.”
- The US Supreme Court ruled the law unconstitutional in 1967.

MARCH 20, 1924

IMMIGRATION ACT OF 1924 SIGNED INTO US LAW



- President Calvin Coolidge signed the Johnson-Reed Act, also known as the “National Origins Act.” This act was based in eugenics, the false idea that some “races” were biologically superior to others.
- This new immigration law limited the total number of immigrants to around 164,000 people per year and established quotas. Only a specific number of people born in a given country could immigrate to the United States each year.
- More than 85 percent of the immigration slots (about 141,000) were reserved for people born in Northern and Western Europe. Fewer than 1 percent (1,200) of the slots were reserved for people born in Africa. Asians were prevented from immigrating at all.

MAY 26, 1924

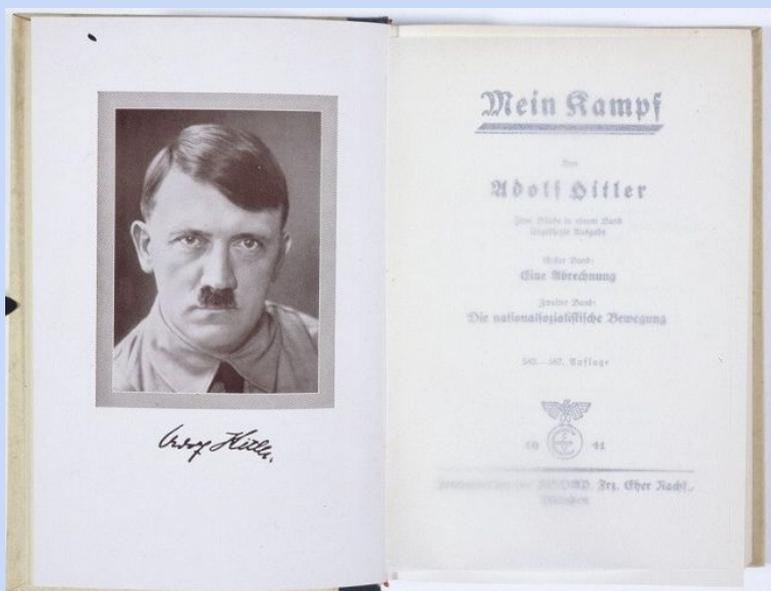
MILLIONS JOIN THE KU KLUX KLAN



- Millions of Americans throughout the United States joined the Ku Klux Klan in the 1920s. Many had been influenced by *The Birth of a Nation* and the eugenics movement, and held anti-immigrant and antisemitic prejudices.
- The Klan was anti-Catholic, antisemitic, anti-immigrant, and anti-Black. Its slogan was “100 percent Americans.”
- The KKK was a mainstream organization that held public pageants, marches, picnics, and rallies. By 1925, the Klan had an estimated four million members.
- This photo shows a 1926 KKK parade in Washington, DC.

1925

MEIN KAMPF PUBLISHED



- In 1923, Hitler and the Nazi Party attempted to take over the German government by force. The coup attempt failed and Hitler served nine months in prison.
- While in prison, Hitler wrote *Mein Kampf* (“My Struggle”), an autobiography that also laid out his plan for the future of Germany. He expressed violent racist and antisemitic ideas and stated that Germany needed to expand to the East. *Mein Kampf* sold more than 12 million copies.
- In *Mein Kampf*, Hitler praised the United States for excluding “the immigration of certain races.” In a second volume published in 1927, he applauded the United States as the “one state” attempting to create a race-based hierarchy.

JULY 18, 1925

FORCED STERILIZATION LEGALIZED



- Carrie Buck (pictured on the left with her mother) was from a poor family and had little formal education. After she was raped and impregnated, her foster family sent her to an institution where doctors declared her “feebleminded.” They forcibly sterilized her.
- In *Buck vs. Bell*, the Supreme Court ruled that states could sterilize citizens against their will, preventing them from having children. A Supreme Court justice wrote, “Three generations of imbeciles are enough.”
- Many states added sterilization laws based in eugenics, meant to prevent “inferior” people from having children. Black and Brown Americans were targeted by these laws, and tens of thousands of Americans were sterilized.

MAY 2, 1927

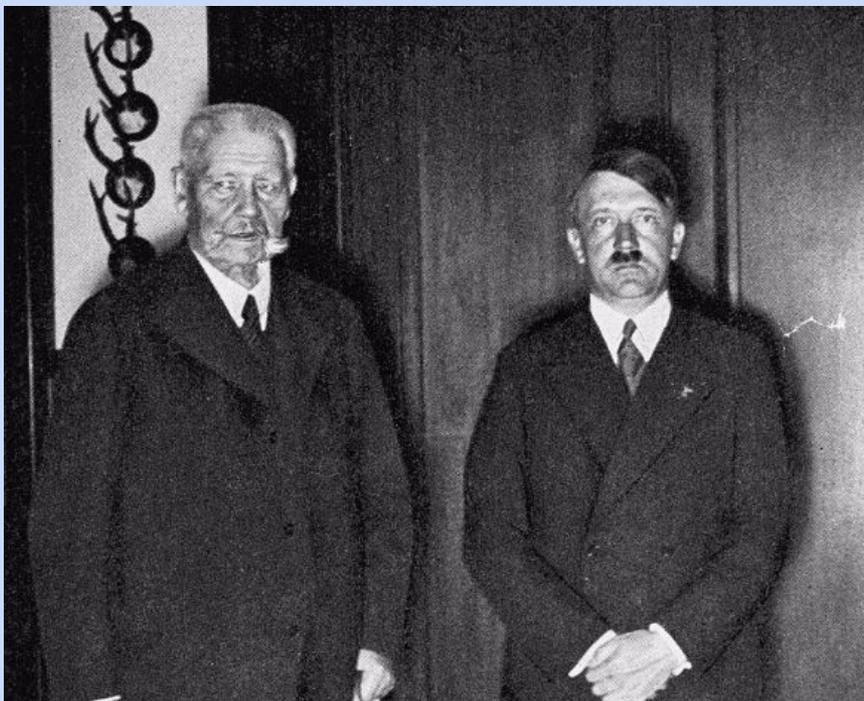
ANTISEMITISM IN EUROPE



- *Antisemitism* means “prejudice against or hatred of Jews.”
- In the Middle Ages and early modern era, religious antagonism towards Europe’s Jews resulted in anti-Jewish legislation, expulsions, and violence. In the 19th century, many of these restrictions were lifted.
- In 1933, there were about 500,000 Jewish Germans, about 1 percent of the overall German population. Most spoke German and were integrated in the community. Many Jewish German men fought in World War I for Germany. This 1930 photo shows the Zernik family, who were German and Jewish, at a celebration.

PRE-1933

ADOLF HITLER APPOINTED CHANCELLOR OF GERMANY



- In the November 1932 German elections, the Nazi Party won 33 percent of the vote, more than any other party.
- German president Paul von Hindenburg (*left*) appointed Adolf Hitler (*right*), the head of the National Socialist German Workers' Party (Nazi Party), as the new chancellor of Germany.
- Conservative politicians thought they could control Hitler and his followers.

JANUARY 30, 1933

CIVIL SERVICE LAW

THE MANCHESTER GUARDIAN WEEKLY, FRIDAY, MAY 19, 1933

NAZI "PURGE" OF THE UNIVERSITIES A Long List of Dismissals

We publish below a detailed list of the professors who have been dismissed from their posts in German universities between April 13 and May 4. There are also in the list a few assistants or lecturers who have been dismissed and several professors who have resigned their posts.

The list is for the most part compiled from announcements in the German press, and we have made it as complete and accurate as the sources permit. Many famous names are included in the list, and if many others are unknown to British readers we think that the list will be found impressive both in itself and in the comprehensiveness of the subjects covered. Most of the professors have been dismissed because of their Jewish origin, a few possibly because of their liberal sentiments.

DISMISSED ON APRIL 13

Frankfort-on-Main

Professor Heller, Public Law. Formerly of Berlin. (Acted for the Prussian Government before the Supreme Court in its appeal against the appointment of a Commissioner.)
Professor Huchelmeier, Philosophy. Head of the Institute of Sociology.
Professor Lorenz, Economics. (Formerly of Kiel.)
Professor Mannheim, Sociology.
Professor Tillych, Philosophy and Sociology. (Well-known religious Socialist. Formerly editor of "New Pages for Socialism.")
Professor Stahelmeier, Sociology and Law. One of the creators of German labour legislation.

Well-known through his book on the legal structure of the League protocols.
Professor Well, Oriental Languages.
Professor Pritram, Economics.
Professor Richard Koch, History of Medicine.
Dr. Glotzer, Jewish Religion.
Professor Plessner, Oriental Languages.
Professor Sommerfeld, German Philology.
Professor Walter Frankel, Metallurgy.
Professor Fritz Mayer, Chemistry.
Professor Ernst Kahn, Commercial Journalism.
Professor Neumarck, Economics.
Professor Ernst Cohn, Private and Commercial Law.
Professor Braun, Hygiene and Bacteriology.
Professor Ludwig Wertheimer, Banking Law.
Professor Altshul, Methods of Marketing Research.

Marburg

Professor Köpke, Political Science.
Professor Jacobson, Indogermanic Philology. On April 27 he threw himself in front of a train and was killed at once. He was 53 years old.

Göttingen

Professor Haug, Criminal Law.
Professor Courant, Mathematics.
Professor Born, Theoretical Physics.
Professor Emmy Noether.
Professor Bernusin, Statistics.
Professor Bondi.

Königsberg

Professor Henard, Public Law (may be reappointed).

Königsberg—Commercial Hochschule

Professor Boguski, Practical Economics.
Professor Hänler.
Professor Kürbs.

Kiel

Professor Cohn, Economics.
Professor Nisner, Economics.

DISMISSED ON APRIL 28

Heidelberg

Professor Radbruch (former Reich Minister of Justice). Criminal Law. Well-known as a champion of penal reform.

Berlin—German Hochschule für Politik

A free institution founded in 1920. Transferred into a State institution (end of April) with resignation of the President and Directors—Professor Dr. Jackh (a well-known writer on international affairs), Professor Dr. Simon, Professor Dr. Drees.

Berlin—University Institute for Cancer Research

Director resigned on May 1.—Professor Dr. Ferdinand Eisenhath, a pioneer of cancer research. A special chair was established for him in this subject in 1929.

DISMISSED ON MAY 1

Halle

Professor Frankl, History of Art.
Professor Kuch, History of German Law.
Professor Kitzinger, Criminal Law.
Professor Ditz, Philosophy.
Professor Hertz, Sociology (Viennese by birth, and now in Vienna. He wrote as a young man a well-known book, "Moderne Rassentheorien," opposing the theories of Stewart Houston Chamberlain).
Privat Dozent Dr. Baer, Pure Mathematics.

DISMISSED ON MAY 2

Berlin

Professor Dr. Peter Bona, Colloid Chemistry and Physiology.
Professor Dr. Friedrich Franz Friedmann, Tubercular Research.
Professor Dr. Hans Friedenthal, Physiology.
Professor Dr. Franz Blumenthal, Dermatology.
Professor Dr. Rittbaum, Psychiatry.
Professor Dr. Mitwoch, Semitic Philology.
Professor Dr. Julius Pokorny, Celtic Philology, author of studies of the culture and literature of Ireland.

- The German government issued the “Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service.”
- The law removed Jews and political opponents of the Nazis from civil service positions, including school, university, and government jobs. People were exempt only if they had been in that job before August 1914, had fought in World War I, or had lost a father or son in the war.
- Most Jewish lawyers were also forbidden to practice law.

APRIL 7, 1933

EDUCATION LAW



- The German government issued the “Law against Overcrowding in Schools and Universities.”
- The law stated that Jewish students could be no more than 5 percent of the student population of any public school or university.
- Many Jewish students had to leave public school and start attending private school.
- German schools taught Nazi racial ideas about the superiority of “Aryans” and the inferiority of Jews.

APRIL 25, 1933

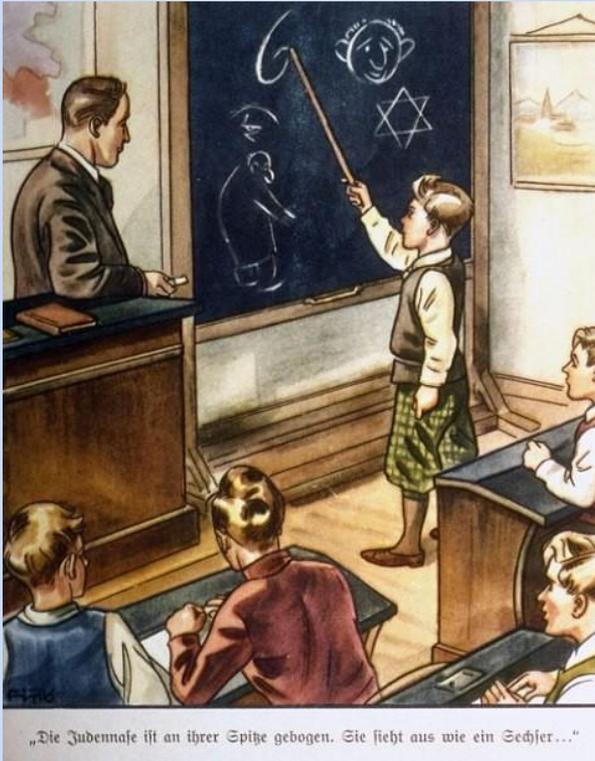
STERILIZATION LAW



- The German government passed the “Law for the Prevention of Offspring with Hereditary Diseases.”
- The law allowed the government to forcibly sterilize people with physical or mental disabilities so they could not have children.
- Under the law, 400,000 Germans were sterilized from January 1934 to May 1945.
- The caption of this propaganda slide reads “Life only as a Burden.”

JULY 14, 1933

NAZI RACISM TAUGHT IN SCHOOLS



- Beginning in 1933, Nazi racial theories were taught in classrooms. By 1936, 97 percent of German public school teachers had joined the National Socialist Teachers League.
- In the classroom, teachers taught students to be obedient, race-conscious, self-sacrificing Germans who were willing to die for Adolf Hitler and for Germany.
- This illustration is from the 1938 children's book *Der Giftpilz* (*The Poisonous Mushroom*), one of many antisemitic books that glorified so-called “Aryan” races and labeled Jews as parasites and criminals, the enemies of Germany.

1933–1938

ANTI-LYNCHING BILL PROPOSED



- “Lynching” refers to murder outside of the judicial system with multiple perpetrators.
- At least 3,265 Black Americans were lynched throughout the United States between 1883 and 1941. Black activists launched anti-lynching campaigns.
- Senators Edward Costigan and Robert Wagner proposed a bill to make it a federal crime for state law enforcement to either participate in or ignore lynchings. Senators representing southern states prevented the bill from being voted on.
- Although murder is a crime at the state and federal level, as of 2020, lynching is not a federal crime.

JANUARY 5, 1934

REICH CITIZENSHIP LAW



- This law defined who the German government considered “German” and who was a “Jew.” The law defined Jews as a race identified by blood and genealogy. It did not identify Judaism as a religion or culture. This genealogical chart helped Germans understand the new law.
- Under this law, Jews lost their citizenship and became “subjects of the state.” This law and the “Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor” are called the “Nuremberg Race Laws.”
- Nazi lawyers studied American laws restricting the rights of Black and Brown Americans when planning the Reich Citizenship Law.

SEPTEMBER 15, 1935

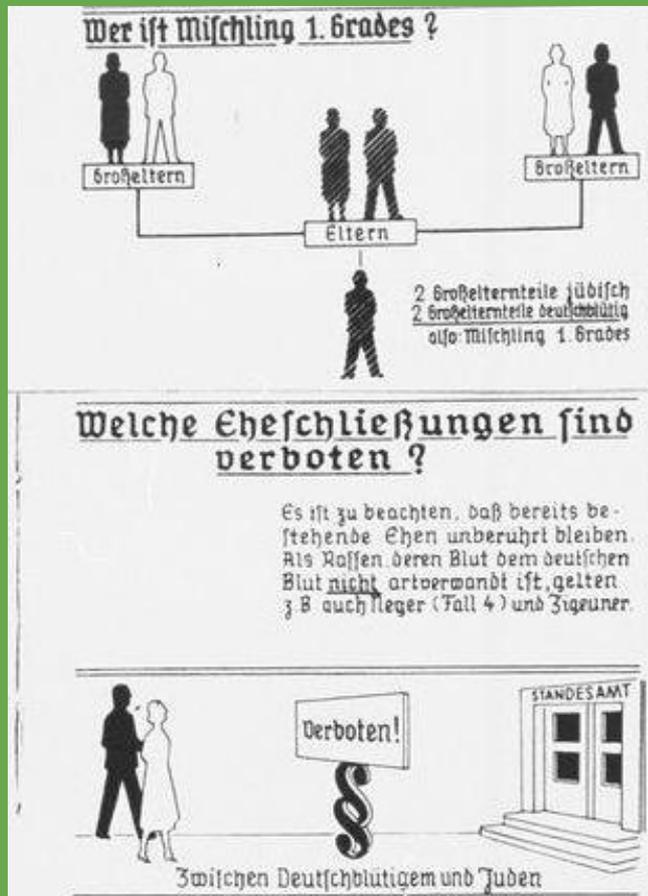
LAW FOR THE PROTECTION OF GERMAN BLOOD AND HONOR



- The German government banned the marriage between Jews and non-Jews.
- It also made sexual relations between these “mixed race” couples illegal. This crime was called *Rassenschande* (race defilement).
- This law and the “Reich Citizenship Law” are called the “Nuremberg Race Laws.”
- Nazi lawyers studied American laws prohibiting interracial marriage when writing this law.

SEPTEMBER 15, 1935

RACIAL DEFINITIONS EXPLAINED

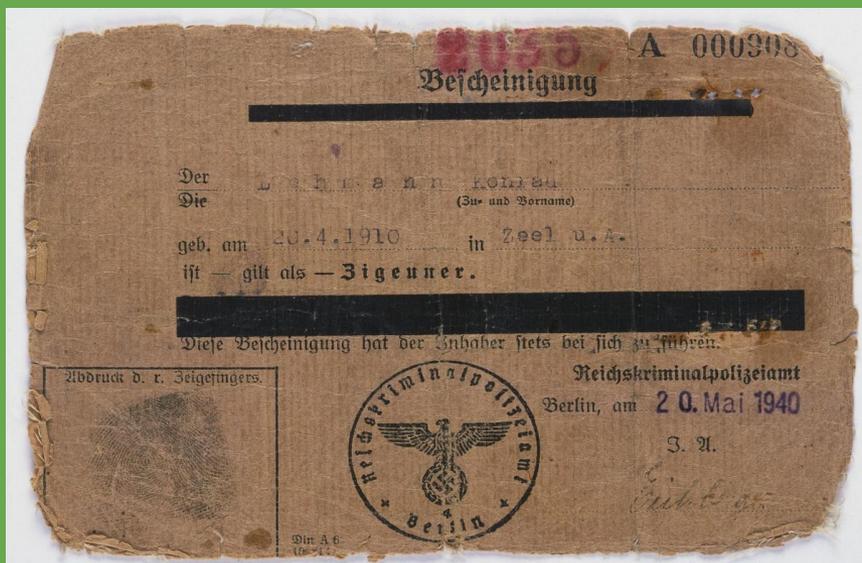


- The German government issued the “First Regulation” to the September 15, 1935 Reich Citizenship Law.
- The regulation clarified that Germans who were descended from one or two Jewish grandparents would be considered *Mischling* (an offensive word meaning mixed race, or “half-breed”). Those who had three or more Jewish grandparents were classified as Jews.
- “*Mischling*” were still permitted to vote and to hold civil service jobs.
- German Jews who had served in World War I lost their exemption from the April 7, 1933 law. They had to retire from civil service jobs by the end of the year.

NOVEMBER 14, 1935

NUREMBERG LAWS EXTENDED

- The Reich Minister of the Interior, Wilhelm Frick, announced an expansion of the September 15, 1935 Reich Citizenship Law.
- Frick stated that the citizenship law also applied to Roma and Sinti (referred to by the offensive word *Gypsy*) and to Black Germans.
- Roma, Sinti, and Black Germans lost their citizenship and were not permitted to marry “Aryan” Germans.
- This racial identity card identifies Konrad Lehman as a *Zigeuner* (Gypsy).



NOVEMBER 26, 1935

BERLIN OLYMPICS OPEN



- Throughout 1935, Americans debated whether the United States should boycott the 1936 Olympics, hosted by Nazi Germany. Ultimately, the United States decided to compete.
- Nazi Germany removed antisemitic signs from the streets prior to the arrival of international visitors and athletes. The Olympics was an enormous propaganda success for the country.
- Eighteen Black American athletes competed for the United States, including track star Jesse Owens. Despite winning multiple medals for their country, these athletes still faced racism and segregation after returning to the United States.

AUGUST 1, 1936

JEWISH REFUGEE CRISIS BEGINS



- On March 12, 1938, Germany annexed Austria, officially adding that country to Germany, in an event called the *Anschluss*. Jewish Austrians were immediately subjected to Germany's antisemitic laws.
- The United States had no laws to help refugees. Under the 1924 law, only 27,370 people born in Germany or Austria could immigrate to the United States each year. By June 1939, more than 300,000 people, most of them Jewish, were on the waiting list for immigration visas to the United States.
- As Germany expanded and invaded other countries, it became even more difficult for people to escape. This photo shows people waiting in line outside a police station in Vienna to collect immigration papers.

MARCH 1938

KRISTALLNACHT ATTACKS



- After learning that his family had been deported from Germany, a Polish-Jewish teenager shot a German diplomat in Paris. In retaliation, Nazi supporters launched a coordinated attack on Jewish-owned stores, synagogues, and homes across the Third Reich.
- The attacks became known as *Kristallnacht*, the “Night of Broken Glass.”
- Approximately 30,000 Jewish men and boys were arrested and sent to concentration camps. Hundreds of synagogues (including this one in Aachen, Germany) and more than 7,000 businesses were damaged or destroyed.
- Nazi Germany fined the Jewish community one billion Reichsmarks (\$72 billion today) to pay for the damage.

NOVEMBER 9–10, 1938

GERMANY INVADES POLAND



- The German army invaded Poland using a quick, decisive attack with a massive military force. This style of warfare was called *blitzkrieg* (lightning warfare).
- Great Britain and France (“the Allies”) had an alliance with Poland. On September 3, they declared war on Germany. The United States vowed to remain neutral. World War II in Europe began.
- On September 17, the Soviet Union invaded eastern Poland. Nazi Germany and the Soviet Union divided Poland between them. Poland surrendered in October 1939.

SEPTEMBER 1, 1939

JUD SÜSS PREMIERES



- *Jud Süß* (pronounced “Yood Seuss,” meaning “The Jew, Seuss”) was a Nazi propaganda film, a historical drama based on a novel set in Germany in the 1700s. This antisemitic movie told the story of a Jewish tax advisor (Seuss) who is ultimately executed for corruption and for raping a non-Jewish woman.
- Nazi propaganda minister Dr. Joseph Goebbels encouraged the making of the film and urged the director to make it more antisemitic.
- An estimated 20 million Germans saw the movie, making *Jud Süß* a major box office success.

SEPTEMBER 24, 1940

GERMANY INVADES THE SOVIET UNION



- Breaking the August 1939 non-aggression pact, Nazi Germany launched a surprise invasion of the Soviet Union and the areas occupied by the Soviet Union (including Lithuania, Latvia, and Estonia).
- Mobile killing squads, called *Einsatzgruppen*, followed behind the German lines, murdering Jews and other victims by shooting and gassing in gas vans. Approximately two million Jews died this way.
- Although the German military captured millions of Soviet prisoners of war, the Soviet Union did not surrender. The United States began supplying the Soviet Union through the Lend-Lease Act.

JUNE 22, 1941

U.S. ENTERS WORLD WAR II



- The United States imposed economic sanctions on Japan and cut off Japan's supply of oil. In retaliation, the Japanese military launched a surprise attack on the US Pacific fleet at Pearl Harbor, Hawaii. The United States declared war on Japan.
- On December 11, Nazi Germany declared war on the United States.
- The United States officially entered World War II and joined the Allies.
- The United States Army was racially segregated and non-white servicemembers were often assigned difficult and dangerous jobs.

DECEMBER 7, 1941

WANNSEE CONFERENCE



- German government officials and Nazi Party officials held a conference at the Wannsee Villa in a suburb of Berlin. They discussed the logistics of the “Final Solution.”
- The “Final Solution” was a code name for the mass murder of European Jews.
- The mass murder of Jews had already begun by the time the conference took place. At the Wannsee Conference, the Nazis discussed how to coordinate the expansion of the killing.

JANUARY 20, 1942

DOUBLE-V CAMPAIGN BEGINS

- James G. Thompson, a young Black man in Wichita, Kansas, wrote a letter to the *Pittsburgh Courier*, a Black newspaper. He asked, “Should I sacrifice my life to live half American?”
- Thompson proposed a “Double-V” campaign, representing “Victory Abroad” against Nazi Germany and “Victory at Home” against racism in the United States.
- The Double-V campaign was popular in the Black community, but many whites argued that the campaign might endanger the American war effort. Those complaints were not believable, because more than one million Black men and women served in the American military during World War II, most of whom volunteered for service.



FEBRUARY 7, 1942

OPERATION REINHARD BEGINS



- Operation Reinhard was the code name for the plan to murder approximately two million Jews in the *Generalgouvernement*, or German-occupied Poland.
- Although the Nazis began planning the operation in 1941, it was named after Reinhard Heydrich, the head of the office responsible for organizing the deportations and murders, who was assassinated in 1942.
- Nazis murdered at least 1.5 million Jews at the Operation Reinhard killing centers: Treblinka, Belzec, and Sobibor. The Belzec killing center began gassings on March 17, 1942.

MARCH 17, 1942

GERMAN FORCES SURRENDER



- At the end of April, Soviet forces encircled Berlin, Germany's capital. American forces moving from the West and Soviet forces from the East met at the Elbe River in Germany on April 25, 1945. Adolf Hitler committed suicide five days later.
- German officials unconditionally surrendered on May 7, 1945.
- The next day, as the war in Europe formally ended, the Allies celebrated V-E Day (Victory in Europe).
- More than two million Europeans, including 250,000 Jews, were displaced persons. The Allies opened camps for them until they could return home or immigrate.

MAY 7, 1945

DENAZIFICATION IN EUROPE



- As World War II ended in Europe in May 1945, the victorious Allied powers made an effort to expose and educate Germans about the crimes of the Nazi regime.
- American soldiers occupied a zone of Germany after the war. They worked with British and Soviet troops to dissolve the Nazi Party and Nazi organizations, and to eliminate all Nazi propaganda. German students in the American zone learned about democracy.
- “Denazification” included renaming streets, removing Nazi monuments, and prohibiting the use of Nazi signs and symbols. Nazi propagandists were prosecuted in war crimes trials.

1945–1949

US ARMY DESEGREGATES

EXTRA — — By Executive Order

PRESIDENT TRUMAN WIPES OUT SEGREGATION IN ARMED FORCES

2nd Order Sets Up FEPC In All Government Jobs

In a dramatic and historic move, unprecedented since the time of Lincoln, President Harry Truman issued Monday afternoon two executive orders which doom forever Jim Crowism in the Armed Forces of the United States and guarantee equal job opportunities in the Federal Government and all of its branches.

Executive Order No. 1

Establishing President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services.

Whereas it is essential that the highest standards of democracy, with equality of treatment and opportunity for all those who serve in our country's defense;

Now, therefore, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States, by the Constitution and the Statutes of the United States and as Commander in Chief of the Armed Services, it is hereby ordered as follows:

1. It is hereby declared to be the policy of the President that there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services with-

out regard to race, religion or national origin. This policy shall be put into effect as rapidly as possible, having due regard to the time required to effectuate a necessary change without suspending efficiency of service.

2. There shall be created in the United States military establishment an Advisory Committee to be known as the "President's Committee on Equality of Treatment and Opportunity in the Armed Services" which shall be composed of 7 members to be designated by the President.

3. The Committee is authorized as an adjunct of the President to examine into the rules, programs and practices of the armed

services in order to determine in what respect such rules, programs, and practices may be altered or improved with a view to the wiping out, from the

Chicago Defender
WORLD'S GREATEST WEEKLY
Copyright 1948 by Robert S. Abbott Pub. Co., 3435 Indiana Ave., Phone Column 2238

NATIONAL Edition

10¢ PAY NO MORE

VOL. XLIV, No. 16 CHICAGO, ILL., SATURDAY, JULY 24, 1948

Under 'States' Rights' Posse, Bent On Lynching, Searches Woods For Prey

Come Back And Do A Job Is Truman Edict

GOP Must Decide What Comes First, Party Or Nation

WASHINGTON—The Republican dominated 80th Congress is on the spot, President Harry S. Truman put it there.

The Republican Party is split in on the spot. It is "out on its back" on one side, with the

Rumor: Negroes Would Resist Scatter Mob

Intended Victims Escape; 2 Whites Shot As Frowlers

HAZELBURG, Miss.—A mob of 200 armed whites, including highway patrolmen, bent on lynching, searched the woods for their prey and that some of the 70 Negroes who took refuge in a woods across the creek were

Aubrey Williams Bids Dixie Demos Farewell: 'Get Out And Stay Out'

By JOHN LEFFLORE

MONTGOMERY, Ala.—Continuing his attack on Dixiecrats who walked out of the Democratic convention over President Truman's civil rights program, Aubrey Williams, militant southern liberal, last week let loose another blast in the form of an editorial in the Southern Post.

Williams, editorially known as a "liberal," who headed Dixie, under Roosevelt, charged that the South Doesn't

Dixiecrats of the NEWS



- During World War II, the United States had fought with a racially segregated army. After the war, it became increasingly difficult for the American government to condemn Nazi antisemitism and promote democracy while also defending segregation in the United States.
- In an executive order, President Harry Truman declared that “there shall be equality of treatment and opportunity for all persons in the armed services without regard to race, color, religion, or national origin.”

JULY 26, 1948

SUPREME COURT RULES ON DESEGREGATION OF SCHOOLS



- In *Brown v. Board of Education of Topeka* (Kansas), the Supreme Court unanimously ruled that state laws mandating racial segregation in public schools were unconstitutional.
- It still took years for some schools to integrate, and in some cases, the federal government had to intervene to force schools to accept Black students. As public schools integrated, many white parents put their children in private schools.
- This photo shows Hazel Bryan angrily taunting Elizabeth Eckford outside their high school in Little Rock, Arkansas.

MAY 17, 1954

MONTGOMERY BUS BOYCOTT



- After Rosa Parks, a Black woman, was arrested for refusing to move to the “colored” section of a public bus, the Black community of Montgomery, Alabama, staged a 13-month boycott of the public transportation system.
- Martin Luther King, Jr, a leader of the movement, was tried and convicted for violating an anti-boycott law, but the non-violent protest continued.
- In December 1956, the United States Supreme Court ruled that racial segregation on public buses was illegal.

**DECEMBER 5, 1955–
DECEMBER 20, 1956**

MARCH ON WASHINGTON FOR JOBS AND FREEDOM



- An estimated 250,000 people, most of them Black, gathered in Washington, DC, to protest against racial segregation and police brutality, and in favor of increased economic opportunity.
- The protestors heard multiple speeches delivered on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, from individuals including John Lewis; Martin Luther King, Jr; and Rabbi Joachim Prinz, a rabbi and civil rights activist who had escaped Nazi Germany by immigrating to the United States in 1937.

AUGUST 28, 1963

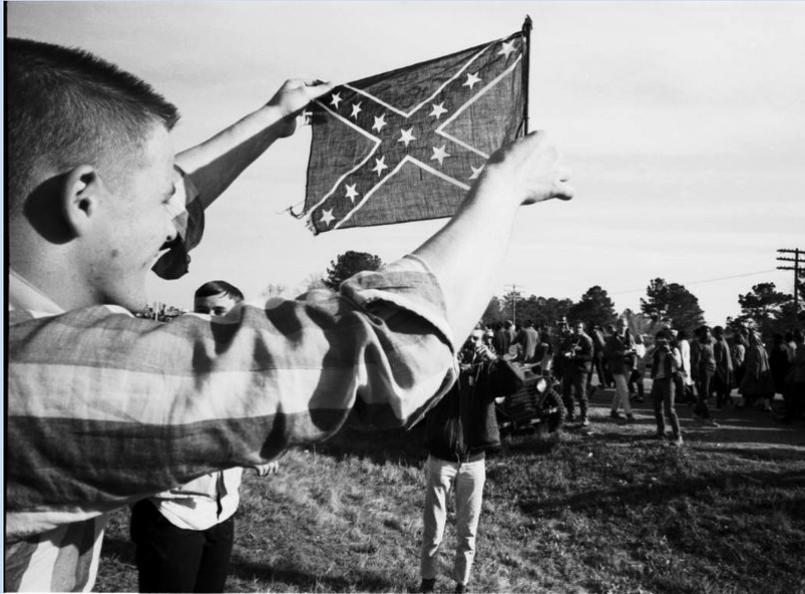
CIVIL RIGHTS ACT



- After years of lobbying and attempting to pass a meaningful civil rights bill, President Lyndon Johnson finally signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964.
- This law prohibited racial segregation in all public facilities and accommodations, including restaurants, hotels, and movie theaters. It also prohibited any organization or program that received federal funding from discriminating against people by race.

JULY 2, 1964

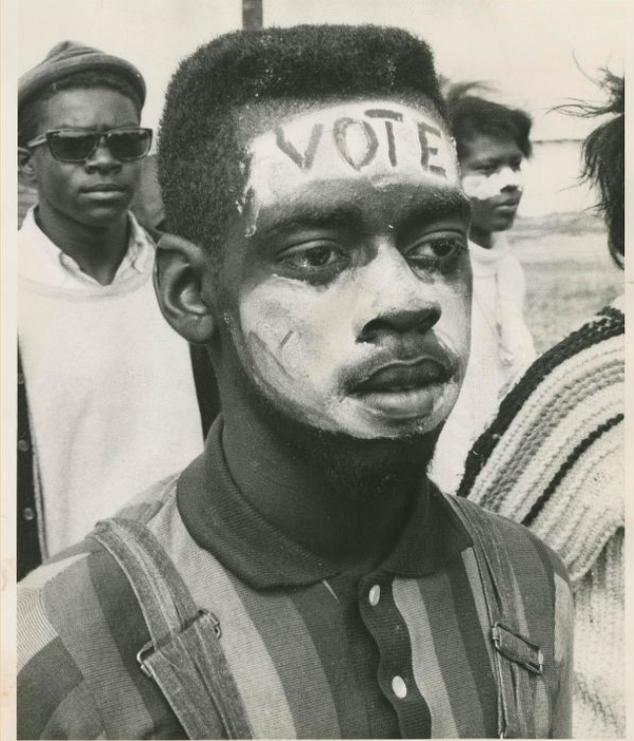
SELMA TO MONTGOMERY MARCH



- After a Black civil rights activist, Jimmie Lee Jackson, was shot and killed by an Alabama state trooper, civil rights groups organized a 54-mile march from Selma to Montgomery, Alabama, to protest for voting rights and equality for Black citizens.
- The first attempt at a march, now called “Bloody Sunday,” was cancelled after white police and state troopers beat Black marchers crossing the Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma. These attacks were televised.
- More than 2,000 people marched from Selma to Montgomery, including hundreds who traveled to join in the protest in response to the Bloody Sunday attacks. This photo shows a man taunting the marchers.

MARCH 7–21, 1965

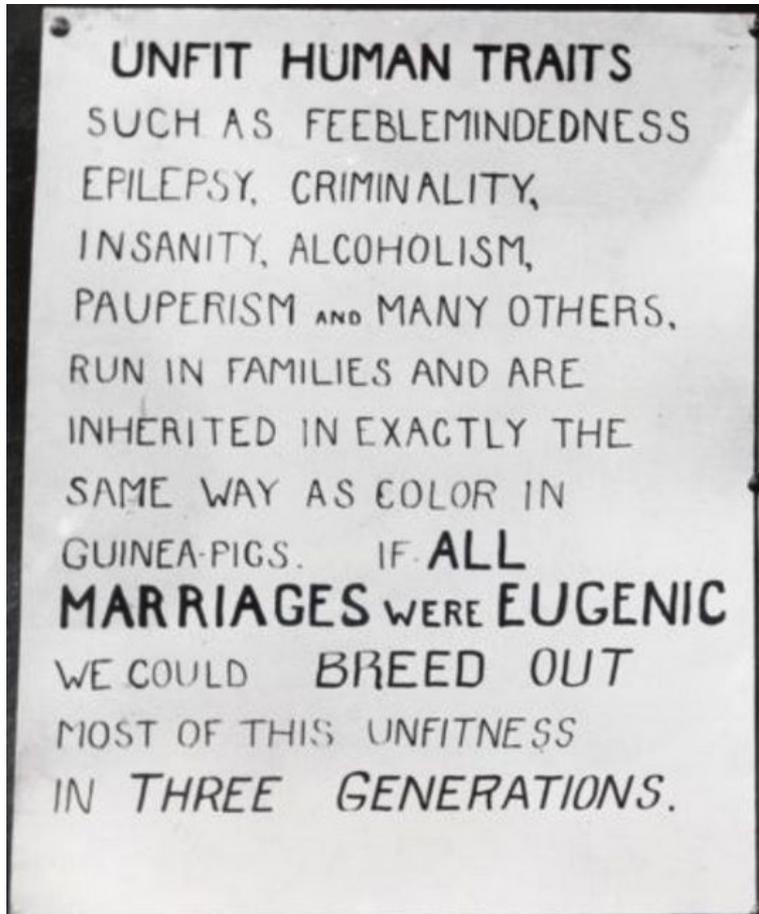
VOTING RIGHTS ACT



- Despite the Fifteenth Amendment, many states had introduced poll taxes, “grandfather” clauses, deceptive literacy tests, and intimidation tactics to deny Black people the right to vote.
- After increased attention because of the Selma to Montgomery march, Congress passed and President Lyndon Johnson signed the Voting Rights Act. This act banned racial discrimination in voting practices and introduced penalties to states that restricted the right to vote on the basis of race.
- In 2013, the Supreme Court struck down part of the Voting Rights Act, allowing politicians in areas with histories of racial discrimination to change voting laws without federal approval. Chief Justice John Roberts argued that the law was no longer necessary because “our country has changed.”

AUGUST 6, 1965

EUGENICS AT AMERICAN STATE FAIRS



- Health exhibits at state fairs were one of many methods used by supporters of eugenics to teach families about this “science” and how their marriage decisions could lead to the births of “normal” and “abnormal” American children.
- This chart was one of several on display at the Kansas Free Fair Eugenic and Health Exhibit in 1929. It sought to educate audiences about which individuals were “fit” for reproduction and which were “unfit.”

1929

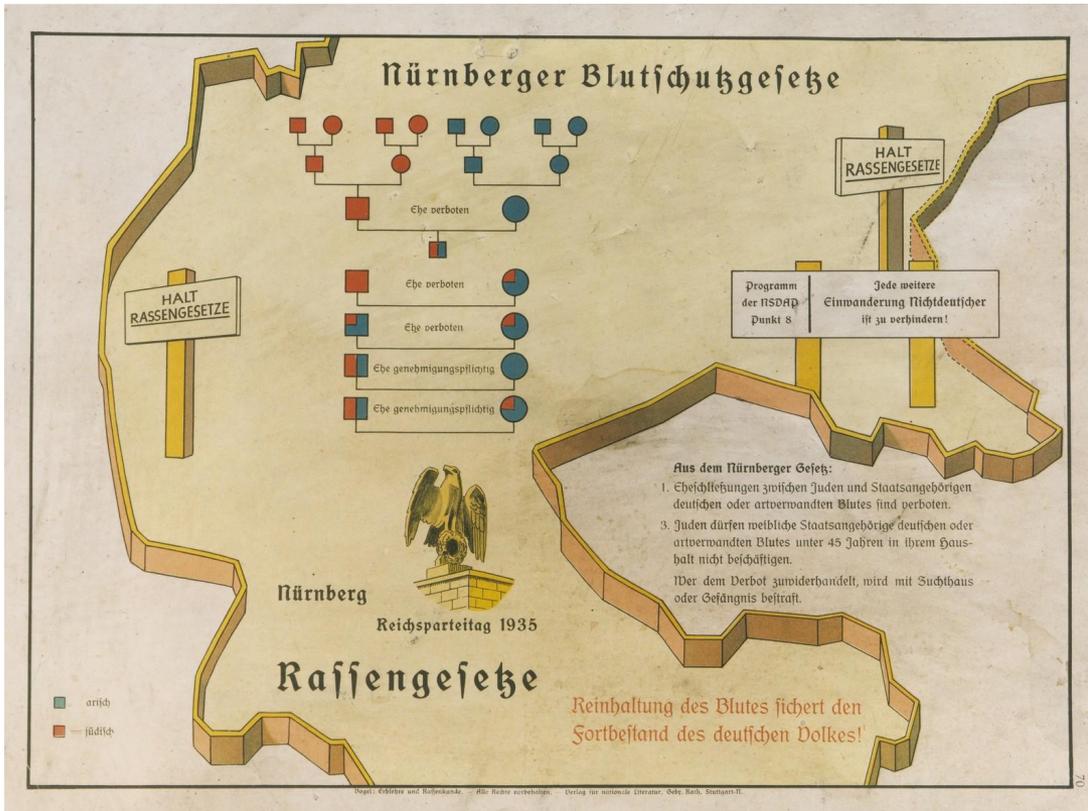
EDWARD ADLER ARRESTED



“At the same time a law took effect that did not allow a Jewish person, male or female, to go with a Gentile person, male or female. At that time, I was going with a nice young lady that I had gone with for some time, and we were out camping. I remember very well, I had a kayak, and we went out camping near Hamburg, and there was a fellow and, next to us, near us, in another little camp with a tent, we slept in tents. He wanted to make a date with this young lady that I was going with, and she didn't want any part of it. He reported me to the Gestapo and I was arrested for going with a Gentile girl. I got six months in prison, solitary confinement in 1935. When I was released, I became known as a habitual criminal in the eyes of the Nazi Party. I was a habitual criminal. I never did anything criminal in my life, but as far as they're concerned, doing something against the law was enough to make me a habitual criminal.”

1935

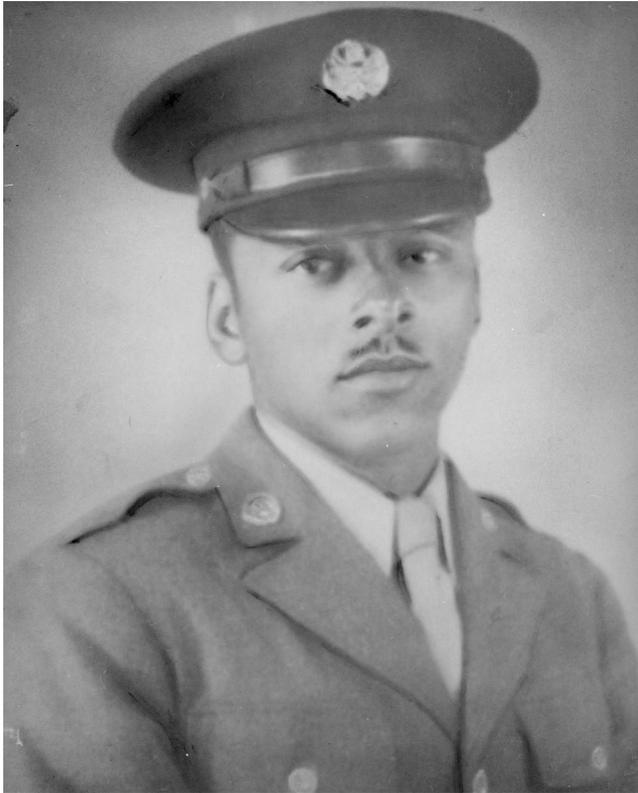
NUREMBERG LAW POSTER



- This poster helped explain the 1935 Nuremberg Race Laws to Germans.
- The family tree graphic includes an “Aryan” (non-Jewish) family in red and a Jewish family in blue. Marriages (*Ehe*) between “Aryans” and Jews was forbidden (*verboten*), and marriages between people with Jewish ancestors were subjected to government approval.
- The statement in red at the bottom reads “Maintaining the purity of blood ensures the survival of the German people.”

1935

LEON BASS VOLUNTEERS FOR US ARMY



“I was 18, and that’s when I became part of the military.”

“How did you become part of the military, did you volunteer or were you drafted?”

“Yes, I volunteered, and I was to go out with the next group. And when I went down to the induction center, institutional racism smacked me in the face. Because the sergeant was there and he told me to go one way when I went through the door and told my white friends to go another way. Because my country practices, promulgated, promoted institutional racism, and the military was one of the largest to do just that. And so I went into an all-black unit, save for the officers, they were white. But all of my comrades in arms at the time were black.”

1943

US LAWS/DECREEES/COURT CASES

1500-1800

1800-1910

1910-1920

1920-1933

1933–1945

1945–1965