

Propaganda Cartoons of Hate: Japan and Germany in the Eyes of America, 1920s-1940s

Written by Caitlyn DeCorte

Edited by Hunter J. Ford

Reviewed by Dr. Sarah Coleman

Anti-immigrant sentiment was rampant in America on the eve of the 20th century. The Chinese Exclusion Act had been passed in 1882, leading more Japanese to immigrate to the United States for labor opportunities. This uptick in Japanese immigrants created space for more xenophobia. With the *Thind v. United States Supreme Court Case* decision as well as the Alien Land Laws, Japanese immigrants were not allowed citizenship or land ownership. German immigration began much earlier, but these immigrants were European and therefore held in a higher esteem. By 1924, all Asian immigration was barred; this is seen in immigration restrictionist political cartoons. Over the course of the 1920s through the 1940s, American propaganda about these two groups changed significantly. While Americans were wary of Germany in the 1930s, the propaganda from the 1940s reflects more fear towards Japan. In studying the American attitudes towards Germans and Japanese, it is evident that the discrimination towards Japanese immigrants stems from a racialized hatred, despite both countries' roles as enemies to the U.S. in World War II. Americans have viewed Japanese immigrants as subhuman since the beginning of Japanese immigration. After comparing cartoons about Germans and Japanese, I theorize that the hatred towards Japan during World War II originated from the consistent characterization of Japanese people as barbaric and animalistic, while the attitude towards Germany was that of a once great nation now fallen.

Introduction

Political cartoons are an important facet of visual culture; they express general viewpoints at specific times in history and allow for greater analysis of historical events and their

overarching themes. The comics presented in this paper demonstrate the comparison between Germany and Japan. In exhibiting both comics that depict Japan and Germany on their own, as well as direct juxtaposition between the two,

it is evident that the American view of these countries and their people differed greatly. This essay explores the contrast between the two countries' relations with and the attitudes towards their emigrants in America. The comics chosen represent the national sentiment towards these countries through newspapers that circulated in highly populated areas. Each comic represents an idea or opinion about either country, which is indicative of Americans' fear and attitude towards them. In examining the American attitudes towards Japan and Germany throughout the 1920s-1940s, it is evident that the country's history of anti-Japanese sentiment was significantly more prominent and grew immensely by the end of World War II, despite Germany's role as America's enemy in both World Wars. Moreover, the roots of anti-Japanese sentiment contributed to the animalistic caricatures of the Japanese in American World War II propaganda.

American Relations with the Japanese and Germans before 1940

Japanese immigration to the United States began in the mid-1800s when Commodore Perry sailed to Japan to initiate trade relations; however, many more Japanese immigrants arrived in the early 1900s. The

beginning of immigration discrimination towards Japanese people began with the Naturalization Act of 1790. As Chinese immigration began to accelerate in the late 1800s, this act was altered to exclude Chinese immigrants from being American citizens. Anti-Chinese sentiment increased due to the number of immigrants, resulting in protests and even violence. This eventually led to the Chinese Exclusion Act in 1882. America, now in need of a new source of cheap labor, began allowing Japanese immigrants to emigrate to Hawaii on work permits, and then later to the United States mainland. Economic instability in Japan was also a factor in the emigration of Japanese immigrants. Japanese immigration was unrestricted for several decades; from 1901 to 1908, 127,000 Japanese immigrants arrived in the U.S. Anti-Japanese sentiment soon followed this influx of immigrants. Cultural differences and the fear of jobs lost to the Japanese caused this sentiment to grow, and the American Federation of Labor even petitioned to extend the Chinese Exclusion Act to include Japanese people in 1900. The Japanese Exclusion League was formed in California in 1905, which proceeded to propose anti-Japanese legislation, and eventually segregated Japanese children in public schools. Because of the desire to maintain

diplomatic relations, the United States and Japan entered the Gentleman's Agreement in 1907. This prevented Japan from issuing work visas to the United States, only allowing those who had family already in the United States to immigrate. Despite this, many Japanese men brought wives from arranged marriages in the United States. This agreement slowed Japanese immigration, but it did not halt it. Anti-Japanese sentiment remained prominent, especially in California, and in 1922, the Supreme Court finalized the decision that this prohibition of naturalization extended to Japanese immigrants.¹

This negative sentiment led to the creation of immigration quotas in the Immigration Act of 1924. Despite the work in eugenics that had already been done, the Quota Board had difficulty classifying and counting the white races that had already existed in the US, as well as classifying children of racial intermarriages. By the early 1920s, almost all Asians were barred from immigrating or ineligible for citizenship.² Alien Land Laws as well as Supreme Court Cases *Ozawa v. United States* and *United States v. Thind* allowed the US government to prevent Japanese immigrants

from gaining citizenship, citing its own barring of Japanese immigration. In *Ozawa*, the Supreme Court attempted to define racial classification in terms of citizenship. Ultimately, it was concluded that the color of skin alone was inadequate as a measure of race; however, the case did confirm that Caucasian and white were the same, and therefore, Japanese were not Caucasian, so they were not considered white. The *Thind* case deconstructed the definition of Caucasian; Bhagat Singh Thind, a Hindu man, claimed he was Caucasian and cited that Aryans of India have "distinct European features."³ The Court dismissed this argument on the basis that the term Caucasian had gained too much popularity and now included more than just the white race, effectively disqualifying Thind from naturalization. The Alien Land Laws followed this court case and forbade those who were ineligible for citizenship from owning land, directly targeting Asian immigrants.

Americans felt threatened by Japanese immigrants' proficiency in agriculture and feared they were attempting to take over the farmlands in California. Additionally, prior to the Immigration Act of 1924, Japan had an agreement with the United States to prevent its

1 The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, "Before Pearl Harbor," in *Personal Justice Denied* (Washington, D.C.: The Commission, 1983), 28-30, 32-34.

2 Ngai, "Architecture of Race," 80-81.

3 Ibid., 84.

laborers from immigrating to America.⁴ Despite this, many Americans felt it was not enough, and full Asian immigration exclusion was finalized with the Immigration Act of 1924. The government was able to do this by barring the immigration of those ineligible for citizenship.

German immigration began much earlier, in the 1600s, and continued over the next few centuries. Germans were thought to fit better into American society because of scientific race theory and their prior existence in America. Historically, Germanic peoples were some of the first in the early American colonies. They helped English immigrants settle the Jamestown colony in 1608, as well as the Dutch colony New Amsterdam in 1620, which later became New York. In 1683, William Penn, along with thirteen German Mennonite families, founded Germantown, Pennsylvania in pursuit of religious freedom. Incentivized by cheap land, many German families arrived in America throughout the 1600s; German towns and settlements sprung up around New York, Ohio, Maryland, the Carolinas, and Georgia.⁵ By the mid-1700s, Germans made up one-

third of the American colonies' population. German Americans were crucial in distributing newspapers, and German was one of the most widely spoken languages aside from English because of their role in the early news circuit. In the Revolutionary War, many Germans volunteered to be in the colonies' militias to join the fight for independence.⁶ German immigration only increased in the 1800s. After the failure of the German Revolution in 1848, thousands of Germans left for America because of unemployment, confiscations of land, and scarce resources in Germany. By 1854, 200,000 German immigrants had arrived in America.⁷ Germans played a large role in establishing modern American culture; many aspects of the modern school system were created by Germans, like kindergarten, physical and vocational education, and the idea of universal schooling. Many recreational areas, like parks, concert areas, and sports clubs were also created by Germans; the modern American weekend can also be credited to German immigrants. German culture is extremely tied to American ideals and values because of their longstanding history in the country.⁸ German language was

4 Ibid., 85, 87.

5 "The Call of Tolerance," The Library of Congress, Immigration and Relocation in U.S. History, accessed April 16, 2023. www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/german/call-of-tolerance/.

6 "Building a New Nation," The Library of Congress, Immigration and Relocation in U.S. History, accessed April 16, 2023. www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/german/call-of-tolerance/.

7 "A New Surge of Growth," The Library of Congress, Immigration and Relocation in U.S. History, accessed April 16, 2023. www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/german/new-surge-of-growth/.

8 "Building Institutions, Shaping Tastes," The Library of Congress, Immigration and Relocation in U.S. History, accessed April 16, 2023. www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/german/new-surge-of-growth/.

taught in public schools, and the culture was widely accepted until the dawn of World War I.

The United States entered World War I in April 1917 after the Zimmerman telegram was intercepted by British cryptographers; Germany sent the telegram to Mexico, offering the country United States territory in exchange for allying with the Germans.⁹ This, combined with the sinking of the U.S.S. Lusitania and the subsequent deaths of 100 Americans, changed the public view of Germany. Many Americans believed the Lusitania incident was an intentional act of violence. Through the use of newspapers and their communities, German-Americans attempted to stop the US government from declaring war on Germany.¹⁰ Despite their efforts, President Woodrow Wilson ended his position of neutrality and declared war. Americans feared German-Americans would spread pro-German propaganda. Subsequently, many public schools banned German language instruction. They believed that children in German schools were

taught to be militaristic. The threat of Germany was so severe that some German-American businesses either had to shut down or change names. Moreover, in one incident, a mob lynched a German immigrant.¹¹ Similarly but not as extreme, Germans had strong opinions toward America. Germany regarded America as greedy and willing to do anything for money. German propagandists attacked President Woodrow Wilson, claiming his ultimate goal was to make money, even in war. The Allied powers believed Wilson was too patient and too willing for peace. German propaganda painted the average American soldier as weak and incompetent.¹² The German military also protested America's use of shotguns, threatening that any American captured with one would be executed. They based this protest on the Hague Conventions of 1899 and 1907,¹³ which barred the use of weapons that caused "unnecessary suffering."¹⁴

While perceptions of Japanese and German Americans were shaped by foreign relations, so too were they shaped by racial

loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/german/building-institutions-shaping-tastes/.

9 "The Zimmermann Telegram," National Archives and Records Administration, accessed March 22, 2023. www.archives.gov/education/lessons/zimmermann.

10 Paul J. Ramsey, "The War against German-American Culture: The Removal of German-Language Instruction from the Indianapolis Schools, 1917-1919," *Indiana Magazine of History* 98, no. 4 (2002): 294. www.jstor.org/stable/27792420.

11 Ramsey, "The War against German-American Culture," 296, 299-300.

12 Eberhard Demm, "Propaganda and Caricature in the First World War," *Journal of Contemporary History* 28, no. 1 (1993): 180, 185. www.jstor.org/stable/27792420.

13 The 1899 and 1907 Hague Conventions sought to limit the evolution of armed forces and weapons that could be used in war; they also attempted to apply the Geneva Convention terms to naval warfare.

14 Charles A. Jones, "In 1918, the U.S. Armed Its Forces With Shotguns—and Germany Launched a Diplomatic Protest," History Net, December 3, 2019, www.historynet.com/the-1918-shotgun-protest/

theories of the time. A new pseudoscience, scientific race theory, was beginning to emerge in the public sphere. This hierarchy placed Asian peoples at a lower tier than Europeans, and Americans felt threatened by Japanese immigrants and their agricultural ability. Many Americans also feared Japanese culture and societal norms, believing they could not assimilate into American ideals.¹⁵ Scientific race theory spread significantly in the early 1900s, but the idea of a racial hierarchy was not new. In the mid-1700s, Count Buffon posited the theory of New World degeneracy in which he claimed that life in North America was naturally weaker, physically and mentally, than that of life in Europe. He utilized this theory to discourage migration to the Americas, which many Europeans feared would lead to America being positioned as a new rival on the world stage. His writings on the subject expanded on the belief already held in Europe, and the idea continued to circulate after Buffon's death.¹⁶ However, a new racial theory took its place about a century later. Widespread scientific race theory began as a way to categorize people through biological factors. Scientists theorized

that physical characteristics affected the culture of a certain race. Though in its earliest stages, scientists created a racial hierarchy with Nordic races at the top and non-European races at the bottom.¹⁷ An early theory by Arthur de Gobineau claimed that the Germanic peoples were the most intelligent and natural leaders. This theory placed Asian persons in the middle of the hierarchy, classifying them as a "good middle class" for a nation to have; Gobineau believed Asian peoples could not have created a widespread civilization, because they do not have the willpower to invent.¹⁸ This idea spread throughout the United States and perpetuated racist ideals. Americans worried that immigrants would outnumber them. In 1916, eugenicist Madison Grant posited his theories about race as a scientific ideology. He formulated a very specific caste system, similar to the one mentioned earlier. Grant organized the races into three groups: Nordics from Northern Europe, Alpines from Southwestern Asia, and Mediterraneans from North Africa. He described each group's physical features, including height, build, nose shape as well as eye, hair, and skin color. Grant affirmed

15 Mae M. Ngai, "The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924," *The Journal of American History* 86, no. 1 (1999): 80. doi.org/10.2307/2567407.

16 Lee Alan Dugatkin, "Thomas Jefferson Versus Count Buffon: The Theory of New World Degeneracy," *The Chautauqua Journal* no. 1 (2016): 5.

17 Joel Z. Garrod, "A Brave Old World: An Analysis of Scientific Racism and BiDil," *McGill J Med*,(2006): 54-60. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2687899/.

18 Arthur de Gobineau, "The Inequality of Human Races," trans. Adrian Collins (1915), 206-207.

Gobineau's earlier theory about Asiatic peoples, claiming they were "servile", while also noting the Mediterranean group as "sluggish." The Nordics were considered the "Master Race." Grant also posited that race and class were unchangeably intertwined and backed this theory with ancient tapestries that depicted blond men on horses while brunet men held the bridle.¹⁹ Eugenics was quickly adopted during this time, and Grant became president of the Eugenics Research Association in 1918 and made large contributions to furthering the organization. He and other eugenicists went on to found the Eugenics Committee of the United States of America to permanently establish such an organization for the country. Along with co-opting the medical field in support of eugenics, the ECUSA, as well as the ERA and the American Eugenics Society, lobbied with politicians to make policy changes; Grant's work in eugenics was instrumental in establishing immigration quotas in the forming of the Immigration Act of 1924.²⁰

The Japanese and Germans in American Political Cartoons from the 1920s

Though Japan and the United States

had fought on the same side in World War I, the United States grew increasingly wary of Japan's imperial tactics. Moreover, Japan was unhappy with the treatment of Japanese immigrants in the US and requested a racial equality clause from America, which they denied; Americans became warier of Japan after they were granted German concessions in Shandong.²¹ This fear and distrust are evident within editorial cartoons. The cartoon from *Chicago Daily Tribune*, "Japan Objects to the Weapon Which He Himself Has Never Hesitated to Use," exemplifies the relationship between the two nations on both sides (Fig 1). Two giant men are shown facing each other with an ocean between them. One is labeled California, and he holds a sword that reads, "Japanese Exclusion Laws;" the other man is Japan, and his sword says, "White Exclusion Laws." Japan shouts to California "I object to that weapon!" (Fig. 1). This references the aforementioned alien land laws in California. Japan felt as though their people were being discriminated against in America and threatened to create white exclusion laws to mirror the anti-Japanese laws in the United States. Because Japan never created any such laws, the title of

19 Jonathan Peter Spiro, *Defending the Master Race: Conservation, Eugenics, and the Legacy of Madison Grant*, University Press of New England, 2009: 148-149. doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1xx9bzb.

20 Spiro, *Defending the Master Race*, 179-180, 187, 231.

21 "Japanese-American Relations at the Turn of the Century, 1900-1922," U.S. Department of State, accessed December 7, 2022, history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/japanese-relations

JAPAN OBJECTS TO THE WEAPON WHICH HE HIMSELF HAS NEVER HESITATED TO USE.

[Copyright: 1920: By The Chicago Tribune.]



Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

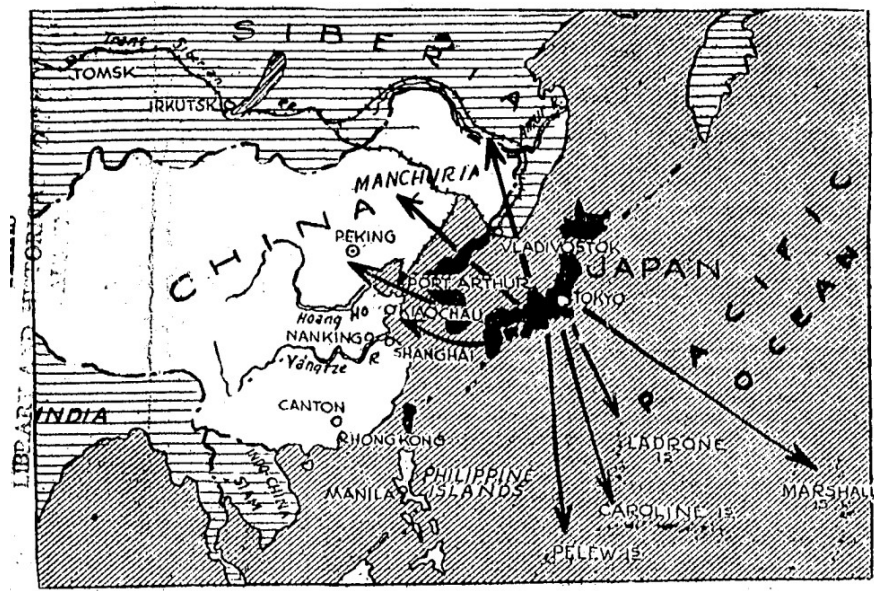
Fig. 1. Illustration by John T. McCutcheon, “Japan Objects to the Weapon Which He Himself Has Never Hesitated to Use,” *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 3, 1920.

the cartoon is sarcastic. *The Statesman's* 1919 cartoon, “Map Shows Japanese Aims,” depicts a map of the Pacific Ocean, including Japan, China, the Philippines, and several other islands (Fig. 2). Japan, colored black, has eight arrows directed towards its surrounding countries (Fig 2). This comic characterizes Japan as an imperialistic nation, trying to spread its global reach. Moreover, the black coloring of Japan and the white coloring of the countries around it subtly indicate

the vilification and fear-mongering towards Japan’s imperialistic mission. It demonstrates the country’s increasing desire to expand its power and, implicitly, America’s increasing fear of that power. “In the Pacific,” from the *Chicago Daily Tribune*, published in 1930, demonstrates America’s worries about Japan’s growing strength and militarism (Fig. 3). A bird sits atop a map of Tokyo. The cartoon is captioned, “America (looking at Japan): ‘I ought to have swallowed that up when it was small. It is too strong now’” (Fig. 3). These cartoons portray the United States’s position towards Japan; it fears Japan is too powerful and militaristic, and Americans worried war with Japan could strike.

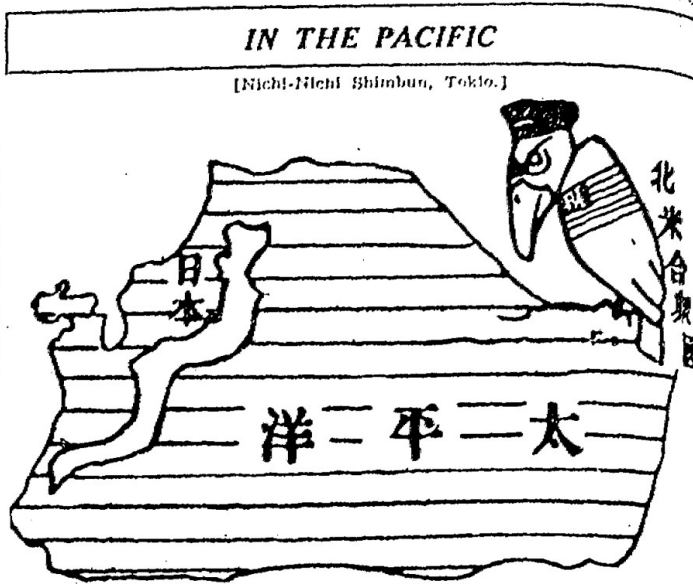
Post World War I, American leaders wanted to revitalize Germany and its economy. They believed stabilizing Europe would allow

Fig. 2. “Map Shows Japanese Aims,” *The Statesman*, February 17, 1919.



the economy to prosper. Germany owed reparations to Britain and France, and the United States banks helped fund Germany's payments. In turn, Britain and France used

Editorial Cartoon 2 – No Title
Chicago Daily Tribune (1923-1963); Mar 26, 1930; ProQuest
pg. 12



America (looking at Japan): "I ought to have swallowed up that waz when it was small. It is too strong now."

Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.
Fig. 3. "In the Pacific," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 26, 1930.

this reparation money to repay their war debts to the United States. The American view of Germany was one of irresponsibility and a need to be rehabilitated. The United States essentially made Germany its ward. Diplomats were sent to Germany to work out the reparation plans, as America wanted full control over them.²² The *Wall Street Journal's* cartoon "The Kind it'll be if 'Made in Germany'" demonstrates the American opinion on Germany's responsibilities and lack

of action post-World War I (Fig. 4). A woman, labeled Germany, is depicted holding a paddle that says "Punishment," and stands over a man, labeled "War Criminals," who is bent over but covering his behind (Fig. 4). The woman says, "Holler real loud. An make the neighbors think you're gettin' an awful thumpin'!" (Fig. 4) This shows that Americans did not believe Germany was truly disciplining its war criminals and therefore not reforming itself. "At Last the Germans Have Picked Onto Some One Everybody Hopes They Can Conquer" from *The Washington Post* further shows the idea that Germany was not fit to fully govern itself

Fig. 4. "The Kind It'll Be If 'Made In Germany,'" *Wall Street Journal*, March 3, 1920.



Reproduced with permission of the copyright owner. Further reproduction prohibited without permission.

22 Frank Costigliola, "The United States and the Reconstruction of Germany in the 1920s." *The Business History Review* 50, no. 4 (1976): 478, 491. doi.org/10.2307/3113137.

(Fig. 5). A man labeled Germany is throwing a temper tantrum in front of the mirror. He has thrown chairs and even punched the reflection of himself. The title of the cartoon highlights the idea that Germany had destroyed its economy and itself in the war; Americans

AT LAST THE GERMANS HAVE PICKED ONTO SOME ONE EVERYBODY HOPES THEY CAN CONQUER



Fig. 5. Illustration by J.N. Ding, "At Last the Germans Have Picked Onto Some One Everybody Hopes They Can Conquer," *The Washington Post*, March 19, 1920.

wanted Germany to stay powerless in hopes they could no longer target other nations.

However, by the 1930s, the Nazi Party was rising to power. The period of economic instability and lack of political guidance allowed Hitler to take control in 1933 with the promise

of a new and more powerful Germany. The cartoon, "Genuine or Fake?" published in *Chicago Daily Tribune* in 1930 depicts German men standing around a portrait of Hitler with the inscription, "Man in Armour" (Fig. 6). The men debate: "It was not goot!" and "Ach! It was a fake!" and "Nein! It was goot!" (Fig. 6). At the bottom of the cartoon, it reads, "The problem of Germany's new "master." (Fig. 6). This cartoon demonstrates the uncertainty and doubt that Germans had about Hitler's capability to lead the nation. Moreover, it illustrates the American view; the cartoon attempted to diminish Hitler's credibility, as Americans did not yet see Hitler as a viable threat.

Road to Involvement in World War II

When the stock market crashed in 1929, America was thrown into the Great Depression. After Hitler's official rise to power, news of Jewish persecution spread to the United States. There were demonstrations and protests in an attempt to bring attention to this mistreatment of Jews in Germany. Some organizations began to boycott German goods, but others feared worsening retaliation against the German Jews. Many Germans wanted to immigrate to the United States for safety, but President Hoover had created limitations on immigrants who were likely to be



Fig. 6. "Genuine or Fake," *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 20, 1930.

a public charge and unable to financially support themselves, which would cause more strain on the economy.²³ As Nazi Germany and Japan became more militarized, annexing Austria and occupying Manchuria, respectively, Americans wanted to remain neutral and isolated from foreign affairs. As Japan increased its occupation in China, the United States became warier because of its allyship there, but continued to remain neutral. The Japanese Army eventually killed three Americans in the bombing of the U.S.S. Panay; this created more tension, but war was staved off with an apology and indemnity from Japan.²⁴

The Neutrality Acts of 1935 and 1937 placed

23 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "The United States and the Nazi Threat: 1933-1937," *Holocaust Encyclopedia*, accessed December 7, 2022, encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-united-states-and-the-nazi-threat-1933-37.

24 "Japan, China, the United States and the Road to Pearl Harbor, 1937-41," U.S. Department of State, accessed December 7, 2022, history.state.gov/milestones/1937-1945/pearl-harbor.

25 United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "The United States and the Nazi Threat."

26 The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, "Executive Order 9066," in *Personal Justice Denied* (Washington, D.C.: The Commission, 1983), 49.

limitations on providing aid to foreign nations, with the latter act allowing the president the ability to decide neutrality towards certain countries.²⁵

The United States was determined to remain neutral, but with the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor on December 7, they were unable to and declared war on December 8, 1941. Prior to this event, President Roosevelt commissioned a secret study to examine the loyalty of Japanese Americans. The study found no disloyalty within the group. Despite this, within a year after the bombing, Roosevelt enacted Executive Order #9066, split the western United States into military zones, and gathered all Japanese Americans in those areas to be sent to internment camps.²⁶ Thousands of Japanese Americans were forcibly removed from their homes; many suffered extreme financial losses, as they were forced to leave their property and businesses behind. Japan's imperialism continued to take hold as they invaded American territories Guam and the Philippines. Propaganda against the Japanese increased, as their actions were an extreme threat to

democracy. Despite internment, thousands of Japanese Americans enlisted in the war, but this did not prevent Americans from questioning their loyalty. In 1943, a committee was formed to develop a questionnaire that would test Japanese Americans' loyalty for release purposes. It also included a loyalty pledge. Men of draft age were asked if they would serve in the army, while women were asked if they would join the Women's Army Auxiliary Corps or the Army Nurse Corps. The loyalty question was particularly divisive as it asked the Japanese to forsake the Japanese emperor. Many Issei (first-generation immigrants) had trouble answering this question, while the Nisei were more willing to pledge full loyalty to the United States. The majority of those in the camps answered yes to the loyalty question and were released around a year later after President Roosevelt rescinded Executive Order #9066.²⁷

The Japanese and Germans in American Political Cartoons from the 1940s

Americans were significantly more hateful towards Japan than Germany during World War II. Japanese Americans had consistently been looked down upon, and this continued even more fervently during the war. The propaganda used



Fig. 7. "Rat Poison Wanted," *Times*, 1943.

exemplifies this. The ad from *Times* publication, "Rat Poison Wanted," depicts a Japanese soldier; his eyes are drawn as thin lines, and his teeth are bared to mimic a rat (Fig 7). The blurb beneath reads, "There's only one way to exterminate the slant-eyes— with gunpowder!" (Fig 7). This illustrates the attitude Americans held toward the Japanese; they saw them as vermin and a subhuman threat to be destroyed. Dr. Seuss created several anti-Japanese cartoons during the war as well. Dr. Seuss published his cartoons in *PM Magazine*, a periodical that was "against people who pushed other people

27 The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians, "Loyalty: Leave and Segregation," in *Personal Justice Denied* (Washington, D.C.: The Commission, 1983), 190-194.

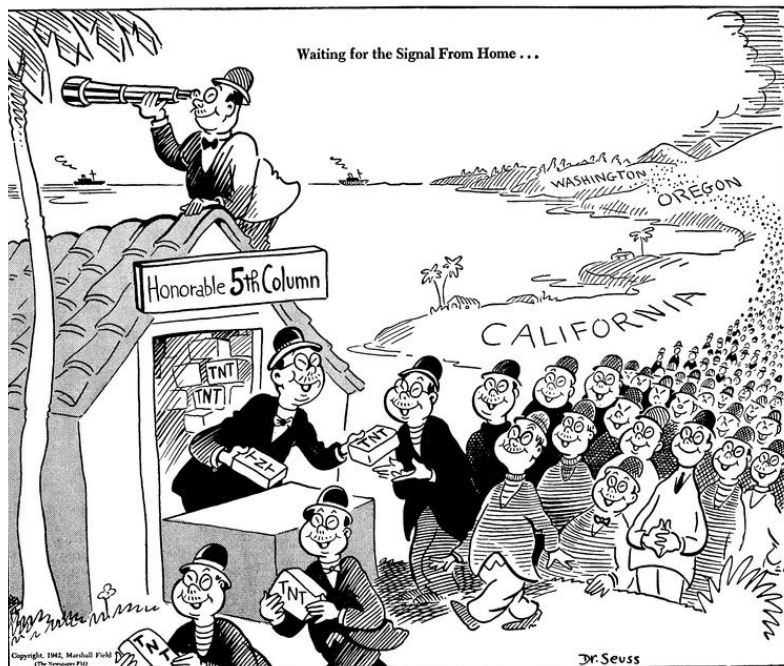


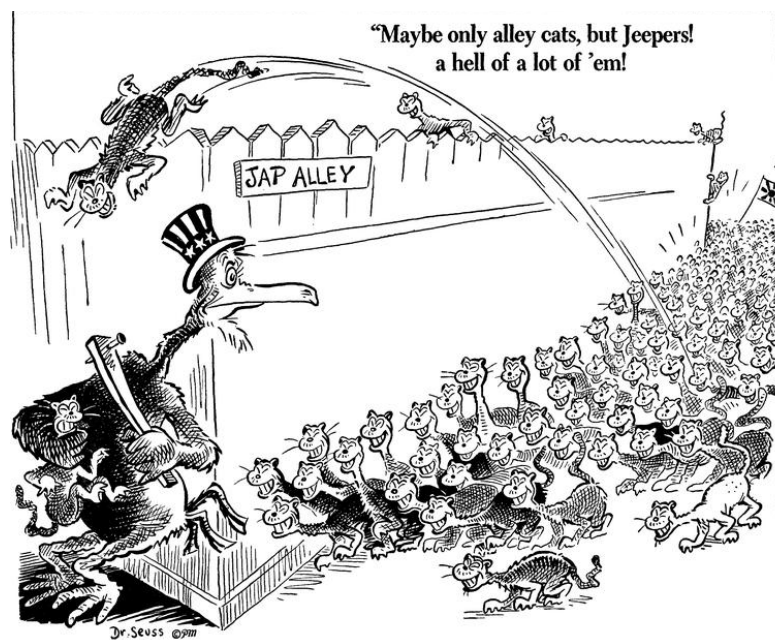
Fig. 8. Illustration by Dr. Seuss, "Waiting for the Signal From Home," *PM Magazine*, February 13, 1942.

around." Though Seuss's cartoons are racist depictions of the Japanese, it is similar to the other cartoons at the time. The war effort left no room for niceties. His cartoon, "Waiting for the Signal from Home," depicts a long line of Japanese people waiting for TNT (Fig. 8). The Japanese are portrayed as rat-like, with upturned noses and lines for eyes. This directly relates to internment as many Americans viewed the Japanese Americans as an inherent threat, waiting to wreak havoc on American soil. His other cartoon, "Maybe Only Alley Cats, but Jeepers! A Hell of a Lot of 'Em!" depicts the Japanese as feral cats, lining up in hordes in "Jap Alley" to attack Uncle Sam, who is an eagle (Fig. 9). Uncle Sam's weapon is a piece of

wood with a nail sticking out of it, and he hides around the corner, holding one of the alley cats, ready to fight the rest of them. This cartoon is an encouragement to strike down the Japanese, both the ones in America and overseas, before they destroy democracy.

Reports of Germany's persecution of Jews had circulated in the United States before their entrance into the war. However, there was little documentation of it during the war. The majority of the press focused on the horrors Japan was committing. While Germany was summed up as "Nazis," Americans still held the sentiment that there were "good Germans."²⁸ Though Germany had not attacked the United States directly, the nation

Fig. 9. Illustration by Dr. Seuss, "Maybe Only Alley Cats, but Jeepers! A Hell of a Lot of 'Em!" *PM Magazine*, December 10, 1941.



was still the enemy, and Americans would not stand for their attempt at world domination. Americans viewed Germany as an out-of-control, power-hungry nation. Fred O. Seibel's cartoon, "Nothing Like this in Nazi Germany," from the *New York Times*, characterizes Germany as a dictatorship with no room for democracy

"NOTHING LIKE THIS IN NAZI GERMANY"



Fig. 10. Illustration by Fred O. Seibel, "Nothing Like This in Nazi Germany," *New York Times*, November 8, 1942.

(Fig. 10). There is a ballot box with a man's head (US voters) sticking out of it, yelling into a megaphone. The "sound" coming out is "Voice of the People." Both the Republican elephant and Democrat donkey sit next to the ballot box. Seibel asserts that Germany, unlike the United States, is not a country of freedom. Another *New York Times* cartoon, "The German

Chump," depicts a German boxer spinning in a circle, with his boxing gloves at the ready (Fig. 11). It is captioned, "He is in a whirl wondering where the next blow will fall" (Fig. 11). This cartoon characterizes Germany as unruly and wild; the nation is unable to predict its own next moves. Dr. Seuss also drew cartoons depicting Germany. In "Food? We Germans don't eat food! We Germans eat countries!" a German father exclaims the title of the cartoon to his emaciated child (Fig. 12). Seuss portrays Germany as cruel and unwilling to take care of its constituents as all it cares about is the path to world domination.

Fig. 11. "The German Chump," *New York Times*, July 18, 1943.

THE GERMAN CHUMP
New York Times (1923-); Jul 18, 1943; ProQuest Historical Newspapers: The New York Times pg. E5

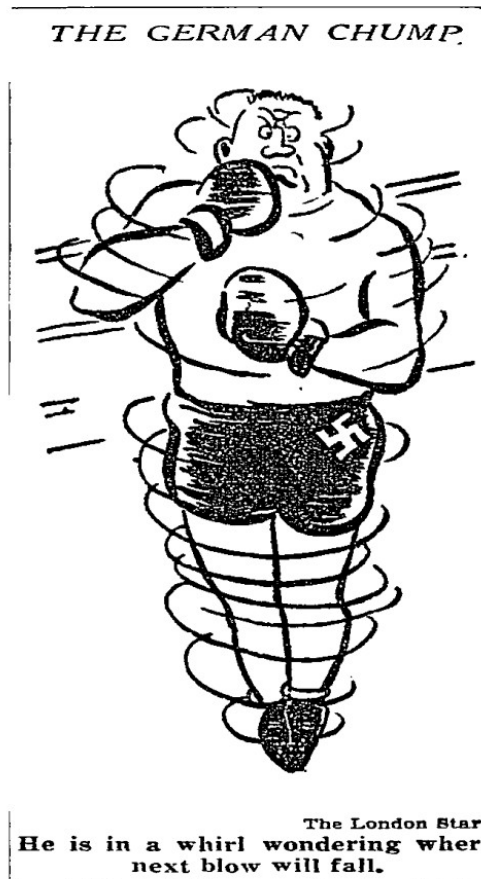




Fig. 12. Illustration by Dr. Seuss, "Food? We Germans don't eat food! We Germans eat countries!" *PM Magazine*, October 7, 1942.

Other cartoons that depict Germany and Japan side by side further the idea that the American hatred of Japan was racialized. Dr. Seuss's "What Have You Done Today to Save Your Country from Them?" depicts a large billboard with Hitler and Japanese emperor Tojo with the title above them (Fig. 13). A person labeled "You" stands below. Hitler is depicted as snobby, with his head upturned and jaw jutting out. His eyes are closed and he is not smiling, but he is not racially caricatured in any way. Like in Seuss's previous cartoons, Tojo is portrayed as rat-like with a big grin, upturned nose, and slanted eyes. This directly shows the need to make Japan seem inhuman and therefore easier to destroy. Seuss's use of rats to depict Japanese people was a common sentiment, as

seen in "Rat Poison Wanted" (Fig. 7). Japanese people were a species to exterminate, not a nation to defeat. Another cartoon, "Mimic" from *The Washington Post*, depicts Hitler and Japan crushing the territories they invaded (Fig. 14). Hitler stands atop Lidice and Lezaky, and he looks coy. Japan, on the other hand, labeled as "Japs," is a large gorilla, violently stomping on the Philippines. This is blatant racism; Germans were seen as people, and Hitler is even stated in the cartoon. Japan is just "Japs," not any one person, just a generalized sense of a nation. The use of the gorilla to portray Japan demonstrates the destruction Japan caused, but it dehumanizes the Japanese. This depiction of Japan characterizes the nation as a brutish and violent animal, not a human to be reasoned

Fig. 13. Illustration by Dr. Seuss, "What Have You Done Today to Save Your Country From Them?" *PM Magazine*, March 5, 1942.





Fig. 14. Illustration by David Low, "Mimic," The Washington Post, July 1, 1942.

with, unlike Germany.

Comparison of the Enemies

Anti-Japanese sentiment was the common belief in America before World War II, and wartime created even more hatred for Japanese people, significantly more so than hatred for Germans. Japan's attack on Pearl Harbor engendered outspoken hatred toward the Japanese. This vendetta against Japan explains why the Americans had such a vile view of Japanese people, even though one might argue this was caused by the lack of time spent in the European theater compared to the

Pacific theater. Moreover, American media reported the horrors of Japan more often than those of Germany. Japan's attack was personal, and many Americans desired revenge against the country. Interestingly, the initial response of some Americans was the belief that Germany had coerced Japan into the attack.²⁹ Pre-existing anti-Japanese sentiment led Americans to believe Japan was too weak-minded and incapable of engineering such an attack, despite their military advances in the 1930s. This idea stemmed from the aforementioned scientific race theory, in which Asian peoples were seen as non-creative and subservient. However, Japan quickly became the ultimate enemy and seemingly posed more of a threat to America than Germany did. Americans feared that Japan wanted to take power from the white race. An incident in Hong Kong in December of 1941 proved this; white men and women were forced to march in the streets to humiliate and strip the power of white Europeans in the area.³⁰ Racist rhetoric persisted as Japan continued to bomb Chinese cities; such barbaric behavior could only come from an uncivilized nation. Reports of the deaths of prisoners of war in Japan furthered Americans' hatred. Though Japan's treatment of American prisoners was

29 Dower, "War Hates and War Crimes," 37.

30 Gerald Horne, "Race/War," in *Race War!: White Supremacy and the Japanese Attack on the British Empire*, (2003), 78.

barbaric, Germany also killed many white prisoners. 3.5 million of the original 5.5 million Russian prisoners in Germany were killed before the war's end. However, Americans were not concerned with casualties that were not their own.³¹ In actuality, Japan did kill more American prisoners than Germany did, but the "perception [of Japan's immense brutality] was nonetheless culture-bound and racially biased."³²

Despite Germany's persecution of Jews and Eastern Europeans, Americans believed there were still good Germans. This is in part due to Americans' lack of relatability with those groups and their history of also discriminating against them. The violence exhibited by Germany was not in the people's overall nature but exacerbated by Hitler's lead. Moreover, it was thought that Germany's actions were those of a typical war because the knowledge of the Holocaust was buried by American leaders until after the war. Americans separated good and bad Germans with "Nazi;" the violent war crimes were not done by Germany but by the Nazis.³³ This grace was not given to Japan. Their brutality was synonymous with being Japanese. This is furthered by the use of the phrase "the Jap"; there were no good Japanese

because they were all one enemy. "Good Japanese" became a racist sentiment; "The only good Jap is a dead Jap." Racialized hatred of the Japanese is clear in Japanese internment. Despite President Roosevelt's study returning with no concerns about Japanese Americans, the fear of Japanese spies was still a threat, and they had to be neutralized. The majority of German Americans did not receive similar treatment in the United States, although the German-American Bund had outright supported Hitler prior to the start of the war. The notion from the early 1900s that the Japanese were unable to assimilate continued through Japanese internment; sentiments about "[Japanese] blood will tell," and "a Jap's a Jap" spread through the United States.³⁴ The inhumane treatment at the internment camps proves the American belief that the Japanese were not people, and this translated into propaganda at the time.

Throughout the early 1900s, anti-Japanese sentiment was extremely common, especially in the Western United States. Americans felt Japanese immigrants were incapable of assimilation and simultaneously feared they would take American jobs. According to scientific race theory, Germans

31 Dower, "War Hates and War Crimes," 48.

32 Ibid.

33 Ibid., 35.

34 John W. Dower, "Apes and Others" in *War without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War* (1986), 79-80.

were more suitable for American ideals because of their whiteness. Additionally, most early American colonists were of British descent and would have been familiar with Germanic peoples, as modern Germany did not exist yet. Germanics also arrived in North America before the United States and before any naturalization or citizenship legislation was created. This allowed for easier assimilation into the early American states. Moreover, at this time Japan was an established empire and had been for centuries, which exacerbated the Japanese “threat” to Americans. Anti-Japanese sentiment ultimately caused the full barring of Asian immigrants, beginning with Chinese exclusion, and ending with the Immigration Act of 1924. Though the political cartoon addressing Japanese exclusion laws was not inherently racist, the attitude behind it was. Moreover, Japan continuously became a nation to fear as its military actions became more imperialistic, which is exemplified by “Just Supposing—” and “In the Pacific.” In this same period, Germany was in economic turmoil. Despite the countries’ conflict over trench warfare and the threat to execute American soldiers, the United States helped organize their reparations. The United States government saw Germany as unorganized and unwilling to punish war

criminals, as seen in “At Last the Germans Have Picked Onto Some One Everybody Hopes They Can Conquer” and “The Kind it’ll be if ‘Made in Germany’” (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3). By the 1930s, Americans were aware of Hitler’s rise to power but were unsure of his abilities. As Japan and Germany became more militant and increasingly imperialistic, the United States entered World War II after Pearl Harbor. Racist rhetoric regarding Japan became commonplace in the United States, and racist caricatures in propaganda followed. Germany was depicted as a fascist nation led by a dictator, but Americans felt as though this was a temporary lapse. This is exemplified by “What Have You Done Today to Save Your Country From Them?” and “Mimic” (Fig. 13 and Fig. 14). The cartoons of Germany depict people, while the cartoons of Japan depict animals, which is particularly racist when compared side by side. American propaganda of Germany was significantly less caricatured and regarded Germany as a nation that had fallen from grace, while anti-Japan propaganda depicted the Japanese as a brutish, subhuman race that needed to be exterminated.

Primary Source Bibliography

Ding, J.N. "At Last the Germans Have Picked Onto Some One Everybody Hopes They Can Conquer." Cartoon, *The Washington Post*, March 19, 1920, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. libproxy.txstate.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/at-last-germans-have-picked-onto-some-one/docview/145746834/se-2.

"Genuine or Fake." Cartoon, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 20, 1930, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. libproxy.txstate.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/editorial-cartoon-3-no-title/docview/181168837/se-2.

"In the Pacific." Cartoon, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, March 26, 1930, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. libproxy.txstate.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/editorial-cartoon-2-no-title/docview/181099284/se-2.

Low, David. "Mimic," *The Washington Post*, July 1, 1942, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. libproxy.txstate.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/libproxy.txstate.edu/historical-newspapers/mimic/docview/151580746/se-2.

"Map Showing Japanese Aims." Cartoon, *The Statesman*, February 17, 1919, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. libproxy.txstate.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/comic-1-no-title/docview/1617028945/se-2.

McCutcheon, John T. "Japan Objects to the Weapon Which He Himself Has Never Hesitated to Use." Cartoon, *Chicago Daily Tribune*, October 3, 1920, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. libproxy.txstate.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/editorial-cartoon-1-no-title/docview/174694215/se-2.

"Rat Poison Wanted." Cartoon, *Times*, 1943, Ad*Access Database. jdn.duke.edu/ark:/87924/r4zc7sd8z

Seibel, Fred O. "Nothing Like This in Nazi Germany." Cartoon, *New York Times*, November 8, 1942, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. libproxy.txstate.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/nothing-like-this-nazi-germany/docview/106377433/se-2.

Seuss, Dr. "Food? We Germans don't eat food! We Germans eat countries!" Cartoon, *PM Magazine*, October 7, 1942, UC San Diego Library Digital Collections. library.ucsd.edu/dc/object/

[bb39598970](http://library.ucsd.edu/dc/object/bb39598970)

Seuss, Dr. "Maybe Only Alley Cats, but Jeepers! A Hell of a Lot of 'Em!" Cartoon, *PM Magazine*, December 10, 1941, UC San Diego Library Digital Collections. library.ucsd.edu/dc/object/bb0171467h

Seuss, Dr. "Waiting for the Signal From Home..." Cartoon, *PM Magazine*, February 13, 1942, UC San Diego Library Digital Collections. library.ucsd.edu/dc/object/bb5222708w

Seuss, Dr. "What Have You Done Today to Save Your Country From Them?" Cartoon, *PM Magazine*, March 5, 1942, UC San Diego Library Digital Collections. library.ucsd.edu/dc/object/bb12977599

"The Kind It'll Be If 'Made In Germany.'" Cartoon, *Wall Street Journal*, March 3, 1920, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. libproxy.txstate.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/ki-nd-itll-be-if-made-germany/docview/129889586/se-2.

"The German Chump." Cartoon, *New York Times*, July 18, 1943, ProQuest Historical Newspapers. libproxy.txstate.edu/login?url=https://www.proquest.com/historical-newspapers/german-chump/docview/106668779/se-2.

Secondary Source Bibliography

"Building a New Nation," The Library of Congress, Immigration and Relocation in U.S. History, accessed April 16, 2023. www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/german/call-of-tolerance/.

"Building Institutions, Shaping Tastes," The Library of Congress, Immigration and Relocation in U.S. History, accessed April 16, 2023. www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/german/building-institutions-shaping-tastes/.

"The Call of Tolerance." The Library of Congress. Immigration and Relocation in U.S. History. Accessed April 16, 2023. www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/german/call-of-tolerance/.

Costigliola, Frank. "The United States and the Reconstruction of Germany in the 1920s." *The Business History Review* 50, no. 4 (1976): 477–502. doi.org/10.2307/3113137.

The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians. "Before Pearl Harbor." In *Personal Justice Denied*, 47–

92. Washington, D.C.: The Commission, 1983.
- The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians. "Executive Order 9066." In *Personal Justice Denied*, 47-92. Washington, D.C.: The Commission, 1983.
- The Commission on Wartime Relocation and Internment of Civilians. "Loyalty: Leave and Segregation." In *Personal Justice Denied*, 185-212. Washington, D.C.: The Commission, 1983.
- De Gobineau, Arthur. "The Inequality of Human Races." trans. Adrian Collins (1915), 205- 212.
- Demm, Eberhard. "Propaganda and Caricature in the First World War." *Journal of Contemporary History* 28, no. 1 (1993): 163-92. www.jstor.org/stable/260806.
- Dower, John W. "Apes and Others." In *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, 77-93. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986.
- Dower, John W. "War Hates and War Crimes." In *War Without Mercy: Race and Power in the Pacific War*, 33-75. New York: Pantheon Books, 1986.
- Dugatkin, Lee Alan. "Thomas Jefferson Versus Count Buffon: The Theory of New World Degeneracy." *The Chautauqua Journal* no. 1 (2016): 5.
- Garrod, Joel Z. "A Brave Old World: An Analysis of Scientific Racism and BiDil." *Mcgill J Med*, (2006): 54-60. www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2687899/.
- Horne, Gerald. "Race/War." In *Race War!: White Supremacy and the Japanese Attack on the British Empire*, 60-79. New York: NYU Press, 2003.
- "Japanese-American Relations at the Turn of the Century, 1900-1922," U.S. Department of State. Accessed December 7, 2022, history.state.gov/milestones/1899-1913/japanese-relations.
- "Japan, China, the United States and the Road to Pearl Harbor, 1937-41." U.S. Department of State. Accessed December 7, 2022, history.state.gov/milestones/1937-1945/pearl-harbor.
- Jones, Charles A. "In 1918, the U.S. Armed Its Forces With Shotguns—and Germany Launched a Diplomatic Protest." History Net. December 3, 2019. www.historynet.com/the-1918-shotgun-protest/.
- "A New Surge of Growth," The Library of Congress, Immigration and Relocation in U.S. History, accessed April 16, 2023. www.loc.gov/classroom-materials/immigration/german/new-surge-of-growth/.
- Ngai, Mae M. "The Architecture of Race in American Immigration Law: A Reexamination of the Immigration Act of 1924." *The Journal of American History* 86, no. 1 (1999): 67-92. doi.org/10.2307/2567407.
- Ramsey, Paul J. "The War against German-American Culture: The Removal of German-Language Instruction from the Indianapolis Schools, 1917-1919." *Indiana Magazine of History* 98, no. 4 (2002): 285-303. www.jstor.org/stable/27792420.
- Spiro, Jonathan Peter. *Defending the Master Race: Conservation, Eugenics, and the Legacy of Madison Grant*. University Press of New England, 2009: 148-149, 179-180, 187, 231. doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1xx9bzb.
- United States Holocaust Memorial Museum, "The United States and the Nazi Threat: 1933-1937." Holocaust Encyclopedia, encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/the-united-states-and-the-nazi-threat-1933-37.
- "The Zimmermann Telegram." National Archives and Records Administration. National Archives and Records Administration, June 2, 2021. Accessed March 22, 2023. www.archives.gov/education/lessons/zimmermann.