

Nazi Propaganda in American Universities from 1933 to 1938

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Introduction

Two months after he was appointed chancellor of Germany in January 1933, Hitler designated Joseph Goebbels to head the newly formed Ministry of Public Enlightenment and Propaganda (RMVP). Such a position was nothing new for Goebbels, who had served as Reich leader of Nazi Party propaganda since April 1930. In fact, those three years provided him ample time to scheme his takeover of the German media and public opinion.¹ The RMVP was tailored specifically for Goebbels,² granting him control over virtually every form of mass media within Germany. “The national education of the German people,” he wrote in his diary, “will be placed in my hands.” Goebbels took to his new role quickly. That March, he organized a national boycott on Jewish businesses. A month later, on May 10, Goebbels gave a speech during the Nazi burning of “un-German” books, most of which were written by Jewish authors. His propaganda was working.

While his primary task was to centralize the culture and public opinion of the German people, Goebbels also recognized the importance of spreading propaganda overseas, particularly to America. Initially, however, neither he nor anyone else in the Third Reich knew what

1. Bergmeier, H. J. P., and Rainer E. Lotz. 1997. *Hitler's Airwaves: The inside Story of Nazi Radio Broadcasting and Propaganda Swing*. Yale University Press, 4.

2. Bergmeier and Lotz, *Hitler's Airwaves*, 3.

direction to take regarding foreign relations with the United States.³ Even Hitler himself—albeit knowing little about America—had no personal designs for the country, failing to see its significance as a player on the world stage.⁴ But as the RMVP expanded throughout the mid-1930s, it formulated an approach to propaganda in America with four main goals:

1. Broadcast a positive image of Nazi Germany.⁵
2. Consolidate the support of German-Americans.⁶
3. Create divisions between Americans.⁷
4. In the case of a war, prevent them from joining the conflict at all costs.⁸

The RMVP accomplished these aims in several ways. Newsreels in America depicting Nazi Party activities were heavily censored to the benefit of the Nazis.⁹ Many were required to contain “at least some shots which are of propaganda value for Germany.”¹⁰ In an interview with Walter Williams, founder of the University of Missouri School of Journalism, Hitler himself invited Americans—specifically German-Americans—to his country to prove that “law and order and contentment rule.”¹¹ Nazi organizations like the German-American Bund also brought ethnic Germans together to support and spread Nazi ideology in America. And when World War II began, the Bund was one of the greatest advocates for U.S. isolationism. Although the Nazis

3. Wilhelm, Cornelia. “Nazi Propaganda and the Uses of the Past: Heinz Kloss and the Making of a ‘German America.’” *Amerikastudien / American Studies*. 57.

4. Hart, Bradley W. *Hitler’s American Friends: The Third Reich’s Supporters in the United States*. New York: Thomas Dunne Books, an imprint of St. Martin’s Press, 2018, 9.

5. Frye, Alton. *Nazi Germany and the American Hemisphere, 1933, 1941*. Yale University Press, 1967, 22.

6. Wilhelm, “Heinz Kloss,” 59.

7. Hart, *Hitler’s American Friends*, 6.

8. Hart, *Hitler’s American Friends*, 7.

9. Doherty, Thomas. *Hollywood and Hitler, 1933-1939*. Film and Culture Series. New York: Columbia University Press, 2013, 91.

10. “German Rules for Newsreels.” *Variety*. November 6, 1934. 13.

11. Adolf Hitler, interview by Walter Williams, November 1933.

overestimated the effectiveness of many of these tactics, their backing in America continued to grow.¹²

But perhaps one of the most important battlegrounds of Nazi propaganda was American universities. Public speakers invited to universities could reach thousands of students, and German departments and clubs already existed on college campuses. In addition, German exchange programs at several American universities continued until the outbreak of World War II. College campuses were the perfect place to spread Nazi ideology and both the Nazis and U.S. government knew it. John C. Metcalfe, who monitored Nazi organizations in America, expressed such concerns in front of the U.S. House Committee on Un-American Activities (or “Dies Committee”). “American students are being indoctrinated with the aims of fascism in Germany both abroad and at home to the detriment of democratic institutions in America,” Metcalfe said of the exchange student program, adding that several university professors were known to have delivered pro-Nazi lectures.¹³

Germany had a clear idea of its target audience. A reoccurring idea raised by German exchange students was that “young people would be the ones to build international understanding and avoid war.”¹⁴ At a weeklong camp in Neustrelitz, the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD) reminded exchange students that they represented Nazi Germany and that “true understanding can only be built on mutual knowledge of peoples and their mutual respect.”¹⁵ German exchange students were expected to not only learn about American culture and ideology, but also to spread their own as representatives of the Nazi Party.¹⁶

12. Wilhelm, “Heinz Kloss,” 59.

13. *Investigation of un-American propaganda activities in the United States: Hearings on H. Res. 282, Second Session, Before the Special Committee on Un-American Activities*. 78th Congress, 1938, 1133.

14. Hart, *Hitler's American Friends*, 158.

15. Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth, and Fred von Hoerschelmann. *Briefwechsel*. Edited by Hagen Schäfer and Ralph Erich Schmidt. Wallstein Verlag, 2021. 896.

16. Noelle-Neumann and von Hoerschelmann. *Briefwechsel*. 896.

Many of America's higher institutions were faced with Nazi propaganda being spread by students in exchange programs and German student organizations. Some colleges condemned Nazism on their campuses. At others, university administrations and faculty played a large role in facilitating the Nazi ideology on campus. These leaders at American colleges often remained indifferent to anti-Nazi protests on their campuses or around the rest of the country. Nazi sympathizers were often invited to speak on campus by these administrations, thereby validating the Nazi regime. This occurred even at the most prestigious universities in America, such as Harvard and Columbia, in addition to several others which will be mentioned throughout the paper. Student groups including the Paul Reveres, German clubs, and foreign exchange students—all of whom played a large role in legitimizing the Nazi regime on campus—will be covered afterward. Notably, the University of Missouri was not exempt from the influence of Nazi propaganda and a case study of that situation will be conducted last.

It is worth mentioning that a majority of the research in this upcoming section was originally conducted by Bradley Hart and Stephen Norwood in their respective books: *Hitler's American Friends* and *The Third Reich in the Ivory Tower*. Their research contributed heavily to the next part of this paper.

Propaganda at American Universities

On March 27, 1933, the *Columbia Spectator* published an article covering a petition that was being circulated by the Jewish Students Society at Columbia University. The petition, which had received over 500 signatures, condemned Hitler's actions against Jews in Germany, comparing them to "persecutions that recall the blackest hours of the Dark Ages."¹⁷ It had also

17. "Demands Action Against Hitler." *Columbia Daily Spectator*. March 24, 1933.

received the support of advisors to both Protestant and Catholic students at the University.¹⁸ Yet, nine months later, Columbia President Nicholas Murray Butler invited Hans Luther, Germany's ambassador to the United States, to speak on campus. Despite a large number of students protesting this action, Dr. Butler did not revoke the invitation. The day of Luther's speech, the *Columbia Spectator* printed a column entitled "Silence Gives Consent, Dr. Butler," denouncing his failure to condemn the Nazis despite being outspoken against the Soviets: "We know of no instance where Dr. Nicholas Murray Butler has forcefully taken a stand on the policies of the Hitler government... it is time to speak, Dr. Butler."¹⁹ Later that day, over 1,000 students in organizations from Columbia University, New York University, and other surrounding colleges protested outside of the auditorium where Luther was to deliver his speech.²⁰ Hoping and expecting to confront Dr. Butler, students inside the hall were surprised to find Luther was introduced by the international law and diplomacy professor, Charles Hyde.²¹ President Butler was nowhere to be seen.

Dr. Butler was far from the only administrator that legitimized the Nazi regime at Columbia. After returning from a visit to Germany in 1934, Dean Thomas Alexander defended the Nazis' "wonderful" program of sterilization and expressed his full support for the practice of "throwing out the criminals and other undesirables."²² The following day, five members of the Columbia University Department of Zoology condemned Alexander's remarks in addition to all sterilization programs taking place in Nazi Germany.²³ Alexander was later accused by John L.

18. "500 Support Hitler Petition." *Columbia Daily Spectator*. March 27, 1933.

19. "Silence Gives Consent, Dr. Butler." *Columbia Daily Spectator*. December 12, 1933.

20. "Call Meeting Against Luther; Jewish Society Disowns Protest." *Columbia Daily Spectator*. December 8, 1933.

21. Norwood, Stephen H. *The Third Reich in the Ivory Tower: Complicity and Conflict on American Campuses*. Cambridge University Press, 2009, 84.

22. "A Vicious Program." *Columbia Daily Spectator*. January 10, 1934.

23. "Genetics Department Assails Alexander, Criticizes Sterilization as 'Ineffective', Calls German Plans Political, Unscientific." *Columbia Daily Spectator*. January 11, 1934.

Spivak, a communist investigative reporter and author, of collaborating with the antisemitic organization Order of '76.²⁴ Although an investigation of Alexander was conducted by the university, no further action was taken. It was also found that Columbia University actually had a Nazi teaching the German language on campus. Friedrich Ernest Auhagen, who had received his master's degree at Columbia, served as a professor while working on his doctorate. In 1936, however, he reportedly abandoned his teaching duties and instead began "devoting himself to propaganda activity" as the Nazi movement gained momentum.²⁵ Auhagen was dismissed from the university later that year, but his platform had allowed him access to the minds of thousands of Columbia students.

Another prestigious college that gave a platform to the Nazi ideology was Harvard University. Led by President James Bryant Conant, Harvard hosted prominent Nazi figures on its campus and remained deaf to the persecution Jews faced in Germany. On May 27, 1934, German ambassador Luther arrived on the Nazi warship *Karlsruhe* to protests by Boston Jews and anti-fascist groups. Later, several Harvard faculty members were present at a ceremony to honor the men of the *Karlsruhe* at a prominent hotel in Boston.²⁶ A few days later, the Harvard administration gave Luther a tour of the Germanic Museum and Widener Library.²⁷ Upon the *Karlsruhe*'s return to Germany the following month, it was reported that the crew regarded their welcome in Boston "the friendliest of any port in a trip that had taken them three-quarters of the way around the world."²⁸

24. "Spivak Charges Dean Alexander and Student Conduct Anti-Semitic, Pro-Nazi Activities Here." *Columbia Daily Spectator*. November 19, 1934.

25. "Fife Recalls Arrested Nazi." *Columbia Daily Spectator*. October 3, 1940.

26. Norwood, *The Third Reich*, 45.

27. Norwood, *The Third Reich*, 45.

28. Norwood, *The Third Reich*, 46.

Not all university newspapers responded with hostility to a Nazi presence on their campus. Unlike the *Columbia Spectator*, the *Harvard Crimson* often supported the actions of its administration and repeatedly condemned anti-Nazi protests. Demonstrators gathered at Boston Harbor to protest the arrival of the *Karlsruhe* found themselves injured and indiscriminately arrested by a police force numbering almost 200, some on horseback and wielding clubs. Although an editorial published by the *Harvard Crimson* hours after the event criticized the violence of the Boston police, it expressed opposition to the “discourteous” demonstration in the first place.²⁹ Almost a week later, an article justified the police’s use of force as “a practical way to break up the meeting” and firmly denounced the protest.³⁰

A separate scandal occurred that October when the Harvard Debating Council held a mock trial with Adolf Hitler as its defendant. The debate revolved around Hitler’s actions during the German “Night of Long Knives,” a massacre of Nazi leaders and other political opponents on June 30, 1934. After student prosecution and defense teams presented their arguments before an audience of 200, a panel of five Harvard professors found Hitler guilty on two of four charges.³¹ However, any testimony regarding Hitler’s oppression of Jews was “ruled out as irrelevant to the immediate questions,” displaying a shocking indifference to current world events.³²

Long celebrated for their intellectual prestige, it’s astounding that Harvard and Columbia responded to the rise of Nazi Germany as they did. Even in the years immediately following Hitler’s rise to power, the extent to which Germany persecuted Jews was national news in America. Additionally, both schools continued to host exchange students from Germany until 1938, when Kristallnacht finally forced the colleges to make statements. By welcoming Nazi

29. “Boston’s Finest.” *Harvard Crimson*. May 18, 1934.

30. “Causa Belli.” *Harvard Crimson*. May 22, 1934.

31. “Mock Trial Hits Hitler On But Two of Four Charges.” *Harvard Crimson*. October 25, 1934.

32. “Mock Trial Hits Hitler.” *Harvard Crimson*. 1934.

exchange students and German officials like Hans Luther with open arms, American universities provided legitimacy to the Nazi regime even while aware of the country's treatment of Jews. Although Harvard and Columbia were the most prominent examples of this, university faculty and German departments at countless colleges around the country embraced the rise of Nazism. This could be seen when German departments at the University of Wisconsin and the University of Minnesota hosted warm receptions for Hans Luther in 1935, although both visits were derailed by student protests.³³ Another instance of this occurred when the Germanic Club at Yale invited Dr. Richard Sallet to address its members in December 1934. The Yale chapter of the National Student League wrote in the *Yale Daily News* that it was "certain that Dr. Sallet comes to Yale with the definite intention of spreading Nazi propaganda."³⁴ They were proven correct when Sallet defined Nazi Germany as a "people's fellowship" that was "inherently pacifistic."³⁵ Of course, it's easy to condemn these events with the benefit of hindsight that these universities lacked, but it still doesn't excuse the fact that their actions—or inaction—aided the Nazis pursuit of their most important pre-war goal: maintaining a positive image of the Third Reich.

Pro-Nazi student organizations such as the Paul Reveres also dedicated their time to spreading propaganda around campus. Co-founded in Chicago by Elizabeth Dilling and Col. Edwin Hadley in 1932, the Paul Reveres was originally created as a vicious anti-communist group. However, Dilling resigned from her own organization in 1934 after getting into a dispute with Hadley, who argued that Jews should not be allowed membership. After Dilling's exit, Hadley proceeded to transform it into a predominantly antisemitic group. Throughout the 1930s, the Paul Reveres maintained at least an underground presence at almost every major college in

33. Norwood, *The Third Reich*, 160-164.

34. "Nazi Propaganda and the Yale Campus." *Yale Daily News*. December 11, 1934.

35. Norwood, *The Third Reich*, 165.

America.³⁶ In many cases, students worked directly with German agents to distribute Nazi propaganda which often idolized Hitler and was fiercely antisemitic.³⁷ At the University of California, for example, one pamphlet created by the Paul Reveres urged readers to force Jews from their homes and cities, concluding with the statement, “let us all be American Hitlers.”³⁸

Nazi exchange students assisted in these propaganda efforts by repeatedly urging Americans to visit Germany. One such student at Stanford, Kurt Wolf, complained in 1938 that American newspapers portrayed his country in a hostile manner. The best way to combat this, he argued, was for Americans to “come and see... my country, which is a land of peace and work.”³⁹ Some exchange students even organized propaganda-filled tours to Germany for American students and professors over the summer. Upon returning home, the Americans assisted in maintaining the country’s positive image, enthusiastically corroborating the “fine conditions in Germany, especially the way the Jews are treated over there.”⁴⁰ These vacations were often extraordinarily cheap and supported by Americans living in Germany.⁴¹

Exchange students from Germany maintained a large presence in the United States during the years leading up to World War II. In 1937, sixty-six German students studied at a wide range of universities across America.⁴² The following year, that number increased to over seventy.⁴³ While not all of these exchange students spread propaganda, the Dies Committee received evidence the same year concerning the several who did. According to testimony from John

36. Hart, *Hitler's American Friends*, 150.

37. Spivak, John L. “Plotting America's Pogroms.” *New Masses*. 1934, sec. "Hate-The-Jew" Campaign in the Colleges, 76.

38. Spivak. “Plotting America’s Pogroms.” 82.

39. “Exchange Student Speaks of Nazi Colonial Demands.” *Stanford Daily*. October 26, 1938.

40. Spivak. “Plotting America’s Pogroms.” 76.

41. “German Camp Chooses Two.” *Stanford Daily*, May 12, 1938.

42. Priwer, Esther. *Nazi Exchange Students at the University of Missouri*. Columbia, Missouri: The Menorah Journal, 1938, 362.

43. “Exchange Student Speaks.” *Stanford Daily*. 1938.

Metcalfe, the following colleges harbored students that expressed support of the Nazi ideology: Drury College (Springfield), Clark University (Worcester), Iowa State College, the University of Vermont, and the University of Indiana. A majority of the students at these schools were reported to have praised Hitler and portrayed the Nazi regime in Germany positively. However, there is one particular school mentioned by the committee absent from this list. It will be examined across the following pages.

Propaganda at the University of Missouri

The University of Missouri hosted two German exchange students during the 1937 to 1938 academic year. Upon arriving in Columbia, Elisabeth Noelle and Heinrich Haering quickly became popular figures around campus.⁴⁴ This was likely helped by the fact that the students were housed in Greek town during their stay: Noelle lived with the Kappa Kappa Gamma sorority and Haering with the Beta Theta Pi fraternity, the houses that had sponsored the exchange program between the University of Missouri and other universities in Germany.⁴⁵

Although the perspectives of exchange students were highly valued in the *Columbia Missourian*—especially those of Noelle and Haering due to developments in Germany—Haering’s name was not often found in the campus newspaper. On the contrary, Noelle’s name appeared frequently, whether in an advertisement for the German or international club, or as an invitee to sorority dinners (for which she was a highly sought-after guest).⁴⁶ Enrolled in the School of Journalism, Noelle was also given the opportunity to write several editorials

44. Noelle-Neumann and von Hoerschelmann. *Briefwechsel*. 199.

45. “Foreign Students Reach Highest Enrollment.” *Columbia Missourian*. October 8, 1937.

46. *Columbia Missourian*, September-December 1938.

throughout her time on campus. As a result, this section will focus mostly on Noelle's activities at the University of Missouri.

Elisabeth Noelle was first mentioned in the *Columbia Missourian* on September 28, 1937. The article served to introduce Noelle to readers and outlined her goals in studying at the University of Missouri. Noelle's focus during the year, the article read, would be analyzing the influence of women on the American press. She hoped to encourage more women in Germany to pursue journalism because, as Noelle explained, "German women take less interest in Journalism than do American women."⁴⁷

At that time, every exchange student was the topic of a feature story that was published in the *Missourian*.⁴⁸ So, the following day, Noelle appeared again. In the article, Noelle voiced her opinion on several American customs such as hitch-hiking, dating, and smoking, as well as expressed her desire to study in France the following year. Notably, she also shared her thoughts on war in Europe: "In Germany, Berlin is closer to the Polish border than Columbia is to Kansas City and we are forced to build up a large army, but we do not want war. No European country does. We are afraid of war."⁴⁹ Otherwise, Noelle kept her opinions private throughout the first few months in Missouri, mostly writing about local news or programs taking place in the German club with which she was involved.⁵⁰

But on November 24, an article entitled "Two Foreign Visitors Write of Nazi Rule" appeared on page four of the newspaper. At that time, Noelle was enrolled in an editorial writing class through the School of Journalism which required students to write in the *Columbia*

47. "Exchange Student Enrolls." *Columbia Missourian*. September 28, 1937.

48. Priwer. *Nazi Exchange Students*. 354.

49. "German Student Is Amazed at American Talk About War." *Columbia Missourian*. September 29, 1937.

50. Neumann and von Hoerschelmann. *Briefwechsel*. 200.

Missourian. The editor of the *Missourian*, Dean Frank L. Martin, had requested that Noelle and another exchange student from India, P. P. Singh, define National-Socialism in the context of a debate.⁵¹ Directly below Singh's editorial that condemned Nazism and Jew-baiting appeared Noelle's piece, "A Nazi Version."

Noelle defined National-Socialism primarily as a reaction to the injustice of the Treaty of Versailles, which required that Germany disarm, pay financial reparations, and forfeit territory among other consequences. She also attributed Nazism to Germany's deteriorating national pride and culture, a result of the "extending influence of Jews" who held "about 70-90 per cent of the key positions in medicine, law, the press, the theatre, and a large part of government positions" after World War I.⁵² The German people, Noelle argued, elected Hitler because he brought ideological certainty to an uncertain country. She also defended Nazism's main principle—"public welfare above self-interest"—which "demands readiness to sacrifice and restricts individual liberty if the independence of the entire nation is at stake."⁵³ Noelle concluded by stating that National-Socialism required the preservation of national character, which could be accomplished through the separation of races and a war of defense, but not aggression.

While the article may not have completely reflected her personal beliefs, Noelle demonstrated clear support of many Nazi doctrines. Her opinions might also have been influenced by the camp she attended in Neustrelitz. As mentioned in this paper's introduction, this is where she and most other German exchange students underwent intensive Nazi ideological training for a week before coming to America. Relevantly, a letter to the editor by Mr. Herbert Gore, which appeared in the *Missourian* a few days later, considered Noelle's

51. Neumann and von Hoerschelmann. *Briefwechsel*. 914.

52. "A Nazi Version." *Columbia Missourian*. November 24, 1937.

53. "A Nazi Version." *Columbia Missourian*. 1937.

attitude as “conditioned by environment and the national point-of-view.”⁵⁴ Outside of this response though, campus reaction to her editorial was limited.⁵⁵

In addition to writing in the newspaper, Noelle spoke frequently at social gatherings at and around the university. In March 1938, a promotion for a Men’s Club dinner appeared in the *Moberly Monitor Index*, mentioning that several foreign exchange students from the University of Missouri were to speak about conditions in their respective countries. One of those students was Elisabeth Noelle, whom the advertisement described as a strong Nazi sympathizer.⁵⁶ The next day, another article appeared in the *Monitor Index* and summarized Noelle’s comments from the event, mentioning that she willingly follows and agrees with Hitler out of “love and allegiance.”⁵⁷ Noelle appeared at similar gatherings, whether singing German folk songs for the Needlework Guild at least once a week during a majority of her time at the University of Missouri.⁵⁸

Although Elisabeth Noelle certainly supported Germany and spread its Nazi ideology around Columbia, whether she was explicitly sent to America as a propagandist is an entirely different question. But it’s one that many began to ask throughout Noelle’s second semester in Missouri. On May 10, 1938, an editorial was published in *New Masses* by Danish exchange student Karl Eskelund. Eskelund was thought to be a good friend of Noelle’s, but this was evidently not the case. The article made the claims that Noelle had met Hitler personally and was proud of it, dismissed internationalism as impossible, desired war, and believed all journalists—except those that wrote nicely about Germany—were Jewish propagandists.⁵⁹ By the time this

54. “Our Nazi Debate Goes On.” *Columbia Missourian*. December 6, 1937.

55. Priwer. *Nazi Exchange Students*. 356.

56. “Foreign Students to Speak Here.” *Moberly Monitor Index*. March 11, 1938.

57. “German Youth Follows Hitler in Love and Allegiance, Says Speaker at Men’s Club Dinner.” *Moberly Monitor Index*. March 12, 1938.

58. Priwer. *Nazi Exchange Students*. 361.

59. Eskelund, Karl J. “Nazi Exchange Students.” *New Masses*. May 10, 1938.

letter was published, Eskelund had ended his semester and left for China. A *New York Times* article widely publicized at the time also stated that German exchange students attended a yearlong propaganda camp where they were taught to be “political soldiers.”⁶⁰

Backlash on campus was almost immediate. The following week’s issue of *ASU Tiger* condemned Noelle as a propagandist and also floated a rumor that there was a secret, 250-person Nazi organization on campus. However, the claim was based on flimsy evidence and never proven true.⁶¹ On September 29, Metcalfe testified before the Dies Committee and, borrowing details largely from Eskelund’s letter, elevated the case to national attention. While all of these claims contained some elements of truth, the reality is that most of them were blown out of proportion. Noelle complained that the letter contained “the most vulgar distortion of the things I had ever said to him in conversation.”⁶² It was true that Noelle met Hitler the June before coming to Columbia, as well as that she had attended the Nazi camp at Neustrelitz—but only for a week rather than a full year. It is also possible that Eskelund’s letter was written as a reaction to Noelle declining his sexual advances earlier in the year when they were dating.⁶³ Regardless, a letter to the editor printed in the *Missourian* on May 27 accused Eskelund of deliberately misrepresenting Noelle.⁶⁴ He later apologized for the article, stating that he treated Noelle “very unfairly” and he was ashamed of it.⁶⁵

The Dies Committee also reported that Professor John B. Wolf, a member of the University of Missouri German Department, had given a series of lectures on Nazi Germany and had visited the country on a trip paid for by the German government. Wolf laughed at these

60. Priwer. *Nazi Exchange Students*. 357.

61. “Miss Noelle Exposed As Propagandist.” Columbia, Missouri: *ASU Tiger*, 1938.

62. Neumann and von Hoerschelmann. *Briefwechsel*. 908.

63. Neumann and von Hoerschelmann. *Briefwechsel*. 908.

64. Neumann and von Hoerschelmann. *Briefwechsel*. 912.

65. Neumann and von Hoerschelmann. *Briefwechsel*. 913.

allegations in an article published in October's copy of the *Mizzou Alumnus*, stating that he had taught a class on modern Germany, but "if my stand in that class was Nazi propaganda, I'll eat it."⁶⁶ Wolf also repeatedly insisted that he visited Germany of his own expense.⁶⁷ Further in Metcalfe's testimony to the Dies Committee, he suggested that Noelle and Haering had composed a mailing list for Nazi propaganda. An article published by the *Centralia Fireside Guard* in 1941 later claimed that Nazi propaganda agencies had sent free propaganda flyers to "nearly every fraternity, sorority and other organization of University of Missouri students."⁶⁸ However, it is unlikely that these two events are correlated.

It is doubtful that Elisabeth Noelle and Heinrich Haering were sent to the University of Missouri as designated Nazi propaganda agents. Noelle herself did not believe that the camp in Neustrelitz could significantly influence a person in a week or that the exchange students could help Germany in any substantial way.⁶⁹ The best form of propaganda, in her opinion, was simply to be well liked.⁷⁰ In that regard, she succeeded. Noelle possessed a wide network of friends during her time in Columbia and was even on friendly terms with several Jewish students (which in itself could be seen as a form of propaganda).⁷¹

However, the extent to which Noelle specifically spread the Nazi ideology at the University of Missouri is undeniable. She continued writing *Missourian* articles throughout her second semester, many of which expressed support for the Nazi party. No matter her intentions, Noelle helped uphold the positive image Germany was so eager to maintain. Fortunately, Noelle's efforts did not affect the college's perspective of Germany and Nazism. The University

66. "Propaganda Charge Called Misleading." *Mizzou Alumnus*, October 1938. 10.

67. "Propaganda Charge Called Misleading." *Mizzou Alumnus*, 1938. 10.

68. "A Good Move for Safety." *Centralia Fireside Guard*, 1941.

69. Neumann and von Hoerschelmann. *Briefwechsel*. 896.

70. Neumann and von Hoerschelmann. *Briefwechsel*. 199.

71. Neumann and von Hoerschelmann. *Briefwechsel*. 911.

of Missouri was decidedly anti-German throughout the 1930s—a sentiment which only increased as the second world war neared— and one university professor even attributed part of that shift to Noelle’s activities on campus.⁷² Because of this, it is highly unlikely that even a more dedicated Nazi propagandist could have significantly altered the opinions of students and staff at the University of Missouri.

Conclusion

On the night of November 9, 1938, Nazis viciously attacked Jews, their property, and their synagogues in an event that would come to be known as Kristallnacht, the Night of Broken Glass. Immediately, American universities erupted with large-scale protests against Nazism that lasted days. Most demonstrations were student-led, but faculty members and some administrators also took part.⁷³ The first of these protests began at Harvard and quickly spread to other colleges across the country; however, its administration refused to acknowledge the plight Jews in Germany imminently faced.⁷⁴ Hundreds of students at Columbia University joined in these protests as well, adding their names to thousands of others in a petition urging the U.S. government to end diplomatic relations with Germany—a list that would eventually make its way to President Franklin Delano Roosevelt.⁷⁵ At several other colleges, students began raising money to aid refugees and extended scholarships to many German Jews seeking refuge in America. Even so, the college Jewish communities and campus Hillel’s did most of the necessary work.

72. Neumann and von Hoerschelmann. *Briefwechsel*. 914.

73. Norwood, *The Third Reich*, 230.

74. Norwood, *The Third Reich*, 233.

75. “Columbia Justice.” *Columbia Daily Spectator*. November 15, 1938.

Elisabeth Noelle went on to become a prominent political scientist well known for coining the term “spiral of silence,” which refers to the phenomenon that occurs when people alter their own ideologies to match public opinion due to a fear of alienation. However, Noelle’s past came back to haunt her over half a century later when she was appointed a visiting professor in the University of Chicago’s Political Science Department. An article accusing her of antisemitism was released a week before she took up the position in 1991, sparking debate across the entire campus.⁷⁶ Noelle admitted to joining a Nazi student organization in order to travel to the United States as a student, but she denied being a Nazi. She additionally requested that her articles be judged by the circumstances of their time.⁷⁷ Nevertheless, she worked at the university until the completion of her term in December 1991. Even up until her death in 2021, Elisabeth Noelle never explicitly apologized for her past.⁷⁸

76. “Professor Is Criticized for Anti-Semitic Past.” *The New York Times*. November 28, 1991.

77. Noelle-Neumann, Elisabeth. “Accused Professor Was Not a Nazi.” *The New York Times*. December 14, 1991.

78. “Silent to the End.” *Chicago Jewish Star*. August 27, 2010.

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