Giving Youth a Voice: American Student Perceptions of Adolf Hitler, 1933-1939

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Senior Honors Thesis, 2002-2003
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Acknowledgements

I would like to take this opportunity to express my appreciation to Dr. Harold Marcuse for all his help. As my mentor of this thesis, he has provided continuous support, guidance, and understanding. Thanks are due also to Dr. Erika Rappaport whose support, encouragement, and direction have been very helpful over this past year.

I am grateful to my wonderful family for all of their love and support through such an intense year. A special note of thanks to many of the individuals who have given me additional support through this entire process, including my professors, classmates, co-workers, and friends, especially all you crazy Santa Barbara kids.

I am forever grateful to my research partner and good friend, Jenna Berger. This time of personal growth and academic achievement would not have been nearly as enjoyable without her. Thank you for preparing me for the "real world" with my new found computer knowledge, as well.

And lastly, much thanks to Madrid for embedding in me his passion for European History.

Contents

Introduction

American society has been fascinated with Adolf Hitler since he first came to power in 1933. People yearn to know what kind of man could lead a country to take over half of Europe, while also organizing the genocide of eleven million people under his policy of creating a pure Aryan race. Hitler's name has become synonymous with several ideas and images in history, past and present. He is often considered one of the most evil men ever to have lived because of his supervision of the extermination of six million Jews and five million others, including gypsies, homosexuals, political dissidents, and social outcasts. On the other hand, he has been seen as a great political leader who rebuilt Germany after several years of unstable governments and one of the worst depressions of its history. He is also portrayed as a military genius because of the ease with which he overtook several European nations. According to one recent scholar, Hitler is "even closer to the center of consciousness and is today a figure of inescapable presence."[1]

This fascination with Hitler first developed when he came to power in January 1933, as different groups debated his new policies in Germany and his future abilities as a leader. Throughout the 1930s, America definitely did not have a general consensus about Hitler. Americans were divided in their responses to him, but one group that proved to be especially anti-Hitler was America's college students. Unfortunately, in the studies that have been conducted on the American public's perceptions of Hitler, it appears that little attention has been paid to youth views during his years in power. This thesis, will attempt to give youth a voice, as

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[1] Alvin Rosenfeld, *Imagining Hitler* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1985), 94-95, quoted in Kenneth L. Work, "A Separation From Reality: The American Attitudes Toward Adolf Hitler from 1923 to 1995" (Ph.D. diss., Georgia State University, 1996), 213.

it focuses on their opinions of Hitler from 1933-1939, as voiced in their own student newspapers.[2]

This study compares the public perceptions of Adolf Hitler in university newspapers with the views expressed in mainstream journals in the United States from 1933 until 1939. The focus of the study is to find out whether university students, as representatives of the educated, younger generation, had a consistent view of Hitler and his policies in Germany with those expressed in contemporary journals of the 1930s. This study analyzes news stories, editorials, and editorial cartoons from the University of California, Los Angeles's *California Daily Bruin*, the University of California, Berkeley's *Daily Californian*, the *Yale Daily News*, and *The Harvard Crimson*. The student newspapers are from four of the most elite universities in the United States, and thus, they reflect opinions of some of the most educated and informed students at this time. Also chosen because of their regional differences, these newspapers allow the reader to get a feel for how the older, single-sex, private schools in the east compared to the newer, coed, public schools in California. All of these university newspapers were student operated and available to all students on a daily basis for a small fee during the 1930s.

I traveled to each of these universities and researched student opinion on Hitler as found in archived student newspapers only during the more significant or newsworthy events that related to Hitler and Germany from when he came to power in January of 1933 until World War II broke out in early September 1939. I examined each newspaper about a week prior to each event and for about two to three weeks after each event. In years when there proved to be little going on in Germany, specifically 1934, 1935, and 1937, I looked for opinions every day the

[2] Throughout this paper, any reference to youth indicates the views of elite college educated students, as this was the sector of the population that I focused on. Because only four college newspapers were utilized, this thesis serves as only one attempt to find a consensus of student opinion on Hitler.

newspaper was published. At Harvard, I also used the online archive to look up any other days the newspaper included articles about Hitler or Germany.

By comparing student views found in these newspapers with what was printed in the mainstream press, this thesis contends that educated students, although very pacifist during the 1930s, were highly critical of Hitler much earlier on than their elders who completely underestimated Hitler as he rose to power throughout the 1930s. The general public's failure to take Hitler seriously until 1938 had deplorable consequences for Europe during World War II and the Holocaust. The students, who were among the strongest supporters of the anti-war movement in the 1930s, also proved to be very anti-fascist and anti-Hitler, and often called for intervention by means other than war. Moreover, American students began to develop a separate political identity in the 1930s. As they criticized Hitler, they also criticized American leadership and that of the Allies, as well. Hitler was not seen as an isolated phenomenon, but rather as a product of failed diplomacy, a harsh peace treaty, ignorance, U.S. neutrality, and Allied appeasement. This position in no way "forgave" Hitler, but rather it suggests that American students had a very sophisticated understanding of the political situation and were possibly frustrated by their inability, as young people, to affect change. Most importantly, this research suggests that the debate over America's reaction to Hitler in the 1930s was a crucial chapter in the history of America's left, and it was an important moment in developing a cultural identity for youth that continues today.

Literature Review

Several scholars have explored the public's opinion of Hitler in America throughout the years prior to, during, and after his reign as the leader of Germany. In an attempt to find a

general public opinion about Hitler, most of these scholars have surveyed mainstream American periodicals and newspapers during the years he was in power. At a time when public opinion polls were not widely used beyond forecasting local election results, leading U.S. newspapers and journals seemed to have been one of the best ways to determine a general consensus about American views of Hitler.[3] While graduate students Kenneth Work and Eugene Bacon explored both newspapers and journals in their research, most of the people who have written on this subject only surveyed several mainstream journals over a specified number of years. Historian Michael Zalampas argued that periodicals are useful because they provide a wide variety of sources for information and did not publish under the same time pressures as newspapers.[4] Graduate student Liesel Ashley Miller also looked at periodicals because "daily newspapers and radio broadcasts were not afforded days or even hours at times to review and rewrite information and thus could not provide as thorough reports as the weekly or monthly periodicals."[5] That said, daily newspapers still proved to be a reliable source in determining general American opinion. Campus newspapers are particularly helpful because they proved to be one of the few vehicles through which students' voices could be heard. Furthermore, student newspapers provided a place in which student opinion was shaped, as well as reflected

The scholarship that has been written on this subject tends to take two forms. Some historians have tried to focus on American perception of National Socialism as a whole, including the policies that Nazism advocated. The majority of scholars, however, have looked specifically at the U.S. perceptions of Hitler himself, who they view as the creator of the regime,

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[3] Work, 4. See also Daniel Shepherd Day, "American Opinion of German National Socialism, 1933-1937" (Ph.D. diss., University of California, Los Angeles, 1958), 7.

[4] Michael Zalampas, *Adolf Hitler and The Third Reich in American Magazines, 1923-1939* (Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1989), 217.

[5] Liesel Ashley Miller, "Perceptions of the Personality of Adolf Hitler in American Periodicals, 1939-1941" (Master's thesis, Mississippi State University, 1994), 5.

in an attempt to get to the core of National Socialism. Both of these types of studies serve utmost importance to this paper because Hitler becomes almost interchangeable with Nazi Germany as a whole. This proves to be true, as scholars who attempted to give an overview of American perceptions of Nazi Germany discuss in great detail the perception of the "Hitler regime" instead. Writing his dissertation in the 1950s, Daniel Day Shepherd attempted to find a consensus among American opinion of German National Socialism by surveying the opinions of diverse groups in society. He focused primarily on how these groups felt toward the "Hitler regime," as if every aspect of Third Reich could be attributed to Hitler himself. He freely interchanged "Hitler regime" with "Nazi regime" and "National Socialism" in his concluding remarks about how each group of Americans felt during this time.[6] This reflects the idea that Nazi Germany was a totalitarian state, and thus, all aspects of that nation were controlled by Adolf Hitler.

Liesel Ashley Miller specifically stated in the introduction of her Master's thesis that she was looking at American perceptions of Hitler "the man," not at his rise to power or his Nazi policies on the Jewish question. She focused more on Hitler's personal life, his personality, his role as the German leader, and his role in the war.[7] This is how her work differed from Michael Zalampas', whom she claimed focused more on Hitler's policies, the Nazi Party, and the Third Reich. Zalampas' *Adolf Hitler and the Third Reich in American Magazines, 1923-1939* never made a clear distinction between "Hitler" and "his regime," as he hardly ever separated the two in his writing. Miller claimed that her work, like graduate student Roberta Siegel's "Opinions on Nazi Germany: A Study of Three Popular American Magazines, 1933-1941," does make a clear

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[6] Day, 224-226.
[7] Miller, 4.

distinction between the German people and the German government (Hitler), and thus, raises questions about him as the leader and what kind of control he had over the Nazi state.[8]

Thus, Hitler's name is often used synonymously with that of Nazi Germany itself. Kenneth Work further proved this with his 1996 attitudinal research on Georgia State University students who were asked to give their opinion of Hitler.[9] Work's research showed that the students were very familiar with Hitler's name, as almost every student associated Hitler with being the leader of Germany during the Second World War. His research also confirmed the results of a previous study in which eleventh graders who were questioned about twentieth century history overwhelmingly associated Hitler with being the leader of Germany during World War II.[10] Thus, all of the scholars tended to focus on American public perception of Hitler "the man" in one form or another because his name was interchangeable with Germany prior to and during World War II.

This study, as well, focuses on student opinion of Hitler rather than of Germany or the Nazi movement because student newspapers, like the more mainstream magazines, freely interchanged Hitler's name with Nazi Germany, especially beginning in 1936. Hitler had become equivalent to Germany by this point in the minds of American students. This can be seen specifically in debates over whether or not America should participate in the Olympics or send delegates to the 550th Heidelberg University anniversary celebration.

Most studies attempted to capture a general public opinion and to include the opinions of the majority of American society, and thus, they surveyed popular magazines. For example,

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[8] Miller, 8. See also abstract of Roberta Siegel, "Opinions on Nazi Germany: A Study of Three Popular American Magazines, 1933-1941" (Ph.d. diss., Clark University, 1950).

[9] Work, 184.

[10] "America's Grade on 20th Century European Wars," *New York Times* (December 3, 1995), 5. This data was based on a test given by the Educational Excellence Network with the National Assessment of Educational Progress. The results were published in Diane Ravitch and Chester E. Finn Jr., *What Do Our 17 Year Olds Know*? (Harper and Row, 1987), quoted in Work, 187-188.

Kenneth Work claimed that he used *Time, Newsweek*, and *The Literary Digest* because they were the leading magazines of the day. He chose *The Reader's Digest, The Saturday Evening Post,* and *Review of Reviews* because of their large circulations.[11] Historian Toni McDaniel also selected twelve periodicals based on their "moderate to large readership" and their "interest in publishing articles about Hitler."[12] These magazines, although massively circulated, target specific parts of the population, and therefore, do not "represent" all Americans. It appears that America did not necessarily have a general consensus, but unfortunately, there has been an entire segment of the population—the youth—which these magazines do not necessarily target, and thus, student opinions have often been left out of such studies.[13] Because the mass-circulated periodicals are written by and appeal to members of an older generation, we do not know whether or not the views they expressed were consistent with attitudes of the younger generation.

Daniel Shepherd Day attempted to divide American public opinion into groups of individuals. He surveyed magazines that would give the best reflection of American labor opinion, business opinion, farm opinion, church opinion, and intellectual opinion because he wanted "to ascertain the views of those groups which occupied influential positions among the American population, and which either reflected or shaped the opinion of a large section of the population."[14] While Day's intentions are good, he also failed to include a large segment of the population by not including youth opinions in his study. And although youth may not have "occupied influential positions among the American population," Day is hypocritical because he

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[11] Work, 11.

[12] Toni McDaniel, "A 'Hitler Myth?' American Perception of Adolf Hitler, 1933-1938," *Journalism History* 17 (1990-1991): 48.

[13] Kenneth Work was the only scholar who actually directly included university students' views in his research by surveying core curriculum history courses at Georgia State University. "The overall objective...of the research was to determine how college students perceived Adolf Hitler, using a research technique that encourages students to give free and uninhibited responses to questions." Work, who succeeds in including the voice of youth, still ignores the youth perceptions of Hitler during the years he was in power, as his research was conducted between the end of 1991 and the summer of 1995, some fifty years after Hitler's death.

states that "to consider only the general or average opinion of the American people is to overlook or minimize the attitudes and convictions of those factions of the population which reflected more discernment than was evident among average citizens."[15]

Youth views are important because they include an important group of future policy-makers that is often overlooked or lumped together with the older generation. It is important to distinguish between the two different generations because they do not necessarily always agree with one another. Furthermore, the student movement proved to be extremely important in the 1930s as Robert Cohen discussed in his book, *When the Old Left Was Young*. The movement was very large while "[a]t its peak in the late 1930s, the student movement's demonstrations involved hundreds of thousands of students annually—by some estimates almost half of America's undergraduate population."[16] The movement was also quite influential with students organizing the first national student strikes and shaping political discourse on campus for the remainder of the decade.[17] Cohen's book offers insight into how youth in America viewed important foreign policy issues at the time, such as fascism, the Nazi movement, and the war in Europe. Cohen focused on the isolationism of the student movement, which helps one to better understand what students meant when they called for action against Hitler in their student newspapers. Cohen also recognized most historians neglect of the students' voices, which he attributes to the fact that "[h]istorians, as a middle-aged group, tend not—outside of those working on the era of the 1960's—to take youth seriously enough to study their ideas or the

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[14] Day, 8.
[15] Day, 6.
[16] Robert Cohen, *When the Old Left Was Young* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), xviii.
[17] Cohen, xiii.

history of student politics."[18] Cohen's explanation proves to be a fairly accurate one when looking at the studies of American perceptions of Hitler.

[18] Cohen, xix.

Part I: 1933-1935

Hitler Becomes Chancellor

Hitler's appointment as Chancellor of Germany on January 30, 1933 made front page news in Berkeley's student newspaper, *The Daily Californian*, and in UCLA's *California Daily Bruin*. However, at Yale and Harvard, the student newspapers hardly gave notice to Hitler's new role. *The Harvard Crimson*, in particular, did not mention the new German leader's name until February 14, 1933 and only in the form of a recorded interview with a noted history professor. Nevertheless, by February, *The Harvard Crimson* and the *Yale Daily News* printed more information about the new leader of Germany. And although an inconsistency existed between how much the newspapers printed immediately after Hitler's appointment, students were well served with the amount of information in their student newspapers about the events in Germany.

An article in Berkeley's newspaper labeled Hitler a very "ambitious" Fascist leader even before his appointment as Chancellor was confirmed.[19] The day following his appointment by President Paul von Hindenburg, the paper fully covered the story on the front page and offered insight into Hitler's planned social and political programs. It mentioned that his policies included state control of economics and business activity, relief of debtor's burdens, and "reorganization of the social and political life of Germany on the basis of the 'racial theory.'"[20] UCLA students similarly knew about the appointment of Hitler, as the story made front page news. The story also discussed the other cabinet members elected with the intention to safeguard Hitler's regime with their conservative views.[21]

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[19] *The Daily Californian*, January 30, 1933.
[20] *The Daily Californian*, January 31, 1933.
[21] *California Daily Bruin*, January 31, 1933.

At Yale, however, there was, a brief article which appeared primarily on the third page of the paper describing how different countries in Europe reacted to the news.[22] After this, the *Yale Daily News* began to cover the German affair quite adequately, attesting to the popularity of National Socialism only one day later.[23] Strikingly, Harvard failed to mention Hitler's appointment until mid-February, not with a news or editorial article, but rather with a Harvard history professor's opinion printed in the paper.[24] This appeared to be the trend in Harvard's newspaper, in particular, in which there was no news reporting on any sort of international events until 1938 and the only mention of international events came in the form of editorials and professor opinion articles. Perhaps, the editors of *The Harvard Crimson* assumed that students received information on international affairs from other local newspapers, and thus, it tended to focus more on domestic concerns or school-related events.

Student opinion immediately after Hitler's appointment as Chancellor proved to be rather neutral, but there was an indication of some doubt in the students' minds. An editorial in *The Daily Californian* the day after Hitler was appointed claimed that whether Hitler took things into his own hands by taking drastic measures or whether he was in the best interests of Germany, he would represent the current Fascist trend.[25] This editorial only offered commentary on Fascist thought, rather than showing a definite student opinion of Hitler right away. The students at Berkeley were skeptical of the Hitler government, doubting whether his regime would last through his planned four-year economic plan. In this editorial, the author demonstrated doubt, claiming that his regime would not amount to anything of significance.[26] The *Yale Daily News*, also commenting on the political situation in Germany, claimed the "critics who after the last

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[22] *Yale Daily News*, February 1, 1933.
[23] *Yale Daily News*, February 2, 1933.
[24] *The Harvard Crimson*, February 14, 1933.
[25] *The Daily Californian*, January 31, 1933.

Reichstag elections said that Adolf Hitler was through" were "false prophets."[27] The students, then, criticized the people who underestimated the popularity of Hitler after the previous election.

Once Hitler became Chancellor in January 1933, mainstream magazines recognized that Germany was now under the rule of a dictator and that he would rule by suppression and the threat of force. Moreover, the general public still saw several positive checks to Hitler's radical policies. The magazines speculated that "the German officer corps, the monopoly capitalists, or the state of the German economy would topple Hitler, or at least, cause him to moderate his policies."[28] Kenneth Work also found that the general American reaction to Hitler's appointment was one of disbelief, as people never thought President Hindenburg would give the position to Hitler. Work's study also confirmed that people felt Hitler's government would not be permitted to rule unchecked. Overall, Work concluded that "Americans took Hitler's appointment too lightly."[29] Information in mainstream magazines remained neutral and factual, similar to the early article found in Berkeley's newspaper. But the fact remains that even if students viewed the stalwart conservatives that Hindenburg named to office as safeguards to Hitler's power, they still attested to his popularity and questioned those who viewed Hitler lightly.

National Socialism Prevails

The March 5 Reichstag election proved to be a huge success for the Nazi Party and an even bigger triumph for Hitler, who was able to demonstrate to the world that he was not only a party leader, but a national leader who enjoyed broad support in Germany. The Nazis did not

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[26] *The Daily Californian*, February 7, 1933.
[27] *Yale Daily News*, February 3, 1933.
[28] Zalampas, 214-215.

achieve an absolute majority alone, but by attaining 288 Reichstag seats and the German Nationalists winning 52 seats, they arrived at a 51.7 percent majority.[30] *The Daily Californian* picked up the fact that the election may not have been very fair right away, claiming that although Hitler had an impressive victory, the election could have been fixed because Germany was living under a dictatorship by this point. The students noted that since Nazism prevailed by such a large margin, it must have meant that Hitler was good for the country. Despite this observation, they did not omit the fact that the election may have been rigged, showing their skepticism of the government yet again.[31] UCLA students also noticed the restrictions on speech and press that Hitler issued on the eve of the election in order to quiet the opposition. The newspaper stated that Hitler, in order to assure success, issued "an emergency decree abrogating civil rights throughout the nation."[32] Thus, they implied that this disrespect of civil liberties was necessary for Hitler to ensure a victory, demonstrating their doubt that he could have achieved it on his own. Moreover, they were clearly asserting that Fascism was "anti-democratic."

Immediately after the election results were in, the student population showed early criticism of the rest of America for not focusing on Hitler's huge victory at the polls which they maintained was of huge significance. In their opinion, Americans were too distracted by domestic developments, such as the Great Depression and the new presidency to notice important developments in Germany. A criticism in the *Yale Daily News*, declared that "[a]fter many months at a standstill, democracy in Germany has at last succeeded in establishing a government. In the process, democracy may have committed suicide."[33] In the eyes of the Yalies, although allowing Hitler to come to power may have looked like a good thing for

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[29] Work, 71-75.
[30] Jackson J. Spielvogel, *Hitler and Nazi Germany A History* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1996), 70-71.
[31] *The Daily Californian*, March 6, 1933.
[32] *California Daily Bruin*, March 8, 1933.

Germany, in reality, the dictatorship he was creating would not be positive for the country. They did not hide their criticism of the German government or of their elders and their own government. The students' criticism of Hitler developed into a criticism of mainstream America and its isolationism. This also grew into a critique of American leadership. Thus, the debate over Hitler became one of the issues that sparked generational-based politics. American students appeared to be developing their own political identity at this time.

Another critique that became more noticeable among the American student population after the Reichstag election is that which was placed upon the Allied countries. In an editorial in *The Harvard Crimson*, one student made himself quite clear stating the French "have been instrumental in putting Comrade Hitler in his seat of power." He blamed the French and the other Allies because of their treatment of Germany after World War I. "Having humiliated and imprisoned Germany [with the Treaty of Versailles] they [the French] are now 'surprised' that a nationalistic, reactionary party [i.e. the Nazi party] has come to the fore."[34] American students, tended to place more blame on the Allied countries. This was a trend that only began to develop here among the student press, but it was also seen in contemporary magazines of the time. Roberta Siegel contended that magazines put the blame on World War I and the Treaty of Versailles for the rise of Hitler:

> [T]he disillusionment and oversimplified appraisal of World War I and the Treaty of Versailles for some time blinded the magazines to the real issues at stake in World War II and to the fact that this latest war was not merely a new edition of the first one."[35]

Because they were imprisoned by hindsight, the older generation saw the rise of Hitler as the result of failed diplomacy and a harsh peace treaty.

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[33] *Yale Daily News*, March 7, 1933.
[34] *The Harvard Crimson*, March 8, 1933.
[35] Siegel, 3.

Students criticized the rest of America for not giving much attention to Hitler's huge victory in the Reichstag election. Instead, mainstream magazines at this time focused on the severe depression, the isolationist attitude within the United States, and on New Deal experiments to revive the economy.[36] Newspapers and magazines remained rather reserved and restrained, reporting primarily on how "Nazi Germany was on the whole rather favorable to the new government."[37] It is no wonder, then, that Hitler's huge margin of the success in the election was taken quite lightly by the older generation. Intensely focused on domestic issues, they failed to take the new German leader seriously.

Early Jewish Persecution

On April 1, 1933, Hitler's new government took its first public action against the Jews, calling for "a nation-wide boycott aimed at Jewish businesses, goods, doctors, and lawyers."[38] The boycott was unsuccessful and was called off after only one day due to a lack of popular participation and nation-wide support in Germany. *The Daily Californian* carried a story about the failed boycott on the front page of its paper in early April.[39] Berkeley's students noted that the boycott was ended because of "Hindenburg's request that Hitler rescind the order that Jewish enterprises discharge Jewish employees." They also believed that the attitude of both London and Washington in the anti-Semitic campaign helped to bring an end to the boycott. They believed that both the German president, as well as international opinion maintained a strong check on Hitler's power at least with regard to the "Jewish Question."[40] UCLA students also

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[36] Zalampas, 216.
[37] Siegel, 1.
[38] M. Domarus, *Hitler, Reden und Proklamationen* 1932-1945 (Wiesbaden, 1973), 248-251, quoted in Ian Kershaw, *The 'Hitler Myth': Image and Reality in the Third Reich* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), 234.
[39] *The Daily Californian*, April 3, 1933.
[40] *The Daily Californian*, April 4, 1933.

hoped that world opinion could prevent Hitler's radical measures against the Jews, as indicated in the following editorial:

> It is to be hoped that the firm hand of enlightened world opinion will dissuade Hitler's war-like party from following a course which will besmirch the good name of Germany and upset the world's attempt at universal tranquility.[41]

It seems, then, that these students along with the general America public viewed the checks on Hitler's power as more effective than they actually proved to be, showing their idealism and inaccurate assumptions about Hitler's government and world opinion.

Harvard's students criticized the American government and other governments that persecuted minorities, instead of Hitler himself. In two separate editorials, the students at Harvard claimed that "it is idle to rail against the German people" who have showed their support for a regime that dislikes Jews. People in the United States favored a government that disliked blacks, which put Americans in the same boat as the Germans.[42] Furthermore, they maintained that:

> Mr. Hitler is doing precisely no worse or no better than the heads of other states throughout the world...Persecuting Jews in Germany and threatening Jewish lawyers in Scottsboro are governmental functions differing only in degree. To ignore this elementary fact is to criticize Mr. Hitler with a crass myopia which can scarcely command attention or respect.[43]

This student implied that other governments, including that of the United States, persecuted minorities. Asserting that racial politics in the U.S. were as bad as those in Germany, this student believed criticizing Hitler while ignoring the persecution within the U.S. was hypocritical. Thus, the student used the situation in Germany to discuss American injustice.

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[41] *California Daily Bruin*, March 30, 1933.
[42] *The Harvard Crimson*, March 31, 1933.
[43] *The Harvard Crimson*, April 10, 1933.

The general American public also hoped that Hitler would not follow through with his anti-Semitic policies after he came to power.[44] Contemporary magazines such as *Time* and *Newsweek* thought the Nazi boycott of Jewish stores was limited to only nine hours because of the economic dilemma it caused. The severe economic pressures and the falling Berlin stock market resulted in protests and boycotts in foreign countries, along with complaints to President Hindenburg that something must be done. Michael Zalampas maintained that "Hindenburg then summoned Hitler, 'like a naughty schoolboy,' and 'Handsome Adolf' backed down before threats Hindenburg would declare martial law and abolish the government."[45] Hindenburg proved to be an effective check on Hitler's power in this case, leaving the American public believing that he would prove to be so in the future as well.

The public, however, was wrong in their assumption because according to Zalampas, "the end of the official Nazi boycott...did not spell the demise of Nazi anti-Semitism." Instead, anti-Semitism continued through official decrees that were ordered by the Nazi government banning everything from the kosher slaughtering of meat, to Jews being allowed to participate in sports.[46] Americans were slow to criticize the new government and it was only this constant persecution against the Jews, especially after the failed boycott that persuaded the general public that Hitler was a problem. Furthermore, "[i]t was Hitler's attack on the Jews shortly after taking office that drew attention away from his foreign policy and focused on his domestic policy, thus lessening international tension."[47]

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[44] Work, 77.

[45] "All Fools Day," *Time*, April 10, 1933, 23; "Nazis Heed an Indignant World," *Newsweek*, April 8, 1933, 17; "Co-ordination," *Time*, April 17, 1933, 17; *The Nation*, April 19, 1933, 430, quoted in Zalampas, 31.

[46] Zalampas, 31.

[47] Frank H. Simonds, "Europe Moves Toward War," *Harper's Magazine* 167 (June 1933): 1-11, quoted in Work, 86-87.

Germany's Bold Move

On a quiet Saturday in mid-October 1933, Hitler committed his boldest move and withdrew Germany from the League of Nations and the Disarmament Conference. This came as a shock to Americans and people worldwide. Hitler, however, claimed that he only wanted Germany to gain arms equality. This suggested that he was determined to make his country a first-class nation once again. The withdrawal from the League had nothing to do with Germany's interest in ending world peace, as according to the *Yale Daily News*, "Hitler swears that withdrawal postulates 'no possibility of territorial conflicts between France and Germany.'"[48] Nevertheless, *The Daily Californian*, along with *The Harvard Crimson*, reported that Hitler's move thrust Europe into frenzy and left it with an uneasy feeling. Moreover, his decision to withdrawal Germany clarified how Hitler really felt about the international organization and its attempt to maintain world peace.[49]

Not only did student newspapers contain front-page news stories on Germany's exit from the League of Nations, but a plethora of student editorial pieces began to fill the papers. Attempting to both reflect, as well as to influence public opinion on college campuses, these student editorial pieces began to reveal an interventionist tone, calling for the youth to keep a close eye on Germany and Hitler. The students at Berkeley, especially, demonstrated their desire to stand up against Hitler if need be:

> The United States has adopted its usual policy of watchful waiting…Students at this point are little more than observers, but close observation is imperative in preparation for the time when we, as citizens and officials, must take over this mess.[50]

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[48] *Yale Daily News*, October 16, 1933.
[49] *The Daily Californian*, October 16, 1933; *The Harvard Crimson*, October 16, 1933.
[50] *The Daily Californian*, October 17, 1933.

The students were critical of the United States for its "usual policy of watchful waiting" as if it had taken a passive role yet again in world affairs. An editorial cartoon in *The Daily Californian* further exemplified their criticism, displaying two men playing tug-of-war over the U.S.'s stance on National Socialism (fig.1).[51] Furthermore, the students criticized the rest of America, claiming that they will be the ones that must take over control of the situation in Germany. The students recognized their future roles as America's decision-makers.

Figure 1: "Tug o' War"
(Source: *The Daily Californian*)

A similar editorial in *The Daily Californian* emphasized that as Europe waited for war, "few sincere statesmen mourn the destruction of their...effort for world harmony." The student blamed the Treaty of Versailles for imprisoning Germany with its chains of "compromise," describing Germany as a fugitive who had returned to pay back his conquerors fourteen years later. The student described this fugitive as a "he" which could be interpreted as referring to Germany or its new leader, Hitler, or to both as the two slowly became interchangeable with one another. Most importantly, however, this Berkeley student criticized the neutral nations:

> On this international teeter-totter of death and destruction on one side, peace and understanding on the other, each nation must stand or fall now. There is to be no more standing in the middle, shifting weight now on one side, now on the other. One thing is absolute. Those nations who slide from the fulcrum into desolation will be criminal in the sight of the world which will one day achieve sanity. In a sense...the world is standing atop a "hog-back" ridge. Behind lies the darkness of greed and expansionism, before, the light of human sympathy and understanding. Those who go back never again will attain the summit; those who progress cannot

[51] *The Daily Californian*, October 17, 1933.

> fail. From the youth of the world should come the protest against this impeding crime. Where is our prophet?[52]

This student very powerfully stated that for any sort of progress to be made in this difficult time when nations must choose between their own priorities and their desire to intervene, those nations that stood up against Hitler would be the most successful. He/She also directly called for intervention from the youth against Hitler's crime; that is, his withdrawal of Germany from the League of Nations. Although there was no indication of what such intervention might entail, this Berkeley student was directly stating that it was necessary.

The students at Harvard who wrote similar editorials hinted at what might be meant by intervention:

> The role of the neutral nation will be, as always, a difficult one. But those nations sincerely desirous of European peace still have an opportunity to preserve it. An economic boycott of Germany to force its government to terms would so multiply its target as to make a shot impractical.[53]

Calling for an economic boycott against Hitler revealed an interventionist attitude that the students developed earlier than their elders, and it also seemed the most appropriate means of intervention for this group that remained among the most pacifist of Americans throughout the 1930s. Such an economic boycott would also necessitate an international alliance against Hitler, demonstrating a strong internationalist student sense as well. These editorials also revealed the beginning stages of a conflict the American youth faced throughout the 1930's, having to wrestle with their anti-fascist and anti-Hitler feelings in an anti-war age.

The reaction of the older generation can be summed up by the findings of Eugene Bacon, who reviewed mainstream American magazine and newspaper press from 1932 until 1937:

> The reaction in the American press to Hitler's withdrawal from the Arms Conference and the League of Nations was one of alarm. Though viewing the

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[52] *The Daily Californian*, October 16, 1933.
[53] *The Harvard Crimson*, October 24, 1933.

> action with misgivings a majority of the press didn't think that the action would lead to war.[54]

Few Americans, including the youth, thought that there would be war immediately after Germany's withdrawal from the League, and talk of war was deemed "both premature and mischievous."[55] People thought Hitler was militarily weak and would be unable to stand up against the stronger western nations. However, even though Hitler may not have intended to go to war in October 1933, it is this doubt by the American public that allowed him to gain more power. Magazines failed to call for intervention in the same manner that the student newspapers did, but focused more on the seriousness of the situation at hand. *The Nation* referred to this grave, almost desperate situation abroad, and demanded that "the moral opinion of this country be ceaselessly alert." It also criticized other magazines such as *The New Republic* that insisted that the United States withdraw from European affairs altogether.[56] Still, this older generation remained less than critical of the neutral ground that the United States took at this time. The older generation's isolationism was profoundly different from the students' interventionism and internationalism.

Hitler's Consolidation of Power

At about the same time that Hitler withdrew Germany from the League of Nations, he announced the first plebiscitary Reichstag election to be held on November 12, 1933. "The 'election' aimed at the approval and legitimation of the policies and achievements of the government as a whole" and was "directed at ensuring the required show of loyalty to the person of Hitler." The party achieved tremendous success, winning 90 percent in the plebiscite and 87.8

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[54] Eugene Bacon, "American Press Opinion of Hitler, 1932-1937," (Master's thesis, Georgetown University, 1948), 41.

[55] *Springfield Republican*, October 16, 1933, quoted in Bacon, 41.

percent in the Reichstag election. However, those voting had no choice, as the ballots offered no alternative to the Nazi party and there was little secrecy at the ballot box.[57] The students noticed this immediately, as they did with the March 5 Reichstag election. They regarded the election as worthless because every public opinion source that might run counter to Hitler's ideas had been eliminated. "Hitler evidently feels, however, that some justification would not be amiss and he is ready to get it by even such a ludicrous machination as a plebiscite," noted *The Daily Californian*.[58] This student found Hitler completely ridiculous for holding such an election and dismissed him as insecure. This criticism also appeared in the *Yale Daily News,* where a student claimed that the German people voted for a unanimous Nazi Reichstag, but only because they feared imprisonment and even torture if they did not vote as they were told. Also, any non-voters were arrested, leaving the Germans little choice but to vote for Hitler. The editorial went on to state:

> Surely the necessity for such an election as yesterday's is a telling sign of weakness! If the Hitler government were sure of itself it could easily afford to allow its five to ten million real enemies to declare themselves; since he is already secure in the possession of twenty to thirty million supporters.[59]

Not only did this student consider the Hitler government very weak, but he also made a good point in stating that a strong and secure government would not need such affirmation from its people.

Harvard students also demonstrated their uncertainty of how long the Hitler regime would last. One student remarked that Hitler only temporarily united his nation behind him as its sole ruler, despite the fact that he won over 92 percent of the vote. Asserting that the election

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[56] "America, the Allies, and Hitler," *The Nation*, November 1, 1933, 499, quoted in Zalampas, 41.

[57] Kershaw, 63. See BAK, R18/5350, and, for investigations into complaints of electoral irregularities, Fos. 95-10, 107-22. See also M. Broszat, *The Hitler State*, London, 198, pp. 91-92. A detailed analysis is provided in K.D. Bracher, F. Shulz, and W. Sauer, *Die nationalsocialistische Machtergreifung*, Ullstein edn., Frankfurt a.M. 1974, i. 480ff.

was "Germany's last call for a peaceful settlement," the student also stressed that Hitler's present position in Germany required "a period of loud shouting and of anxious waiting."[60] People, then, must remain on their toes and be ready to intervene by some sort of protest or boycott if Hitler's further actions resulted in a worse situation.

Mainstream magazines and newspapers reported that the results of the Reichstag vote were "an indication of the willingness of the German people to give Hitlerism a trial."[61] Many Americans saw little reason why Hitler should not be given at least the benefit of the doubt because of the "lingering inequities of and disgust with the Treaty of Versailles" hanging over their heads. Thus, many Americans did not question the election results and thought his policies should at least be given a chance.[62] Even those who alleged that the plebiscite was a farce were rejected by popular journals, such as *Newsweek*, *Time*, and *The New Republic*.[63] Recognizing the pressure put on the German people at the ballot box, all three agreed that the results were authentic and that the Germans gave Hitler a strong mandate—what *Time* labeled as a "blank check."[64]

The final check on Hitler's power, President Paul von Hindenburg, died in early August 1934. Immediately afterward, Hitler made himself both President and Chancellor of Germany, claiming absolute power for himself. Both Berkeley's and UCLA's newspapers provided sufficient coverage of his final consolidation of power. A UCLA student noted, "Hitler has dictatorial power more potent than any other ruler on earth," and thus, should not be taken

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[58] *The Daily Californian*, October 19, 1933.
[59] *Yale Daily News*, November 13, 1933.
[60] *The Harvard Crimson*, November 14, 1933.
[61] *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, November 13, 1933; *Chicago News*, November 14, 1933, quoted in Bacon, 52.
[62] Work, 207.
[63] *Buffalo News*, November 14, 1933; *Washington News*, November 14, 1933; *Baltimore Sun*, November 13, 1933, quoted in Bacon, 52.

lightly.[65] The popular press, on the other hand, was more concerned with paying tribute to Hindenburg, rather than focusing on Hitler's new power.[66] Such papers dwelled on Hindenburg's great reign as the German leader, instead of focusing on what trouble Hitler might now bring to Germany.

Goodbye to Versailles

The remainder of 1934 and the beginning of 1935 saw the end of the Treaty of Versailles with Hitler's rearmament of Germany, as well as the Saar referendum. The Saar region, which was comprised of a ninety-nine percent German population, was placed under a League Commissioner for fifteen years at the end of World War I. As early as June 1934, six months prior to the plebiscite in which Germans would have the opportunity to vote for the Saar to be returned to the Reich, Nazi propaganda began to direct its attention toward this feat. It was noted in such magazines as *Time* that Saarlanders, who "were 'racially and linguistically almost pure Germans'...desired union with Germany prior to Hitler's accession." Hitler, however, was most concerned about achieving a "*ja* vote" because he realized that this would show that he kept his promise to the German people that he would do away with the Treaty of Versailles.[67] This was only one of many steps that Hitler took after his consolidation of power to bring an end to the terms of the Treaty of Versailles.

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[64] "Effective Political Machine and One-party Ballot Bring Expected Nazi Landslide," *Newsweek*, November 18, 1933, 13; "Kämpfet Mit Uns," *Time*, November 20, 1933,19; "The Third Reich Votes," *The New Republic*, November 22, 1933, 38, quoted in Zalampas, 42.

[65] *California Daily Bruin*, August 3, 1934.

[66] John W. Wheeler-Bennett, *The Wreck of Reparations* (London: Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1933), quoted in Bacon, 79.

[67] "Deutsch Ist Die Saar!," *Time*, January 7, 1934, 18-19, quoted in Zalampas, 63. A "*ja* vote" meant a vote in favor of reuniting the Saarland with Germany.

After an astoundingly huge victory at the plebiscite, Hitler began rearming Germany by building up a huge military that the *California Daily Bruin* predicted was an indication that Germany was preparing for war. The Germans also massively imported new war equipment and manufactured commodities, and its laboratories and factories were up to top speed production. The students at UCLA thought war could be the only result of such preparation. One claimed, however, that "[r]easons for Germany's demand for military equality and her rapid strides toward greater war strength are not difficult to understand" because "[t]he sixteen year destruction of German pride and national honor by foreign domination of German policies could only result in indignant revolt."[68] This student showed some understanding, asserting that Germany could not be blamed for wanting to rearm and attain military equality with other nations of the world. In his/her eyes, it was only feasible that Hitler should want to do so. These events in Germany could be in part seen as a rational response to an overly punitive treaty:

> If war comes, and Germany is the focal point of that war, the allies can look only to themselves as its provocateurs. It was the allies who created the bayonet peace which was as economically unsound as it was psychologically humiliating.[69]

In another editorial, a student similarly suggested that the allies were hypocritical for protesting Germany's demand for armament equality when they in fact were all calling for greater national defense in their respective countries.[70] Criticism is turned onto the allies, demonstrating that students used events in Germany as a starting off point for criticizing other western governments, as well as their own. Nevertheless, the image of Hitler, "cutting his way" through the Treaty of Versailles, as indicated in a *Daily Californian* cartoon, dominated much of the remainder of his term (fig. 2).[71]

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[68] *California Daily Bruin*, November 11, 1934.
[69] *California Daily Bruin*, November 11, 1934.
[70] *California Daily Bruin*, March 18, 1934.
[71] *The Daily Californian*, January 17, 1935.

Understanding Hitler

Figure 2: "Cutting His Way"
(Source: *The Daily Californian*)

During the remainder of 1934-1935, international news focused more on the rampant spread of Benito Mussolini's Fascism in Italy. There seemed to be little coverage of German affairs during the period, possibly because not a whole lot was going on in Germany at the time. *The Harvard Crimson* contained a student editorial piece about Hitler speaking at the inaugural of the Berlin auto show. At first appearance, this article seemed to be a bit inconsequential, but when looked at closely, it reflected the student's opinion that Hitler's manipulation of both foreign policy and domestic policy "has lacked something of subtlety and tact." The student also implied that Hitler's common sense had been "roughly uprooted," as he made extraordinary promises to the Germans about how accessible and cheap cars would be in the near future.[72] The Harvard students utilized such opportunities to criticize Hitler. The *Yale Daily News* carried a front-page story on news that Hitler had to cancel a proposed conference with British Foreign Secretary, Sir John Simon, because of a head cold. The article, which was very critical of Hitler, stated that he had "only a temporary case of a hot head and cold feet" and ridiculed Hitler for canceling an important conference for such a "trifle" matter.[73] Berkeley's students condemned not only Hitler, but also the United States for continuing its policy of watchful waiting. They conveyed their opinions in a front-page article describing how Hitler

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[72] *The Harvard Crimson*, March 12, 1934.
[73] *Yale Daily News*, March 6, 1935.

was showing off his new military air force in a show of power.[74] *The Daily Californian* used this event to critique Hitler and the United States' non-interventionist attitude.

Such articles did in fact serve a larger purpose. American students were quite perceptive in seeing that Hitler was selling his regime to the German people as providing for their consumer needs, canceling an international conference, and showing off his military might. The students were trying to use these events to analyze and understand what Hitler's regime was all about. At Berkeley, the students used such events to condemn the U.S. government for its watchful waiting policy. This was an opinion that the more interventionist students expressed throughout the 1930s. Although they called for more intervention against Hitler and denounced their own government for its lack of response, the students never really came up with an adequate solution as how to stop Hitler. Proving to be very anti-war at the time, as exemplified by such blatant statements as "I don't see how anyone could honestly say war accomplishes anything," the students failed to come up with an alternative solution.[75] Their editorial pieces reflected this conflict that the students faced—remaining vehemently anti-Hitler and calling for intervention against him, yet not wanting to go to war. Overall, it proved to be an extremely difficult time for them, trying to compromise these two ideologies.

Because mainstream magazines and newspapers reported on such insignificant events, Americans received a distorted picture of what was going on in Germany which later resulted in deplorable consequences for the European continent. The average American received news about Hitler's favorite vacationing spots and personal hobbies, at the same time that he was consolidating his power in Germany and making plans for his takeover of Europe. It is no wonder, then, that people came to underestimate Hitler, for it is the former that Americans were

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[74] *The Daily Californian*, March 20, 1935.
[75] *The Harvard Crimson*, May 3, 1935.

most interested in, and "[t]he American public, dependent on newspapers, radio, and periodicals for its information, had little reason not to believe what the media reported."[76] According to Liesel Ashley Miller, "[r]eports about Adolf Hitler filled the pages of magazines for American readers to satisfy their avid curiosities and substantiate rumor and gossip already in existence."[77] The fact remains that the students, although reporting on inconsequential material, still used every opportunity to criticize Hitler. Their elders felt otherwise because "despite the obvious threat which Germany increasingly posed for Europe, there was an unwillingness on the part of many journalists to treat Hitler with the seriousness which his increasingly aggressive course of action warranted."[78]

By the beginning of 1935, Hitler had firmly consolidated his power within the German Reich. He eliminated any opposition at the polls in the March 5, 1933 and November 12, 1933 plebiscites. Furthermore, the purge of his Storm Troops—or SA—in June 1934 eradicated any possibility of opposition from this group of his allies. He began to abolish the boundaries established by the Treaty of Versailles with the rearming of Germany throughout 1934 and the Saar plebiscite in January 1935. The next couple of years would see further abandonment of the terms set out in the Treaty of Versailles and the end to Jewish citizenship rights in Germany.

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[76] Miller, 31.
[77] Miller, 30-31.
[78] McDaniel, 51-52.

Part II: 1935-1937

Nuremberg Laws Announced

On September 15, 1935, Hitler passed new measures further defining the status of Jews. A new series of decrees deprived Jews of citizenship, prohibited them from flying the German flag, barred them from marrying or having sexual relations with Aryans, prevented them from attending the same schools as Aryans, and prohibited them from employing Aryan servants under the age of 45. Surprisingly, there was little reporting on the new Nuremberg Laws in the student press. Only *The Daily Californian* briefly reported on the new measures Hitler took against the Jews.[79] UCLA's *California Daily Bruin* contained no coverage of the Nuremberg Laws, but instead focused on Mussolini's Fascism in Italy. Yale and Harvard had not yet started printing the paper for the new school year and they did not mention the laws when the school year began.

The general American press also wrote little on the Nuremberg Laws. Eugene Bacon argued that this might have something to do with the fact that "the papers thought the new decree [was] of little importance in further debasing the Jews."[80] Non-Aryans rarely had any citizenship rights under Hitler prior to this, and thus, the new decrees only made that fact official. The *New York Post* concurred:

> Hitler has taken away all the rights of citizenship from Germans, whether Christian or Jewish, who happen to be wholly or partly of Jewish descent.
>
> This sounds like a terrible blow to the "non-Aryans" until one tries to figure out just what these rights of German citizenship are under Hitler.[81]

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[79] *The Daily Californian*, September 16, 1935.
[80] Bacon, 125.
[81] *New York Post*, September 17, 1935; reprinted in the *Philadelphia Record*, September 18, 1935, quoted in Bacon, 125.

Furthermore, the new decrees did not result in an overt pogrom on the streets of every German city like some magazines had predicted.

Olympic Preparation

Berlin was selected as the site of the 1936 Olympics long before Hitler came into power. The International Olympic Committee, with representatives from forty-two countries, chose the site and extended invitations to compete to all interested countries.[82] Beginning at the end of 1935 and continuing into 1936, Americans debated whether or not sending athletes to the Olympics meant that they were supporting the Hitler regime. The American student population also debated this issue. The opinion of the editorial staff of *The Harvard Crimson* firmly advocated that America's participation in the 1936 Games "is by no means an endorsement of Adolf Hitler and his Nazi principles of government," even going as far to say that "even Germany's most embittered opponents will agree that the ideal of the Olympic games has always been one of international amity and fair play." The newspaper strongly demanded that American athletes suppress their personal feelings about the Hitler regime and that no discrimination against any racial or religious group take place during the Olympics. The editorial staff made a strong case in favor of participating in the Games:

> It is unfortunate that a high-minded affair like the Olympic games should take place in Nazi Germany, but unless actual discrimination in athletics is proven, there is no valid reason for American athletes to refuse to complete in Berlin.[83]

Although the editorial staff maintained this opinion, it was hardly the opinion of all

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[82] *The Harvard Crimson*, November 5, 1935. William J. Bingham, the Chairman of the Field and Track Committee, wrote this article explaining how the International Olympic Committee operates and how the American Olympic Committee came to accept an invitation to the 1936 Games. He assured the Harvard students that the possible Nazi persecution of Jews has no bearing on America's participation in the Olympics.

[83] *The Harvard Crimson*, October 24, 1935.

American students, or even all Harvard students for that matter. Shortly after the above piece appeared in the newspaper, Harvard student Blan Hale wrote a letter to the editor of *The Harvard Crimson* strongly disagreeing with American participation. He claimed that Hitler had already committed violence against Jewish athletes in the Reich. Supporting his argument, Hale cited the fact that Tschammor-Osten, an appointee of Hitler, announced that only Germans of Aryan descent could acquire the highest rewards in German sports. Furthermore, Catholics or Protestants were not permitted to maintain their own sports clubs, Jews had been barred from stadiums and public sports ground, and Jewish sports associations had been disbanded. Hale pointed out that the President of the Amateur Athletic Union agreed with the *New York Times* that "'participation in the games under the Swastika implies the tacit approval of all that the Swastika symbolizes,' and that 'for Americans to participate in the Olympics means giving American moral and financial support to the Nazi regime which is opposed to all that Americans hold dearest.'"[84] Hale, strongly objecting to *The Harvard Crimson* editorial, concluded:

> It seems obvious that the conditions in Germany under which non-Aryans exist makes it impossible for them to participate in the Olympics, and that the injection of race, religion, and politics into sports in general, and the Olympics in particular by the German Government has destroyed the "free and independent" character of Olympics.[85]

The editor of *The Harvard Crimson* responded to this letter by simply reaffirming that participation in the Olympics "does not involve endorsement of Hitler and his policies." However, the editorial staff also felt that the American Olympic Committee and the Amateur Athletic Union were better qualified to pass judgment on what renders discrimination.[86]

From this debate at Harvard, it is difficult to determine who is of the majority opinion, but it is important to note that such debates were actually occurring and the newspaper provided

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[84] *The Harvard Crimson*, November 4, 1935.
[85] *The Harvard Crimson*, November 4, 1935.

a forum for this. The editors of the *Daily California Bruin*, however, proved to be much more united in their decision. One editorial listed several events in Germany over the past year that promoted racial discrimination against Jews, indicating that Germany had not promoted fair play in sports within a year of hosting the world's athletes. The student agreed that the contest was a farce if whole races and sects of the population were excluded, and thus, the student only listed negative events that the government promoted over the past year.[87] Another student editorial criticized the student executive council at UCLA that voted unanimously to use one hundred dollars of student funds to help send American athletes to the Olympic games. The council upheld that it had no intention of giving its approval to the Hitler regime when it voted on this measure. One editorial, however, showed its disapproval of this:

> But the idea of the council's aiding the acceptance by American athletes of Germany's invitation to join in the games when those games have always stood for tolerance and impartial respect for merit, and when the nation now extending that invitation stands for intolerance and bitterness and discrimination towards minority groups—all this it rather unfortunate that the council did not find it advisable to withhold any support, financially, or otherwise, from what now be only in name, the Olympic Games.[88]

The editorial disagreed with the student council approving any amount of money to fund America's athletes. Many students had begun to oppose any and all support that might indicate support of the Hitler regime.

Many Americans suggested that the 1936 Berlin Olympics Games "be moved elsewhere because of the political and humanitarian situation in Germany."[89] Magazines, such as *The Nation, The New Republic, Commonweal,* and *The Christian Century* called for an American boycott of the Olympics. *The New Republic* cited several incidents of Nazi attacks on Jewish

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[86] *The Harvard Crimson*, November 4, 1935. From the Editor's Note.
[87] *California Daily Bruin*, December 5, 1935.
[88] *California Daily Bruin*, February 20, 1936.
[89] Richard D. Mandell, *The Nazi Olympics* (New York: Macmillian & Co., 1972), 68-82, quoted in Work, 105.

athletes and argued that other nations might also withdraw from the Olympics given an American example.[90] It also remarked that the American Youth Congress was among one of the groups that had joined the boycott, indicating the youth's desire to withhold support from anything that might endorse Hitler. It should be noted, however, that the four magazines advocating such a boycott remained among the minority in the American press. For example, *Commonweal* and *The Christian Century* were part of the religious press that united against the Nazi threat to religious freedom after the persecution of the Jews and the assault on the Catholic and Protestant Churches in Germany. Furthermore, *The New Republic* and *The Nation* were two leftist magazines that were predominately interventionist and advised that Hitler not be underestimated.

Despite the call for a boycott by certain magazines, American athletes attended the Olympics and the world saw firsthand how successful Germany had become. Hitler used the Games to show the rest of the world his image of Germany and to persuade people that he was not as radical as he was perceived to be. After attending the Games, American's faith in Hitler increased and "most of the world was overwhelmed with admiration for what it had seen."[91] Thus, the older generation still proved more willing to give Hitler a chance after the Olympic games.

Remilitarization of the Rhineland

In early March 1936, Hitler defied both the Treaty of Versailles and the Locarno Pact, a 1925 treaty whereby Germany confirmed its western boundaries with France and Belgium, as he

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[90] "America and the Olympics," *The New Republic*, November 6, 1935, 357-358; *The New Republic*, December 18, 1935, 456, quoted in Zalampas, 77-78.
[91] Work, 106, 108-110.

announced that Germany would remilitarize the Rhineland.[92] Hitler had already violated the Treaty of Versailles, but many Americans were still quite alarmed by his sending of troops into the Rhineland. Commenting on Germany's invasion, three Yale professors stated that it would be hard to predict how the French would react after Germany's unnecessary gesture. They asserted that Americans should take Hitler more seriously now because most Americans had failed to prior to this.[93] The American press remained divided over the remilitarization of the Rhineland. Only the leftist publications directly commented on the issue, while other mainstream magazines dodged the issue or only reported on it without any comment.[94] Some newspapers thought that Europe faced a very serious crisis, while others saw the remilitarization of the Rhineland as the logical development of Nazi policy.[95] Overall, however, there was a growing plea for American neutrality, demonstrating that even after this larger crisis in Europe, the older generation of Americans wished to avoid any involvement in the affairs of Germany and did not view Hitler as posing a tremendous threat to world peace.

The student press carried front-page stories on Hitler's scrapping of the two treaties and France's moving of troops to the German frontier as a precautionary measure.[96] The *California Daily Bruin* claimed that Hitler's actions were contradictory to his words. Hitler professed that "Germany will never break the peace of Europe" and that his "remilitarization of the Rhine is only a move for peace." The newspaper reported that in spite of this, every move he had made spelled war to the German troops, as well as to the world.[97] Although Hitler convincingly assured people that he was promoting peace, the students doubted his intentions. The editorial

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[92] Spielvogel, 193.
[93] *Yale Daily News*, March 9, 1936.
[94] Zalampas, 90.
[95] Bacon, 136-146.
[96] *California Daily Bruin*, March 9, 1936; *The Daily Californian*, March 9, 1936; *Yale Daily News*, March 9, 1936.
[97] *California Daily Bruin*, March 10, 1936.

staff of the *California Daily Bruin* wanted something to be done about Hitler and his policies. However, they also warned against making irrational decisions that may lead to war:

> There's a great danger in yelling about the warlike activities of Hitler and in becoming emotional over the probability of war in the world. The danger is that the yelling and the becoming emotional is all that will be done…Genuine peace is the result of satisfactory adjustment of problems. Peace cannot come out of the anger of one people against another nor can it be developed on a basis of victor nations dictating to loser nations…The danger today is more than a danger of one dictator. It is a danger that men and nations will be moved by fear and hatred instead of reason.[98]

The students saw not one "dictator" as the danger here, but rather they saw the danger in people being driven to war by their emotions. In a way, this was a discussion of the meaning of pacifism. Calling for action to be taken against Hitler, they also advocated a peaceful solution, revealing the ideological conflict students encountered in the 1930s because they failed to suggest other ways that Nazism should be confronted.

The Daily Californian urged Berkeley students to discuss the issue by encouraging them to enter an essay contest sponsored by *The Nation*. This contest, held after the Rhineland remilitarization, wanted students to write an essay on the subject, "Will Neutrality Keep us out of War?" However, instead of focusing on the U.S.'s neutrality in war, the editorial encouraged students to "try their hand at tossing vitriolic incentive at such patron saints of humanity as Adolf Hitler."[99] Even though the contest only asked for student opinion on U.S. neutrality and the war, the article pushed these students to write about Hitler in a negative tone and to make spiteful comments about him. Written in a very sarcastic tone, calling Hitler a "patron saint of humanity," the article revealed the animosity these students had towards the German leader.

The Berkeley students also questioned Hitler's amount of support in remilitarizing the Rhineland. In a very clever editorial cartoon, the students insisted that Hitler may be bluffing

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[98] *California Daily Bruin*, March 11, 1936.

because he waged all of his money in a game of poker with the other foreign leaders, but in fact, he had nothing in his hand (fig. 3)[100] This cartoon may have come out as a reaction to the election that Hitler called in order to prove to the world that the German people backed him in his defiance of the two treaties. Berkeley's and UCLA's newspapers reported that, "[t]he German nation, almost to a man, united behind Chancellor Adolf Hitler" in defiance of Versailles and Locarno in what proved to be a rigged election in which all other parties in Germany were outlawed and results were "compiled weeks in advance on the basis of previous elections."[101] Hitler, who insisted that the election results were a confirmation that the German people supported his demand that Germany's full rights of sovereignty be restored, may not have had all the backing that he claimed to have since the election had been rigged. Thus, this is the reason that the students at Berkeley thought he might be bluffing. Nevertheless, *The Daily Californian* stated, "[t]he vote was intended to impress firmly on the Reich's political foes that 'Hitler is Germany' and that Germany will stand or fall on his will."[102] This seemed to be even closer to the truth, as everything that Germany represented by this point was associated with Hitler, and therefore, any

Figure 3: "Hitler's Bluff?"
(Source: *The Daily Californian*)

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[99] *The Daily Californian*, March 12, 1936.
[100] *The Daily Californian*, March 31, 1936.
[101] *The Daily Californian*, March 30, 1936; *California Daily Bruin*, March 31, 1936
[102] *The Daily Californian*, March 30, 1936.

opposition to Germany could be seen as opposition to Hitler as well. This was further illustrated in the debate over whether or not the universities should send delegates to the University of Heidelberg anniversary celebration.

The Heidelberg Debate

Heidelberg University, one of Germany's oldest and most distinguished universities, celebrated its 550th anniversary in 1936. To commemorate its founding, Nazi Germany invited several schools, including those within the Ivy League to send a representative to join the celebration. Like the 1936 Berlin Games, these invitations instigated widespread debate in America, but primarily among university students because this event involved them directly. Harvard University, who ironically celebrated its 300th anniversary the same year, received an invitation and accepted it, but only with the stipulation that its acceptance did not mean an approval of the Nazi government. After Harvard's President accepted the invitation, the Harvard Student Union advocated a resolution that he reconsider his decision to send the delegates to Heidelberg in light of new information that Hitler's propaganda was in connection with the celebration. A student editorial in *The Harvard Crimson*, however, argued against withdrawing Harvard's delegates because such an act would be one of "supreme discourtesy to Heidelberg and to the reputation that it has built up over five centuries." Insisting that the "Harvard Student Union is merely trying to make an issue of a non-political problem because it is unable to resist any opportunity to take a crack at the German Government of today," the article went on to state:

> Although the world may not approve of the Hitler regime, care should be taken not to show a puerile hostility of this sort which will only end with the result that international relations, already filled with suspicion and hatred, will be aggravated…The Harvard Student Union will place itself in a very ridiculous position tonight if it carries out its intention of asking President Conant to

> reconsider his decision. But after all there is a certain amount of self-importance to be gained from cheap publicity.[103]

Extremely critical of the Harvard Student Union for introducing such a resolution, this student asserted that sending delegates to the celebration did not necessarily show that Harvard was favoring the Hitler government, and should do so merely not to aggravate the situation further.

While deciding whether or not Yale University should accept the same invitation from Heidelberg, the editorial staff of the *Yale Daily News* similarly maintained that "[t]o refuse stiffly such a well-meant gesture of international friendship might easily place Yale in an indefensible position of bigoted hostility to a friendly nation." Recognizing that this decision was different from that which Yale faced during the Olympics because a national committee ultimately decided the question of America's participation in that event, the student saw a different problem at hand and suggested his own solution:

> This is the ever-recurrent problem faced by those to whom have been extended invitations from persons or organizations whose beliefs and conduct are essentially hostile to those of the guest…The obvious solution presents itself in the form of a courteous acceptance of Heidelberg's invitation, paraphrased in language to make clear to all who read, that her representative comes to Heidelberg to pay respect to the great tradition of the University's past, to respond to a friendly gesture of international good will, not to rejoice at a 'celebration' which will more resemble in the eyes of the world an indecent revel over the corpse of a great liberal nation.[104]

Agreeing with this view, another student wrote a letter to the editor of the *Yale Daily News*, asserting that a rebuke to Heidelberg would be a grave error because the United States was attempting to establish a lasting peace with Germany. Because they offered an invitation, Yale should accept it out of mere courtesy. This student, however, also argued that "[t]he question of whether or not the German government is right or wrong is not for us to decide; I dare say the

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[103] *The Harvard Crimson*, May 6, 1936.
[104] *Yale Daily News*, March 5, 1936.

German people will solve it without assistance."[105] In this last point of his letter, this student revealed his own personal desire to remain removed from the situation in Germany. His statements reflected the opinions of many other students and their elders who had no desire to get involved in the affairs of Europe at this time.

While Yale continued to weigh its decision about the Heidelberg invitation, the *Yale Daily News* included the opinion of the faculty who generally opposed Yale's acceptance of the invitation because "Heidelberg is considered Germany's worst example of Nazi regimentation" where "forty out of sixty professors have been dismissed for their lack of Nazi leanings."[106] The newspaper also compiled data to show why the university should oppose the invitation to the Heidelberg anniversary celebration, indicating that it also took this position because no data was given in favor of accepting the invitation.[107] Yale University ultimately accepted in what it deemed a purely academic decision that did not mean the approval of Hitler or his policies. The article announcing the acceptance mentioned, however, that the majority of the members of the university still opposed the decision, demonstrating a student body profoundly divided.

Berkeley's students condemned anything that supported Hitler and Nazi Germany. Strongly critical of Columbia University's decision to send a representative to the celebration at Heidelberg University, *The Daily Californian* was of the opinion that Columbia "must rescind its acceptance" because "unless it does, it will in effect be bestowing a benediction upon the spoliation of education and culture by the Hitler regime." Furthermore,

> It will be giving its approval of those who have suppressed academic freedom, perverted the content and teaching of all branches of learning, fostered a fraudulent 'race science,' dismissed and persecuted scholars on religious, political, and racial grounds…It will be approving the systematic repudiation of

[105] *Yale Daily News*, March 11, 1936.
[106] *Yale Daily News*, March 5, 1936.
[107] *Yale Daily News*, March 10, 1936.

> all those academic ideals and standards upon which Columbia's reputation is founded.[108]

The editorial was accompanied by a cartoon that displayed a Columbia student sitting on top of the world in oblivion to all that was going on in it. Berkeley's students appeared to be strongly opposed to anyone or anything that supported Hitler and his regime. And it is by this point that they began to equate supporting Germany with supporting Hitler, as indicated by their extreme opposition to supporting the University of Heidelberg because it was a German institution, and thus, must somehow be associated with Hitler.

The mid-1930s was an especially crucial time for students to voice their opinions about a number of issues that directly affected their college campuses. The debates over whether the U.S. should send representatives to the Olympics and to the University of Heidelberg's anniversary celebration became especially heated in student newspapers. Students attempted to determine how to react to Hitler's continuing persecution against the Jews and his new assertive foreign policy. His aggressiveness would continue over the next couple of years, as he aimed to take over more land in Europe.

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[108] *The Daily Californian*, March 11, 1936.

Part III: 1937-1939

Collegiate Pacifism

As war in Europe seemed to grow closer, the students in the United States demonstrated an even stronger desire to avoid war. Movements against war grew to include incredible numbers of students in the mid 1930s. An article in the *California Daily Bruin* claimed that over half a million students participated in demonstrations against war in 1936 and millions were expected to participate in similar movements the day after the article was written. Declaring that almost every campus was to have some sort of peace activity, the article went on to explain how much this student movement had grown over the past couple of years.[109] The peace strike that took place at UCLA the following day drew about 1000 students, the largest crowd in UCLA's history.[110] Harvard students also planned to join thousands of New England collegians in the Boston Commons in the interests of peace:

> Not satisfied with merely crusading for an abstract, effervescent peace, the students have decided to direct their disapproval against war and the forces which make for war; compulsory military training in schools and colleges; the billion dollar war budget; teachers' oath laws and similar restrictions of American civil liberties; and finally, against the Fascist aggression in Spain.[111]

This peace strike had multiple objectives, all of them revealing a sense of a very pacifist student body. The article exclaimed that "[n]o one who has seen the horrors of war and contemplated the tragedy of the mass slaughter that war entails, can fail to appreciate the motives that are causing peace strikes all over the country."[112] The following year, the Harvard Student Union planned on joining other student organizations for the annual peace strike again. The neutrality council also met, according to *The Harvard Crimson*, "to discuss a program to make isolation

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[109] *California Daily Bruin*, April 21, 1937.
[110] *California Daily Bruin*, April 23, 1937.
[111] *The Harvard Crimson*, April 21, 1937.

from war intellectually and morally respectable."[113] This suggested that Harvard's students were more cautious about going to war, as their views tended to remain closer to the mainstream press.

Beyond simply protesting war, students across the country indicated their refusal to fight in a future war in polls that were taken at several universities. For instance, a UCLA poll revealed that most college students preferred to spend time in jail or in isolation, rather than on the battlefield.[114] Students overwhelmingly voted against the United States engaging in an aggressive war. However, a large portion of both men and women said they would fight a defensive war.[115] *The Daily Californian* also reported that University of Texas males said they would overwhelmingly not fight another war. Berkeley's students seemed to be much more perceptive, alleging that "collegiate pacifism is direct evidence of susceptibility to propaganda, rather than any sort of evidence of imperviousness to it. Very few people, in college or out, in war or in peace, do their own thinking."[116] Perhaps college students were less pacifist than their elders, but were simply reiterating the anti-war opinions of the country as a whole. After all, they were living in an anti-war age, and they had trouble coming to terms with this fact, while calling for intervention against Hitler at the same time. An editorial cartoon revealed this conflict, as it advocated that the American Student Union (ASU) must prevent world war before it happened. The cartoon also implied that Hitler was the man who

Figure 4: "Before He Wakes" in *The Daily Californian*

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[112] *The Harvard Crimson*, April 21, 1937.
[113] *The Harvard Crimson*, February 11, 1938.
[114] *California Daily Bruin*, January 5, 1938.
[115] *California Daily Bruin*, January 12, 1938.

could cause world war, and thus, the ASU must prevent this "before he wakes" (fig. 4).[117] Such students had a very sophisticated understanding of the political situation and were only frustrated by their inability as young people to affect change.

The *Yale Daily News* reported that Brown's *Daily Herald* instigated a nationwide poll to be given to nine hundred colleges asking students under which conditions they would fight for the U.S. According to the Chairman of the *Yale News*, "[c]ertainly no one in government can afford to ignore the opinion of the student group, if it is well established by the poll." The editors of the *Herald* felt "that a declaration of student opinion would be helpful in outlining and solidifying the attitude of the nation regarding questions of international policy."[118] More importantly, student opinion would be important, seeing as how the students were the ones who would be fighting the next war and making future decisions. Yale's students also gave credit to Brown's paper for attempting to gather a huge poll of student opinion because "whatever the results, the men in charge of America's foreign policy will simply have to sit up and take notice."[119] The results of the poll were published in the *Yale Daily News* in mid-April and an editorial published that same day stated:

> True to its conservative tradition, Yale reflects the sentiment generally assumed to be dominant in the nation as a whole today…Yale undergraduates are cautious. They are not willing to commit themselves too definitely. Perhaps they hate war more than this or any poll could show. But perhaps they are not sure of what to do about it. Perhaps they do not know which policy is the best one to gamble on.[120]

Demonstrating that students used the student newspaper to debate such topics as Hitler and war, this student appeared to be conflicted about what to do. The student's pacifism was very in line

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[116] *The Daily Californian*, February 1, 1938.
[117] *The Daily Californian*, January 25, 1938.
[118] *Yale Daily News*, March 15, 1938.
[119] *Yale Daily News*, March 16, 1938.
[120] *Yale Daily News*, April 15, 1938.

with the isolationist policies of the United States at this time. Students tended to be more cautious because they did not know how to react to Hitler and war, similarly to how their elders did not know how to react either. Another student confirmed this, stating, "while college students by and large are articulate in their desire to stay out of war, their voice becomes confused in advocating the means to that end."[121] The college students realized that staying out of war was unrealistic with Hitler running rampant through Europe.

Anschluss

War seemed to grow even more near as Hitler marched his troops into Austria on the morning of March 12, 1938. Germany had been encroaching on Austria since February, and the Austrian Chancellor, Kurt von Schuschnigg, in order to forestall a complete German takeover, called a plebiscite in which Austrians could vote to remain independent of Germany. Hitler threatened Schuschnigg with military force if he did not cancel the plebiscite. Schuschnigg complied and German troops marched into Austria on the "legal" basis that the Austrian chancellor had requested the troops to assist in establishing law and order.[122] As German military units crossed the border, "they were met with what appeared to be near-universal acclaim by the Austrian population."[123] Hitler had returned to his homeland that had now become a part of the Reich. Furthermore, the *Anschluss*—or union—with Austria provided Germany with excellent strategic position in central Europe, especially because Hitler had had his eye on Czechoslovakia for some time. The *Anschluss* proved to be not only a diplomatic

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[121] *Yale Daily News*, April 25, 1938.
[122] Spielvogel, 204.
[123] Dietrich Orlow, *A History of Modern Germany 1871-Present* (New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1999), 180.

success, but also an international triumph, as Britain and France readily accepted Austria as part of the German Reich.[124]

The *Yale Daily News* carried ample information about the *Anschluss* of Austria. One student argued that the outcome of such a bold coup was unknown, but that immediate war was unlikely. This same student also included a section about the reactions abroad, and claimed that the Allies were "weak states" because they did not rise up against Hitler.[125] Students were, again, using the situation in Germany to criticize the Allied powers. Most importantly, however, was a very perceptive editorial written by none other than Yale undergraduate, McGeorge Bundy, who later became President Lyndon Johnson's National Security Advisor in the 1960s. Bundy claimed that people knew for years that Hitler was going to take Austria because Hitler wrote about it in his book and in countless speeches. He still found Hitler's *Anschluss* of Austria to be shocking:

> We detest Hitler, but there was no horror in his remilitarization of the Rhineland. There was no immediate horror in the rebuilding of the German army; there was none in the making of the Rome-Berlin axis...This new move brings a shock that I have not felt since 1933. For now another people has lost its birthright; another land must learn not to ask questions; another part of a great race must face a merciless persecution.[126]

Bundy demonstrated a very critical opinion of Hitler, as well as a sympathetic tone towards the Austrians and others that Hitler persecuted. Bundy also asserted that "[y]ou can get hardened to barbarism, but you cannot let it grow," exemplifying an interventionist attitude. He argued that Hitler's barbarism must be stopped before he took over any more of Europe. Commenting on how the undergraduate must react to all that was going on in Europe, Bundy offered some good insight:

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[124] Orlow, 182.
[125] *Yale Daily News*, March 14, 1938.
[126] *Yale Daily News*, March 14, 1938.

> Our daily life is little clouded by Hitler. We know, because logic tells us, that it is all desperately important, for us as well as for the Austrians. We know there is a war coming, and we know it will affect us...We can express our disapproval; we can join any one of sixty organizations fighting for what is right. But how can we know that these organizations are using the proper weapons? How can we know that they do more good than harm?
>
> Europe's trouble will affect us, of course, but how it will happen we have no idea. And precisely because we have no idea, we can do nothing now. We may watch the European and Asiatic struggles as we watch a baseball game—we have our favorites, but we lack influence.
>
> Nevertheless, if there is a war coming, and if it is going to affect us, we cannot afford to persist in a cheerful refusal to face the facts. For what are we to do when it comes? What preparations should we make against it? If Fascism threatens—how stop it? And so on. Right now we can do damnably little. But if we have any duty at all it is to study our world and to prepare. We must learn of our problems and of ourselves, so that in a crisis we may not act blindly...We must be fitted to decide.[127]

Bundy understood that a war in Europe would not immediately affect the undergraduate population at Yale. He also seemed frustrated by the fact that students had little influence and minimal ability to affect change. On the other hand, Bundy understood that students were going to be the future decision-makers and some of them may even be the ones fighting a war if the U.S. were to get involved. Thus, he asserted that the most important thing that students could do was become educated about Hitler and the situation in Europe so that they could make informed decisions. Bundy used the situation to help students determine how they should react as individuals with their own political identities.

The Daily Californian, The Harvard Crimson, and the *California Daily Bruin* all included professor insight on whether or not Hitler's current move would result in war. The professors also commented on Hitler's plans for the future. For example, a UCLA professor perceptively stated that Hitler would be eying Czechoslovakia next.[128] A student editorial *in The Harvard Crimson* agreed with this prediction because it was the next logical step to the program

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[127] *Yale Daily News*, March 14, 1938.
[128] *California Daily Bruin*, March 16, 1938.

that Hitler set out in his book.[129] Most of the professors believed that an immediate war was unlikely in Europe, and the UCLA professor also maintained that there was no reason why the U.S. could not stay out of war. They saw Hitler's annexation of Austria only as a part of his plan to return Germany to its pre-war status.[130] By including the opinions of professors in their newspapers, these students were looking towards their elders for guidance about what to do in an isolationist era while Hitler was storming throughout Europe.

The students' elders were obviously conflicted about what to do as well. After all, their professors debated over whether or not war was inevitable in the student papers. One thing was certain, however: 1938 proved to be a turning point in mainstream opinions on Hitler. Kenneth Work, for example, argued,

> Until 1938 it was still believable that the German people would come to their senses and dispose of Hitler. Americans came face to face with the recognition that radical and destructive form of political life was a permanent feature of the German state and that it challenged the fundamental precepts of western civilization...Hitler's foreign policy and anti-Semitism, as well as his own evolving character, and public image contributed to the heightened awareness and recognition that Hitler was dangerous and threatened the peace of Europe and the world.[131]

Up until this point, most Americans treated Hitler as a German or European problem. However, beginning with Hitler's annexation of Austria and continuing through 1938, Americans began to think otherwise. Whereas before they were more willing to give Hitler a chance, Americans now realized that his violent policies were not declining and that the German people and the other European nations were not doing anything to stop him. Secretary of State Hull's speech outlining the administration's attitude exemplified a changing American perspective. Hull, "usually quite phlegmatic...emphasized that the United States could no longer carry out a policy

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[129] *The Harvard Crimson*, March 15, 1938.

[130] *California Daily Bruin*, March 16, 1938; *The Daily Californian*, March 5, 1938; *The Harvard Crimson*, March 15, 1938; *The Harvard Crimson*, March 17, 1938.

of isolationism." Although he did not necessarily spell out what course of action the U.S. would take, he stressed that the U.S. needed to rearm. *Newsweek* commented on this speech, stating that it demonstrated a general drop in isolationism and won support for a sterner foreign policy.[132] Americans were also more inclined to take Hitler seriously, especially after the mainstream press increased reports on the brutal anti-Semitic measures that Nazi officials instituted on Austrian Jews.[133] This change in American perceptions of Hitler augmented especially after the Munich Crisis and the Nazi action against the Jews.

Crisis in Munich

Shortly after the *Anschluss* of Austria, Hitler turned his demands on Czechoslovakia, just as some people had predicted. He was most concerned with the three million Germans in Czechoslovakia, who lived under supposedly intolerable conditions in the Sudetenland, the northwestern border area adjoining Germany and Austria. Determined to take this area by force if necessary, "Hitler also emphasized that he would not march until he was certain France and Britain would not intervene."[134] The British and the French, who were supposedly on Czechoslovakia's side, wished to avoid world war at all costs. Thus, after British Prime Minister Neville Chamberlain heard Hitler's demands that the Sudetenland be given to Germany in order to avoid world war, "Chamberlain convinced his own government and the French government to accede to Hitler's wishes."[135] The Czechs reluctantly accepted Hitler's demands. When Chamberlain returned to Germany to announce his agreement to Hitler's terms, Hitler included

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[131] Work, 115-117.
[132] "Hull Voices U.S. Anxiety Over 'Gangster' Nations," *Newsweek*, March 28, 1938, 9-10, quoted in Zalampas, 140.
[133] Zalampas, 140.
[134] Spielvogel, 205.
[135] Spielvogel, 205.

the new demand that Germany be allowed to occupy the Sudetenland by October 1, 1938 and take over all its military installations. The leaders of Germany, Italy, France, and Great Britain met in Munich on the 29 of September to discuss the fate of the Sudetenland. As Europe seemed to be on the brink of war, an agreement was reached to follow all of Hitler's demands. This proved to be the height of Western appeasement to Hitler, and Chamberlain returned to Britain with the announcement that he had achieved "peace in our time."

As Europe appeared to be on the brink of war throughout September, the student press followed the progression of events very closely. Each newspaper contained front-page coverage of the latest developments in Europe, as well as an abundance of opinion articles criticizing Hitler. One Berkeley student chastised Hitler for his hypocritical policy of trying to save the Sudetens from their state while excluding Jews as a part of the Nazi state.[136] Demanding the right of self-determination for the Sudetens, Hitler failed to acknowledge his own treatment of racial minorities. Similarly, after the Munich Crisis was over, *The Harvard Crimson* reported:

> Merely the thought of Hitler's treatment of German Jews makes his protest of Czechoslovakia's discrimination against the Sudetens seem like a hypocritical fabrication. It was the removal of subversive elements that were threatening the unity of the state that Hitler claimed to be the purpose of the rout of the non-Aryans from Germany.[137]

Such views of the student population were very insightful because they recognized Hitler's inconsistent policy with regard to racial minorities. Moreover, they were not afraid to voice their views.

Another Berkeley student did not think that Hitler would stop with the Sudetenland, but would continue to storm through Rumania, Hungary, and other democratic nations as well.[138]

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[136] *The Daily Californian*, September 13, 1938.
[137] *The Harvard Crimson*, October 15, 1938.
[138] *The Daily Californian*, September 20, 1938.

Seeing as how the other nations were not doing anything to stop Hitler, the Berkeley students called for the youth of America to be concerned about dictatorship:

> Those who say that the form of government in other countries is not our concern are tragically wrong. A democratic Germany would not be waiting tensely today for a decision of one man; it might go to war, but only if the people willed it. Because Hitler's moment of rashness will set the democracies as well as the fascist powers ablaze with war, the youth of America has a selfish interest in the theory and practice of a dictatorship.[139]

Because the student population could possibly be affected by war, students had an interest in preventing dictatorships; that is, they had a strong desire to intervene in order to stop Hitler. This student also criticized his/her elders, or those who claimed that the youth should not be concerned with what was going on in other countries because it would not affect them. Recognizing that students' voices mattered but had not been heard, he/she said, "[s]omeday, the people of the world may live under real democracy."[140]

Critiques of Hitler often turned into a condemnation of the democratic nations in Europe. One Berkeley student, for example, thought that Britain "sold out" by not standing behind Czechoslovakia.[141] *The Daily Californian* also included an editorial cartoon entitled "Watchful Waiting" that portrayed Hitler slowly climbing over a sitting lion that represented Great Britain (fig. 5).[142] This cartoon was strikingly similar to renowned wartime cartoonist David Low's depiction of a nose-thumbing Hitler using the

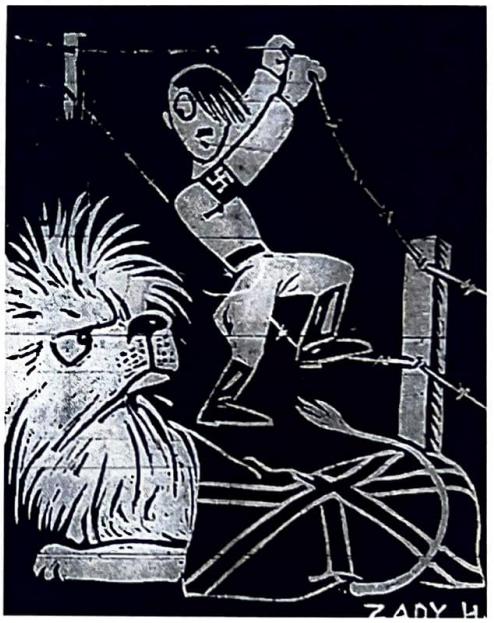

Figure 5: "Watchful Waiting"
(Source: *The Daily Californian*)

[139] *The Daily Californian*, September 12, 1938.
[140] *The Daily Californian*, September 12, 1938.
[141] *The Daily Californian*, September 20, 1938.
[142] *The Daily Californian*, September 1, 1938.

"spineless leaders of democracy" as stepping stones to march towards his ultimate goal as "boss of the universe" (fig. 6).[143] Both were depictions of the results of appeasement and were aimed at critiquing the democratic nations of Europe. The *Yale Daily News* also offered insight on the democracies of Europe that wanted peace at any price:

Figure 6: David Low's accurate depiction of the results of appeasement. (Source: Orlow, 184)

> It will most likely be his [the historian's] sad duty to record that in their frantic quest for peace the great democracies bartered away their stronghold against the enemy's expansion and prepared for themselves the seeds of a future war much more horrible than the one which they might have risked to call the Fuehrer's bluff early in the game.[144]

Criticizing the democracies of Europe, this student thought that war could have been avoided if Britain and France stopped Hitler earlier in the 1930s. Harvard's students also condemned the leaders of Britain and France for betraying Czechoslovakia, maintaining that they "sold out to Germany, so that fascism is victorious and omnipotent."[145]

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[143] Depicted in Orlow, 184. For a further discussion of David Low's political cartoons of Hitler see Timothy Benson, "Low and the Dictators." *History Today* (March 2001): 35-41.

[144] *Yale Daily News*, October 1, 1938.

[145] *The Harvard Crimson*, September 24, 1938.

Beyond using the situation in Germany to chastise the Allied powers, the students condemned their own government for its isolationist policy and called for U.S. intervention. The same Harvard student writing above encouraged America to take a stand on the war:

> But there is no doubt among the foreign leaders that America, with its natural bigness, could avoid a world war by stepping into the present crisis and arbitrating. If war comes, certainly the American stand will determine its outcome. Why not speak now and show the enemy what must be the result if they begin war?[146]

This interventionist attitude was a common one among students in the 1930s, but it became even more prevalent after the Munich Crisis, even at Harvard where the student opinion tended to be more in line with the mainstream view of isolationism. Another student at Harvard questioned Hitler's promise that the Sudetenland was his last territorial demand. Moreover, he declared that if the world wanted peace, it must take a firm stand against Hitler in order to save democracy from a Fascist takeover.[147] UCLA's students also advocated intervention and offered some suggestions as to how this could be done:

> America should lead in naming aggressor nations and applying embargoes to stop the flow of money, raw materials, and war supplies which make aggression possible. It should lead in counteracting the propaganda with which the war-makers are flooding the non-fascist nations…America must make full use of its vast potential power as a force for peace and seek to prevent the conflagration that threatens to destroy human civilization.[148]

Still proving to be pacifist at this time, this student offered several other means as to how the United States could make a stand against Hitler. Students toyed with the idea as to how effective non-military intervention would be. Their conflicting ideologies were even more difficult to balance, especially after war seemed to be inevitable.

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[146] *The Harvard Crimson*, September 24, 1938.
[147] *The Harvard Crimson*, September 27, 1938.
[148] *California Daily Bruin*, September 26, 1938.

Because the Munich Crisis was a fast-breaking story, the monthly magazines faced an inherent problem. They often reported "background material" which, as Michael Zalampas argued, was so broad that it had little news value. On the other hand, they had the choice of publishing stories about events that might not be relevant by the time the issue came out. For example, in September 1938, *The Atlantic Monthly* reported that "Czechoslovakia would meet force with force" and would remain firm in the crisis, but by the time this article reached readers, "Chamberlain was already meeting with Hitler to arrange the Munich pact."[149] Thus, it seems that the older generation of Americans did not react to Hitler like the student generation did, possibly because they did not have comprehensive information about the Munich Crisis in their magazines. On the other hand, mainstream newspapers could have offered current information on the latest events in Munich.

The Nation and *The New Republic*, two consistently interventionist magazines, heavily criticized the British and French leaders, as well as Hitler. They also both felt that Hitler was not motivated by any sort of concern for the Sudetenlanders, but rather by Czech raw materials and his determination to break the Franco-Russian pact.[150] Still, these two magazines proved to be among the only two that criticized Hitler and called for intervention. *Time*, in contrast, "believed 'there was never any doubt that Chief Chamberlain would not quarrel with Chief Hitler as Chamberlain was determined not to fight 'with the Soviet Union' as his ally." Moreover, *Time*

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[149] Carl J. Frederich, "Edward Benes," *The Atlantic Monthly*, September 1938, 357-365, quoted in Zalampas, 157.

[150] "The Great Surrender," *The New Republic*, September 28, 1938, 200-201; "Deathbed Repentance," *The New Republic*, October 5, 1938, 225-226; "The Great Betrayal, T*he Nation*, September 24, 1938, 284-285; Vladimir Pozner, "Hitler Wants Skoda," *The Nation*, September 24, 1938, 287-288; Oswald G. Villard, "More Parallel Action," October 1, 1938, 352; *The Nation*, October 1, 1938, 309; "If Hitler Has His Way," *The Nation*, October 1, 1938, 312-313; John Gunther, "Interim Notes on the Crisis," *The Nation*, October 1, 1938, 316-317; "The World Waits," *The New Republic*, October 5, 1938, 225; "Teuton and Slav," *The New Republic*, October 12, 1938, 253-254; Vera M. Dean," Pan-German Redivivus," *The New Republic*, October 12, 1938, 259-260, quoted in Zalampas, 157-159. The Franco-Russian Pact was a treaty of mutual assistance signed between France and Germany at the beginning of 1935.

defended the Munich Crisis and erroneously thought that "'for the first time in history,' a major crisis had been 'settled by talking instead of shooting first.'"[151] Maintaining a narrow view of the crisis, the mainstream press remained divided over what Hitler's motivations were and how to react. They offered the students very little guidance in this difficult time, and few magazines beyond *The Nation* and *The New Republic* openly criticized the United States government for its lack of intervention.

Occupation of the Sudetenland

Hitler occupied the Sudetenland on October 1, 1938 in accordance with the agreement reached in Munich. Shortly thereafter, people realized that Hitler had never intended to follow the Munich agreement. The new Czech territory was plagued with internal discord, as Hitler encouraged the large Slovak minority to demand autonomy within a Czecho-Slovak state. Hitler aimed at creating enough disorder to justify full German occupation of Czechoslovakia to prevent anarchy.[152] Nevertheless, the end of September and the month of October saw a plethora of student opinion pieces on the decision reached in Munich and how the United States should react.

Several of the same themes that surfaced in articles during the Munich Crisis also appeared immediately afterward. Students continued to advocate intervention against Hitler, but they never specifically stated how to do this. A student writing to the editor of *The Harvard Crimson*, for example, asserted:

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[151] "Four Chiefs," *Time*, September 26, 1938, 15-16; "Four Chiefs, One Peace," *Time*, October 10, 1938, 15-17; "What Price Peace?," *Time*, October 17, 1938, 19-22, quoted in Zalampas, 158-160.
[152] Spielvogel, 206-207.

> One can only conclude that the only sensible way to maintain Czech independence and world peace is to put every pressure upon the governments of the democracies to stand firm before the march of Fascism.[153]

Calling for pressure to be put on the democracies to take a stand against Hitler, this student exemplified the general attitude that American students held at this time. Another Harvard student's opinion demonstrated that these students were still strongly opposed to solving the problem by going to war with Hitler:

> The tremendous degradation following a war like the last brings more misery than the suffering of the Czech nation, England's loss of prestige, and the enlargement of a fascist country.
>
> There are those who say that force will rule the earth unless the democracies fight to combat it. History has never shown that through destruction comes enlightenment.[154]

The students attempted to achieve "peace by reason," as the title of this editorial indicated. And going to war was not a reasonable solution for them.

America's students were very perceptive in reviewing the results of the Munich settlement. They understood that Hitler had never intended to abide by the agreement. *The Daily Californian* commented that, "Adol[f] Hitler...seems ready to proclaim himself dictator of Europe as well as of Germany."[155] These students, as well as the students at UCLA understood that Hitler was not willing to stop after Czechoslovakia. An editorial in the *California Daily Bruin* predicted that war in Europe was still inevitable because the crisis in Munich did not settle everything. The world would still be headed towards war because Hitler's intense and unifying nationalism was still strong.[156] Students also understood that the democracies of Europe had made an enormous sacrifice to maintain peace. The same editorial in Berkeley's newspaper recognized the mistake the European nations had made by appeasing Hitler:

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[153] *The Harvard Crimson*, September 30, 1938.
[154] *The Harvard Crimson*, October 7, 1938.
[155] *The Daily Californian*, October 17, 1938.

> It wasn't a fair trade at all, this exchange of power for the name of peace. Great Britain sacrificed her ideal and her leadership in Europe for a scrap of paper which Adolph Hitler will consider binding only as long as convenient. She admitted that her sworn determination to fight was only a bluff, thereby notifying the world that she would stand for anything.[157]

Such editorials revealed a very sophisticated understanding of Hitler and of how the current situation would be viewed in future years.

Possibly the most insightful student editorial written during this time, however, was another article written by McGeorge Bundy while he was a student at Yale. Shortly after Hitler occupied the Sudetenland, Bundy ventured to discuss the difference between old and young in the U.S. in their general attitude toward the solution reached in Munich, for he thought there was a difference and that it deserved attention. Bundy thought that the average undergraduate would have preferred war to what they were left with after the Munich Crisis. On the other hand, the students' elders held a different opinion, as Bundy eloquently stated:

> They [our fathers], far more that we, were genuinely harrowed by the events of recent weeks; far more than we, they were horrified by the imminence of a general war. And for them, the announcement of the Munich agreement came as an extremely joyous surprise...these older men shed a brief and sincere tear for Czechoslovakia, but were principally concerned with the central fact that we have peace. This was the position of Mr. Roosevelt and Mr. Hull; it was also the position of the majority of their contemporaries.[158]

Whereas the students wished that Hitler would be "smashed," their elders were more concerned with maintaining peace, and thus, they were quite satisfied with the Munich agreement.

Bundy not only noticed a generational divide between the old and young in the United States, but he also offered his own insight into why such a divide existed:

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[156] *California Daily Bruin*, October 3, 1938.
[157] *The Daily Californian*, October 17, 1938.
[158] *Yale Daily News*, October 3, 1938.

> First, they [the students' fathers] lived through the last war, and we didn't. No amount of "horror photography" and no amount of lecturing on the futility of war can have on us a fraction of the effect that has been produced on our fathers by the actual experience of war and the mature observation of its aftermath. Second, and this is perhaps even more important, war now would be to our fathers the negation of their life work. They are too old to wipe the slate clean in so drastic a manner; they have passed the time of life when they can think hopefully of new beginnings; their emotions and their happiness are bound up in the preservation of a precarious equilibrium which they think would be shattered by war. It is not surprising that they hesitate. To us, on the other hand, a war to smash Hitler seems in times of crisis to be a desirable purgative; we are prepared to face the horror of battle and bombs, because we almost subconsciously envision a new era when the war is done. Unlike our fathers, we are not tied to a way of life in which war has no place. Growing up in a world whose problems are increasingly complex, we unconsciously believe that a stroke of the sword may out the Gordian knot.[159]

Bundy explained this divide by the fact that the older generation had lived through World War I, and thus, they did not see the value in fighting another war. They experienced the trauma of war and realized that maintaining peace in this situation was the best solution. The younger generation, on the other hand, had not experienced war, but hoped for a time that was better than the one they currently lived in. Although students were predominately an anti-war group, in this situation, war seemed to be the best solution. Bundy also argued that his elders were more settled into their lives, and thus, did not want to be disturbed by war. The youth, conversely, were more progressive thinkers who ultimately believed that problems could be solved by taking action. Most importantly, however, Bundy showed a superior understanding of the fact that America did not have a general consensus about Hitler. He noticed a generational divide during the time when all of this was taking place, and he also offered sufficient explanations as to why his own generation thought differently than their parents.

Bundy's argument about his elders being not as willing to go to war with Hitler proved to be fairly accurate. *The Harvard Crimson* confirmed, in an article about President Roosevelt's

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[159] *Yale Daily News*, October 3, 1938.

latest pleas to Hitler, that Roosevelt had a general interest in keeping the United States out of war. The newspaper quoted Roosevelt as follows:

> The government of the United States has no political involvements in Europe and will assume no obligations in the conduct of the present negotiations. Yet in our own right we recognize our responsibilities as a part of a world of neighbors.[160]

Even though he recognized the U.S.'s international responsibility as one of the world's superpowers, Roosevelt still did not find the agreement reached in Munich enough of a reason to get involved in the affairs of Europe. Roberta Siegel noticed, however, that the Munich settlement came as a shock to Americans and left them angry with Hitler, as well as with France and England for appeasing Hitler. She declared that "[f]aith in Hitler's statesmanship and moderation decreased markedly during 1938."[161] While Americans anxiously awaited what they thought was an imminent European war, they still did not see a need for Americans to get involved and continued to play the watchful waiting game.

The Night of Broken Glass

Jewish persecution in Nazi Germany took a turn for the worse in November 1938. Some 20,000 Polish Jews were rounded up and deported to the Polish frontier after Warsaw commanded all Polish passport holders residing in foreign countries to obtain special visas. About 8,000 Jews remained in the small one-mile open strip between the German and Polish frontiers after being herded out of Germany and failing to get back into Poland. Herschel Grynszpan, a 17-year old Polish Jew, was very upset that his parents had been recently expelled from Germany, and in order to take revenge on the Germans, he shot the German Secretary Ernst

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[160] *The Harvard Crimson*, September 28, 1938.
[161] Siegel, 2.

von Rath at the German embassy in Paris.[162] After this, Hitler directed Propaganda Minister Joseph Goebbels to initiate an orgy of mass destruction and violence against the Jews to make them pay for what Grynszpan had done. Between November 9 and 10, seven thousand Jewish businesses were destroyed, one hundred Jews were killed, and thousands more were sadistically tormented. Furthermore, the Nazis burned synagogues in all the major German cities. Afterwards, 30,000 Jewish males were arrested and sent to concentration camps. In addition, the Jews were forced to pay for all the damages that the Nazis had caused.[163] Following the night of broken glass—or *Kristallnacht*—the expulsion of Jews from Germany was accelerated, as was persecution and violence against Jews.

All four student papers sufficiently covered the violence committed against Jews during *Kristallnacht*. Such stories greatly detailed the shooting of Ernst von Rath, the burning of synagogues in Germany, and the deporting of Jews to concentration camps. In the aftermath of *Kristallnacht*, the student newspapers contained much more information on anti-Semitism in Germany and included more articles condemning Hitler. *The Daily Californian* called Hitler "mad," asserting that "[h]e should recognize that his slaughter will produce a terrible and all-inclusive hatred for him and his doctrines."[164] The *Harvard Crimson* criticized Hitler for fining the Jews for the atrocities the Nazis had committed. It also asked the world to stand up for the Jews who were in no position to pay the sum of money that Hitler requested. This interventionist student insisted that a rebuke from the U.S. would help the Jews.[165] The *California Daily Bruin* also contended that the U.S. should do something about the recent violence in Germany:

> A nation such as ours, whose very existence as a democracy is threatened by recent German acts, should not condone these same acts by its apathy…But it is

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[162] Zalampas, 164-165.
[163] Spielvogel, 272-273.
[164] *The Daily Californian*, November 15, 1938.
[165] *The Harvard Crimson*, November 14, 1938.

> the fault of the American government that has made the atrocities possible. The American government has enabled Germany to attain and to maintain its present menacing position by continuing economic and diplomatic relationships with the Hitlerian nation. Without the tacit support we give Germany by continuing to do business with her, she would be unable to threaten the existence of democracy…An immediate and effective quarantine of Germany should be America's reply to German aggression and persecution.[166]

Beyond calling for intervention, this UCLA student also used the situation in Germany to criticize American leadership for its lack of response during Hitler's rise to power. The student understood that America's continued economic and diplomatic relationship with Germany meant that it was still supporting a regime that was harming its own people. Only an immediate break of economic and diplomatic relations would be effective in combating Germany's continued belligerence towards the Jews. He/She offered this solution as opposed to going to war, demonstrating the common feeling of collegiate pacifism.

The *Yale Daily News* reported "[t]hat such outrages as this would go on in civilized countries year after year is almost inconceivable." However, one student admitted that finding a solution to stop intolerance was not clear because it was on the increase worldwide.[167] This was an accurate assumption, as the newspaper carried an article about anti-Semitism within the United States only a week later. Yale's students, like UCLA's students, criticized their own country's anti-Semitic policies:

> And here America finds itself crying out against the oppression in Germany, at the same time harboring groups which are actually talking up in the cry for intolerance. It is an ironic situation, and a problem which, though not so pressing, perhaps, as finding a haven for the harassed German Jews, will eventually be even more important for this country to solve. Until the feeling is eradicated, Hitler will certainly have a quiet laugh up his sleeve.[168]

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[166] *California Daily Bruin*, November 23, 1938.
[167] *Yale Daily News*, November 11, 1938.
[168] *Yale Daily News*, November 22, 1938.

Viewing the U.S. as hypocritical for harboring anti-Semitic groups at the same time that Americans were condemning Hitler, this student had a very mature understanding of the situation at hand. This was also possibly one reason why Americans did not do more to intervene in Germany.

Kristallnacht appeared on the front page of almost every U.S. newspaper and after the horrific acts committed against the Jews, more people spoke out against Hitler and Germany. Kenneth Work claimed that "[t]hose American leaders who remained aloof or indifferent during the first years of Hitler's regime now felt compelled to openly take a stand."[169] *Newsweek*, for example, reported that "'newspapers, public officials, civic organizations, and religious groups from coast to coast' were united in their protest against Nazi barbarism." Even leaders such as Herbert Hoover and Alf Landon joined Harold Ickes in protest against the pogrom.[170] American attitudes toward Hitler and Nazi Germany had finally begun to change. According to historian Michael Zalampas, "the November pogrom and the subsequent reports of continuing Nazi anti-Semitic brutality had a greater effect on democratic public opinion and diplomacy than did the *Anschluss* or the Munich Pact."[171] The traditional leftist magazines, *The Nation* and *The New Republic* called for an embargo, an official boycott, or a diplomatic break with Germany.[172] *Time* reported that President Roosevelt "'had a mandate from the people' to respond to the pogrom. Roosevelt, however, either failed to perceive he had a mandate to act decisively or perceiving it, failed to act on it."[173]

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[169] Work, 118-121.

[170] "Democracies Uniting to Solve the Problem of Fleeing Jews," *Newsweek*, November 28, 1938, 13-14, quoted in Zalampas, 166.

[171] Zalampas, 167.

[172] Oswald G. Villard, "Issues and Men," *The Nation*, November 26, 1938, 567; "Refugees and Economics," *The Nation*, December 10, 1938, 609-610; "An Embargo on German Goods," *The New Republic*, November 30, 1938, 83-84, quoted in Zalampas, 168.

The Calm before the Storm

As 1939 began, the idea of a European war seemed to linger in the minds of many Americans. They kept a close eye on Hitler to determine what he was going to do next. *The Daily Californian* revealed that Europe remained tense, as Hitler reaffirmed the German-Italian military alliance and warned Britain and France against moving eastward.[174] America's students also looked towards Hitler's speeches for guidance as to what the future would hold. Berkeley's students commented that an early 1939 speech gave no guide for the future and was not extremely aggressive, but only justified his foreign policy and reviewed the progress of the Third Reich since he came to power. One student, however, thought that "[a]s is usually the case in speeches of this nature, what is left unspoken may often be more important than what is said."[175] It seems that such students predicted something big would be happening soon. Czechoslovakia had already been put into the "ground round" of the German Reich, and they could only speculate which country would be next (fig. 7).[176]

Figure 7: "Ground Round"
(Source: *The Daily Californian*)

An anti-Hitler and anti-fascist attitude remained strong among undergraduates and became much more intense on college campuses. Some students at Yale, for example, were especially angered by a local fascist organization in New Haven that hoisted a swastika flag and distributed fascist flyers. In response to this, an angry mob attempted to hoist a Hitler effigy to the top of the Freshman

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[173] "Singular Attitude," *Time*, November 28, 1938, 10-11, quoted in Zalampas, 166.
[174] *The Daily Californian*, January 31, 1939.
[175] *The Daily Californian*, January 31, 1939.
[176] *The Daily Californian*, March 16, 1939.

Commons flagpole. This serious anti-Nazi demonstration was halted by police just as the group was trying to hang the effigy to the top of the flagpole, which was the same place the swastika flag had been raised.[177] These students were not only using their newspaper to voice their hatred of Hitler, but they were now displaying their vehemently anti-Hitler feelings in the form of protest. An editorial in the *California Daily Bruin* also asserted that there was almost universal condemnation of Hitler and fascism within the United States:

> American men and women, depicted by an antagonistic Nazi press as "hoodlums and street-walkers," have come to detest Hitler's crooked cross as being symbolic of his official sadism. Liberal and conservative; priest and layman; government official and private citizen; all have vocalized their opposition to German fascism, and the terror it represents.[178]

An editorial in the *Yale Daily News* agreed that an anti-Nazi feeling was sweeping the country in the form of mass meetings, resolutions, and petitions. This student showed admiration for the crusade, but warned that the fervor must remain controlled and reasonable as not to cause harm.[179]

Another rumor that came out in early 1939 was the idea that Hitler had died the previous September. The student papers pondered this question, and ultimately maintained that even if he was dead, it would not make much of a difference. *The Daily Californian*, for example, stated, "[i]t can be hoped that Hitler's death would mean the downfall of Nazism, but it cannot be advanced except as a possibility."[180] The *California Daily Bruin* agreed that the speculation over whether or not Hitler was dead was inconsequential:

> And anyway, what difference does it make if this particular man is alive or not? The movement which he founded is going great guns, and seems destined to fulfill the "impossible" promises made in *Mein Kampf*, unless the democratic nations are able to call a halt. It would be no great solace to the advocates of

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[177] *Yale Daily News*, March 3, 1939.
[178] *California Daily Bruin*, March 1, 1939.
[179] *Yale Daily News*, January 20, 1939.
[180] *The Daily Californian*, March 3, 1939.

> democracy if it were clearly shown that Hitler lies in a grave. The day for which we are striving, rather, is that when "Hitlerism" will be buried from sight, along with the hatred and intolerance which accompany the National Socialist dogma.[181]

These students believed that Nazism was so embedded in German society by this point that even killing Hitler would not prevent it from continuing. It seems the students had a very insightful understanding of how much Hitler had influenced society to follow his plan of action. The students suggested, that unless the democracies of the world stood up in protest, Hitler's Nazi machine would continue with or without him. This idea offers insight into how much of a role Hitler played in the daily operations of the Reich by 1939 and if the war and the Holocaust would have gone on if Hitler had been killed at this point.

Figure 8: "And the Angels Sing" (Source: *The Daily Californian*)

Despite such rumors, students who believed Hitler was alive ultimately thought that the fate of world war was in his hands, as depicted in a *Daily Californian* editorial cartoon (fig. 8).[182] Any new developments in Europe were often regarded as Hitler's actions instead of Germany's, demonstrating that students viewed Hitler as the man responsible for much of Germany's actions. For example, a *California Daily Bruin* news report stated that "Hitler…pushed an ambitious diplomatic drive, reaching across Europe…in an effort to strengthen Germany's position for the eventuality of war."[183] Similarly, *The Harvard Crimson*, interviewed a history professor who thought "[w]ar is now up to Hitler."[184] After the war started, the student papers still deemed Hitler responsible for much of the atrocities that were occurring. A *Daily Californian* cartoon entitled "A Man and His Dream"

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[181] *California Daily Bruin*, April 3, 1939.
[182] *The Daily Californian*, August 28, 1939.
[183] *California Daily Bruin*, May 4, 1938.
[184] *The Harvard Crimson*, May 6, 1939.

suggested that Hitler's horrifying dream of taking over much of the globe was beginning to come true at the cost of many lives (fig. 9).[185] Another editorial cartoon later in September also implied that everything had turned into a complete nightmare as people were still following Hitler, as others were dying (fig. 10).[186]

Figure 9: "A Man and His Dream" (Source: *The Daily Californian*)

Figure 10: "Nightmare" (Source: *The Daily Californian*)

Students also continued their criticism of the United States and the Allies for maintaining a neutral stance. *The Daily Californian* blamed the European struggle for power after World War I for the rise of Hitler, and claimed that the U.S. needed to take a more dominant role in the next world war. It also advocated ending all wars and achieving world peace:

> The second war to save democracy must be more than a slogan: it must be from start to finish a war to end war. And that end must be accomplished over individual aims of European nations, else it will have been as farcical as the last. If America enters, she must take the lead and keep it. If sentiment is backed by sincere and universal desires for world peace, the result would not be the dismemberment of victim nations, but a forceful and definite program for world peace of an everlasting variety.[187]

By entering another war, this student implied that the U.S. would be helping to prevent future world wars rather than to cause them. Such an interventionist view was even more common at Berkeley during this time period. The U.S. needed to take a leading role, but some students, especially those at Harvard, were still skeptical that this should be done through the means of war. After the war started, a *Harvard Crimson* editorial claimed that "American must

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[185] *The Daily Californian*, September 8, 1939.
[186] *The Daily Californian*, September 27, 1939.

do everything within her power—'measures short of war'—to aid the Allies." It advocated, instead, to send the Allies all the munitions and raw materials that they could purchase because "the best chance of our [the U.S.] remaining neutral is the success of Allied arms."[188] This Harvard student's view reflected the idea that students were dealing with the conflicting ideologies of wanting to intervene on the side of the Allies, but also wanting to avoid going to war. Such views at Harvard tended to remain more with the mainstream view that the U.S. should do anything to aid an Allied victory without actually joining the war. As Liesel Ashley Miller concluded, "[t]he periodicals did not support appeasement after 1939, but they were not necessarily interventionist."[189] Thus, the United States continued to play the watchful waiting game as more countries fell to Hitler and his Nazi minions throughout the remainder of 1939 and into 1940. People had finally begun to take Hitler seriously, but the U.S. would not join the war against Germany until Hitler declared war on the United States after the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor in December 1941.

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[187] *The Daily Californian*, February 2, 1939.
[188] *The Harvard Crimson*, September 23, 1939.
[189] Miller, 134.

Conclusion

Student newspapers covered Hitler's policies and the significant events in Germany thoroughly in front-page news articles, editorials, and editorial cartoons. Harvard's newspaper tended to focus more on domestic concerns or school-related issues than the other three papers, but there were still editorials on Hitler and his policies. However, Harvard and Yale's newspapers contained much more debate over whether or not America should send representatives to the University of Heidelberg's 550th anniversary celebration in 1936, most likely because both of these schools were invited. All of the newspapers contained very little coverage of the national boycott against Jews in April 1933 and of the announcement of the Nuremberg Laws in September 1935, but fully covered much of the persecution that took place against Jews otherwise. There was little or no coverage of events that happened while school was not in session, such as the Blood Purge of June 1934, in which Hitler killed the members of the *Sturmabteilung* or Storm Troops—better known as the SA.

The same proved to be true about mainstream periodicals. Americans were well served by the amount of information about Hitler and Nazi Germany in their magazines. According to one historian, there was no lack of coverage concerning Germany or Hitler, especially in the pre-war years, and there was definitely an interest in American-German foreign relations in the 1930s.[190] Although there was less coverage beginning in 1923 when Hitler attempted a coup d'etat on the Bavarian government in Munich, once he was appointed Chancellor of Germany in 1933, there were plenty of articles about Hitler's rise to power and his plans for the future. All of the magazines surveyed provided adequate information to their American readership about what was going on in Germany. Thus, Michael Zalampas concluded that, "[i]f Americans failed

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[190] McDaniel, 46-47.

to respond to the threat to civilization posed by Adolf Hitler and his Nazi minions, it was not because they were ill-informed by their periodicals."[191]

Overall, the students were much more critical of Hitler than their elders. Of the four schools, Berkeley's students tended to be the most critical of Hitler and of their own government, as well. Their editorial cartoons often depicted Hitler in a very negative light and they did not hide back any ill-will they had towards the German dictator. They called for intervention against Hitler as early as October 1933 after he withdrew Germany from the League of Nations and the Disarmament Conference, and they grew more critical over the following years. However, Harvard's students tended to remain closer to the mainstream press in their opinions of Hitler. They still considered him a more serious threat than their elders, but were often more cautious about wanting to intervene in the affairs of Germany, and especially about going to war. Even in 1939, they wanted to help the Allies, but only without having to go to war.

Most Americans failed to take Hitler seriously, even though they were well informed about his Nazi regime. Historian Toni McDaniel stated that "despite the obvious threat which Germany increasingly posed for Europe, there was an unwillingness on the part of many journalists to treat Hitler with the seriousness which his increasingly aggressive course of action warranted."[192] Hitler's aggressive actions were dismissed because of the long history of German militarism, and thus, he was seen as doing "nothing new." Thus, he was not seen as a threat because his policies were not much different from those in the past.[193] Beyond not taking Hitler seriously, Americans reacted quite slowly to his coming to power. Most people seemed willing to give Hitler a chance because they thought that he might be a good leader for an unstable nation. Also, there seemed to be a greater evil at hand—"Communism—against which Nazism

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[191] Zalampas, 218.
[192] McDaniel, 52.

was believed by many to be an antidote." Thus, the general American response once Hitler came to power was that of reticence.[194]

Another reason why historians have argued that people did not take Hitler seriously was possibly because of the amount of information printed about Hitler's personality. Magazines printed heaps of information about Hitler's psychology and personal life. Kenneth Work thought this led people to underestimate the "destructive force of Hitler and National Socialism" which "was the single most overriding element of the pre-war period and perhaps in terms of perception, its greatest tragedy."[195] Hitler was also seen in many of the magazine articles as a satirical figure and was made the target of many jokes. Therefore, the comic relief that Hitler provided to many readers caused them to dismiss him and underestimate the seriousness of his intentions for Germany. This proved to be true only in few cases in the student newspapers, as any articles that viewed Hitler as a comical figure, condemned him afterwards.

Furthermore, scholars saw mainstream magazines devoting more space to other problems the U.S. faced which may have caused Americans to misjudge Hitler. There were several other events that filled the pages of mainstream journals that distracted U.S. opinion. These included the depression within the U.S., the presidential focus on New Deal experiments to revive the economy, and "other international events that were, at times, regarded as more immediate challenges to American interests," such as the 1937 Japanese attack on China, of special interest to Americans, and the several coup attempts in Latin America that threatened American economic interests.[196] Because Hitler did not pose a direct threat to the U.S. when he came to

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[193] McDaniel, 49-50.
[194] Day, 2. See also Work, 206.
[195] Work, 205.
[196] Zalampas, 216.

power in 1933 and was not considered more than a German problem until 1938, Americans continued to underestimate him.

All of the historians concluded that there was a definite shift in public opinion on in 1938, especially after the organized action against the Jews in November. Up until this time, Americans had believed Hitler would remain moderate and that the German people would never surrender their freedoms. Americans thought the Germans would not allow this man to stay in office and Hitler would be restricted "by inherent forces within the Weimer constitution."[197] *Kristallnacht*, the pogrom against the Jews, as well as Hitler's increasingly aggressive actions toward surrounding European nations, led most people to believe that "Hitler had ceased to be a Jewish problem, a German problem, or even a European problem but, rather, had become a problem for civilized people everywhere."[198] People were no longer laughing Hitler off as comic relief or willing to give him a chance as the German leader.

Student newspapers were more critical of Hitler and they were much quicker to criticize the Allied powers and the United States than the mainstream press. This was especially true after the Munich Crisis and the occupation of the Sudetenland in the fall of 1938. Students called for some sort of intervention to maintain peace in Europe, whether it had to be through an economic boycott or diplomacy. Because they were among the largest anti-war supporters, they advocated intervening by means other than war. A sense of collegiate pacifism emerged on all four campuses, as indicated by peace polls taken during the 1930s.[199] Maintaining their anti-war, yet anti-Hitler ideologies was difficult and many student editorials revealed this conflict. The students never defined what they meant by "intervention" or "speaking up" against Hitler, but

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[197] Work, 6-7.
[198] Zalampas, 218.
[199] Such polls cited in this study were taken at Yale University, UCLA, and the University of Texas (as reported by Berkeley's newspaper).

they knew that they did not want to go to war. Thus, they never really came up with an alternative solution to stopping Hitler. They also used the situation in Germany to condemn their own government for its isolationist and racist policies. For example, they often called the U.S. hypocritical for criticizing Hitler's anti-Semitism while ignoring the persecution of minorities, even Jews, within the United States. This was especially seen in several of Berkeley's editorial cartoons cited in this thesis.

McGeorge Bundy, while he was a student at Yale, offered perhaps the most insightful understanding as to why there was a generational divide with regard to American opinions of Hitler during the 1930s. He thought that students wanted Hitler to be defeated, whereas their parents were more horrified by the imminence of war. He pointed to the fact that youth had a more radical nature and that they generally tended to be more progressive thinkers. They thought that change could be achieved through action, and that a brighter future was in sight. Their elders, on the other hand, were more cautious because they had lived through the horror of World War I. Moreover, they were settled into their lives and did not want to be disturbed by the fact that their country might go to war.

Most scholars have all agreed that it is difficult to find a general "American" opinion. Both Toni McDaniel and Daniel Shepherd Day agreed that it was difficult to find a "unanimity of opinion" during Hitler's first years in power.[200] Liesel Ashley Miller also agreed that in order to get a comprehensive view of Hitler, one had to read a wide range of periodicals.[201] The same was true of student opinion. This study, for example, only utilized four school newspapers out of hundreds that existed throughout the United States in the 1930s. Also, the opinions voiced in student newspapers often reflected the views of the newspaper editorial staffs, as well as the

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[200] Day, 223. See also McDaniel, 50.

majority of the campus populations. Dissenting opinions, however, were seen in certain editorials and letters written to the editors of the paper disagreeing with certain views that the papers advocated.

More than anything, this study has shown that students began to develop their own political identity in the 1930s. They had a very perceptive understanding of what was going on in the United States and in Germany at this time and they were not afraid to voice their opinions about Hitler or American leadership. This study has shown that America did not have a general consensus in the 1930s, but rather both students and their elders debated what to do about Hitler. The students, especially, used their student newspapers to try and figure out who this man was and how to react to him. They dealt with their anti-Hitler ideology in an anti-war age to the best of their ability, but the fact remains that they could never come up with an adequate solution as to how to stop Hitler. They understood, however, that America's waiting policy was insufficient, and they saw Hitler as more than simply an isolated phenomenon. Most importantly, this study has proved to be an important chapter in the history of America's student movement because it was at this time that students first began to develop their own political identity; an identity that was very prominent in the 1960s student movements and an identity that, I would argue, continues to be seen today with the recent war on Iraq and the continuing war on terror.

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[201] Miller, 133.

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