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- 1999: Nora Hall, "On Being an African-American Woman: Gender and Race in the Writings of Six Black Women Journalists, 1849-1936"; Director: Hazel Dicken-Garcia, University of Minnesota
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2012 MARGARET A. BLANCHARD

DOCTORAL DISSERTATION PRIZE

PRIZE WINNER

Brian Dolber, "Sweating for Democracy: Working Class Media and the Struggle for Hegemonic Jewishness, 1919-1941";

Director: Robert W. McChesney, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign

HONORABLE MENTION AWARDEES

Fred Carroll, "Race News: How Black Reporters and Readers Shaped the Fight for Racial Justice, 1877-1978";

Director: Kimberley Phillips, Brooklyn College

Jason A. Peterson, "Full Court Press: How Mississippi Newspapers Helped Keep State College Basketball Segregated, 1955-1973";

Director: David R. Davies, University of Southern Mississippi

David Wallace, "The Way We See It:

Massive Resistance, Southern Myth, and Media Suppression";

Director: Polly E. Bugros McLean, University of Colorado

ABSTRACTS

Brian Dolber, "Sweating for Democracy: Working Class Media and the Struggle for Hegemonic Jewishness, 1919-1941"

Using the framework of political economy of media, this dissertation examines the history of the Jewish working-class counterpublic in the United States during the interwar period and its relationships to the broader public sphere. Between 1919 and 1941, organic intellectuals such as B.B. Vladeck, J.B.S. Hardman, Fannia Cohn, and Morris Novik, employed strategies to maintain the Yiddish-language newspaper, the *Forward*, worker education programs, and radio station WEVD. These forms of media and cultural production were shaped by internal conflicts and struggles within the counterpublic, as well as evolving practices and ideas around advertising, public relations, and democracy. Vladeck, Hardman, Cohn and Novik all helped to extend Yiddish socialist culture through the reactionary 1920s while laying the groundwork for an American working class culture represented by the CIO in the 1930s, and a broad consensus around a commercial media system by the postwar period. This history demonstrates the challenges, conflicts, and contradictions that emerge in media production within

counterpublics, and posits that other similar case studies are necessary in order develop enlightened strategies to democratize our contemporary media system.

Fred Carroll, "Race News: How Black Reporters and Readers Shaped the Fight for Racial Justice, 1877-1978"

Between 1877 and 1978, black reporters, publishers, and readers engaged in a never-ending and ever-shifting protest against American racism. Journalists' militancy oscillated as successive generations defined anew their relationship with racism and debated the relevance of black radicalism in the fight for racial justice. A national network of news by, about, and for African Americans emerged in the late nineteenth century as editor-proprietors defended freedoms gained during Reconstruction. In the early twentieth century, publishers adopted more militant editorial policies to win over readers moving northward for urban industrial employment. In the interwar years, reporters and readers infused black journalism with an unprecedented racial militancy and political progressiveness as they explored the politics of anti-colonialism, anti-capitalism, and black separatism. During World War II, this outlook propelled black newspapers to their peak popularity and influence. With the ascendancy of anticommunism, though, publishers jettisoned radical writers for younger journalists who narrowed their focus to the fight for domestic civil rights. Radical writers resurfaced in the 1960s to challenge commercial publishers criticized for compromising their militancy. In the 1970s, journalists began to broaden the reach of black journalism by fighting to integrate white newsrooms, ultimately transforming how mainstream media covered African Americans.

Jason A. Peterson, "Full Court Press: How Mississippi Newspapers Helped Keep State College Basketball Segregated, 1955-1973"

During the civil rights era, Mississippi was cloaked in the hateful embrace of the Closed Society, historian James Silver's description of the white caste systems that used State's Rights to enforce segregation and promote the subservient treatment of blacks. Surprisingly, challenges from Mississippi's college basketball courts brought into question the validity of the Closed Society and its unwritten law, a gentleman's agreement that prevented college teams in the Magnolia State from playing against integrated foes. Led by Mississippi State University's (MSU) basketball team, which won four Southeastern Conference championships in a five-year span, the newspapers in Mississippi often debated the legitimacy of MSU's claims to a trip to the integrated NCAA national championship tournament with some reporters, namely Jimmy Ward of the *Jackson Daily News*, damning the Starkville-five for their attempted violation of the state's white-dominated social structure. Others, such as Jimmie McDowell of the *Jackson State Times*, emerged from the sports desk as a bold and progressive voice in the annals of Mississippi journalism. By the time MSU added its first black basketball players in 1971, the Closed Society had loosened its grip on Mississippi's newspapers as evident in the absence of race-based descriptions and identification of these brave athletes. This dissertation examines the role Mississippi's journalists played, from 1955 through 1973, in maintaining segregated college basketball in the state and the reaction to the integration of basketball teams at University of Southern Mississippi, the University of Mississippi, and Mississippi State University. In total, the press either condemned any efforts to introduce social equality in Mississippi's athletic avenues, remained silent, or supported such efforts in the name of national basketball dominance.

David Wallace, "The Way We See It: Massive Resistance, Southern Myth, and Media Suppression"

In response to the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education ruling, segregationist leaders in the South organized a region-wide "massive resistance" to the Supreme Court's decision. The media played a central role in this response, and segregationists sought to influence press coverage of the South and the movement. However, when it became clear that the national media, and a small minority of southern journalists, would not simply submit to southern myth, ideology and tradition, segregationists looked to not only punish their intransigence but to remove them completely from the public sphere. This dissertation explores the role and methods of media suppression during massive resistance. It places the suppression within a broader context of segregationist-and state-supported public relations and southern society. This dissertation argues that certain news coverage and opinion in northern and southern media outlets threatened the ideology and myths behind massive resistance, leading to segregationist backlash aimed at silencing criticism, dissent and public debate of both the civil rights issue as well as segregationist responses. Segregationists understood the threat open public debate posed to their social system and desperately fought to prevent the free flow of information. From rural Mississippi weeklies to the *New York Times*, no voice of dissent was safe.