

# Return of the Repressed: Re-emergence of Either/or Thinking as a Defense Against Racial Awakening

Constance E. Dunlap, MD, DLFAPA  
Catawba Springs Health LLC

April 20, 2023





**MHTTC**

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network  
Funded by Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration

The purpose of the MHTTC Network is technology transfer - disseminating and implementing evidence-based practices for mental disorders into the field.

Funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), the MHTTC Network includes 10 Regional Centers, a National American Indian and Alaska Native Center, a National Hispanic and Latino Center, and a Network Coordinating Office.

Our collaborative network supports resource development and dissemination, training and technical assistance, and workforce development for the mental health field. We work with systems, organizations, and treatment practitioners involved in the delivery of mental health services to strengthen their capacity to deliver effective evidence-based practices to individuals. Our services cover the full continuum spanning mental illness prevention, treatment, and recovery support.

The MHTTC Network uses affirming, respectful and recovery-oriented language in all activities. That language is:

STRENGTHS-BASED  
AND HOPEFUL

INCLUSIVE AND  
ACCEPTING OF  
DIVERSE CULTURES,  
GENDERS,  
PERSPECTIVES,  
AND EXPERIENCES

HEALING-CENTERED AND  
TRAUMA-RESPONSIVE

INVITING TO INDIVIDUALS  
PARTICIPATING IN THEIR  
OWN JOURNEYS

PERSON-FIRST AND  
FREE OF LABELS

NON-JUDGMENTAL AND  
AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS

RESPECTFUL, CLEAR  
AND UNDERSTANDABLE

CONSISTENT WITH  
OUR ACTIONS,  
POLICIES, AND PRODUCTS

# MHTTC Network

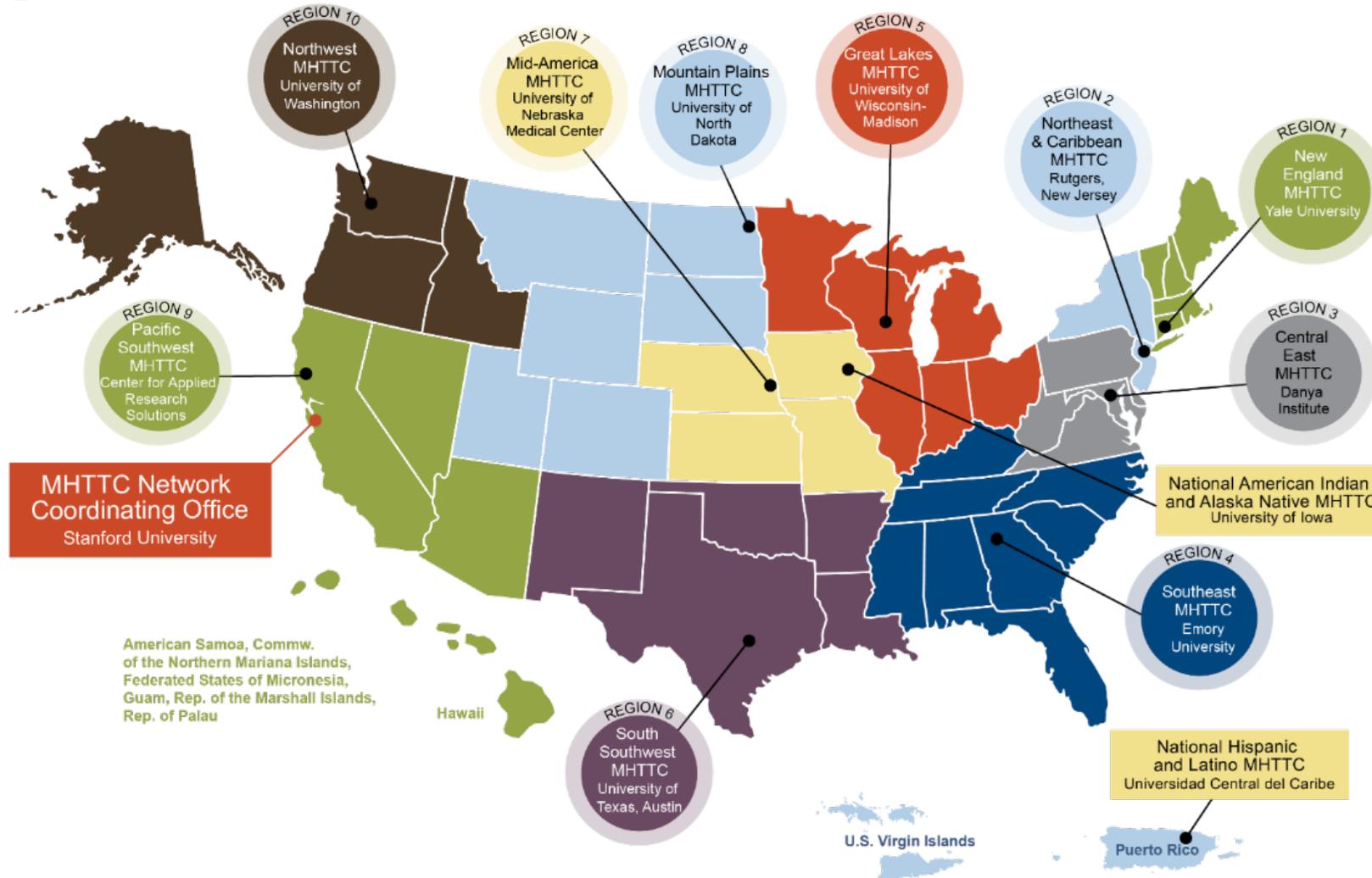


MHTTC

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MHTTC Network



# Central East Region 3



Central East (HHS Region 3)

**MHTTC**

Mental Health Technology Transfer Center Network

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At the time of this publication, Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon, Ph.D, served as Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and the Administrator of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

The opinions expressed herein are the views of the authors and do not reflect the official position of the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS), SAMHSA. No official support or endorsement of DHHS, SAMHSA, for the opinions described in this document is intended or should be inferred.

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Presented 2023

# Evaluation Information

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- At the end of today's training please take a moment to complete a **brief** survey about today's training.

[Evaluation Link](#)



# **Return of the Repressed: Re-emergence of either/or Thinking as a Defense against Racial Awakening**

**Presenter: Constance E. Dunlap, MD, DLFAPA  
Owner, Catawba Springs Health LLC  
Washington, DC**

**Moderator: Annelle B. Primm, MD, MPH  
Council of Elders, Black Psychiatrists of America  
Baltimore, MD**

**April 20, 2023**



# Today's Topic

- Racial power dynamics in the U.S. have historical underpinnings and psychological consequences.
- Exploration of these complexities is timely given recent challenges and bans of DEI initiatives.
- We thank CE-MHTTC for their partnership on the BPA Health Equity Webinar series.
- Content has both Central East region and national relevance.
- Our featured speaker is Constance Dunlap, MD, DLFAPA

Disclosure: views are my own



GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY



The American College of Psychiatrists

Clinical Psychiatry News



Washington Psychiatric Society





## A Paradox...

- Patient's **history** is a vital component of evaluation & treatment
- 
- Color **Blind** Racial Ideology
  - Denial of systemic **racism**
  - Educational **gag orders**

“Whiteness Project is an interactive investigation into how Americans who identify as white, or partially white, understand and experience their race.”

[Whiteness Project Video - Sarah](#)

# Objectives & Outline

# Objectives

- Identify key dates in the historical arc of Black progress and resistance to social justice gains
- Describe individual and group use of either/or racial thinking to manage fear, guilt and shame
- Describe some risks and potential consequences of legislative attacks on freedom of speech and suppression of racial literacy which includes bans on Critical Race Theory (CRT) and Diversity, Equity & Inclusion (DEI) initiatives
- List strategies for facilitating free speech in education, training & clinical care

## Outline:

# History, Psychology & Politics (Bio-Psycho-Social Model)

## I. History

- A. A brief historical overview of the US: legally integrated for 59 years

## II. Psychology

- A. The origins of either/or thinking & birth of the US Black/white divide (psychoanalytic and social)

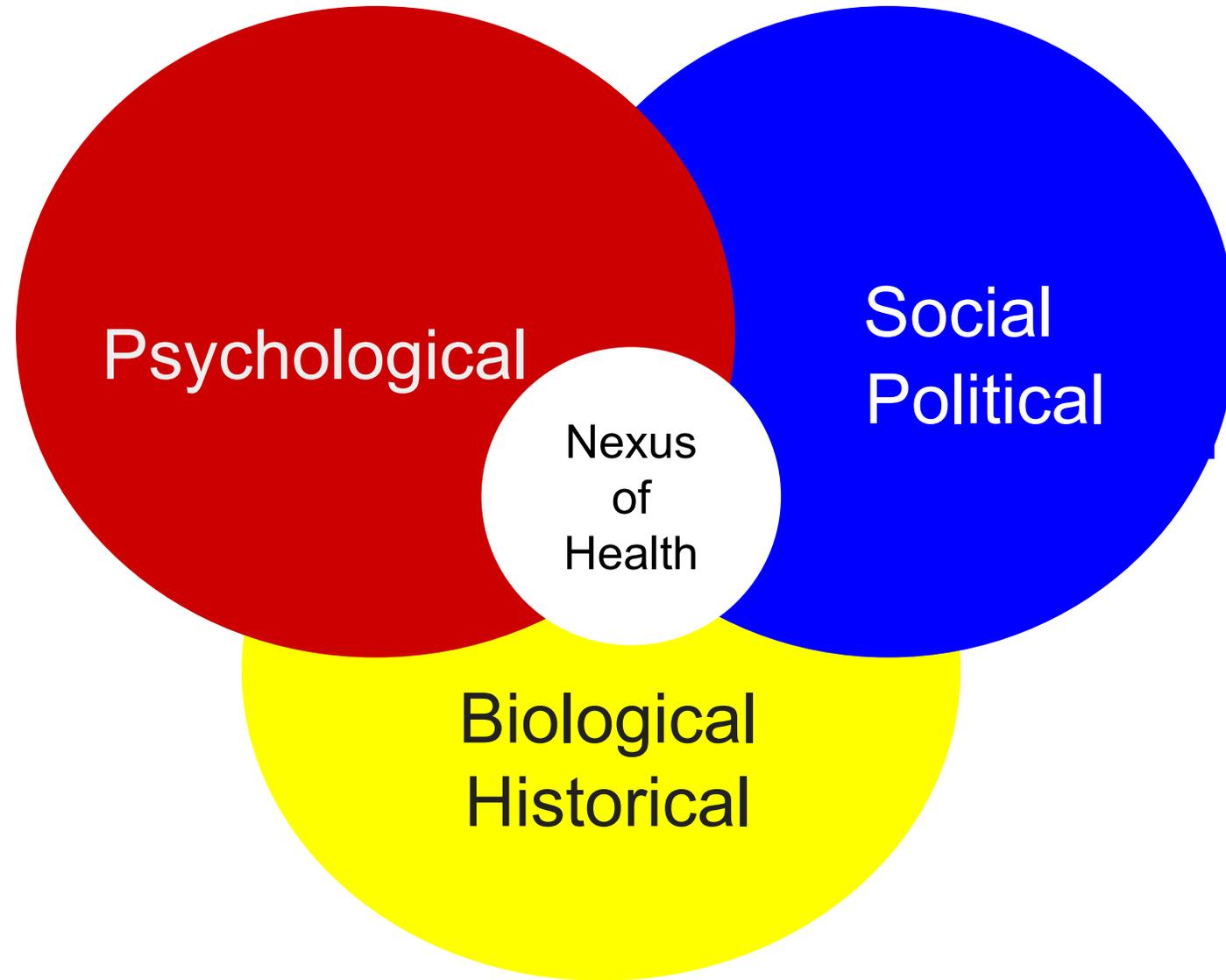
## III. Politics

- A. The fleeting season of racial awakening
- B. Efforts to suppress free speech
- C. Strategies to protect free speech - the foundation of health equity

Q&A

# Return of the Repressed

- A term Freud used to describe the way that repressed memories and desires can resurface in our conscious minds
- Can include thoughts and feelings could manifest themselves in a variety of ways, including dreams, slips of the tongue, and neurotic symptoms
- can still exist in our unconscious, and still have an impact on our thoughts, feelings, and behavior.
- can also be expressed in creative works, such as art, music, and literature.



Histo-Psycho-Political after the Bio-Psych-Social Model

I. History: An Overview of America  
The U.S. Has Been Legally Integrated for 59 Years

# America's Timeline

## AMERICAN SLAVERY

246 years

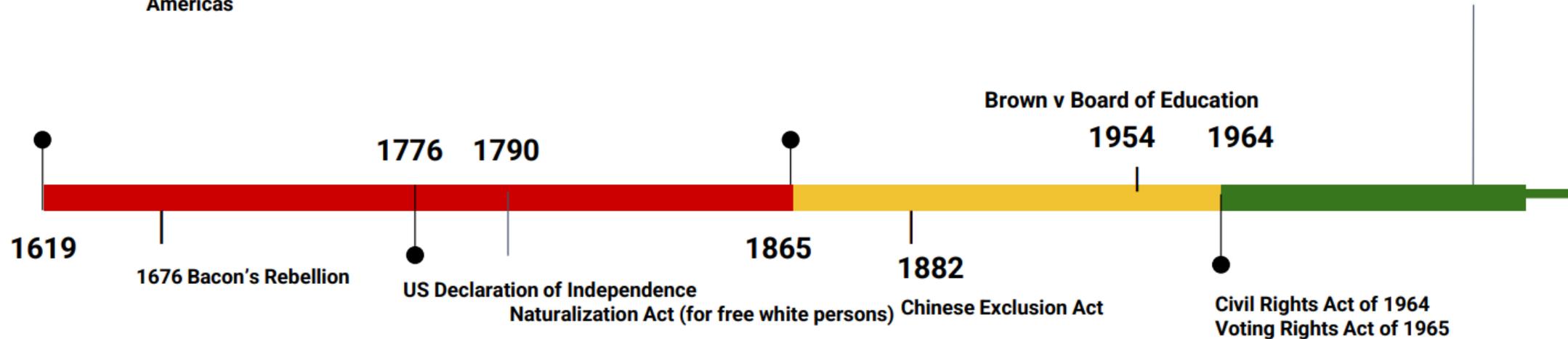
Enslavement of Africans in the Americas

## SEGREGATION

89 years

## LEGAL INTEGRATION

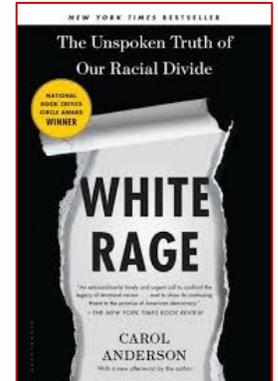
59 years



# White **Rage** and **Resistance** Follow Progress Among Minoritized Groups



Professor Carol Anderson  
(historian, Emory University)



1. Reconstructing **Reconstruction**
2. Derailing the **Great Migration**
3. Burning **Brown** to the Ground
4. Rolling Back **Civil Rights**
5. How to Unelect a **Black President**

1. Reconstruction: 1865-1877
2. The Great Migration: 1910-1970
3. Brown v Board of Ed of Topeka: 1954
4. Civil Rights: 1940-1970
5. 2008: Election of President Barack Obama

# Three Men Committed to Black Education during Jim Crow

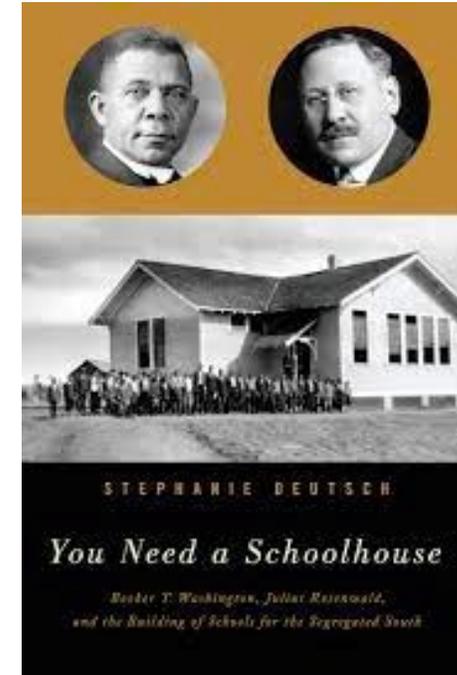


Dr. Booker T. Washington  
1856-1915

Dr. W.E.B. Du Bois  
1868-1963



Mr. Julius Rosenwald  
1862-1932



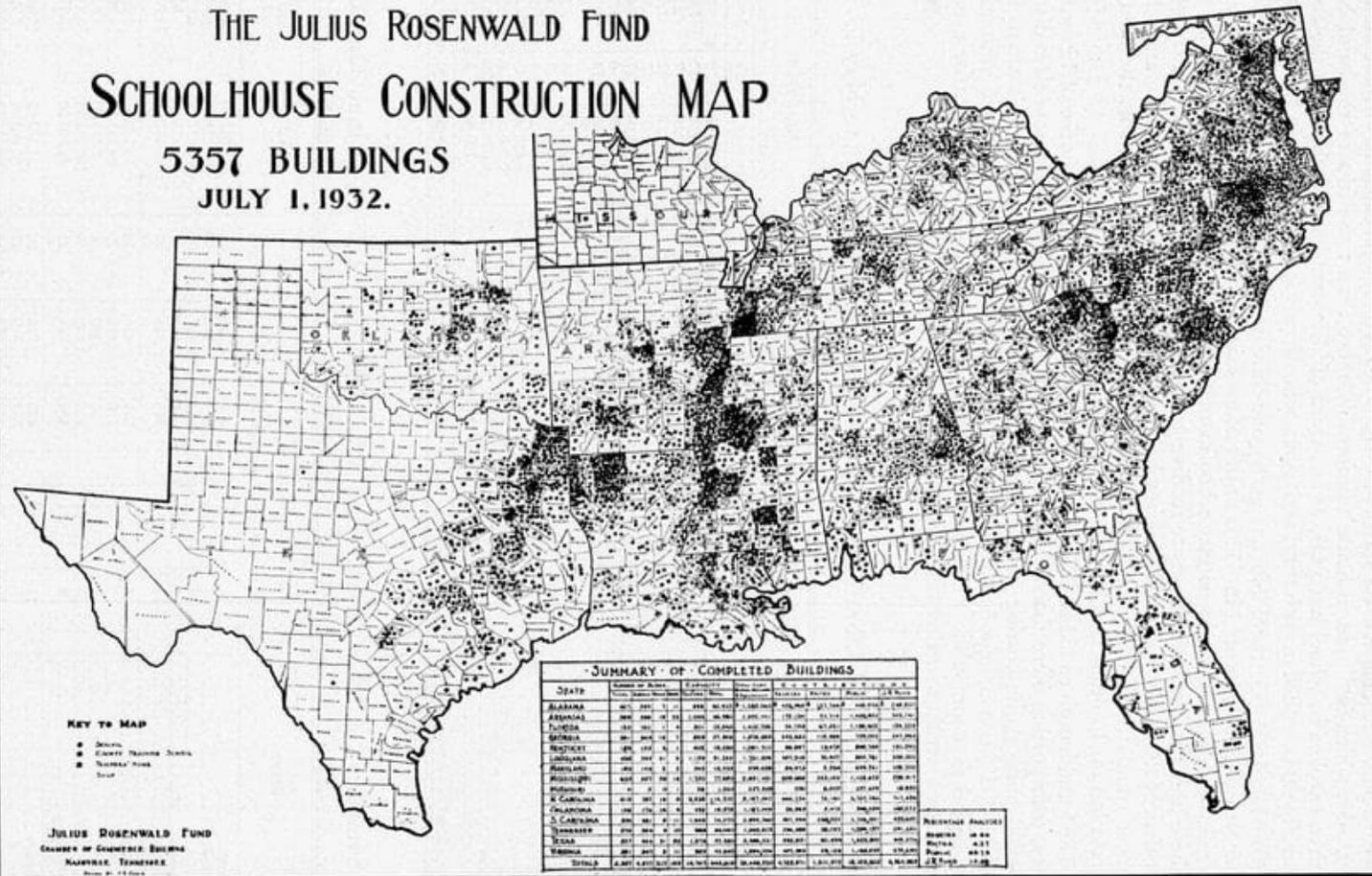
“The Negro Race, like all races, is going to be saved by its exceptional men. The problem of education then, among Negroes, must first of all deal with the “Talented Tenth.” It is the problem of developing the best of this race that they may guide the Mass away from the contamination and death of the worst.”

- W.E.B. Du Bois, from *The Talented Tenth*

**Stephanie Deutsch**, author and editor of the Julius Rosenwald & Rosenwald Schools National Historical Park Campaign Newsletter

THE JULIUS ROSENWALD FUND  
**SCHOOLHOUSE CONSTRUCTION MAP**

5357 BUILDINGS  
 JULY 1, 1932.



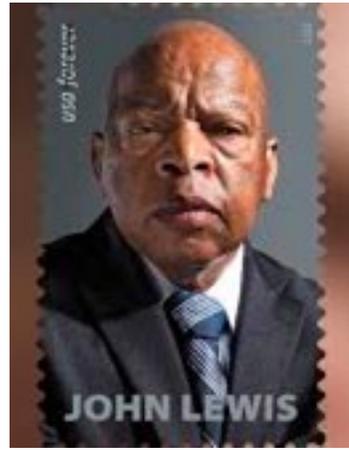
- States**
- Alabama
  - Arkansas\*
  - Florida
  - Georgia
  - Kentucky\*
  - Louisiana
  - Maryland\*
  - Mississippi
  - Missouri\*
  - North Carolina
  - Oklahoma\*
  - South Carolina
  - Tennessee
  - Texas
  - Virginia

\*Not members of the original Confederacy

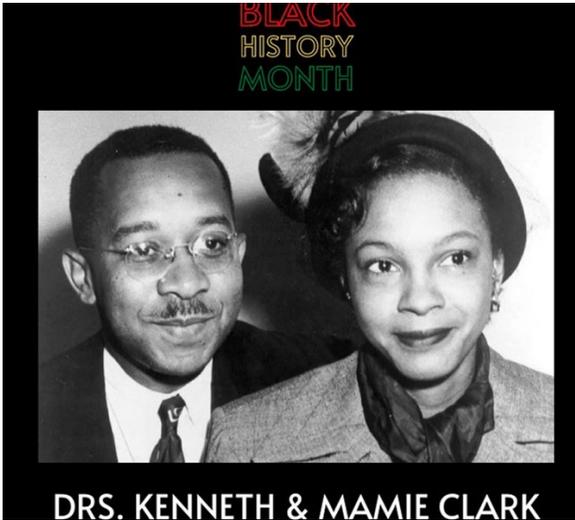
# Bringing the Timeline to Life

- Attended a Rosenwald School for grades 1-3
- Among first Black students to Integrate formerly all white elementary school
- Part of the Great Migration of Blacks to the north (NYC & DC)
- **Notable alumnae of Rosenwald Schools:**  
Maya Angelou, Medgar Evers, Rep. John Lewis, Eugene Robinson...and more
- **Recipients of Rosenwald Fellowships:**  
Marian Anderson, James Baldwin, Elizabeth Catlett, Drs. Kenneth and Mamie Clark, Dr. Charles Drew, W.E.B. Du Bois, Katherine Dunham, Ralph Ellison, Dr. R.E. Fullilove, Jr., Langston Hughes, Zora Neale Hurston, James Weldon Johnson, Jacob Lawrence, Dr. Margaret Lawrence, Claude McKay, Gordon Parks, Augusta Savage...and more





Rosenwald  
Alumni and Fellows



## II. Psychology: The Origins of either/or Thinking in the U.S. The Birth of the Black/White Divide

# Disavowal of Race and Racism in Psychoanalysis & Psychiatry

- **Freud neglected race and ethnicity**
  - Sander Gilman: Freud, Race and Gender
- **Contributions by Blacks excluded from mainstream curricula**
  - Frantz Fanon, MD: *Black Skin, White Masks; Wretched of the Earth*
  - Frances Cress Welsing, MD: *The Isis Papers: The Keys to the Colors*
  - Dorothy Holmes, PhD, Kimberlyn Leary, PhD et al
  - Carl Bell, MD: Racism: A Symptom of the Narcissistic Personality
  - Alvin Poussaint: Opinion - They Hate. They Kill. Are They Insane?
- **Founding of Black Psychoanalysts Speak**
  - Dorothy Holmes, PhD, Dionne Powell, MD, Kirkland Vaughans, PhD et al
- **Contemporary contributions**
  - Dorothy Holmes, PhD, Don Moss, PhD, Beverly Stoute, MD, Ebony Dennis, PsyD et al

# Binary thinking

- Very common, can be helpful in some situations
- Can help us to make decisions quickly and easily
- Limited because it does not allow room for shades of gray
- Contributes to “groupthink” - practice of decision making that discourages creative nuanced thinking and individual responsibility for decisions and actions
- Examples
  - Big/small
  - Good/bad
  - Light/dark
  - Boy/girl
  - Self/other
  - Black/white



# Origins of Black\*/white racial dichotomy

- Traced back to the Transatlantic Slave Trade
- Hierarchy was based on the belief that white people were more intelligent, civilized, and capable than Black people
- Based on the belief that Europeans were superior to Africans
- Used to justify the enslavement of Africans
- Further solidified during the American colonial period (after Bacon's Rebellion)
- The Constitution made it clear that African Americans were not considered to be citizens of the United States

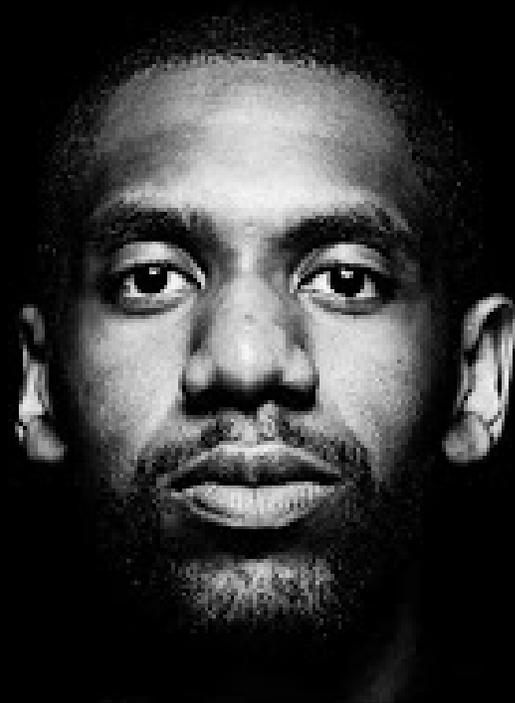
\*Black is capitalized when referring to racial group; white is not (NY Times style guide)

[Source](#)

Binary Thinking, Disavowal and Ignorance  
Have Grave Consequences

# THE LOOK

A story about bias in America.



# Context: Acceleration of Post-Civil Rights Violence



Trayvon Martin, 2012



Eric Garner, 2014



Michael Brown, 2014



Deah Barakat, his wife, Yusor Mohammad Abu-Salha, and her sister, Razan Mohammad Abu-Salha, in Chapel Hill, NC, 2015



Heather Heyer,  
2017



Sandra Bland,  
2015

# 2013: Formation of Black Lives Matter Movement (rejection of projections)



, three radical Black organizers — Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi — created a Black-centered political will and movement building project called #BlackLivesMatter. It was in response to the acquittal of Trayvon Martin's murderer, George Zimmerman.



**Black Lives Matter founders:** Alicia Garza, Patrisse Cullors, and Opal Tometi



# 2020: The Summer of Racial Awakening



Ahmaud Arbery  
Brunswick, GA, 2020



Breonna Taylor  
Louisville, KY 2020

## **H.R.1280 - George Floyd Justice in Policing Act of 2021**

117th Congress (2021-2022): passed the House of Representatives



George Floyd  
Minneapolis, MN 2020

Since 2020: Buffalo shooting, California, Tyre Nichols (Memphis)...and more



TOPS Supermarket  
Buffalo, NY, 2022  
Civilian assault



Tyre Nichols  
Memphis, TN, 2023  
Law Enforcement assault



Ralph Yarl  
Kansas, MO, 2023  
Civilian assault

# Racial Literacy Promotes Dignity

- Racial literacy is a form of socialization that
  - Challenges binary thinking
  - Promotes awareness of injustices
  - Helps with management of discomfort caused by
    - Guilt - a feeling of regret or remorse for something we have done wrong
      - Can motivate us to make amends
    - Shame - a feeling of worthlessness or inadequacy (of missing the mark)
      - Can be paralyzing and cause us to hide or withdraw
  - Can motivate desire to change
  - Promotes dignity for all involved in therapeutic encounters (Ezra Griffith, 2023)

# III. Politics: The Fleeting Season of Racial Awakening (2020 – 2021)

\*not reckoning (the action of calculating or estimating something; settlement of accounts)



## [The Racial Reckoning That Wasn't NPR](#)

**Hosts:** Journalists, Shereen Marisol Meraji and Gene Demby

**Guests:** Hakeem Jeffries (Stanford) and Jennifer Chudy (Wellesley)

## Data about the response to George Floyd's murder

But they found that white support didn't just return to pre-George Floyd levels.

Instead, what we see is that purple line - right? - and the current period is below the zero line, which suggests that **in the aggregate, overall, on average, white support for Black Lives Matter is now lower than it was on January 1, 2020.**

So for the people in the back who did not hear that, white support today is lower than it was before Breonna Taylor and George Floyd were killed by the police.

Now, in the aggregate, yeah, white people have more negative views toward the movement than they did in January 2020 before George Floyd was murdered.



## "Remaining Awake Through a Great Revolution"

[Source](#)

There are all too many people who, in some great period of social change, fail to achieve the new mental outlooks that the new situation demands. **There is nothing more tragic than to sleep through a revolution.** There can be no gainsaying of the fact that a great revolution is taking place in our world today. It is a social revolution, sweeping away the old order of colonialism. **And in our own nation it is sweeping away the old order of slavery and racial segregation. The wind of change is blowing, and we see in our day and our age a significant development.** Victor Hugo said on one occasion that there is nothing more powerful in all the world than an idea whose time has come. In a real sense, the idea whose time has come today is the idea of freedom and human dignity. Wherever men are assembled today, the cry is always the same, "We want to be free." And so we see in our own world a revolution of rising expectations. **The great challenge facing every individual graduating today is to remain awake through this social revolution.**

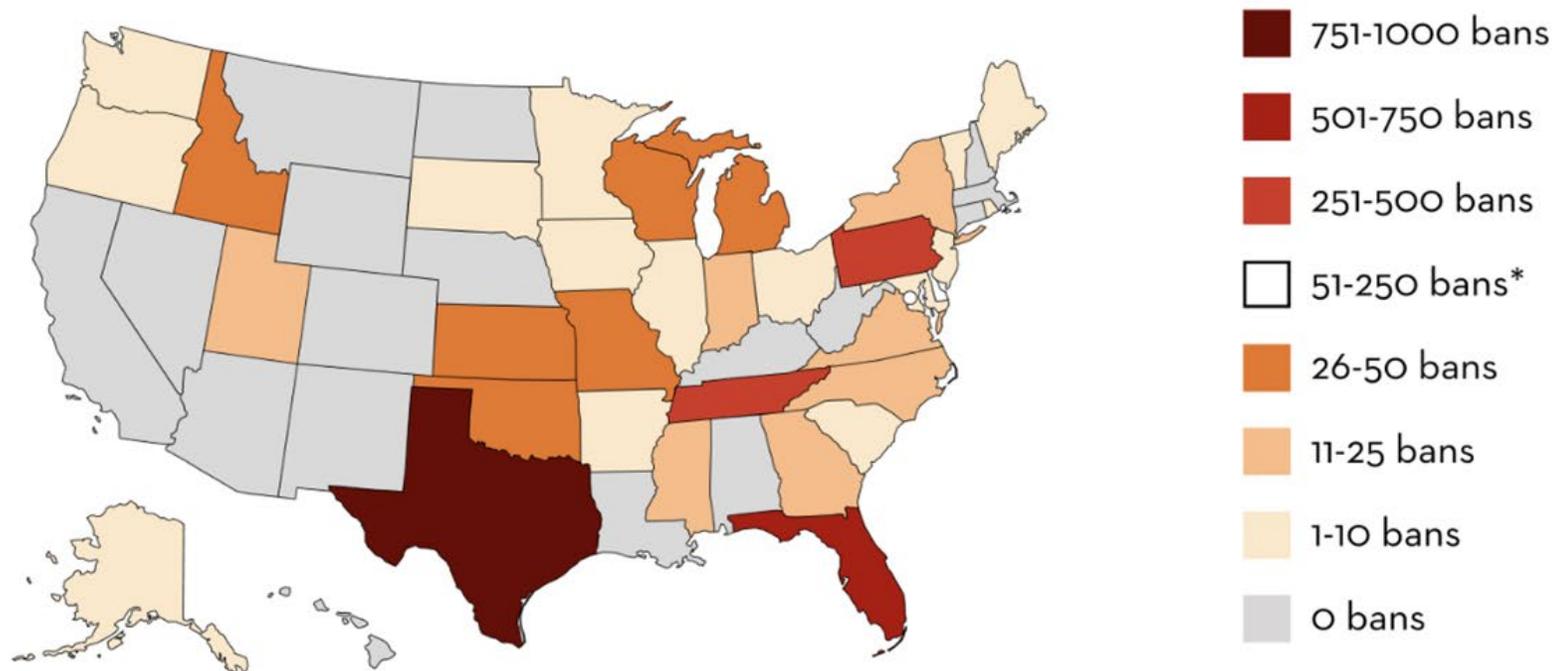


## Methods of Suppressing Speech

- **Methods:**
  - DARVO (Deny, Attack, Reverse Victim and Offender)
  - Distort and demonize terms and concepts, e.g., CRT (Critical Race Theory), Woke
  - [Book bans](#)
- **Organizations**
  - [The Manhattan Institute](#)
  - [Do No Harm Medicine](#)
- **Results**
  - Dismantling of divisions/departments charged with DEI & antiracism initiatives
  - Psychological distress - fear, confusion, chaos

# School Book Bans by State

July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022



Data from PEN America Index of School Book Bans, July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022.

Created with mapchart.net

\*There are no states with 51-250 bans

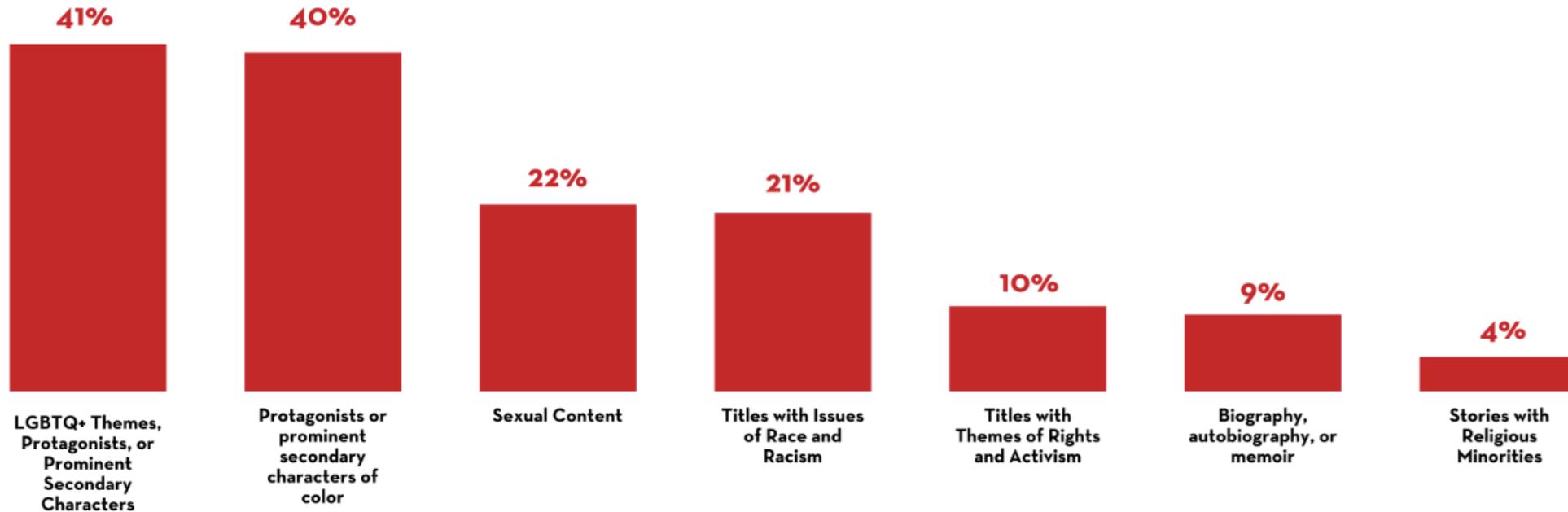
- Bans occurred in 138 school districts in 32 states. These districts represent 5,049 schools with a combined enrollment of nearly 4 million students.

# Subject Matter of Banned Content

By Percentage of Unique Banned Titles, July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022



Note: many titles contain more than one type of content.



Data from PEN America Index of School Book Bans, July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022.



# Strategies for Suppressing Speech

- **Legislation**

- [White House Executive Order on Combating Race and Sex Stereotyping \(2020\)](#)
- [Florida HB 1557 - "Don't Say Gay" Bill](#)
- [Arkansas bans "Latinx"](#)
- [Highlights from PEN America's tracking system](#)

# Strategies to Protect Free Speech: The Foundation of Health Equity

# First Amendment

## Constitution of the United States

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion; or prohibiting free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances.

**The First Amendment** is widely considered to be the most important part of the Bill of Rights. It protects the fundamental rights of conscience—the freedom to believe and express different ideas—in a variety of ways.

[Source](#)





# American Council on Education

## **Free and Open Academic Inquiry and Debate on Our Campuses is Essential to Our Democracy and National Well-being March 3, 2022**

All members of the campus community must be able to speak their minds freely, even if some hold opinions that others find objectionable, factually unsupportable, or abhorrent. **The answer to speech with which one disagrees is more speech, not enforced silence.** Open academic inquiry and vigorous debate are core values of higher education, and America generally, and we must never waver in our commitment to these vital principles.

[Source](#)



Our name: Poets, Essayists, Novelists (original acronym)

- PEN America formed on April 19, 1922, in New York City and included among its founding Members writers such as Willa Cather, Eugene O'Neill, Robert Frost, Ellen Glasgow, Edwin Arlington Robinson, Robert Bench
- PEN was later broadened to Poets, Playwrights Editors, Essayists, Novelists
- Today, the "PEN" in PEN America does not represent an acronym
- Many notable writers are past or present Members of PEN America: Chinua Achebe, Maya Angelou, James Baldwin, Saul Bellow, Langston Hughes, Toni Morrison, Viet Thanh Nguyen, Salman Rushdie, John Steinbeck....
- Many others from the literary professions are members of PEN America, including publishers, editors, translators, screenwriters, and agents, along with important allies among dedicated readers, human rights advocates, civil society activists, and many more who share our dedication to protecting and celebrating free expression. [Pen.org](https://www.pen.org)

# Strategies to Protect Free Speech in Medicine and Healthcare

- Educate yourself and others about the importance of free speech
  - [Association of American Medical Colleges \(AAMC\)](#)
- Advocate for strong academic freedom policies
  - Protect the right to dissent
  - Support open and respectful dialogue
  - Promote critical thinking
  - Encourage diversity of thought
- Speak out against censorship and reprisal
  - Support faculty members
  - Support learners and trainees
- Support organizations that are working to protect free speech in medical education and training



72% of Millennials say their generation **believes in equality** more than previous generations

“Whiteness Project is an interactive investigation into how Americans who identify as white, or partially white, understand and experience their race.”

[Whiteness Project Video - Wade](#)

# Conclusion

# Nazi Book Burning, 1933



## Authors targeted:

- Karl Marx, the founder of the concept of communism;
- Ernest Hemingway, one of “corrupting foreign influences,
- Erich Maria Remarque, international best-selling author who penned an unapologetic description of war, *All Quiet on the Western Front*, considered “a literary betrayal of the soldiers of the World War”
- American authors Jack London, Theodore Dreiser, and Helen Keller, whose belief in social justice encouraged her to champion the disabled, pacifism, improved conditions for industrial workers, and women's voting rights.

[Source](#)



## Podcast: Do No Harm: Racism in Patient Care

“And I think part of the challenge is to train students to consider the implications of complicity and complacency. **Many of our students think that racism has — and other forms of oppression has — nothing to do with them or their future medical practice, or they think that racism is a problem for our politicians and activists to address and not them.** And I think there are two sort of big learning barriers here. One is a rejection of anything that makes them uncomfortable, and another is distancing themselves from how they are morally implicated by systemic issues like racism and other forms of oppression.”

- Laura Guidry-Grimes, PhD

[Do No Harm: Racism in Patient Care](#) Calib

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# Thank You

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Let's connect:



# Questions



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