



MIAMI-DADE COUNTY

## How did media shape U.S. public opinion on Nazism in World War II? Join the discussion.

BY CARLI TEPROFF

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The headlines from the run-up to World War II were chilling but often clinical: “Nazis Open New War on Jews.” “Refugee Vessel Rides at Anchor Off Miami Beach.” “Germans preparing for Jewish Boycott.”

They ran in the pages of daily newspapers in Florida during the 1930s and '40s, one of the main ways Americans learned of the rise of Nazism in Europe and the persecution of Jews.

Hollywood also played a key role in that era, cranking out films with similar tropics like "Confessions of a Nazi Spy," an overtly anti-Nazi story, and "Casablanca," a romantic drama set during the war.

And on the radio, journalists including Edward R. Murrow reported live from Europe.

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How did the information disseminated through those mediums shape Americans' opinions about the war and Nazism? To help answer that question, the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum is holding two panel discussions in South Florida dubbed "What Were We Watching? Americans' Responses to Nazism through Cinema, Radio, and Media."

"We are trying to overturn the assumption that Americans didn't have access to information," said Daniel Greene, historian and curator of the Americans and the Holocaust exhibition at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum in Washington, D.C.

The first discussion will be held at 7 p.m. Monday, Dec. 10, at Miami Dade College's Wolfson Campus, 300 NE Second Ave. in the Chapman Conference Center, Building 3, Room 3210. The second program will be at 7 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 11, at B'nai Torah Congregation, 6261 SW 18th St., Boca Raton.

Both panels will feature David Weinstein, author of "The Eddie Cantor Story: A Jewish Life in Performance and Politics." At the Miami Dade College event, Greene will join the panel, and In Boca Raton, Gretchen Skidmore, the director of education initiatives for the museum, will speak. Miami Herald Managing Editor Rick Hirsch will moderate the discussions, which will include questions from the audience.

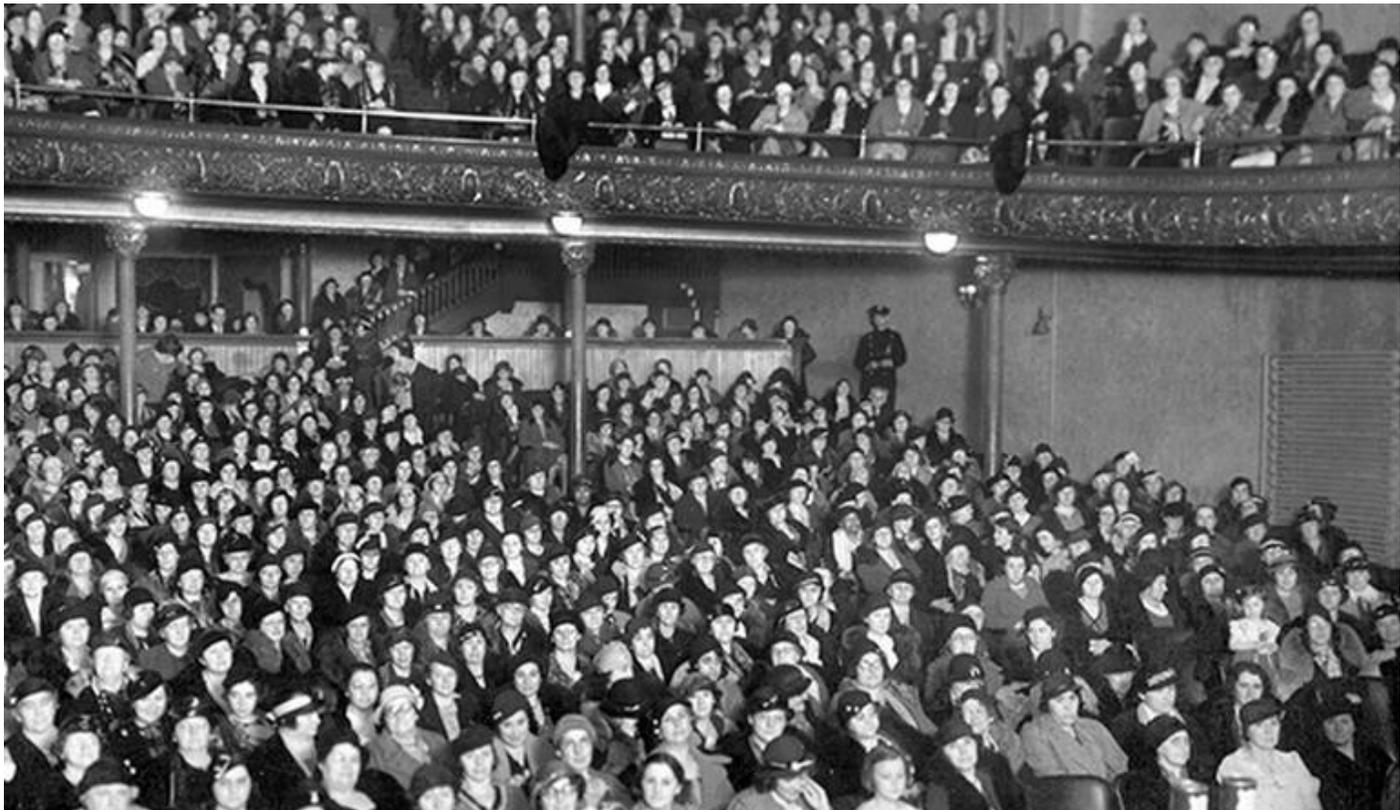
“This program helps us to understand how Americans were being informed and educated about the Nazi threat during the 1930s and ‘40s through the variety of different mediums available at that time,” said Robert Tanen, the museum’s southeast regional director. “It’s important to learn how leaders in government and entertainment attempted to sway public opinion during World War II and the Holocaust.”

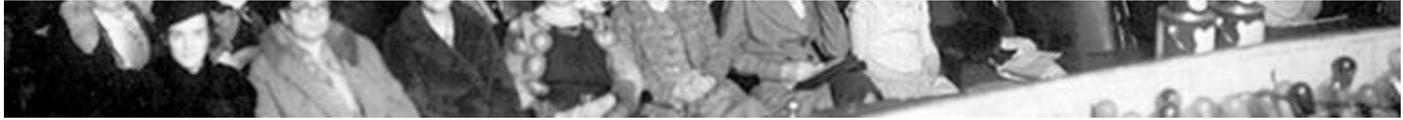
Greene said the idea for the panels — which have been held in other states — comes from the museum’s Americans and the Holocaust exhibition, which is currently on display.

Those who attend the events will see snippets of movies, review headlines and hear radio shows to get a sense of what information Americans were exposed to at the time. Greene said the idea is to answer enduring questions. For example, if Americans knew what was going on, why they didn’t intervene sooner?

“Even though this is a historical discussion, a lot of questions we can explore resonate today,” he said.

Both programs are free, but registration is required. For information or to register, call the museum’s southeast regional office at 561-995-6773, email it at [southeast@ushmm.org](mailto:southeast@ushmm.org) or visit [www.ushmm.org/online-calendar/event/seamrrspnzipp1218](http://www.ushmm.org/online-calendar/event/seamrrspnzipp1218) for the event at Miami Dade College and [www.ushmm.org/online-calendar/event/seamrrespnzipp1218](http://www.ushmm.org/online-calendar/event/seamrrespnzipp1218) in Boca Raton.





New Bedford Theatre, 1934. Spinner Publications

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