

Introduction

Besides making the content of our work relevant to today's global issues, the rationale of this study is built upon the solid foundation established by earlier scholars of Julius Streicher studies. Randall L. Bytwerk, retired Communications faculty member of Calvin University, offered a major contribution to the analysis of propaganda with his Calvin University German Propaganda Archive and publications on Streicher. Dennis E. Showalter has set his research on *Der Stürmer* in the context of the Weimar Republic and has uncovered the rocky history of the legal suits Streicher regularly faced. In his French illustrated texts, Ralph Keyzers has provided a rich analysis of *Der Stürmer*'s caricatures as well as an extensive range of insights into the brainwashing of children during the Third Reich. William P. Varga, in his political biography of Streicher in 1981, *The Number One Nazi Jew-Baiter*, offered early on some foundational background on the publisher and Gauleiter. The extensive scholarly work of Daniel Roos in German focuses principally on *Der Stürmer*'s history from 1923 to 1945. Other articles and books contributed to further studies of Streicher's pedagogical goals for his children's books, his speeches, and his fate at the hands of the prosecutors at the International Military Tribunal in his own beloved Nuremberg. Our ultimate objective in examining all of this rests in the demonstration of the power of the visual image as a vehicle of racial ideology, propaganda, and pedagogy.¹

Julius Streicher's deep-seated and rabid anti-Semitic convictions did not appear in a vacuum or overnight, as if a dramatic epiphany for the propagandizing publisher, although he often said he was "called" to fight Jews. The right-wing, anti-Semitic literature of the time, the teachings of the Catholic Church about Jewish deicide, and the crucifixion of Jesus, the publication of the infamous *Protocols of the Elders of Zion* in 1903 in Russia, as well as the *völkisch* belief that Jews were culturally, politically and religiously outsiders, offered Streicher the racialized fodder he needed for his program. Furthermore, the idea that Jews set out to control the media, financial markets and eventually the world served as a type of petri dish that would grow the "fungus" of anti-Semitism in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In writing *Mein Kampf* in 1924, Hitler further nods to the *Protocols'* prophetic outlook: "And the development we are going through today, if contin-

¹ For an overview of how pedagogy and propaganda are linked in a totalitarian regime, see Sneha Pan, "Breeding Hatred: Dissecting the Pedagogy of Propaganda of Nazi Anti-Semitism in German Children's Literature," *NEW LITERARIA An International Journal of Interdisciplinary Studies in Humanities*, Volume 1, No. 1, Aug-Sept 2020, 15–22, accessed July 18, 2024, <https://newliteraria.com/articles/v01i1/v01i1-03.pdf>

ued unobstructed, would fulfill the Jewish prophecy – the Jew would really devour the peoples of the earth, would become their master.”² After 1919, with the German translation of the *Protocols*, *Protokolle der Weisen von Zion*, the notion of Jewish world conquest became very common among conspiracy theorists.³ *The Protocols*, based on Édouard Drumont’s *La France Juive* (1886), laid the basis for Streicher’s and the Nazis’ belief that, like France, all of the country’s problems were caused by the Jews. In 1924, Hitler stated that the Jewish “agitator” controls the realm of finance and above all wishes to dominate the world, a sentiment echoed often in Streicher’s work, who accepted it at face value.⁴ The National Socialists, however, looked more cautiously on the contents of the *Protocols* later during the Third Reich, as many of its conspiracies were refuted.

Chapter One lays out the early stages of Julius Streicher’s life in Nuremberg, his teaching career and his involvement with National Socialist politics starting in 1921 in Munich as a close associate of Adolf Hitler. Already in 1920, the National Socialist Party Platform had established 25 points to which the members would adhere. Point Four focused on racial anti-Semitism, which would become a mainstay of Streicher’s *Weltanschauung* (world view): “4. Only members of the nation may be citizens of the State. Only those of German blood, whatever their creed, may be members of the nation. Accordingly, no Jew may be a member of the nation.”⁵

Streicher fixated on blood and race throughout his publications and his pedagogical thinking in producing three children’s books at his Nuremberg publishing house. Given his early association with Hitler at the dawn of the National Socialist Democratic Workers Party (NSDAP), he joined the Nazi Party, becoming member number 17. Later he became the anti-Semitic loudspeaker of the party as Gauleiter or leader of the local Franconia Nazi Party until 1940, when Nazi officials deemed him the *bête noire* of the party for his extremist views and corruption.

2 Adolf Hitler, *Mein Kampf*, translated by Ralph Manheim (Boston, MA: Houghton Mifflin, 1943/1973), 307 and 452. The 1973 version will be used throughout for citations. At the Nuremberg Trials Streicher admits that he talked with Hitler about the Jewish question and that he first learned about the Jewish question from reading *Mein Kampf*, although at other times he says that he first encountered the Jewish issue in 1919.

3 For the origins of and Nazi officials’ attitude toward *The Protocols*, see David Crowe: “Pathway to the Shoah: The Protocols, ‘Jewish Bolshevism,’ Rosenberg, Goebbels, Ford, and Hitler,” in John J. Michalczyk, Michael S. Bryant, and Susan A. Michalczyk, *Hitler’s Mein Kampf and the Holocaust: A Prelude to Genocide* (London/New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 146–165. Also, in 1923, Nazi Party philosopher Alfred Rosenberg wrote a commentary on the *Protocols* that further advanced the myriad of anti-Jewish tropes that Streicher was to print.

4 *Mein Kampf*, 623.

5 “Program of the German Workers’ Party (1920),” *German History in Documents and Images*, accessed July 28, 2024, https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=3910.

Nevertheless, as a true disciple, he remained faithful to the Party and Hitler right up to the moment of his execution in 1946.

In Chapter Two, we consider the complex history of Streicher's weekly publication of *Der Stürmer* where he reiterates his continuous conviction, "Die Juden sind unser Unglück" ("Jews are Our Misfortune"), printed at the bottom of every issue. Streicher exploits historian Heinrich von Treitschke's anti-Semitic pronouncement of November 15, 1879 and utilizes it as his campaign slogan concerning the Jewish peril throughout the history of the paper. The significant Berlin assembly (pre-Third Reich) presents anti-Semitism as the nucleus of social issues in Germany:

Against the backdrop of the Berlin Congress in 1878, Treitschke discussed the foreign policy situation of the German Empire in the first two thirds of his essay "Our Prospects." The historian supported the policies of Reich Chancellor Otto von Bismarck. In it he saw a new national self-image, which was characterized not least by ideological and cultural homogeneity. In this context, Treitschke problematized the Jewish population as a "national special existence" in the last third of the essay. He denied Jews the will to socially assimilate and stigmatized them as opponents of Germany's national unification. Treitschke concluded from this: "The Jews are our misfortune!" With this essay, the renowned and widely known historian succeeded, as a seemingly neutral and scientific observer, in bringing the anti-Semitism rampant in Germany into intellectual and academic leadership and making it socially acceptable.⁶

Utilizing the popular tabloid format, Streicher made his "fake news" convenient and accessible. Scandal, lurid images and distorted anti-Jewish articles provided the seductive content for popular reading, with the paper's circulation reaching approximately 14,000 by 1927 and nearly a half-million by 1938 at the time of Germany's annexation of Austria and Kristallnacht. Although some elite Germans would consider this a type of "filthy rag," others sensed the excitement surrounding the publication of every issue. Display cases ("*Stürmerkästen*") could be found throughout Germany at bus stops, in city parks, at intersections, as well as in well populated areas and factory lunch sites. (Fig. 1) These cases supplemented the hard copy of the paper. Issues of each publication could often be found spread out in the front windows of the offices. *Der Stürmer* guards protected the cases in locations where they could be vandalized. Vendors sold the paper on streetcorners and boutiques, while devoted readers subscribed religiously to it. Streicher

6 Johannes Leicht, "The 'Berlin anti-Semitism dispute,'" Lebendiges Museum Online, October 26, 2015, accessed February 25, 2024, <https://www.dhm.de/lemo/kapitel/kaiserreich/antisemitismus/der-berliner-antisemitismusstreit.html>. See also German History in Documents and Images, "Heinrich von Treitschke Pronounces, 'The Jews are Our Misfortune' November 15, 1879)," accessed April 4, 2025, https://ghdi.ghi-dc.org/sub_document.cfm?document_id=3910.



Fig. 1: “With *Der Stürmer* against Juda” in Worms, Germany (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum).

especially had in mind the assurance that all members of the working class would have an opportunity to be exposed to his anti-Semitic message.

Julius Streicher comments on the power and availability of his display cases:

German racial comrade! You can go anywhere in Germany that you want. Everywhere, you will find a *Stürmer* display case. All have been built by the people. They were built by frugal, simple people.

The building of these thousands of *Stürmer* display cases is testimony to the spirit of those men who know what has to be done in order to keep the German people awake. These fighters have realized that the Racial Question is the crucial issue for the German people. They have understood the full scope of the Jewish Question. Week after week, they post the *Stürmer* in a display case so that others, too, may learn about the Jews from it.

But *Stürmer* display cases are found not only in Germany, but in almost every country in the world. Everywhere that the Jew has taken control, or threatens to, courageous men have taken up the fight against the world enemy. They, too, have built *Stürmer* display cases

as a visible symbol of their battle. They, too, have followed the German model in order to wipe out the Jewish plague in their country.⁷

In his libelous treatment of scandals, primarily “alternate facts,” and in his vile and at times semi-erotic caricatures of Jews, Streicher drew many lawsuits, yet *Der Stürmer* enjoyed a growing circulation, amassing considerable wealth for Streicher. Despite the Nazi Party’s forcing him from his position as Franconia gau-leiter in 1940, Streicher, with his devoted personnel in his publishing house, continued his printing of *Der Stürmer* until February 1, 1945, three months prior to the end of the war in Europe. A final article condemned the Allies as puppets of an international Jewish conspiracy.

The core of our research can be found in the detailed analysis of imagery in *Der Stürmer* in Chapter Three, using as examples the anti-Semitic images of Philipp Rupprecht, alias “Fips,” in three distinct periods of publication. Streicher will use the same foundational tenets of propaganda that Hitler elaborated in Volume One, Chapter VI and Volume Two, Chapter XI of *Mein Kampf*. Hitler states that propaganda should not be addressed to the scientifically trained intelligentsia. “It must be addressed always and exclusively to the masses.”⁸ For Hitler, the function of propaganda is to call “the masses’ attention to certain facts, processes, necessities, etc. whose significance is thus for the first time placed within their field of vision.”⁹ The Jews obsessively occupied Hitler’s and Streicher’s narrow field of vision. Throughout *Mein Kampf*, as well as the pages of *Der Stürmer*, certain recurring leitmotifs appear using traditional anti-Semitic stereotypes and tropes to capture the attention of the public and manipulate their reactions to the Jewish presence in Germany. The slow drip of propagandistic brainwashing among the masses toward hatred of the Jews would lead to the Shoah, and would eventually bring Streicher to the gallows.

One precursor to the notorious artwork in *Der Stürmer* can be seen in the historic roots of the Jewish caricature and erotic image. In 1921, just prior to Streicher’s entry into the publishing world, historian, author and art collector Eduard Fuchs published his well-known work, *Die Juden in der Karikatur* (“Jews in Caricature”). Streicher and other anti-Semites were most aware of this publication, while others either read or owned copies. Fuchs’ Chapter X elaborates on the erotic in anti-Jewish satire, and he would devote another book to this specific topic: *Das Erotische Element in Der Karikatur: Ein Beitrag Zur Geschichte Der Of-*

7 Randall L. Bytwerk, “*Stürmer* Display Cases,” German Propaganda Archive, Calvin University, 2006, accessed August 26, 2023, <https://research.calvin.edu/german-propaganda-archive/stuermer-skampf.htm>.

8 *Mein Kampf*, 179.

9 *Ibid.*

fentlichen Sittlichkeit. Privatdruck ("The Erotic Element of the Caricature: A Contribution to the History of Public Morality. Private Print").¹⁰ Fuchs often showed unflattering images of the Jews poorly dressed, lusting after Gentile women, or attempting to assimilate into Gentile populations. Streicher would be a fellow traveler of Fuchs as the Nazi propagandist emulated the taboo notion of the provocative caricature through his caricaturist in residence, "Fips," on the front page of *Der Stürmer*. The following anti-Semitic images appeared in the 1921 publication of *Die Juden in Karikatur* ("The Jews in caricature"), a few years prior to *Der Stürmer*'s first caricatures in 1925.



Fig. 2: A 1920 voting poster for the Parliament election, *Die Juden in Karikatur*.

¹⁰ In a 1937 article, philosopher and culture critic Walter Benjamin discussed Fuchs' pioneering work in the history of caricature: "Eduard Fuchs: Collector and Historian," accessed July 12, 2024, https://files.libcom.org/files/Eduard%20Fuchs,%20Collector%20and%20Historian%20-%20W.%20Benjamin%201937_0.pdf

The poster displays figures of a larger-than-life, hook-nosed, sneering Jewish man, contrasted with a solemn, bare-shouldered Aryan woman. (Fig. 2) On the top right is the “Hakenkreuz” or crooked cross, a symbol widely used in religious and cultural settings worldwide. On the left it is shown in reverse.



Fig. 3: “German people! Do you (familiar ‘du’) wish to escape this fate? Then vote National Democrat!”, *Die Juden in Karikatur*.

A cleric with a candle leads the procession of a working-class man pulling a coffin over a cobble-stoned street. (Fig. 3) A bearded Orthodox Jew, very thin in the waist, follows in its wake. Maximilian Liebenwein (1869–1926), a German-Austrian graphic artist and painter, drew this wall plaque in support of the National Democratic Party in the Weimar era.

The image of the banker and Michel (the national image of Germany) in caricature (Fig. 4) continues the Rothschild trope – an obese, lazy Jewish bourgeois financier. Here he and his smirking Jewish table companion offer some leftovers to Michel; this will be discussed later in light of Streicher’s use of this character.

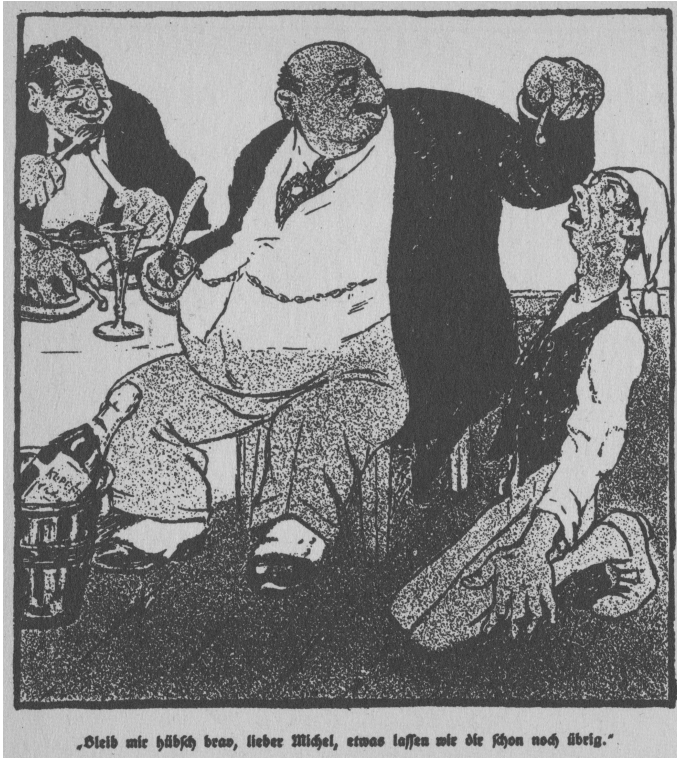


Fig. 4: From “The German Joke Sheet”: “Bleib mir hübsch brav, lieber Michel. Etwas lassen wir dir schon noch übrig” (“Continue to behave, dear Michel. We are leaving something left over for you.”), *Die Juden in Karikatur*.

The rich banker image can be traced to an 1898 image of James Rothschild, patriarch of the French banking system, hovering over the globe. (Fig. 5) It can be further found in other sources:

This antisemitic [Rothschild] image emanates largely from the forgery *The Protocols of the Elders of Zion* [1903], which solidified the anti-Jewish canard of the Jew, as a homogenous group, as rich and all powerful though there are other historic primers. The stereotypical Jewish banker caricature can be found throughout antisemitic propaganda and cartoons, from Nazi imagery blaming Jewish bankers for the fall of Germany, to modern cartoons depicting Jewish bankers as causing economies to fail and creating poverty. Portrayals of the



Fig. 5: A French 1898 caricature of James Rothschild by Charles Lucien Léandre (*Le Rire*, April 16, 1898).

Jewish banking dynasty, the Rothschild family, are often used to show this form of antisemitic trope, creating a perceived tangible controller of global wealth.¹¹

The myth of the wealthy Jew, a parasite living off his host, Germany, thrives in *Der Stürmer* illustrations over the years. Streicher's publishing house in 1938, released the 500-page work *Hoffjuden* (Court Jews) as an exposé of the House of Rothschild by the lawyer and author Peter Deeg (1908–2005), a disciple of Streicher. Hitler wrote the dedication. In 1940, Erich Waschneck produced the anti-Semitic and anti-British film *Die Rothschilds* (The Rothschilds' Shares in Waterloo), which reinforced the negative image of Jews as those in control of world finances, which continued throughout Streicher's publication of *Der Stürmer* and children's readers. The feature film portrays the Rothschilds during the era of Napoleon as a banking family that dominates the European financial system. The film joined the list of other 1940 anti-Semitic Nazi propaganda films like *Eternal Jew* and *Judd Süß*, which were very popular in Germany, as will be discussed later.¹²

Chapter Four analyses how the former teacher Streicher unfortunately enjoyed another outlet for his distorted and malicious anti-Semitic beliefs. From 1936 to 1940, Streicher's publishing firm produced three children's books besides the weekly *Der Stürmer*. These readers follow in the tradition of the Brothers Grimm in relating classic stories like "Little Red Riding Hood."¹³ They emphasize the importance of the education of children in the pedagogical guidelines of the racial ideology that dominated the curriculum, very much in line with Hitler's notion of total racial education. It is ironic indeed that in the United States Critical Race Theory is banned from certain state curricula for young students, as opposed to Streicher's insistence that racial ideology should be taught even to the youngest children through classroom instruction as well as children's readers. The general result is a German type of national and ideological immersion curric-

11 "Antisemitic Imagery and Caricatures," *Antisemitism Policy Trust* (UK), accessed August 11, 2023, <https://antisemitism.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2020/07/Antisemitic-imagery-May-2020.pdf>.

12 The Ministry of Propaganda and Public Enlightenment Office made certain to "enlighten" troops during the war so that they were familiar with all the stereotypes of Jews that Streicher included. The Office distributed the three anti-Semitic films that most readers would have viewed given their popularity: *Der Ewige Jude*, *Jud Süß* and *Die Rothschilds. Aktien von Waterloo*. See this indoctrination discussed in Daniel Uziel, "Wehrmacht Propaganda Troops and the Jews," *Yad Vashem*, accessed July 8, 2024, <https://www.yadvashem.org/articles/academic/wehrmacht-propaganda-troops-and-the-jews.html>.

13 Christa Kamenetsky, "The Roots of Children's Folk Literature in Pre-Nazi Germany," in *Children's Literature in Hitler's Germany: The Cultural Policy of National Socialism* (Athens: Ohio University Press, 1984), 2–30.

ulum whereby lessons in history, mathematics and literature, for example, are taught through the lens of race. Visuals play a key role in this type of education, as we will see.

To offer a concrete understanding of each of Streicher's three children's readers, we undertake an analysis of both text and illustration. Chapter Five concentrates on Streicher's first children's book from 1936, *Trau keinem Fuchs auf grüner Heid und keinem Jud bei seinem Eid* ("Trust No Fox on His Green Heath and No Jew on His Oath"). The book appears in the wake of the 1935 Nuremberg Laws declaring who is Jewish and banning interracial relations. Elvira Bauer utilizes the symbol of the fox since it is normally perceived as sly, intelligent, and above all adaptable to many different milieus. For the early Greeks, the fox was related to the devil. In all of these associations, the Jewish person fits perfectly into the typology. The ten chapters contrast Aryans with Jews. The title resonates with Martin Luther's anti-Semitic ideas articulated in *Von den Juden und ihren Lügen* ("On the Jews and Their Lies"). In this lengthy 1543 treatise he writes,

I had made up my mind to write no more either about the Jews or against them. But since I learned that these **miserable and accursed people** [my emphasis] do not cease to lure to themselves even us, that is, the Christians, I have published this little book, so that I might be found among those who opposed such **poisonous activities** of the Jews who warned the Christians to be on their guard against them.¹⁴

The more infamous children's reader that Streicher published in 1938, *Der Giftpilz* ("The Poisonous Mushroom"), applies an analogy from Nature. In Chapter Six, we view how analogies for young children work well as they proceed from the known to the unknown in simple language. Using an example about the gathering of mushrooms, the *völkisch* narrative clarifies how to distinguish good mushrooms from bad or poisonous ones. The reader learns from the series of 17 short stories how to apply this analogy to the distinction between a Jew and an Aryan through physical features especially. The exaggerated stereotypical traits of Jews make the profound differences apparent for the impressionable young child.

Chapter Seven concludes the Streicher publishing firm's production of the popular children's readers. Streicher's third children's reader in 1940, *Der Pudelmopsdackelpinscher* ("The Mongrel"), once again turns to Nature as an analogous means of instructing children to hate Jews. This chapter illustrates how the basic narratives provide images of offensive creatures like hyenas, snakes, insects, bacteria and the like to illustrate the repulsive nature of Jews.

¹⁴ Martin Luther, *On the Jews and Their Lies* (1543), accessed July 1, 2023, https://archive.org/stream/Luther_201906/Luther_djvu.txt.

The final section, Chapter Eight, describes Streicher's post-war fate during his interrogation in Luxembourg and at the International Military Tribunal in 1945–46. The International Military Tribunal in Nuremberg, Streicher's base of operation, condemned to death the publisher as a pioneer of propaganda at the core of the Nazi Party.

The Epilogue confirms that the anti-Semitism crudely expressed in *Der Stürmer* is very much alive and well and lives on the web and social media. Decades after Streicher and *Der Stürmer* faded into semi-obscurity, Neo-Nazi, white supremacist Andrew Anglin resurrected Streicher's tabloid's mission and founded the hate-driven website *The Daily Stormer* in 2013.

Overall, our rationale for retrieving the polemical anti-Semitic material of Streicher's publications from the shadowy dustbins of history is to elucidate how visual imagery can seduce voyeuristic or innocent audiences and lead to tragic conclusions like genocide.