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MAY 20, 1945

When he was political boss of Nuremberg, Julius Streicher was a close friend of Adolf Hitler, a sex fiend and a Jew baiter, and he brought the yearly Nazi party conventions to his hometown.



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NUREMBERG—For more than 12 years Julius Streicher was this city's most famous resident. He was, after all, the *gauleiter* of all Franconia, including Nuremberg; he was the author of the Nuremberg Laws which deprived the Jews of all their rights as German citizens; he was publisher of *Der Sturmer*, which, he boasted, was the only newspaper his good friend Adolf Hitler read column by column every day, and he was probably the loudest mouthed and most virulent anti-semite in all the world.

He was known to the people of the area as "The Scourge of Franconia," and he reveled in the name.

When Streicher and his Nazi friends came to power in 1933, Nuremberg was a city of toys. Its dolls and puppets, lead soldiers and mechanical trains poured out in an endless stream to all parts of the world. It even looked like a toy city, with its 12th-century walls surrounding the old part of town, its castle on the hilltop, its towers and its spires and its crooked little streets. It was the home of woodcarvers and handicraftsmen of all kinds as well as the *Meistersingers*, immortalized in Wagner's opera.

Now, of course, Nuremberg is no more. It is simply a heap of still-smouldering rubble like so many other German cities. The story of its destruction is really the story of Jew-baiter Streicher.

Streicher was a brutal, forceful man, a lusty lecher who always carried a heavy riding crop and who was one of the founders of the National Workers Party which merged with the National Socialist Movement to become the National Socialist Democratic Workers Party.

Streicher took part in the first effort hatched by Hitler and his cohorts in a Munich beer cellar to seize power in Bavaria. This, as is well known now, resulted in Hitler's arrest and imprisonment and the virtual dissolution of the party. But Streicher remained faithful and during Hitler's prison term held together what remained of the party's organization and slowly

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built it up again. On Hitler's release, he stepped aside and surrendered his leadership to Der Fuehrer, then almost unknown in Germany.

When the Nazis came to power in 1933 Streicher really hit his stride. It was then that Hitler made him *gauleiter* of Franconia, which meant he was political boss of the entire Nuremberg area. His paper, *Der Sturmer*, was riding high, with page one drawings by Streicher himself showing the flower of German womanhood being raped by badly caricatured Jews. The pictures usually showed Jewish doctors raping their patients in their offices.

Anti-semitism was both a profession and a hobby with Streicher. His brutality toward German women who had fallen in love with Jews was notorious. Once they were found out, he had their heads shaved and exhibited them in public spectacles in the Nuremberg amusement park.

It was through his influence that Nuremberg was chosen as the home of the Nazi party celebrations, and those were great days in the city's memory—rather like having the Democratic National convention and the American Legion convention in Atlantic City at the same time.

To take care of the immense throngs that poured into Nuremberg for the celebrations Hitler, in his first year as chancellor, had the *Luitspoldhain* built, the largest stadium in the world. It was a great grass-covered stadium with its grassy banks terraced to provide seating space. At one end was a huge podium which curved to follow the contours of the stadium, and behind the central dais—from which Der Fuehrer addressed the cheering throng—rose four slender columns that supported great panels decorated with the swastika. On either side of these banners were two great bronze German eagles.

In this setting great orgies of German nationalism were held. From the podium Hitler stormed in his hoarse, grating voice against "international bankers" and "Jewish bolsheviks" who were, of course, one and the same. He whipped his brown-shirted followers into frenzies of hate.

Next to the *Luitspoldhain* was a convention hall where the party leaders and representatives from all over Germany sat. These two structures were temporary affairs, like buildings at the World's Fair, hastily assembled and thrown together for an occasion. They were obviously unsatisfactory for a party which was destined, as Hitler once said, to rule Germany for a thousand years.

So he had the *Zeppeliner* amphitheater built, a more pretentious stadium of approximately the same size as the *Luitspoldhain*. Along the grandstands of the *Zeppeliner* were dozens of flagpoles, each topped with a swastika encircled by a wreath from which the flags of all the provinces of Germany were flown.

Each of the grandstands was a photographer's dream, with extravagant masses of stone in intricate geometric angles to be silhouetted against the cloud-decked blue sky, with the banners of the party fluttering in the foreground. And that, of course, was exactly the way they were planned.

There was also a great new sports amphitheater and a horse-shoe shaped Congress Hall, as yet still unfinished, its walls still surrounded by scaffolding and in nearby fields even now are great blocks of stone which could be fitted together like a set of building blocks.

The temporary convention hall was destroyed in the air raids and there now are holes through one of the giant eagles that flanked the great podium of *Luitspoldhain* and part of the outer wall is damaged. Otherwise these great ugly masses of white stone remain intact on the edges of the ruins of the city of Nuremberg.

BUT when Naziism was at its height, Streicher, the Jew-baiter, strode through these scenes of majestic splendor, dressed in riding clothes, though he never rode, or wearing his Nazi party uniform. He was, the people say, a fine figure of a man, cutting the air with careless slashes of his heavy riding crop, never too busy to stop and pinch the cheek of a pretty young girl and

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to ask her name and address.

His newspaper was steadily expanding in circulation and prestige. One of the things that made it popular was the salacious nature of its news. Streicher's preoccupation with sex found a literary outlet in his newspaper, which was filled with stories of the sex crimes of the hated Jew. He clashed once with the publishers of the *Nuremberger Zeitung* in whose plant his paper was printed on a jobbing basis. As a result the *Zeitung* was taken over by Streicher and suppressed.

In 1936 Streicher acquired a farm on the outskirts of Furth, a suburb of Nuremberg, and here he began the life of a country gentleman. His 200 acres of fertile land was farmed by a tenant family, and in his dwelling quarters he led the good life with the best of food and drink and almost every night a different young woman to warm his luxurious bed.

His wife divorced him and the scandal of his behavior spread through the countryside. But Streicher's indiscretions were nothing new. In 1926 one of the original members of the Nazi party, Kurt Hennch, who carried membership card 200, discovered that Streicher was having an affair with his wife. He accused Streicher and Streicher had him thrown out of his house. Then Hennch divorced his wife and pressed charges against Streicher. The Nazi leader was convicted, fined 1,000 *Reichsmarks* and sentenced to three months in jail. This was at a time when the Nazi party was at a low ebb, and there was no recourse for Streicher. But it ended Hennch's association with the party. He dropped out and denounced the Nazi leaders for their immorality and accused Streicher of spending party funds on himself. He published these charges and Streicher tried time and again to bring him to trial for libel. In 1929 he succeeded and Hennch was sentenced to eight months in prison.

After that things quieted down as far as Hennch was concerned until after the Nazis came to power. Then one day he met Streicher in the post office. The next morning Hennch was arrested and imprisoned. Through a friend in police headquarters, which had not yet been purged of its anti-Nazi elements, Hennch got away to Munich, but in 1943 Streicher caught up with him again and again he was imprisoned. This time he was not freed until after Nuremberg had fallen.

An official of the *Nuremberg Zeitung* tells many stories of Streicher's behavior after the Nazis came to power. When Ernest von Rath was murdered by a young Polish Jew in Paris in 1938, Streicher led a mob of Nazi brownshirts through Nuremberg, storming the homes of Jews, tossing men and women out of their windows into the streets where they were beaten to death. They burned the synagogue that night.

The people Streicher gathered around him were of the same caliber as himself. His adjutant, Hans Koenig, had been involved in a number of troublesome affairs as a result of which he had been forced to order several Nu-



In the days when the Nazis were set to rule Germany for a thousand years, Streicher (second from right) palled around with Hess, Goering and Goebbels.

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remberg doctors to perform abortions for him. This was in direct conflict with Nazi doctrine, which had made abortion a capital offense as part of Hitler's efforts to build up the population of Germany.

One night after a particularly troublesome time with a young star of the operetta whom he had "gotten into trouble," Koenig ran his car into a tree, killing the girl, after first having taken the precaution of leaping out himself.

This created a scandal which could not be easily hushed up. As a result, Koenig was forced to commit suicide. A Dr. Martin, head of the *Police Praesidium*, the equivalent of the city council, placed the pistol in Koenig's hands.

For the funeral of this philandering thug, Streicher declared a holiday. All businesses and factories were shut down and all members of Nazi organizations were forced to march in the funeral procession to a Catholic cemetery where the body was buried. But the good Catholics of Nuremberg couldn't stand this desecration and a few nights later Koenig's body was dug up and buried elsewhere.

The same kind of incident finally led to Streicher's fall from power, according to Hennch. Streicher, the story goes, went to a Nuremberg doctor in 1939 and asked him to perform an abortion. The doctor refused. Streicher then said that if the physician knew who the father was he would perform the operation. The father, he said, was Adolf Hitler.

The doctor asked for time to think it over. Instead he telephoned Berlin and next day Streicher was imprisoned. He was brought before the Nazi Party court, presided over at that time by Rudolf Hess. Hess sentenced him to death, after it was brought out in the trial that Streicher had caused a number of other abortions to be performed over a period of years.

When the sentence was reviewed by Hitler, he commuted it to 10 years house arrest. As a result, Streicher retired from the public scene to his farm outside of Nuremberg.

Three weeks before Nuremberg fell to the Third, 42d and 45th Divisions of the Seventh Army, Streicher was married with all the pomp that a showman of his talents could muster to his young and attractive secretary. Americans were already fighting on his home soil of Franconia, but this did little to dampen the celebration. A week before Nuremberg fell, Streicher and his bride quietly slipped away, southward toward Munich and beyond.

STREICHER'S farm lay in the hollow of the rolling Franconian countryside. It consisted of three great farm buildings along three sides of a huge square. Streicher's quarters were in one end of these buildings, directly opposite those of his tenant family across the central court. The smell of dung from the barn, of which his home was a part, fittingly permeated his dwelling.

The story of this lusty, beer-guzzling, fornicating, bawdy old goat lay exposed in these rooms. There was his library, probably the most complete collection of phony racism and anti-semitic literature in the world. There were bound volumes of his newspapers; he edited *Der Sturmer* from his farm during the period of his house arrest. There were his letters, including his correspondence with Goering in which he pleaded to be restored to his position in the Nazi party because his disgrace was a source of shame for his son Lothar, an officer in Goering's *Luftwaffe*. There was a photograph of one of Hitler's slave laborers, whose body had charmed this ruddy old satyr, inscribed: "To my enemy, who is my dearest love."

A sentimental touch was added by a collection of drawings in his attic, the work of very young school children who apparently had been set to the task of drawing greeting cards in honor of the *gauleiter's* 50th birthday by some ambitious Nazi schoolmaster in 1933. They were crayon drawings, in wavering childish scrawls, liberally inscribed with swastikas and wishing the hero a happy birthday.

There was a large assortment of photographs taken from the files of the SS at Lublin, showing conditions in the infamous ghetto there. There were thousands of photographs of Streicher, his

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Julius Streicher

family and various of his pretty little friends, taken in city and country, in ski suits and bathing suits, at Mussolini's summer home and at Nazi party day celebrations. Like most Germans, Streicher was a camera fiend and there was little that escaped his handy little Leica, including pictures showing his prowess in bed.

And that was the man who vent his spleen on the Jewish scientists and artists and financial geniuses who had contributed so much to Germany in the past. That was the "Scourge of Franconia."



YANK

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1945

VOL. 1, NO. 43
By the men...for the
men in the service

OldMagazineArticles.com