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The Jewess Question:
The Portrayal of Jewish Women in Nazi Propaganda
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The leaders of the Third Reich used vast amounts of visual and written propaganda as a means for solidifying their political power, to create and glorify a national Aryan identity, and to perpetuate anti-Semitism which would lead to justification of violence against the Jews. The majority of Nazi propaganda is androcentric; focusing on glorifying Aryan men and demonizing Jewish men. Nazi propaganda lionized the work ethic and strong character of Aryan men and reified Jewish men as sly Shylocks aimed at seducing Aryan women and as the source of the economic downturn that plagued Weimar Germany as a result of the World War I and the Treaty of Versailles.

The portrayal of women in propaganda works in a similar hierarchy, with Aryan women placed above Jewish women. Although not as present as Aryan men, Aryan women found a valued niche in propaganda. When Aryan women are present in propaganda they are almost always in the traditional roles of wives or mothers¹. Their portrayal as nurturing wives and mothers is connected to the assumption of the sexual purity of Aryan women. Propaganda also portrayed Aryan women as being traditionally beautiful as to entice Aryan men to seek out idealized Aryan partners.

Jewish women are even less visible in Nazi propaganda than Aryan women. But when they are depicted the focus is on their bodies and sexuality. Older Jewish women are portrayed as ugly and frumpy whereas younger Jewish women are seen as oversexed and indulgent². Both of these portrayals are intended to inspire disgust in the viewer for the Jewish female body. Jewish women are also portrayed as being more sexually promiscuous, as the carriers of sexually

transmitted diseases, and as seducers of Aryan men. These assumptions of the overt sexuality of Aryan women had heavy political implications when considered along with laws regarding marriage, sex, and childbirth between Aryans and Jews.

The most striking difference between how Jewish women and Aryan women are portrayed in propaganda is their physical appearances. Jewish women appear physically larger than Aryan women. This is intended to make Jewish women appear sexually less desirable than Aryan women and to add to their ugliness. This is especially true of older Jewish women who are often portrayed as being overweight with a haggard of weakened appearance.

The photographs below were taken of Jewish women and were used as propaganda. They illustrate the idea of Jewish women as ugly. The woman in the photograph to the left has a dirty face, unkempt hair, she is overweight and her nose is large and bulbous. Despite all of this, she still has a wide toothy grin which seems to suggest a kind of blissful ignorance. The woman on the right shares this smile, but her teeth are obviously damaged and darkened from a lack of hygiene.

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4 A Jewish woman wearing the Jewish badge. Yad Vashem. Web. 10 April 2012.
Physical power is often connected with political and social power. In reality, men are often physically larger than women; this reflects existing power dispersion. When women gain weight, they can be perceived as threatening the power and privilege of men in society because they are challenging their physical supremacy. Aryan women are portrayed as thinner because their roles as wives and mothers fit more nicely into the ideals of German womanhood.

Jewish women are also portrayed as being overweight due to the association of obesity with laziness. The Nazi Party promoted a lifestyle which was highlighted by an extreme dedication to work. To suggest that Jewish women were obese due to their lack of work ethic served to make them appear devoid of value to the Nazi party.

There is a notable difference in how Aryan women are portrayed in propaganda aimed at garnering the support of women and propaganda which is aimed at men. Propaganda aimed at women portrayed “broad-hipped women, unencumbered by corsets, who could easily bear children” as the standard of Aryan beauty. True Aryan women were portrayed as being physically fit and strong. They were typically shown “working in the fields, doing calisthenics, and practicing trades, as well as caring for children, cooking, and working at other typical ‘womanly’ tasks.” This is in opposition to the thin, delicate, and more traditionally feminine women present in propaganda which was intended for a male audience.

Below are two images which exemplify this dissonance. The first image is from a set of postcards which were sent to German soldiers during the war. The postcards feature beautiful, thin, blonde Aryan woman at work in traditionally male dominated fields. This is a reflection of


5 Stephenson, pg 81
7 Rupp, pg 367
the growing number of women joining the German work force as a result of men leaving their jobs on the homefront to become soldiers. In this particularly postcard, her head is tilted towards the Nazi officer, almost flirtatiously. Although she is holding a traditionally masculine job her appearance is distinctly feminine and appealing, so she is not a threat to Aryan male supremacy.

The second image is the cover of the April 1940 issue of the Frauen Warte, an Aryan women’s magazine. It shows a more physically capable Aryan woman plowing a field with the silhouette of a German soldier in the background. This Aryan woman is older, thicker, and has a more modest appearance than the Aryan woman on the post card. This image inspires a sense of pride not based on outward appearance but on effort. These are both representations of women assisting in the war effort, but they have different connotations because of their intended audiences.

8 Rupp, 360  
9 Women Working For You. 1943. German Propaganda Archive, Calvin College. Web. 10 April 212.  
<http://bytwerk.com/gpa/frauenschaffen.htm>  
<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/fw.htmrete>
The difference in the portrayal of Aryan women in propaganda targeting men and propaganda aimed at women stems from the allocation of power that occurred in the Third Reich. Aryan women were assured that their roles as wives and mothers were of utmost importance to the state and to the future of the Aryan face. For the most part, they believed this and found fulfillment and value in these roles, this lead to their portrayal in propaganda as vital assets to the Nazi party. Because of this, Aryan women had an unrealistic perception of their value to society and were more accepting of the narrow roles that were assigned to them by the Nazi party.

In reality, however, Aryan men truly held most of the power. In accordance with this, when Aryan women are portrayed in propaganda targeted at men, they are traditionally feminine and physically smaller than men. In this way, propaganda aimed at men was more realistic as it better portrayed the true balance of power between genders.

The portrayal of Aryan women can be connected to a backlash against the emergence, especially in Berlin, of the intellectually and sexually asserting “New Woman”. The New Women challenged traditional gender roles where the lives of German women were focused upon the ‘three K’s’: Kinder (children), Kirche (church), Kuche (kitchen). The new women had made advances towards gender equality in Weimar Germany. During the First World War, many women were called on to fill in for men in factory jobs and office positions. Between 1907 and 1925, the female labor force in Germany increased from 8.5 female workers to 11.5 million. Besides replacing men at war, another reason that women were being hired to replace men is that

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11 Stephenson, pg 40
13 Bridenthal, Grossman, and Kaplan eds., pg 42
14 Bridenthal, Grossman, and Kaplan eds., pg 43
they could be paid less than their male counterparts. Women usually were paid only two thirds of
the wage of men.\textsuperscript{15} New occupations were also opening up to women that had previously been
male-only roles.\textsuperscript{16}

Groups of these New Women were starting to faction with groups advocating for a more
militant form of feminism.\textsuperscript{17} Although New Women pushed social and economic boundaries,
some of them did not necessarily want to make waves. Because the groups were breaking apart
and becoming smaller, they were easier to pigeonhole than if they were more unified. Through
propaganda, the Nazi party effectively created a backlash against new German feminism and
couraged German women to more traditional roles. Hitler addressed German feminism in his
1935 Party Day speech: “When our opponents say: You degrade women by assigning them to no
other task than that of childbearing, then I answer than it is not degrading for a woman to be a
mother. On the contrary, it is their greatest honor. There is nothing nobler for a woman than to be
the mother of the sons and daughters of the people.”\textsuperscript{18}

It is also worth noting that the curvaceous Aryan ideal is not just for ascetic or sexual
appeal. Wide hips and large breasts have been traditionally connected to the ability to bear
children. Strong, broad hips are necessary for childbirth and large breasts speak to a woman’s
ability to breast feed. The portrayal of Jewish women of being overweight and devoid of these
curves strips them of their ability to bear children. Because the ability to have children is so
connected to womanliness, the assumption that Jewish women’s bodies are not build for
childbirth robs them of their very womanhood.

\textsuperscript{15} Stephenson, pg 76
\textsuperscript{16} Stephenson, pg 78
\textsuperscript{17} Bridenthal, Grossman, and Kaplan eds., pg 39
\textsuperscript{18} Rupp, pg 268
To solidify the importance of women to the Nazi party, Aryan women are often portrayed in ways which mimic Christian dogma. The most important image of the Aryan woman is that of motherhood. The Aryan mother is portrayed holding her child close to her chest, with her gaze towards the sky or looking lovingly at her offspring. This image closely echoes that of the Madonna and Child, and image of the Virgin Mary holding the infant Jesus. The head of the Aryan mother is often surrounded by light, which echoes the halo which surrounds the Virgin Mary.

In order to promote the continuation of the Aryan race the Nazi Party enacted the Nuremberg Laws in 1935\textsuperscript{22}. The Nuremberg Laws was the first actively anti-Semitic legislation to be enacted in Germany. The Nuremberg Laws, which were approved by Hitler personally, most notably deprived Jews of citizenship, prohibited any non-Jewish German from marrying a Jew, and outlawed sexual relations between Jews and Germans\textsuperscript{23}. When originally written, the

\begin{itemize}
  \item \textsuperscript{19} David, Gerard. Virgo Lactans. 1490. Staatliche Museen, Berlin. Web. 10 April 2012.
  \item \textsuperscript{20} Germany Grows Through Strong Mothers and Healthy Children. 1935. Mother and Child Relief Agency. Web. 10 April 2012.
  \item \textsuperscript{21} Neues Volk. 1936. Germany. Web. 10 April 2012. \textless http://ushmm.org/wlc/en/media\textgreater
  \item \textsuperscript{22} Mischlinge. Shoah Resource Center, Yad Vashem. Web. 10 April 2012. \textless http://www1.yadvashem.org/odot_pdf/Microsoft%20Word%20-%2006504.pdf\textgreater
  \item \textsuperscript{23} Mischlinge, Shoah Resourcee Center.
\end{itemize}
Nuremburg Laws did not specify what qualified as a Jew\textsuperscript{24}. Years of German-Jewish assimilation and intermarriage made this a difficult question to answer. Later, what it means to be a Jew was clarified in this way:

An individual with three or more Jewish grandparents was classified as a full Jew\textsuperscript{25}. An individual with two Jewish grandparents was considered a Mischlinge of the First Degree, or half Jew. Mischlinge of the First Degree were broken down into two sub-groups: Individuals who were married to a Jew or had been members in the Jewish community were referred to as "Geltungsjuden"\textsuperscript{26}. These people were treated as full Jews and were subject to the same persecution and restrictive laws as all full-blooded Jews. They could only marry other Jews or other Geltungsjuden.

The restrictions placed on Geltungsjuden exemplifies the way in which Jews were perceived as a threat not only to Aryan racial purity, but to sexual purity as well. Jewish men and women are hypersexual and if they were allowed to have Aryans as sexual partners they would seduce them and they would be lead into a life of immodesty and sin. Although having children with Jewish blood was certainly the main concern the underpinning of the issue lied in the belief that Jews were inherently sexual and would corrupt their partners into immodesty and gross sexual conduct.

Mischlinge of the First Degree also referred to individuals with two Jewish grandparents who were baptized into Christianity\textsuperscript{27}. Under the original Nuremberg Laws, Mischlinge were

\textsuperscript{24} Kaplan, Marion. Between Dignity and Despair: Jewish Life in Nazi Germany. 1999. Oxford University Press. Print.
\textsuperscript{25} Kaplan, pg 78
\textsuperscript{26} Kaplan, pg 81
\textsuperscript{27} Mischlinge, Shoah Resource Center.
able to keep their citizenship; however, eventually their rights were taken away and they were
treated like the Geltungsjuden.

Someone with one Jewish grandparent was considered a Mischling of the second degree,
or quarter Jew. These individuals were allowed to keep German citizenship but experienced
many handicaps in the workplace\textsuperscript{28}. After Hitler issued an order on April 8, 1940, quarter Jews
could not receive promotions in the military and were not allowed in education. Mischlinge of
the Second Degree were only allowed to marry Germans\textsuperscript{29}.

An interesting statute under the Nuremburg Laws stated that Jewish households were
prohibited having German maids under the age of 45\textsuperscript{30}. This law may not seem connected to
racial purity, but when the portrayal of Aryan women is taken into account that its true meaning
settles into place. Jewish households were not allowed to have young German maids because
Jewish men, with their high sex drives and sly ways, would seduce these young Aryan women.
Jewish men would not find it hard to cheat on their wives with their maids because of their lack
of morals, and also because Aryan women were much more attractive and desirable than an ugly,
fat Jewish wife.

\textsuperscript{28} Kaplan, pg 80
\textsuperscript{29} Kaplan, pg 79
\textsuperscript{30} Kaplan, pg 83
The above picture illustrates this statute. The image shows an Aryan woman shining a pair of shoes while a Jewish woman looks on critically. The illustration was accompanied by text reading: “Rosy leaves the countryside. Up to town, there to bide: She wants to earn a living there… She finds a post with Katz, the Jew. Three bouncing daughters has this Yid; His wife, Oh My! is sure no kid. All four are idle lazybones, Doing nothing all day long.” Although the focus of this image is not that Aryan women will be seduced by German men, it shows a diligently working Aryan woman accompanied by two shiftless Jewish women. It is also worth noting that the woman in the background is applying makeup and smoking, both of which were behaviors that were frowned upon by the Nazi party. Smoking was not to the benefit of creating a pure and healthy Aryan race and makeup covered up natural Aryan beauty. The Aryan woman has naturally rosy cheeks and a soft smile on her face, even under the glare of the Jewish woman.

The Nazi party’s aggressive popularity encouraged ‘racially pure’ women to bear as many children as possible. This policy took radical form in 1936 when SS leaders created the state-directed program known as Lebensborn (Fount of Life). The Lebensborn ordinances prescribed that every SS member should father four children, whether those children should be fathered in or outside of wedlock was not specified. Lebensborn homes sheltered illegitimate children and their mothers, provided birth documents and financial support, and recruited adoptive parents for children. In the end, however the Lebensborn program was never promoted aggressively.


32 Bauer, “The Servant Girl”.
34 Clay, 45
Women and men were intended to exist in different spheres. For men, their sphere was the public sphere and for women it was the private. According to the Nazi party, their sphere were wholly separate but were of equal value to society. The Nazi party had an entire magazine, the Frauen Warte, devoted to making sure that Aryan women knew what was expected of them and how they were to achieve those expectations. The Frauen Warte was published from 1935 to 1945 and was issued bi-weekly, it was fully illustrated and boasted articles from high ranking Nazi officials on the values of Aryan womanhood.

With the value of Aryan womanhood being so tightly connected to their motherhood they were desexualized. Aryan woman are often portrayed as breastfeeding mothers, which is viewed as an entirely maternalistic action without any sexual ramifications. To the contrary, Jewish women are devalued due to their sexualization in propaganda.

Aryan women are valued for their sexual purity and restraint. Jewish women are disvalued for their perceived promiscuity and lack of maternal instinct. The portrayal of Aryan women as wives and mothers is hypervisible in propaganda; Aryan women hardly seem to exist

outside of these two roles\textsuperscript{36}. But it is in these narrow roles that their value is defined. Jewish women are not portrayed in any way being related to the ideals of family or motherhood. Propaganda is meant to mimic a reality while still being unrealistic in its expectations. Because Jewish women are not shown as wives and mothers, it can be inferred that they do not hold these roles in actual society. This serves to completely devalue them as the two narrow roles in which women are intended to find their value do not even apply to Jewish women.

\begin{figure}[h]
\centering
\includegraphics[width=0.5\textwidth]{propaganda.png}
\caption{In this propaganda piece from Der Sturmer (“The Stormer”), a popular Nazi newspaper illustrates the idea that Jewish women lack a maternal instinct. The Jewish woman is standing in a darkened dooray with an annoyed expression on her face and the children are stationed as far away from her as possible. Although it is not clear if the children in this picture actually her children, they appear to be Jewish as they have characterized features and large noses. They are not engaged with her and she is not interested in them. An Aryan woman would not have been portrayed in this way; children are always positioned close to Aryan women, regardless of whether they are her children or not.}
\end{figure}

\textsuperscript{36} Koonz, pg 89
The Nazi party also put great emphasis on science and medicine. All actions taken by the Nazi party, including policies regarding family and gender, were done for the purpose of the bringing about the health and strength of the Aryan race. Desirable genes were to be cultivated; undesirable genes were to be culled\textsuperscript{38}. The latter included genes transmitting diseases or defects, especially those genes associated with the Jewish race as Jews were seen as being the primary source of illness and defects in Aryans\textsuperscript{39}. This idea is connected to the supposed promiscuity of Jewish women, as Jewish women were assumed to be more likely to be carriers of sexually transmitted diseases\textsuperscript{40}.

This propaganda piece depicts the fate of Germany if race mixing is allowed. There is a beautiful Aryan woman in the foreground contrasted with the ugly silhouette of a Jewish man. Below is the word “Germany” inside of a coffin. There was a difference in how Aryan men who

\textsuperscript{40} Kuhl, pg 16
slept with Jewish women were treated as opposed to Aryan women who slept with Jewish men. It was a matter of who was perceived to be the sexual aggressor. A quote from the Holocaust film Schindler’s List exemplified this feeling: “They cast a spell on you, you know, the Jews. When you work closely with them, like I do, you see this. They have this power. It’s like a virus. Some of my men are infected with this virus. They should be pitied, not punished. They should receive treatment because this is as real as typhus.” It was common understand that Jewish women were cunning and just as sly as Jewish men and they used their cunning in order to seduce Aryan men. Likewise, in the case of Jewish men sleeping with Aryan women, it was Jewish men that were the aggressors. In either case, Aryan men and women were not to blame for their actions; they were the victims of the devious sexual advances of the Jews.

To continue the idea of Jewish women being promiscuous, they were portrayed as wearing very little clothing, or all together naked, like the woman in the photograph above. The nudity of Jewish women also added to their dehumanization as their absence of clothes mimics

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42 Stephenson, pg 38
the natural state of animals. As the Nazi party favored a more modest feminine ideal, it served to push them further away from the Aryan ideal of womanhood. The nudity of Jewish women also serves to desexualize them. Although they are naked they are not shown in provocative poses or to be overtly displaying their sexuality. The woman in this photo is not smiling or posing for the camera and her body is not positioned sexually. Her nudity serves more as a tool of repulsion rather arousal.

Jewish women were also portrayed as overly materialistic and desiring of finery such as jewelry and cosmetics. This was viewed as frivolous behavior and was scored by the Nazi party. Aryan women were to show restraint and to be modest in their clothing and appearance. Aryan women were perceived as being naturally beautiful, as they were discouraged from dying or perming their hair or wearing makeup. According to the Nazi party, it was the appearance of Aryan women which make them so valuable to society. Their long, flowing blonde hair, blue eyes, and Nordic features is what made them eligible to carry on the Aryan bloodline.

46 Rupp, pg 365
47 Koonz, pg 218
This photo was a part of an album of anti-Semitic propaganda that was utilized by the Nazi party after they came to power. This photo is of a Jewish cabaret singer, wearing thigh high stockings, a short dress, and high heels while posing openly for the camera. The perception that Jewish women were promiscuous became so widely accepting that the Judischer Frauenbund (JFB or League of Jewish Women) began to encourage more modesty amongst Jewish women. In doing so, they accepted the views of anti-Semites to be true and blamed themselves for their victimization.

The woman in the above photograph is portrayed in a similar fashion as the other cabaret singer, but there is more emphasis on her appearance rather than her clothes. Her cheeks are rouged and her hair is dyed dark and styled dramatically. According to Nazi propaganda, Jewish women were not blessed with the natural beauty that Aryan women were. They were supposedly so ugly that they required massive amounts of cosmetics and scandalous clothing in order to be sexually desirable to men. This fit nicely into the traditional Jewish stereotype of

Jews being greedy and covetous as they desired these adornments. The idea that women were hiding beneath makeup and coifed hair fit very well into the narrative of Jewish women being sneaky and trustworthy. According to Nazi propaganda, Jewish women were not presenting themselves as they really were but instead were masquerading as being sexually attractive. They were enacting this masquerade in order to seduce Aryan men and to pollute their bloodline.\(^{51}\)

The above image appeared in an anti-Semitic children's book “Trust No Fox on his Green Heath, And No Jew on his Oath” or more simply: “Trust No Fox”. This illustration reinforces the idea that Jewish women lead lavish lives and that they did not work for their fancy lifestyles. The Jewish woman in this illustration is wearing shiny black shoes, long elbow length gloves, a bright red scarf, and a hat with a veil that covers her face. Her clothing is undeniably opulent, as is the clothing of her husband. The text which accompanies this picture is a poem reads: “Now see him when the Sabbath comes, Resplendant in a tall top-hat! Velvet and silk adorn her form, For that is quite her special taste! On Sabbath he won’t move a finger; The stupid “goy” does all

\(^{51}\) Herzog, 295  
\(^{52}\) Bauer, Elvira. The Sabbath. Trust No Fox. 1936.  
<http://www.calvin.edu/academic/cas/gpa/images/fuchs/fuchs8.jpg>
The term “goy” is a Hebrew term used to refer to someone who isn’t Jewish and although its original intention was not to be derogatory, it has been used as such. In slang, and it is used this way in the poem. The woman in this illustration is also clutching her wallet, a nod to Jewish greed.

The two illustrations above highlight the supposed laziness of Jewish women by juxtaposing images of Jewish luxury with Aryan work ethic. These images are especially interesting because they pit Jewish women in direct opposition to Aryan women. In the illustration to the right, the Jewish woman is looking over her shoulder scornfully at her Aryan maid. The Aryan maid appears modest, wearing a long and simple dress and a hat to cover her head. She also appears to be smiling softly, even under the glare of the Jewish woman. In contrast, the Jewish woman is overweight and almost masculine in appearance but she is also sexualized, with cleavage bared.

53 Bauer, Elvira. The Sabbath.
The illustration on the left features a Jewish family looking on while an Aryan family is hard at work. The Jewish women in this illustration are smiling as they look into the struggling family. The Aryan woman stands out in the illustration as she is in the foreground and she is leading the work. Her clothes are tattered and her appearance is haggard, she is working persistently while her child clings to her tattered skirt. The insinuations of this propaganda are clear: that Jewish women are inherently lazy and are perfectly content to allow Aryans (particularly Aryan women) to do all of the work while they reap the benefits.

This image was also featured in “Trust No Fox”. It shows a migration of Jewish men, women, and children away from Aryan land. The text beside this picture reads: “In far-off South is the country, Which cradled Jewish ancestry. Let them go back there with wife and child, As quickly as they came! —What a disgusting picture, Is shown by these Jews, so dirty and wild.”

The same couple from the image above is in this pictured here as well, and their opulent dress is more apparent as the people beside them are dressed much more modestly. This image shows the contradiction apparent in Nazi propaganda; Jewish women are at the same time supposedly filthy

57 Bauer, Elvira. The Signpost.
and unclean while they are also lead lives of luxury. This image also reinforces the idea of Jewish women lack maternal instinct as the child walking beside her has a cross expression on his face. There is no visible bond between mother and child; they are not touching or make eye contact with each other. This suggests a distance between them that stems from a lack of maternalism on the part of the mother.

In propaganda, Jewish women do not often interact with the people around them or with their environment. They appear to be aloof and not in tune with the world around them. This portrayal is likely connected to Jewish women as the idle elite as they did not have to pay attention, work, and interact with the world around them in order to survive. They are often portrayed with their eyes nearly closed, or looking into the distance. The illustration below is an example of this. The Jewish woman is dressed in ornate clothes and is getting into a fancy car, her eyes are nearly closed and she has a smug expression on her face. She is unconcerned with the one legged man who appears to be struggling behind her.

Jewish views on birth control also contributed to the perception of Jewish women as promiscuous. Jewish women tended to be more accepting of new birth control techniques and more skeptical than Protestants and Catholics on the issue of abortion\(^59\). Articles in magazines and newspapers for Jewish women stated that although abortion was morally wrong, it was not a crime.

The Nazi regime controlled access to abortion and contraception in accordance with its philosophy of racial hygiene. “Pure-race”, hereditarily healthy Aryan women were completely denied access to abortion\(^60\) and after 1943 abortion providers were threatened with the death penalty\(^61\). Whereas women deemed inferior on the basis of race of health were allowed, or were even forced, to terminate their pregnancies. Jewish women could have abortions starting at 1938\(^62\).


\(^60\) Kuhl, pg 15

\(^61\) Kuhl, pg 12

\(^62\) Koonz, pg 356

The image above was a part of an exhibition titled ‘A Healthy Woman, a Healthy People’, which first opened in 1932 at the German Hygeine Museum. The warning on the image reads “A pregnancy must not be terminated! Beware of counseling and treatment by unqualified persons!” It is worth noting that the older woman, who is the abortion provider, is portrayed with non-Aryan features like dark hair and a broader nose. These features are in direct contrast to her light skinned and blonde client.

Propaganda was meant to serve as a call for action. Illustrations, speeches, photos, and other material were meticulously created and distributed in order to incite a response from the public. Adolf Hitler spoke of propaganda in this way: “All propaganda has to be popular and has to accommodate itself to the comprehension of the least intelligent of those whom it seeks to reach.” Because propaganda had to play into the fears and struggles of a vast variety of people it falls prey to contradictions based on whatever may frighten people the most at that moment.

Jewish women are sometimes regarded as ugly and brutish in order to scare Aryan men away from seeking them out as sexual partners. But, they are also shown as being sensual seductresses in an attempt to frighten Aryan women into holding tighter to their Aryan men. Jewish women are supposedly dirty and poor as they are a vermin to the Aryan people. Or, they are the rich and lazy elite who capitalize off of the efforts of the Aryan people.

It is in the contrasts between Aryan and Jewish women, that they message of Nazi propaganda becomes clear. Aryan women were to be valued for their sexual purity, traditionally feminine and Nordic features and for their capability to carry on the Aryan bloodline as mothers. Jewish women were to be scorned and disvalued for their supposed ugliness and sexual

64 Hitler, Adolf. Mein Kampf. 1925.
promiscuity which leads to a lack of materialism. But, although it seems at first that Aryan women were valued and pampered by the Nazi party, it is shown that this is merely a lapse in perception as they were really only a small piece of carrying out the will of the Nazi party. They were only made to feel important so that they would accept the restrictive roles that were assigned to them.

It is rare for Jewish women in propaganda to be given names. When Jewish men are featured in propaganda they are given stereotypically sounding Jewish names which serves to demonize them. This text from the children’s book “Trust No Fox” offers advice to Aryan children on how to identify Jews based on their names: “So that the Jew you shan’t recognize His name turns up in other guise. Herr Nathan calls himself Jonathan, While Levin becomes Levinson. Abraham loses two of his ‘a’s’ And now his name reads simply Brahm-- Others are even more cunning still!” This text does not identify names of Jewish women; it only focuses on Jewish men. Jewish women are ignored in this way. By not naming them, propagandists dehumanized Jewish women even further.

The portrayal of Jewish women as oversexed, ugly, lazy, and as the opposite of the feminine Aryan ideal served to vilify Jewish women as an enemy to the Aryan race. They were at the same time intensely belittled while at the same time being ignored by propagandists. They were not featured as prominently as Aryan men and women or Jewish men but even their limited visibility speaks volumes about the values and fears of Nazi society and how gender and race influenced these values. Jewish women were a threat to traditional notions of gender and

sexuality as they represented a new woman with uninhibited sexuality, unencumbered by children, and who is able to live a life of luxury without needing the support of a husband.
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Trust No Fox. 1936. Calvin College Propaganda Archive.