

Portrayal and Protest: Interfaith Marriage in Nazi Germany

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Abstract

Interfaith relationships between Aryan women and Jewish men received immediate attack from Germany's National Socialist party. Jewish men were portrayed as thieves of Aryan innocence and anti-miscegenation laws were implemented as early as 1935. Characterization, sexual stereotyping, and racial rhetoric was associated heavily with Jewish men. Pre-existing interfaith marriages were put under intense scrutiny by the Regime; men could face imprisonment for their choice in marital partners. The Rosenstrasse protest demonstrated the power that interfaith marriages held during the Third Reich. The Rosenstrasse protest demonstrates the nuance of protest, how everyday social actions participate in a silent revolution.

Gendered Stereotypes in Nazi Germany

Marriage Laws

- *Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor* banned marriages between Jews and non-Jews. Laws were inconsistent and dependent on outside factors such as children, age, and race.
- **Privileged-Marriages:** Marriages between Aryan men and Jewish women. Not viewed as socially destructive due to the patriarch containing Aryan blood.
- **Non-Privileged Marriages:** Marriages between Jewish men and Aryan women. Seen as a threat to the Aryan race due to the societal importance placed on women's wombs.

How Jewish Men Were Defined

- Jewish males were seducers who aimed to corrupt Aryan women.
- Jewish men were perceived as a sexual-racial threat to the Aryan populace.
- In propaganda, Jewish men are pictured with dark clothes, crooked noses, and displayed as deceitful.
- In media, Jewish men are portrayed as rapist when paired with Aryan women.
- The Nazi party took inspiration from America's Jim Crow laws and anti-miscegenation propaganda.

Idealization of the Aryan Woman

- The Aryan race was defined by its lacking Jewish blood and pseudo-scientific racial hierarchy, exemplifying the Otherness of Jews.
- Aryan women were painted as the saviors of the Aryan race, the catalyst and incubator for the rising master race. This is displayed in cartoons that depict Aryan families as the backbone of the nation.

Resistance

- The Rosenstrasse protest (1943).
- Non-Jewish wives gathered around the Rosenstrasse detention center, protesting to free their husbands from Nazi hold.
- This is one of the only recorded cases of Nazi officials releasing Jewish men in mass.
- Rosenstrasse highlights the importance of protest, and the impact marriage can have as a movement.

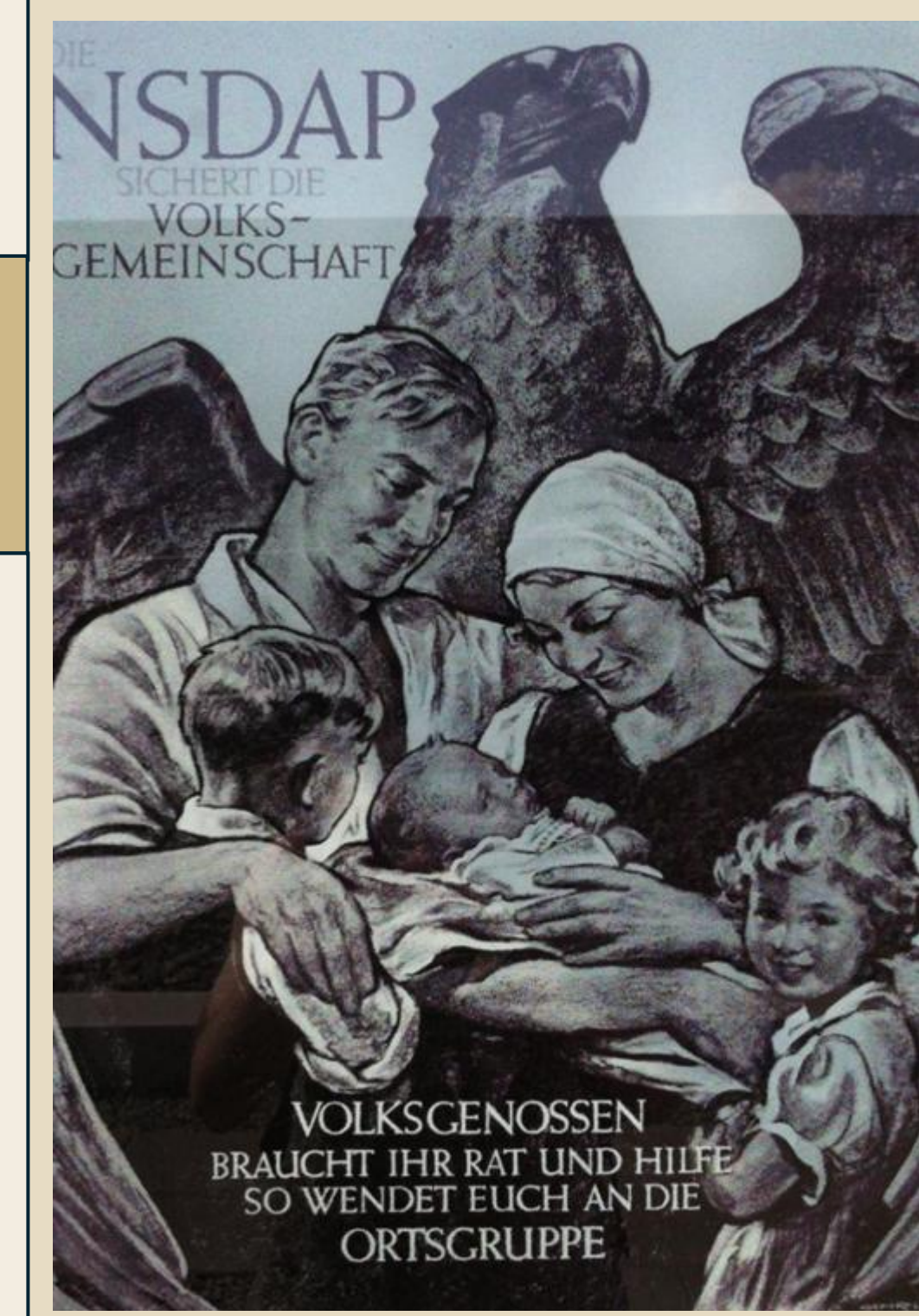
Conclusion

Interfaith marriage was largely villainized by Nazi propaganda. Nazis emphasized the importance of Aryan nuclear families and reintroduced harmful stereotypes against Jewish men. Aryan women that engaged with Jewish men were at risk of losing their German identity. Laws against intermarriage were used to alienate the Jewish population. The Rosenstrasse protest demonstrates the importance of marriage, even when criminalized.

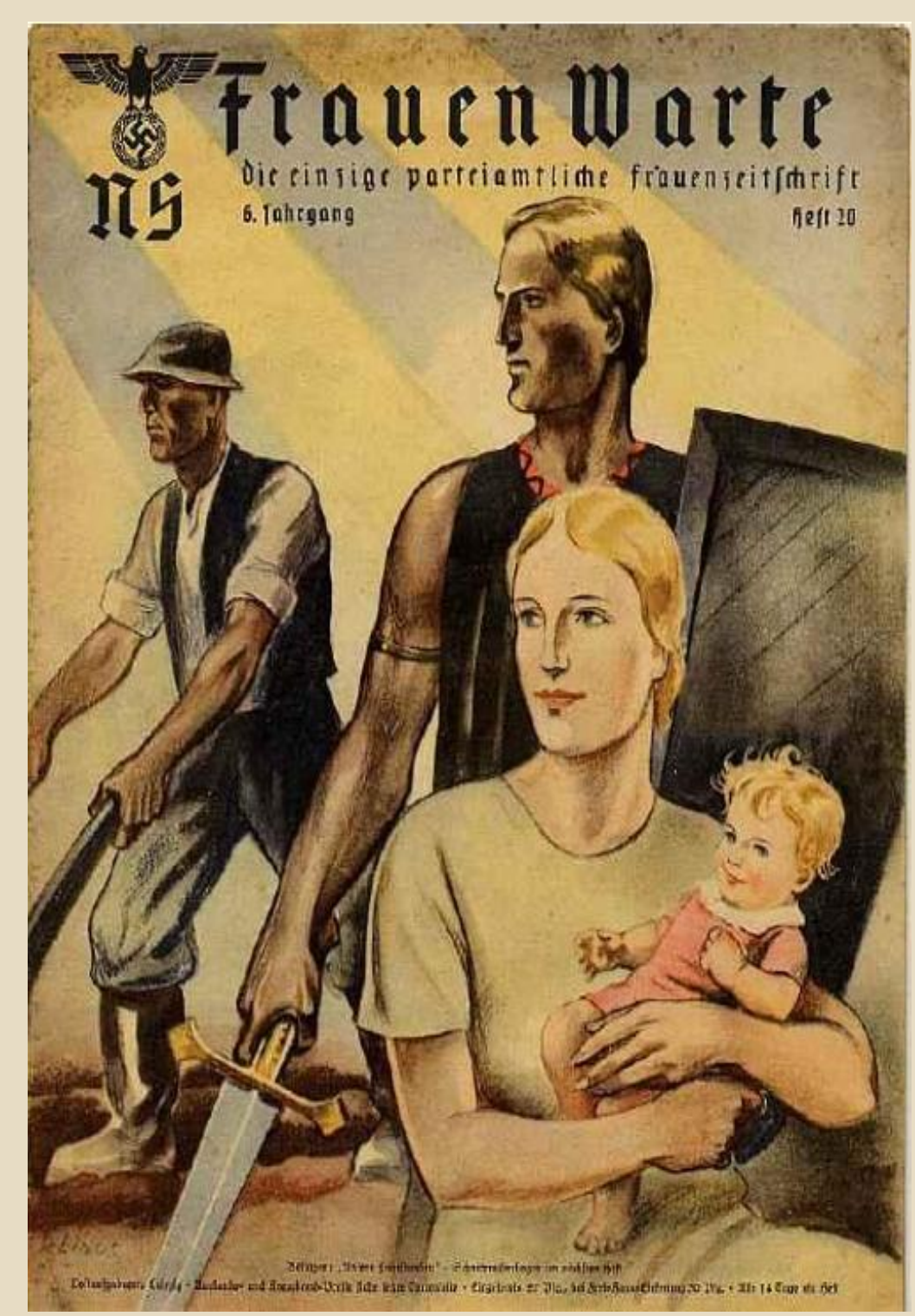
References



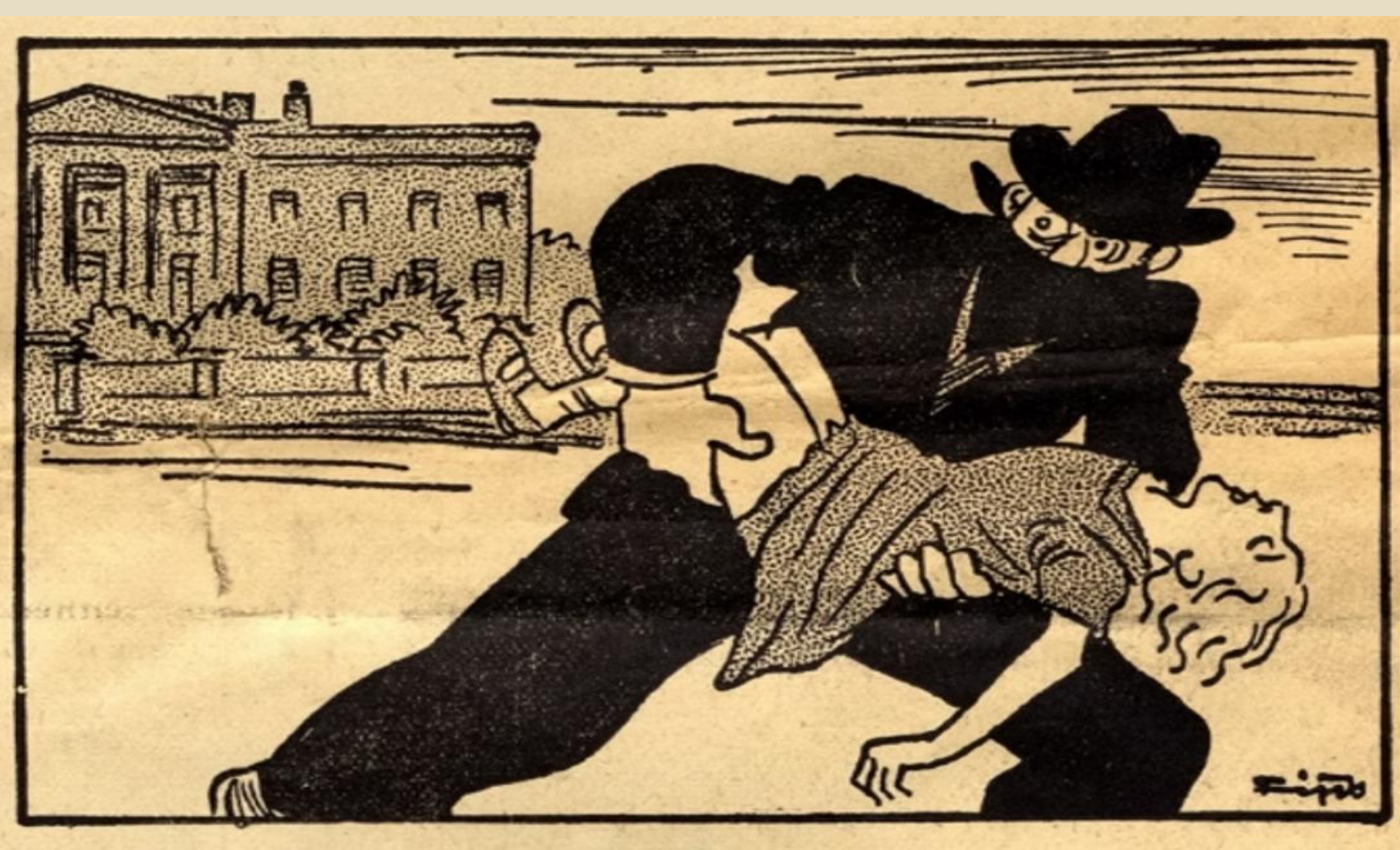
Trust No Fox on His Green Heath and No Jew on His Oath, Elvira Bauer, 1936.



"Die NSDAP sichert die Volksgemeinschaft"



Frauenwarte, #20 Volume 6, 1937-1938.



The Kidnapper, Der Stürmer, 1932-1938.

Interfaith and Marriage as Narratives

Why Does it Matter?

- Differing narratives are imperative to comprehending all sides of historical events.
- Interfaith relationships and marriage are not widely accepted as forms of protest.
- Understanding the influence interfaith marriages and miscegenation had during Nazi Germany further enforces that they were acts of protest.

How is it a Protest?

- Protest can be defined as public acts of objection or disapproval against policies and social norms.
- Anti-miscegenation laws were introduced during the *Nuremberg Laws*.
- Nazi officials pushed interfaith couples to divorce, as it was a threat to the regime.
- Aryan women who remained married to Jewish men were considered an immediate threat to the Nazi Party.