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‘A blood czar of Franconia’: Gauleiter Julius Streicher

Annotation. The article focuses on the political activities of Julius Streicher on his appointment as Gauleiter of Franconia. It shows the development of Streicher as a National Socialist and a radical anti-Semite, the stages of his career in the Nazi Party of Adolf Hitler and his role in the hierarchy of power of the Third Reich. The article analyses Streicher’s style of leadership and the specific events held in Franconia under his leadership, as well as the reasons for his resignation. Streicher’s relations with Hitler and the main officials of the Nazi party have been studied in the research.

Keywords: Julius Streicher, Gauleiter, National Socialism, Third Reich, dictatorship, anti-Semitism, corruption

Introduction

The Nazi party, based on the so-called *Führerprinzip* (German for ‘leader principle’), needed leaders who had broad powers and took complete responsibility for the party policies in the regions. In 1925, the Nazi Party (NSDAP) revived and added new administrative units of the Third Reich, Gau, which often preserved neither the borders of the countries nor the borders of the electoral districts. The territorial division of Hitler’s party coincided with the division of the country into electoral districts only in 1928 under the reform of the party regions. At the beginning of 1938, there were 33 Gau in the German Reich, and by the end of the Second World War, due to the annexation of Austria, the Sudetenland, as well as Polish and French territories, this number increased to 43¹. The regional leaders – Gauleiters – did not have a clearly defined circle of duties and directly subordinated to the leader of the party Adolf

¹ Höffkes K. *Hitlers politische Generale. Die Gauleiter des Dritten Reiches. Ein biographisches Nachschlagewerk*. 2. Aufl. Tübingen, 1997, S. 15.

Hitler, were responsible to him and received direct assignments from him. Later orders came from Deputy Führer of the Nazi Party, Reichsleiter Martin Bormann, and at the end of the war – from Reich Minister of Propaganda Josef Goebbels. Because of Hitler's striving for individual dominance and rivalry between various officials and authorities in Nazi Germany, the 'institutional jungle' emerged, and Gauleiters, using the favour of the party leader, had very broad powers and were the absolute masters of the territories assigned to them.

Gauleiters of the Nazi Party did not constitute a homogeneous group, as the regional party leaders came from different social strata, had different levels of education, were of different ages and were not native to certain specific areas. Nevertheless, 20% of Gauleiters, 25 out of 125, were teachers by education and (or) by profession. Among them was Julius Streicher. He was one of the most hateful leaders of the Third Reich, having gained the worldwide fame and bad reputation thanks to his weekly '*Der Stürmer*'. His stubbornness, penchant for pornography, vanity, rudeness and the unbearable character created many enemies in the Nazi hierarchy, but he always enjoyed the respect and patronage of Adolf Hitler, who completely shared his fanatical hatred of the Jews. Streicher wore the figure of a hanged rabbi on his neck and proudly called himself 'a professional anti-Semite'. German anti-fascist emigrants, familiar with Streicher and his activities, nicknamed him 'a blood czar of Franconia'². He, like no other, personifies the man-hateful nature of Nazi Germany, xenophobia and unhuman, racial-biological anti-Semitism.

Main Part

Julius Streicher was born on 12th February 1885 in Swabia, in the small town of Fleinhausen, near Augsburg. Julius was the ninth and the last child in the Catholic family of Friedrich Streicher, a teacher of the local village school, and his wife Anna. Julius also followed his father's footsteps and in 1903 completed the course of the two-year Bavarian seminar for 'royal' teachers in Lauingen, getting the qualification of a teacher for a public school. In the graduation certificate, it was said that "Streicher, given his very mediocre inclinations, should work with even greater seriousness and perseverance to achieve better results in individual subjects. His knowledge of mathematics is almost unsatisfactory. His behavior was generally satisfactory. During the trial lesson, Streicher spoke with an exciting teacher's tone, demonstrated a desire for solidity and established good discipline in the classroom. However, he should equally involve all students to take an active part in the lessons"³.

² Streicher's 'Jewish Cure'. *Aufbau*, 1939, 1 Oktober, S. 83.

³ Cit. ex: Pöggeler F. *Der Lehrer Julius Streicher. Zur Personalgeschichte des Nationalsozialismus*. Frankfurt am Main, 1991, S. 26–27.

Since 1904, Streicher worked in Swabia as a nontenured rural teacher, then received a teaching position in Nuremberg, and with the outbreak of World War I was enrolled in the 6th Bavarian Reserve Division. He spent the entire war on the front line, mainly on the Western Front, was awarded the Iron Cross 1st Class and the Iron Cross 2nd Class, the Military-Merit Cross (Austria–Hungary), the Bavarian Military Merit Order and was also promoted to lieutenant in reserve (without a patent)⁴. Immediately after signing the Armistice of 11 November 1918 (the Armistice of Compiegne), Streicher was demobilized and returned to Nuremberg, where he returned to working as a teacher. In 1922, he received the title of headteacher, which entitled him to receive the official salary of 3,960 marks and the right to be director of a small public school⁵. Like many other veterans of the war, he believed that Germany lost the confrontation with the Triple Entente because of the treacherous ‘dagger-in-the-back’ by the ‘November criminals’ – the Jews. Streicher began attending meetings of various political parties and groups and soon started to appear on the rostrum himself, speaking with anti-Semitic and anti-Catholic slogans. Then he joined the anti-Semitic and nationalist organization ‘The Deutschvölkischer Schutz- und Trutzbund’ (English: German Nationalist Protection and Defiance Federation)⁶. In 1920, he joined the German Socialist Party (German: Deutsch-sozialistische Partei or DSP), where he quickly seized the leadership. On 20th October 1922, the German Socialist Party joined Hitler's party, where he fully shared their radical anti-Semitic views⁷. On 20th April 1923 in Nuremberg, Streicher published the first issue of the weekly ‘Der Stürmer’ (lit. ‘The Stormer/ Attacker/Striker’), which was destined to serve as the mouthpiece of aggressive anti-Semitic propaganda in Germany for almost quarter of a century.

Streicher was very active in the NSDAP. He proved to be a tireless orator, who was not afraid to speak for hours at meetings not only in Nuremberg but also throughout the district. The Nuremberg group of the Nazi Party became the center from which the ideas of National Socialism spread throughout the whole of Northern Bavaria. However, for the head of the Nuremberg Nazis, it was obvious that Hitler did not trust him. At the party congress held in January 1923, Hitler did not honor him even with a single glance, and then sent Hermann Göring, the head of the Sturmabteilung (lit. Storm Detachment or SA) to Nuremberg, with an inspection. Hitler

⁴ See: *Reichstagshandbuch. VI. Wahlperiode 1932*. Berlin, 1932, S. 307.

⁵ H. S. D. Streicher war mein Lehrer. Erinnerungen an den “Frankenführer” Julius Streicher. *Aufbau*, 1945, 1 Juni, S. 1, 3.

⁶ *Trial of The Major War Criminals before the International Military Tribunal*. Nuremberg, 1949 (hereinafter – IMT), vol. XII, p. 308.

⁷ Streicher J. *Kampf dem Weltfeind. Reden aus der Kampfzeit gesammelt und bearbeitet von Dr. Heinz Preiß*. Nürnberg, 1938, S. 17.

traveled with speeches throughout Franconia but did not come up to Nuremberg. In his turn, Streicher did not hurry to report to the party leader about discovering the new local cells, so that some contemporaries had the impression that he was building up his own NSDAP in Franconia, independent from the Munich leadership.

The relationship between Hitler and Streicher radically changed after the Beer Hall Putsch, also known as the Munich Putsch, on 8–9th November 1923. For the head of the Nuremberg Nazis, who was only invited “to take part in a meeting”, the insurgency warfare of the Nazis in Munich came out of the blue. However, he did not hesitate to join the putsch, played an important role in the organization of propaganda in the city and participated in the march of the Nazis to the Feldherrnhalle (Field Marshals' Hall), during which the march was dispersed and the putsch was quashed⁸. He spent only six weeks in the prison in Landsberg, but due to this fact, he was among the “heroes and martyrs of the Movement”. If only someone in the party dared to oppose him, he would immediately remind of his ‘historical merits’ to the NSDAP. Owing to the Beer Hall Putsch, Hitler and Streicher formed a special relationship, which the anti-Semite from Nuremberg did not hesitate to use. “During the Munich putsch, I went shoulder to shoulder with him in the forefront, and he always remembered this. He then told me in prison that he would never forget me. He did not forget indeed. And I remained loyal to him”, told Streicher to the American psychiatrist Gustav Gilbert in November 1946⁹.

Streicher's participation in the putsch put an end to his teaching career. At the beginning, he was suspended from work with the payment of 2/3 of the previous salary, and in 1928 he was finally dismissed¹⁰. However, he was not left without any means of subsistence, having learned to earn his living by his political activities. Since 1923, he was a member of the city council of Nuremberg; in 1924–32 he was a member of the Landtag of Bavaria; and in 1932–45 he served as a representative of the Reichstag.

Whilst Hitler was serving his prison sentence in Landsberg, many party members, including 10 of the 14 representatives of the Reichstag, shifted towards Gregor Strasser. However, Streicher remained faithful to Hitler and was convinced of the final success of the Hitler movement. In a letter sent to one National Socialist in Northern Germany, Streicher wrote, “We were ‘dissolved’ ... In writing, I can only tell you that we are doing everything to pull together to become even closer than before. Because of our failure, our movement will only be tied to a deeper level. It needs it to reach its goal ... We must firmly believe in each other and take care that

⁸ Kipphan K. Julius Streicher und der 9. November 1923. *Zeitschrift für bayerische Landesgeschichte*. Bd. 39, 1976, S. 283.

⁹ Gilbert G. *Niurnbergskii dnevnik* [Nuremberg Diary]. Moscow, 2012, p. 480.

¹⁰ Reichstagshandbuch, S. 307.

everyone would be kind of a leader until we are again led by our Führer Adolf Hitler”¹¹. Together with Alfred Rosenberg and Hermann Esser, he founded the Großdeutsche Volksgemeinschaft (literally, ‘Great German People's Community’), which not only preserved the position of the Nazi Party in Munich, but also extended its influence on Northern Bavaria. After the re-establishment of the Nazi Party on 27th February 1925, Streicher received a party membership card under No. 18 and was appointed Gauleiter of Nuremberg and Fürth. In 1929, this Gau, located in northern Bavaria, was called ‘Middle Franconia’¹². Step by step, Streicher formed a team of other people around him, who were close to him and occupied various important posts in the management of Gau Middle Franconia and influenced the decisions of the regional party leader. Almost all of them were convicted of fraud, perjury, embezzlement and various sexual crimes¹³.

The annual speeches of Gauleiter of Franconia on Mount Hesselberg strengthened his power. This mountain, located in the southeast of Franconia, was a favorite place for walks and recreation of the local population and was also used to hold the local annual fair. Streicher turned it into a ‘sacred mountain of franks’ and called the festivities on this occasion as ‘the days of Franconia’. Since 1927, the influence of Streicher increased even further when Nuremberg became the city of Nazi party rallies. Its location in the center of what was then Germany, made it easy to get there from any part of the country. There was a suitable place for these Nazi party rallies, the Luitpold Grove (Luitpoldhain) arena, as well as the opportunity to accommodate the participants for the night. Finally, the ban on the speeches of Hitler by the authorities of the Weimar Republic did not apply in Bavaria. Only later, after the National Socialists came to power, a historical connection appeared – Nuremberg in the past as the city of imperial assemblies (Reichstags) and Nuremberg in the present as the city of party rallies (Partitags).

Streicher considered himself the second important orator in the NSDAP after Hitler and more than once used the rostrum of the Landtag of Bavaria to air his views. It was especially important in 1925–27, when the Nazi leader was not allowed to speak publicly. During the parliamentary term, Streicher gradually outlined the contours of the future anti-Semitic policy of the Third Reich. He formulated many racist slogans that later, at the stage of organizational and moral-psychological preparation for the mass extermination of the Jews (1933–41), were implemented by the National Socialists.

¹¹ Cit. ex: Kipphan K. *Op. Cit*, S. 284.

¹² See: Hüttenberger P. *Die Gauleiter. Studie zum Wandel des Machtgefüges in der NSDAP*. Stuttgart, 1969, S. 13.

¹³ Roos D. *Julius Streicher und „Der Stürmer“ 1923–1945*. Paderborn, 2014, S. 183.

It seemed that after the appointment of Hitler as the Reich Chancellor, Streicher had every chance of a fast career. However, unlike many other ‘old fighters’ and veterans of the Nazi movement, he did not receive any significant state post and was among the eight Gauleiters who were not promoted. From time to time, there were groundless rumors abroad about the upcoming appointment of Streicher to the post of the Police Chief of Berlin, the Reich Health Leader, Gauleiter of the Gau Berlin instead of Goebbels, and even about his appointment to the non-existent post of Reichsleiter dealing with the Jews¹⁴. Not having received any public post, he began to call himself ‘Führer of Franconia’, although such a post, firstly, was not in the Nazi party hierarchy, and secondly, part of the historical region of Franconia added another Gau, the Bavarian Eastern March (Bayerische Ostmark)¹⁵.

Streicher's ability to influence the important German political decisions was equal to zero. He saw Hitler, as a rule, only at conferences of Gauleiters. When the Nazi leader came to Nuremberg for a regular party rally or on other matters, Streicher was only a participant in the joint meals, where, apart from him and Hitler, another five to ten people took part. He recalled that he had only met Führer in person in the Brown House in Munich, but even then, their conversation did not concern politics. “All the conversations that I ever had with Adolf Hitler, either in Nuremberg or in Munich, or elsewhere, occurred only in the circle of party comrades”, told Streicher to the International Military Tribunal¹⁶.

In March 1933, the Nazis completely took power in Nuremberg. The Stormers under the leadership of Streicher captured the building of the trade union of metal-workers and the printing house of the social democratic newspaper ‘*Die Fränkische Tagespost*’, broke the printing presses and equipment. The National Socialist Willy Liebel replaced the old enemy of Streicher, the Chief Burgomaster from the SPD, Hermann Luppe. Now, at any opportunity, Streicher repeated that he alone enjoyed the right to give orders in Franconia, and that no one could remove him from the post of Gauleiter¹⁷.

Having finally seized the real power, Streicher immediately proceeded to practical steps against the Jews he hated so much. As early as in March 1933, many Jews of Nuremberg were arrested, and some of them were sent to Dachau. ‘Aryan’ women and girls who maintained relations with the Jews were paraded through the streets. The women had their hair cut and wore placards around their necks which read about ‘desecration of the race’. The Soviet writer Boris Polevoi shared his impression of the

¹⁴ Julius Streicher an die Deutschen Berlins. *Völkischer Beobachter*, 1935, 17 August.

¹⁵ Roth F.E. Julius Streicher. Der Bajazzo des Terrors. *Pariser Tageblatt*, 1934, 3 November, S. 1.

¹⁶ IMT, vol. XII, p. 314.

¹⁷ Ibid, vol. XXVIII, p. 154.

photograph taken during these defamations saying, “Here is Julius Streicher, this pathological bigot... fat, flourishing, mockingly screaming something to these shaved naked girls tied to donkeys. They have ropes on their necks, and on these ropes, cartons hang with the inscriptions saying, “I loved a Jew”, and a furious crowd with fists are coming at them, barely restrained by hefty coats (policemen)”¹⁸. Streicher dreamt of making Nuremberg an exemplary ‘Aryan’ city. Indeed, many of his anti-Semitic measures served as an example for the whole of Germany. Gauleiter of Franconia urged to post at the entrances to the settlements, swimming pools, parks and culture houses the sign plates that forbade Jews access to these places. In August 1933, Jews were banned from visiting the city swimming pool and public baths. In 1936, the Jewish children were expelled from public schools and could only attend designated schools opened for this purpose.

Immediately after the elections to the Reichstag on 5th March 1933, a wave of Jewish pogroms swept through the whole Germany. The initiators of the outrages were the local party leaders, commanders of Nazi assault detachments and detachments of the right paramilitary organization ‘*The Stahlhelm*’ (Steel Helmet). Hitler tried to pass these outrages off for spontaneous manifestations of ‘people’s anger’, but he was not at all happy with such an initiative ‘from humble backgrounds’ – the prestige of the new government abroad was compromised, and the confidence of industrialists and financiers towards the new Reichskanzler was shaken. The appeal to the pogrom-mongers to stop was unsuccessful. Then, the Nazi leader decided to hold on 1–3rd April an organized anti-Semitic boycott and to ordain several laws directed against the Jews. Hitler decided to appoint Streicher the leader of the anti-Semitic action¹⁹. Apart from him, the ‘Central Committee for the Defense against Jewish Atrocity and the Boycott Agitation’ also included Karl Holtz, Heinrich Himmler, Robert Leigh, Walther Darré, Hans Frank and some other functionaries of the NSDAP, who did not hold public office yet. Such composition allowed the Nazi leader to present the boycott as a party and not as a state campaign. The figure of the militant anti-Semite Streicher at the head of the committee was supposed to have a soothing effect on the pogroms initiators who escaped the control of the authorities.

The first day of the boycott was marked by the speech of Streicher, who claimed that the Jews were allegedly a nation of bloodsuckers and racketeers, and their revelation for the sake of the whole mankind fell to the lot of the German people. The Nazi propaganda kept saying that the abominable anti-Semitic action was crowned with complete success. Streicher later boasted, “One thing is for certain, except for minor

¹⁸ Polevoi B.N. *Sobranie sochinenii*: v 9 t. T. 8. Kn. 3 i 4 [Collected Works: in 9 volumes, vol. 8, book 3 and 4]. Moscow, 1985, p. 524.

¹⁹ Goebbels J. *Vom Kaiserhof zur Reichskanzlei. Eine historische Darstellung in Tagebuchblättern*. 33. Aufl. München, 1941, s. 288.

incidents, the boycott was very effective. I do not think there will be a single Jew who can object"²⁰. According to the historians, it was quite the opposite, as the boycott failed. 1–2nd April fell on Saturday and Sunday, when many shops, bigger stores and offices were closed. In addition, the stormtroopers did not always manage to prevent the ‘Aryans’ customers from visiting various Jewish stores, doctor’s surgeries or lawyer’s practices. In Berlin, cases were noted when Reichswehr’s generals with medals on their uniforms went shopping to the Jewish stores, thereby openly demonstrating disagreement with the Nazi policies. The ordinary Germans did not show a strong support to picketers either, industrialists were frightened, and some critical publications appeared in the foreign press.

In the spring and summer of 1935, the all-German propaganda campaign was flourishing. Its participants supported the prohibition of sexual relations between ‘Aryans’ and the Jews. Particularly active were such newspapers as ‘*Der Angriff*’ (The Attack) of Goebbels, ‘*Der Weltkampf*’ (The World Struggle) of Rosenberg, ‘*Der Judenkenner*’ (The Jew-Expert) of Ernest Pistor, and, of course, ‘*Der Stürmer*’ of Streicher. Streicher replied to all foreign critics of anti-Semitic incidents in Gau Franconia, “Go back to your homes and only start worrying about us after you do so. If a German woman, who forgot her origins, is paraded along the streets with a placard on her neck, then this would be called the same throughout the world – a pogrom! When in America you lynch a black person, or when the Communists are tarred and feathered, nobody is interested in this. We do not care what happens in America. This is the Americans’ business. But we demand that we, too, are left alone”²¹.

At the same time, it was astonishing that the man who considered the Jews the main enemy was ignorant about drafting of anti-Semitic laws. On 15th September 1935, on one of the days of yet another Nazi Party rally, Hitler unexpectedly called all the deputies of the Reichstag to Nuremberg and proposed to approve the ‘The Reich Citizenship Law’ and ‘The Law for the Protection of German Blood and German Honor’. The former deprived the Jews of their civil rights, and the latter banned marriages and extramarital affairs between the ‘Aryan race’ and the Jewish people. For Streicher, these racial laws were total surprise. He told the International Military Tribunal, “We were called to the hall, and we did not know what would happen. At least I had no idea. The racial laws were approved. Only then I knew about these laws, and I think that the gentlemen sitting there as prisoners of war and those who were there and then at the imperial party rally, including Hess, felt the same. Only at the imperial party rally in Nuremberg did we learn about these laws. I did not participate in the draft legislation. I openly declare that I felt very offended that I was not

²⁰ IMT, vol. XII, p. 314.

²¹ Gauleiter Streichers Appel. *Hamburger Tageblatt*, 1935, 21 August.

involved in any consultations regarding these laws”²². Nevertheless, both German and foreign correspondents considered passing those anti-Semitic laws as Streicher’s achievement. When he left the hall, “*Heil Streicher!*” was heard from all sides.

As early as on 4th October 1935, the NSDAP Gauleiter of Gau Franconia made a speech later published in the newspaper ‘*Völkischer Beobachter*’ of NSDAP (German: People's Observer) under the title ‘The Protection of German Blood and German Honor’ – this was the name of one of the Nuremberg race laws. As it turned out, Streicher did not consider the Jewish problem solved. At the rally in Cologne on 4th December 1935, he said, “A German woman loses her honor if she enters into an affair with a man of a foreign race. We do not show any disrespect to other races, but we will not tolerate anything that is not acceptable to God... Despite the Nuremberg laws, the Jews continue to insult our race. Therefore, the laws must be controlled by the people. Beware, the Jews still offend against these laws”²³. Speaking at the meeting of the Hitler Youth on 30th January 1936, Streicher openly declared, “The Nuremberg laws did not solve the Jewish problem, because the Jews inventively bypass them. Therefore, the anti-Jewish action should continue without any interruption”²⁴.

On the night of 9-10th November 1938, another wave of Jewish pogroms, known as the ‘*Reichskristallnacht*’ (English: Night of the Broken Glass), swept across Germany. In Nuremberg alone, nine Jews were killed on that night, ten Jews ‘committed suicide’, 160 were arrested and later sent to the Dachau concentration camp. The synagogue in Essweistrasse was burnt. At the trial of the major Nazi criminals, the prosecution failed to prove that Streicher was one of the organizers of the pogroms. According to the witnesses’ statements, he learned about what was happening in the city only when the outrages have already begun, and he just let the situation take its course. Probably, his behavior might be explained by his wounded pride, as it was the second time when the Nazi leadership took serious anti-Semitic steps without asking for his opinion. In addition, Streicher probably feared that too rapid ‘solution’ of the Jewish problem would make his anti-Semitic agitation, which brought a considerable income, needless. He appeared in public only on the evening of 10th November, speaking at another rally in Nuremberg with his typical slogans.

The Gauleiter of Gau Franconia gained his scandalous fame throughout the whole Germany because of always doing something drastic, because of his so-called ‘streich-cherish stunts’ that were invariably widely popularized. One day, he forced the Nuremberg prosecutors, officials, publishers and other respected people of the city to dig a pond for ducks in his villa. On another occasion, he forced the journalists to dance

²² IMT, vol. XII, p. 316.

²³ Gauleiter Streicher in Köln. *Kölnische Zeitung*, 1935, 6 Dezember.

²⁴ Streicher mit den Nürnberger Gesetzen noch nicht zufrieden. *Pariser Tageblatt*, 1935, 30 Januar, S. 2.

on the cabaret scene in revenge for their criticizing the program, or he would receive high-ranking guests dressed only in swimming trunks. The behavior of the local Gauleiter in relation to the ordinary ‘Aryan’ inhabitants of Gau Franconia was not a good example of tact and courtesy. He did not hesitate to examine the people from head to toe and made cutting remarks about their appearance; he beat prisoners in the city jail and unwanted townspeople right at their work places. “Gauleiter Streicher likes beating people with a whip, but only several other people accompany him as his assistants. Usually, these beatings are done with sadistic cruelty”²⁵, as it was pointed out in the report of the inquiry commission appointed in 1940. The case of Dr. Steinruk acquired a broad international resonance. Dr. Steinruk was arrested in October 1934, allegedly for spreading rumors about the local Gauleiter. Streicher appeared in his cell with his deputy Carl Holtz and adjutant Hans Koenig and beat the arrestee with a whip. Not only he did not try to hide this incident; on the contrary, he bragged about it in his public speeches. In August 1938, Streicher beat Burker, an editor, in the office of his Gau. He was not afraid of any response, because behind his back there were König and Scholer, the district functionary of the NSDAP²⁶.

Over time, the cult of Streicher developed in Gau Franconia. In the streets of Nuremberg, the Gauleiter was often greeted with the salutes “*Heil Streicher!*”. He was granted the honorary citizenship not only of his native Fleinhausen, but also of several other places in Franconia. A school, a workers' village and a youth hostel were all named in his honour. In October 1935, the city council of Nuremberg adopted a resolution on the installation of the bust of the local Gauleiter in the hall. Controlled by Streicher, the local press thoroughly enhanced this cult. Being at the peak of his glory and power, Streicher ordered to develop the project of the mausoleum on Mount Hesselberg, where he wanted to be buried²⁷. At the same time, among the party officials, Streicher found a few powerful enemies who despised him for his arrogance, his incisive temper and his rudeness. They repeatedly kept their distance from him and made it clear that they did not share his outrageous anti-Semitic appeals aimed at uneducated and uncivilized Germans²⁸. However, the Gauleiter of Gau Franconia did not lose the leader's approval, even if he did not gain the support in all intraparty disputes he entered. Talking to the Third Reich's Press Chief Otto Dietrich, Hitler said, “Streicher's primitive method is the most effective way to reach out to an ordinary lit-

²⁵ IMT. Vol. XXVIII. P. 148–149.

²⁶ IMT. Vol. XXVIII. P. 154.

²⁷ Roos D. *Op. cit*, S. 298.

²⁸ Kornev N. *Tret'ia imperiia v litsakh* [The Third Empire in Persons]. Moscow, 1937, pp. 445–446, 447.

tle man”²⁹, whilst he announced the following to Rauschning, “Despite all his weaknesses, he is a man with a strong spirit”³⁰. In February 1935, Hitler visited Nuremberg to congratulate Streicher in person on his 50th birthday³¹. The German anti-fascists regarded this visit as support for the anti-Semitic course of Streicher³².

Streicher tirelessly worked on creating the myth that before the Nazis came to power, he was an unselfish political fighter without a penny in his pocket. Until 1933, he did not possess any valuable property indeed; however, he did not live in misery at all. Not only he received the profit from the sale of the weekly ‘*Der Stürmer*’ but also retained his teacher’s pension, as well as compensations paid to him as a member of the city council and a representative of the Landtag. In 1927, his monthly income equaled 400 marks, which was quite enough to lead a comfortable life. After the establishment of the Nazi dictatorship, Streicher turned into a millionaire, in several years his income exceeding two million marks, and the value of his property increased from one million marks in 1938 to 2.2 million marks in 1943³³.

It was not only the propaganda of anti-Semitism that proved to be a profitable business in the Third Reich, but also tenure at the leading party post. Gauleiter of Nuremberg repeatedly received various gifts, including houses and land. In 1937, Streicher acquired an estate in Pleikershof with an area of about 35 hectares (100 Tagewerke), which, by the local standards, made him a big landowner³⁴. The estate cost Streicher 205 thousand marks, and the cost of its improvement amounted to 1.3 million marks. These enormous expenditures provoked an uproar in Nuremberg. People said that the pig’s paddock in Pleikershof cost much more than the residential house of an ordinary German³⁵. As it turned out after the collapse of Hitler’s regime, only in Nuremberg, Streicher owned 13 houses, whereby he purchased some of them through rogue firms³⁶.

Streicher acquired enormous wealth because of ‘aryanization’ – the legalized robbery of the Jews in Germany. With his permission, the leadership of Gau Franconia forced many Jewish owners to sell their land, houses and shops to the party commissioners for only 10 % of their real value. In the process of purchase and sale, the

²⁹ Ditrich O. *Dvenadtsat' let s Gitlerom. Vospominaniia imperskogo rukovoditelia pressy. 1933–1945* [Twelve Years with Hitler. Memoirs of the Imperial Head of the Press. 1933–1945]. Moscow, 2007, p. 148.

³⁰ Rauschning G. *Gоворит Гитлер. Зверь из бездны* [Hitler Speaks. The Beast from the Abyss]. Moscow, 1993, p. 182.

³¹ Adolf Hitler in Nürnberg. *Völkischer Beobachter*, 1935, 13 Februar, S. 2.

³² Hitler gratuliert Streicher. *Pariser Tageblatt*, 1935, 12 Februar, S. 1.

³³ Roos D. *Op. cit.*, S. 330.

³⁴ Großgrundbesitzer Streicher! *Neuer Vorwärts*, 1937, 30 Mai, S. 3.

³⁵ IMT, vol. XXVIII, p. 148.

³⁶ Streichers Vermögen beschlagnahmt. *Die neue Zeitung*, 1949, 17 November.

owners were subjected to psychological pressure, embarrassment and humiliation. They were beaten, forced to stand for a long time, facing the wall, forced to stand on one foot, squat and lean-to sides. Thus, the significant amount of the Jewish property, about 800 enterprises in Nuremberg and Fürth worth up to 20 million marks, went to the hands of those authorized by Streicher. Moreover, the large part of the Jewish property was simply seized by certain Nazis, including Gauleiter of Nuremberg himself. In November 1938, through a phantom enterprise, he bought a stake in the bicycle factory ‘Mars’ valued at 112.5 thousand marks, for only 5% of its real value. Martin Cohn, its former owner and director of the banking house, was sent to the concentration camp at the order of Streicher³⁷.

The corruption among the regional party leaders had also flourished before, and it was not a secret neither for the Berlin leadership of the NSDAP nor for the population. However, this time the plunder of property, which was to refill the state treasury, got so colossal in Franconia that on 17th December 1938, Benno Martin, Police Leader in Nuremberg, informed the Reich Main Security Office (German: *Reichssicherheitshauptamt* or RSHA) and asked to send a commission for inspection³⁸. Martin and the first mayor of Nuremberg, Willy Liebel, sought the resignation of Streicher for a very long time, appealing to Hess, Bormann, Göring, Himmler and Frick. However, each of them knew that Hitler himself patronized the Gauleiter of Franconia. Therefore, they did not intend to get involved in the conflict. Then, at last, the situation breached the tolerance of the Nazi leaders. Goering, who oversaw the four-year plan and the process of ‘aryanization’ sent a special inspecting commission to Nuremberg headed by Obersturmbannführer Josef Meisinger. Its work took several months because of the sabotage of Gau Franconia officials. Nevertheless, Meisinger collected some materials and prepared a two-volume report, charging Streicher with illegal enrichment, fraud, use of party property for personal purposes, forcing his subordinates to give false evidence to the commission, pressure to commit suicide, ‘pathological sexual behavior’ and deliberate dissemination of false information about Reich Marshal Göring³⁹.

Hitler decided to proceed with the case, and on 16th February 1940, the People’s Court in Munich found Streicher “unsuited to lead people”. Hitler had no choice but to dismiss his protégé from the post as Gauleiter of Gau Franconia. At the same time, the decision of the said court was considered interim, there was no official resigna-

³⁷ IMT, vol. XXVIII, pp. 140–144.

³⁸ Kuller Chr., Drecoll A. Inszenierter Volkszorn, ausgebliebene Empörung und der Sturz Julius Streichers. Reaktionen auf die wirtschaftliche Ausplünderung der deutschen Juden. Schabrow M. (Hrsg.). *Skandal und Diktatur. Formen öffentlicher Empörung im NS-Staat und in der DDR*. Göttingen, 2004, S. 96.

³⁹ IMT, vol. XXVIII, pp. 140–154.

tion, and the title of Gauleiter was still attached to Streicher. Undoubtedly, the disgraced ‘Führer of Franconia’ was waiting for the opportunity to take revenge. Albert Speer recalled, “One day during the Nuremberg Trials, Streicher turned to me with an expression of hatred and gloating delight, which I would never forget for the rest of my life and said, ‘I ordered that your friend Liebel, this pig, would be killed shortly, just a few hours before the arrival of the Americans!’”⁴⁰.

Streicher hoped for a different decision of the People’s Court and was depressed. He hoped that Hitler would not allow punishing him. The ex-Gauleiter could no longer appear in Nuremberg, he had to retire to his estate of Pleikershof and start being involved in physical labor, farming and gardening or breeding rabbits. He would eat meat, but only rabbit meat, once a week. His own beehive provided him with honey. On Hitler's instructions, Streicher's weekly '*Der Stürmer*' and the publishing house remained in the property of the disgraced Gauleiter, and they continued to bring him considerable profit. He did not go anywhere; he only communicated in writing with his sons, as no one else dared to write to him or rather did not want to. The Gestapo stopped their observation after a while, but no guests appeared in Pleikershof, as Hess did not recommend the party officials to pay visits to Streicher. Every day, he looked through the latest newspapers and listened to the radio, read historical books, mostly about the Roman history and Bismarck and in 1943-44 even wrote his own memoirs. He also did another job on a regular basis: he edited '*Der Stürmer*' and wrote articles for it⁴¹. Three dogs brightened up the dull days of the newly-minted landowner: a teacup Pomeranian, a Dachshund (English badger dog) and a huge St Bernard dog. The St Bernard dog was specifically trained by the master to attack the Jews. From time to time, they were brought to the estate by orders of Streicher. He invited his neighbors and tried to convince them that the dog would recognize the Jews by their smell. According to the eyewitnesses, such public shows were not always successful⁴².

Hitler was annoyed with what had happened to Streicher. In December 1941, he said, “There is no doubt that we do not have a full replacement for Streicher! With all the weaknesses that he has, there is no other full-blooded personality like him. If we do not want to lie, we must acknowledge for the history that the national-socialist Nuremberg would never exist if Julius Streicher did not exist... It goes without saying, the leadership of the Gau was not perfect. Streicher is not an official. If I apply the scale of administrative officials, he will lose. However, in 1919, Nuremberg was won for me not by the party official! I admit that I cannot replace Streicher... I have a

⁴⁰ Shpeer A. *Shpandau: tainyi dnevnik* [Spandau: A Secret Diary]. Moscow, 2014, p. 139.

⁴¹ IMT, vol. XII, pp. 379–389.

⁴² M.W. Der Hund “Streicher”. “Re-Education” eines deutschen Bernhardiners. *Aufbau*, 1946, 8 März, S. 19.

guilty conscience when I feel that I did not handle someone the way he deserves. Whenever I come to Nuremberg, I have a bitter feeling. After all, people, without even wanting this, still say that in comparison with what he has done, the reasons for his resignation are insignificant! <...> One day you need to find some suitable solution. It is intolerable for me to organize a party rally in Nuremberg, while the man who won Nuremberg for the party stands aside!"⁴³

However, these complaints of the Nazi leader did not lead to anything real. "It was typical for Hitler's contradictory nature to grieve, even in those cases when he could easily change everything; all it took was to give an order. One word to Bormann would be enough to restore Streicher as Gauleiter", Speer notes⁴⁴. In June 1944, under the orders of Hitler, the head of the German Labor Front Robert Ley and the Reich Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels visited Streicher in Pleikershof. Streicher was very proud of this and told about the visit to the judges of the Nuremberg Trials and to the American psychiatrist G. Gilbert, "He sent Ley and Goebbels to me so that they would listen to me to see if I had any wishes. I told them (theatrical gesture), "Report to my Führer that I have no other wish but to die next to him, if the disaster befalls our homeland!" Pausing on the word, Streicher added, "I cannot describe it to you enough how much it impressed him"⁴⁵.

On 22nd May 1945, Streicher, who had grown a beard and was hiding in a remote alpine village, was identified by the residents and arrested by the Major Henry Plitt of the Seventh United States Army near Berchtesgaden. He became one of the defendants at the Trial for Major War Criminals held in his former patrimonial estate, in Nuremberg. The Tribunal found Streicher guilty of crimes against humanity, and he was executed by hanging on 16th October 1946. Ironically, the multivolume report of the International Military Tribunal was to be printed in Nuremberg on the very printing presses that Streicher used to replicate his '*Der Stürmer*'. The Pleikershof estate was converted to rehabilitate the Jews who survived the Holocaust and were preparing to move to Palestine⁴⁶. In 1949, by the decision of the court, 13 houses in Nuremberg formerly owned by Streicher, were confiscated⁴⁷.

Conclusion

The appearance amongst the Nazi Gauleiters of such a man as Streicher was quite logical. His life journey and beliefs fully corresponded to the parameters of an aver-

⁴³ Hitler A. *Monologe im Führerhauptquartier 1940–1944. Aufgezeichnet von Heinrich Heim*, hg. v. Werner Jochmann. München, 2000, S. 158–160.

⁴⁴ Shpeer A. *Decree*. op., p. 138.

⁴⁵ Gilbert G. *Decree*. op., p. 9.

⁴⁶ Die Leiterin des "Kibbuz Streicher". *Aufbau*, 1946, 8 März, S. 19.

⁴⁷ Streichers Vermögen beschlagnahmt. *Die neue Zeitung*, 1949, 17 November.

age National Socialist in the early 1920s. He was a middle-class student, a teacher by profession, of the same age as Hitler. He was also a veteran of World War I, who hated the democratic republic and Leftist forces, the church, and most of all, the Jews. Ignoring all the limits of morality, moral standards and rules of decency, intolerant and aggressive Streicher was ideally suited not only for propaganda of the newest form of Judeophobia – the racial and biological anti-Semitism, but also for the role of a regional party leader, deciding on the fate of people at his own will, regardless of any laws and pragmatic considerations. Perhaps, Gauleiter Streicher is the most striking example among many regional party officials of the Third Reich who personified the vices of the Nazi system – tyranny, unquenchable thirst for irrepressible praise, theft, bribery and fraud. Most likely, Streicher's burning hatred for the Jews for many years provided him with Hitler's support, who was a fanatical anti-Semite himself, being at the wheel of the forceful radical movement. However, the very same quality determined the boundaries of influence of this Nuremberg Judeophob. His sphere of influence never went beyond the small territory of Franconia. After the arrival of the National Socialists to power, he did not receive any significant state post and was not involved in the shaping of state and party policies, including the anti-Semitism one. To his death, Streicher defended racial prejudice, thus sicken ing not only the anti-fascists, but many Nazis as well. The death sentence imposed on ‘No.1 enemy of the Jews’ by the International Military Tribunal was simultaneously the sentence to the Nazi ideology, the misanthropic ideology of racialism and Nazi crimes.

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