

# Leibiger presents 'Of Foxes and Poisonous Mushrooms'

By Travis Gulbrandson  
travis.gulbrandson@plaintalk.net

Anti-Semitic propaganda was utilized by the Nazis prior to and during the Holocaust, and last week, visitors to I.D. Weeks Library had the opportunity to see for themselves how the group used it to indoctrinate Germany's youngest citizens.

On Nov. 6 and Nov. 8, Carol A. Leibiger, Ph.D., associate professor, University Libraries, gave the presentation, "Of Foxes and Poisonous Mushrooms: Julius Streicher and German Children's Literature in Support of National Socialist Racialist Politics."

The lecture was made possible by a grant from the South Dakota Humanities Council, and ran in conjunction with "Deadly Medicine: Creating the Master Race," a traveling exhibit from the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum now on display at the

library. During the course of her talk, Leibiger examined two notorious children's books and discussed the negative stereotypes they perpetuated.

"Their content is disturbing, and their intent unmistakable. ... These children's books were cultural products that both represent and seek to influence – even determine – their context," Leibiger said. The books in question were mailed to Leibiger's father in New York by his German grandmother as a birthday present in 1938.

While his parents did not give them to him, he discovered them when he settled his father's estate in 1981. Leibiger herself engaged with them the first time only when she was preparing her lecture, she said.

"I wondered what their affect on my father might have been had he been exposed to their content," she said.

Both books feature

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"unmistakable negative Jewish images on the covers," she said.

On one, Jewish people are associated with animals such as wolves and foxes, while the other features a mushroom with a stereotypical Jewish face and a Star of David.

Both were published by Nazi Julius Streicher, most famous for his newspaper, Der Stürmer, which he founded in 1923 to support the Nazi Party.

"It remained a highly popular right-wing news organ until 1945, with a circulation of nearly 500,000," Leibiger said. "Special issues on such topics as Jewish ritual murder

had circulations as high as 2 million."

However, even more people than this are estimated to have read the publication, as it was on display in guarded, glassed-in bulletin boards in many German towns and cities, she said.

The primary focus of the paper was scandals involving Jews, caricatures showing the worst possible images of Jews and the names of Germans who "collaborated" with Jews.

There also was a strong pornographic component, Leibiger said.

"So racy was the sexual content that



Streicher was labeled the 'national pornographer,'" she said.

The main idea of the books presented by Leibiger was to teach children how to identify Jews and equate them with all things evil.

The first was written by 18-year-old preschool teacher Thodolinde "Elvira" Bauer, with a title that translates as "Don't Trust a Fox on the Green Heath, or a Jew on his Oath."

The title itself is a reference to a poem by Martin Luther that appeared in his book, "Of the Jews and Their Lies," Leibiger said.

"The book consists of poems and illustrations on facing pages," she said. "The illustrations are brightly-colored and simply drawn. Red type accentuates the important words. If one reads only these words, one readily understands the message of the book."

Two of the red-printed words are "Jew" and "devil."

"The book describes Jews as evil, lazy and devious, with physical attributes that reflect their inferior position among the world's races," Leibiger said.

By contrast, Germans are all portrayed as honest,

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