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**Pages from the Antisemitic Children's Book The Poisonous Mushroom**



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In 1938, the publishers of the intensely antisemitic Nazi newspaper *Der Stürmer* (<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/tags/en/tag/der-sturmer>) released a children's book titled *Der Giftpilz*, or "The Poisonous Mushroom." The book was designed to teach children that Jewish people were a threat to Germany and could not be part of the Nazis' so-called "national community" ("*Volksgemeinschaft*" (<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/volksgemeinschaft-peoples-or-national-community>)). The book compares German Jews to a poisonous mushroom hidden among other mushrooms that it may resemble, but the poisonous one carries great danger for those who come in contact with it. *Der Giftpilz* was one of the first and most well known examples of popular children's literature that transmitted Nazi racial ideology (<https://encyclopedia.ushmm.org/content/en/article/nazi-racism>).<sup>1</sup>

Author and artist Phillip "Fips" Rupprecht designed the work as a series of short stories, each revolving around a different aspect of anti-Jewish stereotypes, including physical appearance, religious beliefs, and moral character. Featured here, one page illustrates Jewish people's supposed worship of money. Another shows German schoolboys discussing how to identify a Jew based on physical features. More dramatic panels show Jewish men attempting to kidnap young German children. Most of these short stories conclude with a poem or anecdote, echoing an already established tradition in Nazi textbooks of combining blatant antisemitic attitudes with more familiar nationalist storylines.<sup>2</sup> The illustrations and language of the stories also appear to draw inspiration from the tradition of German fairytales.

*The Poisonous Mushroom* was just one among several texts marketed to children that aimed to instill them with antisemitism.<sup>3</sup> The book appears to have been successful, appearing in four printed editions and numbering a total of 40,000 copies. To promote it, Nazi publishing houses arranged for Rupprecht to paint a set of large murals based on the book and present them at exhibitions at banks, community halls, and other small venues throughout the country. Those events were popular, drawing in crowds of German attendees, particularly women and children. Such exhibitions increased the popularity of *Der Giftpilz* and further expanded its reach to children and adults alike.<sup>4</sup>

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## All 15 Items in the Everyday Encounters with Fascism Collection



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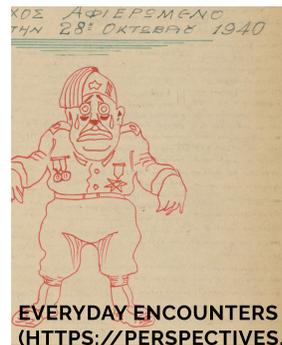
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