

Subject: The Jerry Siegel Family's Response to "Superman's Jaw"

To Whom It May Concern:

Andrew Fogel's essay, "Superman's Jaw," makes a provocative claim: that Superman – the character created by our grandfather Jerry Siegel and artist Joe Shuster – represents an ideal rooted in race science. This argument is historically unfounded, intellectually irresponsible, and a deeply upsetting misrepresentation of both the creators and the creation.

Fogel offers no real evidence of Siegel and Shuster's intent or influences. Instead, he builds a speculative theory almost entirely out of aesthetic observations – jawlines, facial structures, body types – and reads into them a racialized agenda the creators never articulated, endorsed, or implied. He pulls selectively from biographical material, misinterprets basic facts and quotations, and ultimately accuses two Jewish teenagers of embodying the very ideologies they feared and opposed.

To suggest that Siegel and Shuster, two Jewish boys coming of age during the rise of Nazism, somehow aligned with or internalized white supremacist ideals is an extraordinary claim, flatly contradicted by both history and evidence.

One of the more contorted claims, that only Joe Shuster could draw Superman's face because "race was central to their concerns," is utter nonsense. This idea of intent is entirely Fogel's. It's never been said anywhere else and has no facts to back it up.

We are not opposed to reinterpretation. Criticism and reassessment are vital to cultural discourse. But they must be grounded in historical evidence and guided by intellectual honesty. Fogel's piece fails on both counts. It misuses cultural theory to level inflammatory accusations against two Jewish creators and a character who has, for nearly a century, stood as a symbol of resistance, resilience, and hope.

We've been informed by Rabbi Shapiro that Andrew Fogel's essay was not fact-checked by the Skirball Center and was chosen for being "thought provoking." By publishing this piece and awarding it the Friedman Prize, the organization appears to be endorsing the essay's deeply misleading claims. We ask the Skirball Center to take responsible steps to uphold historical truth and to ensure that the voices and values of Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster are not distorted in the name of provocation.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michael and James Larson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Michael" being more prominent.

Michael and James Larson