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Victor Klemperer's Diary Entry about the Impending Boycott of Jewish Businesses
(March 31, 1933)

The picture of the world propagated by Hitler and the NSDAP interpreted the history of humankind as a constant, bitter struggle between superior and inferior races. The regime regarded Jews as the most dangerous enemy of the German people [*Volk*]. According to the Hitler government, Jewish "infiltration" had been poisoning the nation for a long time. They were therefore held accountable for Germany's military, geopolitical, and economic weakness. Hitler took it as his personal historical duty to reverse what he saw as the biological pollution of the German *Volk*, and he aimed to eliminate its racial enemies, especially the Jews. Racial anti-Semitism quickly became the characteristic feature of the Nazi regime, which put all state and party institutions in the service of its racial politics. The first centrally-organized measure against Germany's approximately 500,000 Jews – who, according to Hitler, were part of a destructive world conspiracy – was the countrywide boycott of Jewish stores and businesses organized by Minister of Propaganda Joseph Goebbels. This action also served to mollify the SA and NSDAP's most impatient supporters, who were calling for a quick solution to the so-called Jewish question. The Dresden writer and philologist Victor Klemperer (1881-1960) was among those threatened by the new Nazi racial policy. Klemperer had been born into a Jewish family, but converted to Protestantism back in 1912. On account of his marriage to an "Aryan woman" and his service in the First World War, he enjoyed certain "privileges" during the Nazi period and was thus protected from the most dangerous elements of the state persecution of the Jews. (In 1935, however, he was "relieved" of his professorship at the Technical University of Dresden in accordance with the Law for the Restoration of the Professional Civil Service.) In the following excerpt from a diary entry dated March 31, 1933, Klemperer comments on the imminent boycott of Jewish shops and offers general impressions of the new realities of life in Germany.

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