

Joseph Goebbels, “Why We Are Enemies of the Jews” (July 30, 1928)

Abstract

The Nazis did little to add to the litany of terms already in use by the conservative and radical Right to describe its version of Germanness and its enemies. *Volkstum* (suggesting the unity of the German people), *Deutschtum* [Germanness], *Diktat von Versailles* [Dictate of Versailles], *Schieberrepublik* [Profiteer Republic], *Schmährepublik*, [Reviled Republic], and *Judenrepublik* [Jew Republic], were all part of the political language of the Right during the Weimar era. Antisemitism had also been a common motif of political propaganda, and Hitler’s *Mein Kampf* raised its importance within Nazi ideology. Joseph Goebbels (later Minister of Propaganda) came from the more radical (socialist) side of the National Socialist movement, favoring a second revolution. When it became clear that Hitler was the unequivocal leader of the party, he quickly fell in line, and remained a close confidant of Hitler until their deaths in 1945. The following text from the NSDAP party paper *Der Angriff*, whose publisher Goebbels was, demonstrates both his will to please Hitler and to establish antisemitism as a key tenet of Nazi ideology.

Source

Why are we enemies of the Jews?

We are enemies of the Jews because we are warriors for the freedom of the German people. The Jew is the cause and the beneficiary of our slavery. He has used the social troubles of our broad masses in order to widen the split between the Right and Left among our people, he has split Germany into two halves. Here is the real reason for the loss of the World War on one side and for the betrayal of the revolution on the other side

[...]

The Jew has no interest in the solution of the questions regarding the German fate. He can’t, since he exists only because they remain unsolved. Once you turn the German people into a unified community and give them freedom on the world stage, there would no longer be a place among us for the Jew. He holds the better cards when a nation lives in domestic and foreign slavery than when it is free, hard-working, self-confident and united. The Jew has caused our misery, and today he makes a living from it.

That is the reason why as nationalists and as socialists we are enemies of the Jew. He has tainted our race, spread moral rot, undermined our morality, and broken our strength. Thanks to him we are the pariahs of the entire world today. As long as we were Germans, he was a leper among us. Since we have forgotten our Germanic character, he has triumphed over us and our future.

The Jew is the malleable demon of decline. Wherever he scents debris and rot, he comes out of hiding to begin his criminal butchery among the people. He wears the mask of those whom he wants to deceive, pretends to be the friend of this victim, and before the unsuspecting victim knows it, he has broken his neck.

The Jew is uncreative. He does not produce anything, he merely trades in goods. With rags, clothes, pictures, precious stones, stocks and bonds, shares in mining operations, people and states. And everything he trades in he has stolen somewhere at some point. While he is launching an attack on a state, he is a revolutionary, yet as soon as he is in possession of power, he preaches peace and order so

he can leisurely devour his prey.

What has antisemitism to do with socialism? I'm asking in turn: what has the Jew to do with socialism? Socialism is the doctrine of work. Who ever saw a Jew work and not plunder, steal, sponge (*schmarotzen*) and profit from the sweat of another man's brow? As socialists we are enemies of the Jews, because we see in the Hebrew the incarnation of capitalism, i.e. the abuse of the goods belonging to the people.

What has antisemitism to do with nationalism? I'm asking in turn: what has the Jew to do with nationalism? Nationalism is the doctrine of blood, of race. The Jew is the enemy and the destroyer of unity created by blood, the deliberate destroyer of our race. As nationalists we are enemies of the Jews, because in the Hebrew we see the eternal enemy of our national honor and our national freedom.

"But Jews are human beings, too." Certainly, and none of us has ever doubted it. We only doubt that he is a decent human being. He doesn't belong with us. He lives according to different inner and outer laws. The fact that he is a human being is not a good enough reason for us to allow him to oppress and bully us in the most inhuman manner. He is indeed a human being – but what kind? If someone beat your mother in the face with a whip would you then say: "Thank you, he's only human?" That is no human being, that is a brute (*Unmensch*)! How much worse has the Jew done to our mother Germany and how much worse does he still do today?

[...]

Antisemitism is un-Christian. So that means that it is Christian to look on as the Jew cuts bootstraps from our skin and to let him add insult to injury. Being a Christian means: Love your neighbor as you love thyself! My neighbor is of the same nationality and blood as I. If I love him, then I must hate his enemies. He who thinks like a German must despise the Jew. One results from the other.

Christ himself once saw that love is not the answer in all situations. When he came across the jobbers and profiteers in the temple, he didn't say: "Children, love each other!" Instead he took a whip and drove the pack away. We are enemies of the Jews because we stand up for the German people. The Jew is our greatest misfortune.

That is going to change, as sure as we are Germans.

Source: Louis L. Snyder, ed., *Hitler's Third Reich: A Documentary History*, Chicago: Nelson-Hall, 1981, 53–54. Edited by GHI staff.

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