

Kirsten Eckerman was ten years old when the Nazis came to power in 1933:

“I remember my father’s initial excitement over Hitler. My father and mother had both suffered like many German families as a consequence of the First World War....I know that there were a great many working-class Germans who blamed Jews for their predicament. That was because they had been listening to Hitler and he had exploited their fears to further himself politically, though of course there were obvious problems and maybe Jews were to blame for some of them. Many factories, workhouses and businesses in the streets were under Jewish ownership. When the men lost their jobs they obviously blamed the Jewish bosses and there was that resentment that Hitler and the Nazis exploited. ...Hitler considered Germany to be a racial sewer and he would shout and rage about how the inferior races, if tolerated, would destroy the Germanic race and its purity. ... ‘Germany for Germans’ he would shout at every meeting and he would do so with an immense depth of emotion. He would almost make you cry and he touched you in a way that no one else could.”

-Kristin Eckerman, edited by Tim Heath, “The Third Reich is Born” (2017) excerpt