

## Trudy Gold and Anita Lasker-Wallfisch | Kristallnacht

- [Trudy Gold] Well, good evening everyone and welcome. And of course, tonight is a very, very solemn night because tonight is the 84th anniversary of Kristallnacht. Just to give you a little bit of background, but as I was discussing with Anita before, of course, we now know the pattern, because we can look back with the hindsight of history. And certainly, when I'm going to talk to Anita about her own experiences, they weren't yet aware of what had happened. So, as you all know, between 1933 and 1941, the Nazis had a policy of the legal, social, and political exclusion of the Jews from German society. It's absolutely extraordinary. They were under 1% of the German population. In many ways, their most productive and loyal citizens. But when Hitler took power in 1933, he begins this process. He wants a Reich that is free of Jews. And by 1936, he's already had the Nuremberg, depriving the Jews of livelihood. In 1937, the Aryanization of businesses. By this time, the majority of Jews in Germany had lost their way of earning a living. They were intimidated. There were hundreds and hundreds of legislation against them. The problem was, many of them wanted to get out, but the problem was, after the Wall Street crash, many countries had closed the doors. So in 1938, in the summer of 1938, a conference was held at Evian. And at that conference, it was decided to discuss the plight of German Jewery. And basically, it was summed up by the Australian delegate who said, "We don't have a race problem. We, so we, so we don't want to import one." The British delegate actually apologised to the German government for what he called an unwarranted interference in the affairs and sovereign state. They're not going to do anything, which Goebbels wrote in his diary, "We savages are better than the so-called civilised world because we say what we're going to do." And it gives Hitler the nod. And beginning, that's autumn, he begins to expel from Germany, Jews who'd come to Germany after 1914. The Ostjuden. 18,000 of them are expelled in the Autumn of 1938. And one of those families was called Grynszpan. And they sent a postcard to their son who was studying in Paris, and he shot vom Rath, the attache in the German embassy. And it led to an organised state programme, organised by Goebbels. And I'm going to start by asking Anita, who was a teenager at the time, what are your memories of that night, and what happened to your family?

- [Anita Lasker-Wallfisch] Well, on that night, I didn't notice anything. It was the next morning that I, I heard what had happened, and I went out and look, it's unbelievable, impossible to describe what was going on outside in Berlin. I mean, the streets were running with alcohol, and of course, everywhere, broken glass. And yeah, I mean, it was the beginning of the end and I had a phone call from my parents. I should come home immediately, which I did.

- [Trudy] And what happened to your parents that night? Didn't your

father have an interesting experience?

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Well, that was the beginning of arresting Jews.

- [Trudy] Yeah.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] It was very important experience was that in Breslau was a violin dealer who was a great friend of the family, and he was super decent family. What he did was the most amazing. He went into his Mercedes, which was a very unusual thing to have a Mercedes, went to our house, picked up my father, and drove him around all day long and never stopped. So, my father was one of the very few people who was actually not arrested and put in a concentration camp on that day. Yes, there have been some Germans who were very decent.

- [Trudy] And will you tell us a little bit about your family?

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Well, I come from a typical German culture, voucher, family, you know. We had a, we had a tradition, for instance, every Saturday we had to, we had two sisters. Saturday afternoon, we have to be at home. And father would read from the, and culture was-

- [Trudy] Yeah.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah.

- [Trudy] Would you explain what the word "bildung" means? Because it doesn't exist in English, does it?

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Well, I can't really explain it if it doesn't exist.

- [Trudy] It's culture.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah, culture, it was, it was normal that you know your Classics, you know who wrote what, and it's just culture.

- [Trudy] So, your family were a very cultivated, well-educated family.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah. And what, another interesting thing my father said, very wise words, "Put as much as you can into your heads, because nobody can take that away from you." Very true words.

- [Trudy] Music was a very important part of your life.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah. Well, my mother was a violinist, and music, culture, literature was normal.

- [Trudy] Mm.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] It was normal.

- [Trudy] So, you really did live the enlightenment idea.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah, absolutely.

- [Trudy] And then of course, the horror began, your sister managed to get out.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Well, my sister was a great Zionist. She was absolutely convinced it was the only thing to do. And she was very high up in the movement and this movement. And it, I think it was her job to collect a few children on the way to England on the way to what was then Palestine. But by the time she arrived in, in London, the war had broken out. So she, she spent the rest of the war in, in England.

- [Trudy] And you actually were arrested in the war, weren't you? Well, as a criminal rather than the Jew.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah. I mean, that is a very interesting sideline on the German law as it was. What happened by then, that we had to go to work, I can't call it slave labour, but it was obligated to work. And I was sent to a paper factory. My sister was sent to, you know, where you put rubbish and rubbish?

- [Trudy] We call rubbish, yeah.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Well, she got very ill. And yeah, we finished up both of us in a paper factory and in that, and we were both fluent in French, just, just by the way, because it was very important. In that factory worked a lot of French prisoners of war, and it didn't take us very long to make contact with them. And because we devised absolutely a method somehow to try and escape, run away, not sit and wait 'til some idiot comes to collect me in order to kill me. That didn't come out, fit into my repertoire. So, we started forging papers also for the prisoners to escape. And in the end, we forged papers for ourselves. Completely crazy idea. We didn't even ... there were papers for French workers in, in Germany. We didn't even know whether there was, were female workers. We just tried desperately to somehow get away. And so, equipped with these ridiculous papers and very flowery names, we went to the railway station in Breslau to take our train to Paris with the view of going into the unoccupied zone of France, because very positive things happened in the unoccupied zone of France. There was a possibility to hide or to save yourself. Anyway, we didn't get very far because by the time we, we got to the railway station and the Gestapo was waiting for us. So, I think they've been suspecting us for a long time. And so we were all arrested in Breslau, never got anywhere out of Breslau. But the lucky thing is that I was then classified as a criminal rather than a Jew, because I'd actually

committed three crimes: forging papers, trying to help the enemy, and trying to escape or something like that. I'm not sure, but I think one of the colleagues of my father's who was a lawyer, must have known how crazy the law was in those days, and somehow managed to have us categorised as criminals rather than Jews. Because criminals get court case. Jews don't count. Jews don't count. With the result that I spent a whole year in prison, which was complete saviour, because all the other people that were arrested with us were sent to Auschwitz and nobody survived.

- [Trudy] And then there was a letter that you wrote from prison that, that came into your life again, which is very sad.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah. This is a long story. I mean, while I was in prison ... As a very young child, I was in prison. There were people in Breslau who were very helpful ,,, obviously, I gather that from the letter I wrote ... and visited us. I don't know exactly. But I wrote on my way to Auschwitz, I wrote a letter to one of the people who helped us, thanking them and preparing myself to be killed because Auschwitz was synonymous with, with death. Anyway. Yeah.

- [Trudy] And then there was that terrible time, of course, in Auschwitz where- your music-

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah. But when, then we had our court case, but as soon as we were sentenced to ridiculous sentences, we're hoping to have a long sentence because we already knew it was better to be in prison than in the concentration camp. The moment the sentence was pronounced, we were back in the hands of the Gestapo. So, we were both sent separately to, my sister was sent to penitentiary, and I remained in prison, but not very long, because very soon then we were called to go to Auschwitz. And by that time we knew what was going on in Auschwitz.

- [Trudy] And then of course it was the, the women's orchestra. And somehow-

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yes, somehow I was very lucky because the welcome ceremony in Auschwitz is that you're actually, you are in a very big block, and one of the prisoner's job is to, you know, to save your hair, tattoo a number, and obviously have a conversation with you because they're all prisoners. And this girl who in whose charge I was said, "You come from, how's the war going?" But she didn't know that I didn't know anything about the war. And what then came this ridiculous conversation, "What did you do before the war?" And I said, "Well, I used to play the cello." "Fantastic," she said, "You'll be saved." This is how, as then entered into the women's orchestra, who at that moment did not have a cello. So it was like a saviour, you know? Yeah, that's how I started my career as a cellist in Auschwitz.

- [Trudy] And of course, you've written about it in that extraordinary book of yours, "Inherit the Truth." Going on. And then of course, it was Belsen and finally, can we call it liberation? But, and you were, and you were a witness at the Auschwitz, at the Belsen trial, which must have been very, very strange.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah. Well, I was on the other side of the fence, which was quite nice. What was the question?

- [Trudy] About being, actually being a witness? Because you had the rule of law again, after everything the Nazis did. The point was at Belsen, they tried to give them justice with a defence yet-

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah, well, I was, were we talking about the trial now?

- [Trudy] Yes. The trial.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] I, because I didn't really understand things correctly at the time, I was, surprised is not the right word. Why they had a proper, proper trial.

- [Trudy] Mm.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] You know, as if they were ordinary criminals. But I did understand that at one point, you have to go back to normality. You can't go on in that willy nilly way of murdering people forever. So, that was the beginning of quasi normality. But it was quite difficult to swallow that they get a, get a trial. But I mean, it was a really a short trial because they knew that the people were sitting there were guilty.

- [Trudy] And then after the appalling madness, you finally came to England where you built up an extraordinary career. And-

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Well, I was just very lucky. But I mean, the thing, I think, important thing is that when my sister and I came to England, we thought that we would change the world. The world, they know what has happened, that'll be the end of anti-Semitism. And we had a very, very naive idea of what is going to happen afterwards. Well, it turned out very differently. First of all, nobody asked us any questions. We sort of fell into a hole of silence, which now I can understand it better than then. And yeah.

- [Trudy] How do you understand it? Do you think it was embarrassment? Or-

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Where do you start asking questions? Yeah, it was embarrassment. And not knowing what to do with funny people like us.

- [Trudy] Because that seems to be the experience of many people who'd been to hell.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah.

- [Trudy] Nobody wanted to listen.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] I can even understand now, better than I did then, that it is not easy to ask any questions. "See, I hear you've been in Auschwitz. Tell me what was, what was it like?" You know, it somehow is not a (speaks German). So, yeah, that's how it was. But it was for everybody like that. We all thought that we would change the world, you know?

- [Trudy] And then of course, you met again and married your husband, Peter, who was also a musician. But you knew him in Breslau, didn't you?

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah, I knew, we were at school together.

- [Trudy] And then you married-

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] And we married by chance, met by chance. Everything was by chance.

- [Trudy] Yeah.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah.

- [Trudy] And, and of course, you had two children. One is now a very famous musician. Your daughter's a psychotherapist. Children, grandchildren. Music runs in the family, music runs in the blood, doesn't it?

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Absolutely.

- [Trudy] And will you talk a little bit ... I mean, I, I asked you before, you've had a, you have had an extraordinary career. Not only the work you've done, but the people whose lives you've touched. I mean, musically, you always tell me off when I say this, there must have been a couple of things that really stick out.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Well, I was very lucky to be a member of the English Chamber Orchestra. The English Chamber Orchestra had a completely international career.

- [Trudy] You co-founded it, I believe.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Well, co-founded it. It started a very peculiar way. I mean, the men who actually led it in the end invented it, was

Emanuel Hurwitz. And by that time, I lived in a sort of music commune here in London, can't quite remember. And he said to me, "I'm thinking of, of creating a chamber orchestra. Would you like to be a member of it?" I said, "No." I, I'm already belonged to so many orchestras and nobody makes any money anyway. Anyway, cut a long story short, he said, "Come on, it'll be fun." Well, okay, okay, okay. But all the other orchestras I belong to died, yeah, very shortly after they were founded. But the English Chamber Orchestra became a very important, important institution. And I was very lucky that in the course of my career with English Chamber Orchestra, I met really outstanding people, outstanding artists, and, and seen the world and be paid for it.

- [Trudy] You've seen a lot of the world, haven't you? And of course, King Charles, who was then Prince Charles, was the patron.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah. Prince Charles. Ever since then, I have a very close relationship with what is now our king.

- [Trudy] Yeah.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] And because funnily enough, he played the cello. He learned to play the cello.

- [Trudy] And of course when he visited Yad Vashem, he taught all about you, which, I thought was won-

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah, and people couldn't quite understand that. But people don't know, of course, that I have a relationship because he was a patron of the English Chamber Orchestra. We knew, I knew him from that side, not, not the royal side.

- [Trudy] Okay. The other question, when, it was when your book came out that people did want you to tell the story. There was a change, wasn't it, about the 80s, there was a change. People wanted to know.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah.

- [Trudy] I think it began in the 60s, the late 60s, but it's really by the 80s that the book's come out. And when you talk about how you decided to go to Germany, because that was taboo for a while, wasn't it?

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] I decided to go to Germany ... Now, back to English Chamber Orchestra, yeah. We, every month we got a sort of schedule, what we are doing. So America, Italy, Germany. Anita doesn't go to Germany. It's no problem, send somebody else. But this time, there were two towns mentioned. One is called Soltau, the other Celle. Very near Belsen. And there I had absolutely conviction. I, I would like to go and see what's happened to the, to Belsen. And for once I,

I phoned the orchestra, and I said, "Look, I'm coming with you." And oh my God, they were very scared that I'm going to shoot everybody. I said, "No." I wasn't even going to talk to anybody. I just want to see what has become of that, of that camp. And that's where all sorts of things happened that completely changed my life around. It's a, it's a very long story, really. I can't go into all the details, but when we arrived in Germany, we had to wait for the music stands to arrive. They hadn't arrived yet. So, I was quite pleased that everything works a 100% in Germany. And as I was sitting there waiting with the, my colleagues for the stands to arrive, somehow news got, news got around that this woman who, who's sitting there smoking, she was in the camp. Anyhow, cut a long story short, I was approached by a young man who said to me, in German, obviously, "I hear you want to go to the camp," because you need a car to get to Belsen, "Can I drive you?" Now, I've come to Germany with absolutely sure that I wasn't going to talk to anybody. So, I was in that position. There is this young man standing in front of me offering to drive me. What am I going to say to him? So, my first question was, how old are you? Because age was very, that was in the late 80s, you know, age was important. He was born after the war. So I had that, thank God. I said, "Okay." Well, let me tell you that I'm still friends with him. I mean, he is retired. So that was my reintroduction, which actually communicating with Germans, which resulted in the fact that I think I have been able to make quite a lot of contribution on that side. Especially with what you call it, the, the in Belsen, since they now have the most unbelievably fantastic exhibition.

- [Trudy] Mm-hmm.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] And I was involved with every one of them. So, in the end, it, we had a positive outcome.

- [Trudy] Yeah. Now, you've told your story. You have incredible impact. I mean, I, I remember, I think one of the most extraordinary experiences in my life is when I went with you to Innsbruck, if you remember, where you were awarded 16 doctorates, every department of the university, gave Anita a doctorate. I should tell you, there is a box with all her doctorates and gongs, etc. And what, what was incredible is the President of Austria got one and you got 16. So I know, when you, but I suppose it must, what-

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] To me, it's just a joke.

- [Trudy] I know. But what I think must have been, I know you, you, you often say to me that you sit, you sit outside yourself.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Completely.

- [Trudy] But when you were actually addressing the German Parliament a few years ago ...



- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah.

- [Trudy] that must have been an extraordinary experience.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah, well, I also said, "What the hell am I doing here now?" And I was having a chat with Frau Merkel, and, you know, met all these, yeah. But because I, yeah, I have a way of being a spectator to these ridiculous situations. What am I doing here at the German Parliament now? Anita Lasker, who was in Berlin at that very night, you know, the 9th of November, when they smashed everything up. Now I'm speaking in Parliament. Yeah. Well, maybe it was meant, you know, I haven't volunteered for anything. I just sit at home in my chair and wait for things to happen.

- [Trudy] But they do happen, don't they?

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Well, maybe it's a good thing that I actually can speak German and I can communicate with the Germans in their language.

- [Trudy] And before we get onto the whole issue of where you think things are going, now, I must tell you, because I'm crazy about history, in this room is a piano. Please talk about it. Please.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] That piano belonged to Stefan Zweig and, and truly is going crazy about it. It's, it's completely scratched, in a terrible condition. What can I tell you about it?

- [Trudy] How, how it-

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Well, I know the family.

- [Trudy] Yeah.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] The Zweig family. Alba- Altmann family who married, you know, Zweig. And yeah, I inherited that piano. What can I do? It's now standing in my, in my house. And, but I'm not really so convinced that Stefan Zweig played on it. I don't think so. I think it was just a piece of furniture.

- [Trudy] Yes. I don't, but I mean, it's, it's you and, it's you and the things that happened to you.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah.

- [Trudy] I mean, post-war history's bumped into you, hasn't it?

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Strange things happened to me on the way to the forum. That I can say with conviction.

- [Trudy] I, I was picking up your album a few weeks ago, one of your albums. And a picture fell out. And I said, "What's this?" Because I recognised the Kennedy family, and evidently you've gone, you played for them in Paris, Pierre Salinger's birthday party. I mean, you've got to write the post-war. It's just extraordinary. The kind of-

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah.

- [Trudy] the byways and the kind of-

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Strange.

- [Trudy] extraordinary stories. You've been at the centre of.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] It's true.

- [Trudy] And also, I think the, you do have a huge impact on people, whether you like it or not. I know you don't like it. You don't like me to say it.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] I doubt it.

- [Trudy] No, no, it works. But now, should we come onto how we feel about today? So, Holocaust education, you, you decided, you, you said very strongly, you and your sister decided that it just must never happen to anyone else again. And you've, and I, I know the impact that you have on people. So my question is, where, is there anything that we could have done? Because frankly, the world is going through a very bad patch at the moment. And again, populism is on the rise. Nothing like Germany. I'm not even suggesting that. But people, again, seem to be quite sheep-like. With your wisdom, have you got anything? I mean, what do you think's gone wrong, basically? Why didn't we learn anything? Or did we?

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] No, I don't think we learned anything. But we seem to forget that butchering Jews is not nothing new. I mean, it's been going on for years in, in Russia, only we didn't talk about it. Only this time it happened in Europe. So we, we have to talk about it.

- [Trudy] And it happened to the most so-called civilised countries.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] I know. So I think, I mean, I don't know. You told me, I think they'll never forgive us a Holocaust.

- [Trudy] Because that was a quote of Howard Jacobs.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah. Which I think is very true, because now we have to talk about it. But we still don't really like these peculiar people, Jews. who are these people? Well, it's quite difficult. It's to you, I don't know if that's the solution, but one way forward would

be to have a place where you can actually study Jewish history. Where do these peculiar people come from? I can tell you one thing. I have a lot to do with schools in Germany, and I speak to history teachers who weren't even aware of the fact that there are Sephardic and Ashkenazi Jews. I mean, unless you know how you can't just talk about Jews. Jews are a mass of different people.

- [Trudy] Mm. I, I think one of the problems is that the Holocaust, in a way, it's taken out of Jewish history. It's almost seen as a, as a separate entity.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah.

- [Trudy] And when people study the Holocaust, and they do in most schools, quite badly, but they do, there, as you said, there's not enough emphasis on Jewish history at all. I mean, where did, who are these people? 5,000 years of it. So of course, I totally agree with you on this. But nevertheless, I've got to say that when you speak and when some of your colleagues speak, they do make an, an enormous impact. So. there seems to be a gap somehow. So. your solution would be more Jewish history. What do you think about all the memorials? Do you think they ever work?

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Memorials don't work at all. Waste of waste of space. Especially the last that was suggested here. Yeah. But I mean, people have got their own personal, his- interest sometimes in play. Yeah. It doesn't, I mean, I wish I could. Yeah, I was think teaching history, teaching ... if it's possible to explain what Jews are, I mean.

- [Trudy] Well, I think there's a lot of, there could be a lot of understanding.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah.

- [Trudy] If they saw the world-

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] If you could understand who these peculiar people are, then you can decide, I don't like these people. But you don't have to murder them. You can dislike them, but leave them. We've also been invented and live on this earth.

- [Trudy] And I think what is also extraordinary when you talk about Britain, I would suggest that the German and Austrian Jews who came to this country, and I think the same is true of America, they really, they did something very special to the culture of Britain. I mean, what would it have been like without the contribution of German and Austrian Jews? It's absolutely extraordinary. And I still, what was it that on one level there were these two nations? What was it Hyner said, the two ethical nations can make a new Jerusalem? And certainly

your family was attracted to it, wasn't, weren't they before the horror?

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah, of course. Most assimilated German Jews were attracted to it. And then became the First War where the Jews, you know, volunteered like crazy to, with a hope that when we meet in the trenches, we become brothers. We know what happened.

- [Trudy] Your father presumably fought in One.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Of course. Iron cross.

- [Trudy] He won the Iron Cross, of course.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] And my father always said, "The Germans can't be that stupid to follow that Hitler." Well, he was wrong.

- [Trudy] Because he was a man of the enlightenment.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] They were that stupid.

- [Trudy] And did not, what was it stupid maybe, you know, to, you have to have a certain kind of bent of mind prior to the show up to understand this need to follow. Because one of the areas I've always found most difficult to deal with is how well-educated so many of the monsters were. And that kind of-

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah, but they didn't dirty their hands, you see.

- [Trudy] They planned it.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] They did not dirty the hands. They gave the, the murdering, the blood that was spilled.

- [Trudy] But how do you account for a monster like Mengele? He had two doctorates.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah. Doesn't-

- [Trudy] That's the problem, isn't it? The human condition. We just don't know. We just-

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] I mean, the people who sat at the Evian conference, they were all educated people. Discussed seriously, how can we get rid of these Jews? Yeah. Well, can't understand it.

- [Trudy] But you did say something to me very interesting a few weeks ago when you said, we were talking actually about the Eichmann trial. I don't know if you remember. And you said, you never, you, you don't believe anyone should ever take a life.

- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah. I think murdering is wrong.
- [Trudy] Even, even in those cases, the State shouldn't take a life?
- [Lasker-Wallfisch] It's a difficult question.
- [Trudy] Well, I know-
- [Lasker-Wallfisch] But from the moral point of view to take somebody's life is wrong.
- [Trudy] Hmm. And also, the other thing that I've found about you, you don't like people to pronounce, for example, on how people should have behaved in Auschwitz. That really makes you angry, doesn't it?
- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Unless you've been there-
- [Trudy] I'm not.
- [Lasker-Wallfisch] don't even try and give advice.
- [Trudy] Mm.
- [Lasker-Wallfisch] It's, it is not imaginable. And whatever book, I mean, perhaps Primo Levi was the only one who could actually give you some idea. But what it was actually like to be in this place is, yeah, for somebody who wasn't, he will never know. And he doesn't have to. I'm not even nervous. In the Holocaust education of children, I don't think it is that important to tell children how we have suffered and what terrible things happen. They don't have to suffer with us. Change your ways now. Don't hate people. Don't ... Talk to each other. Celebrate your differences, as Hugo Green stated, which is I think a wonderful, a wonderful sentence. Celebrate your differences. Talk to each other.
- [Trudy] Hmm.
- [Lasker-Wallfisch] Yeah. This is all the wisdom I think I can allow today.
- [Trudy] If only there were more people who thought as you did, that, yeah. I'm going to see what questions we've got now, because I could imagine quite a lot of people are going to want to ask things.

#### Q & A and Comments

- The first few had, this is from Gil.

- My grandfather, Fritz Gold Schmidt of Breslau, was rounded up on Kristallnacht, later to be released with apologies that he didn't know he was such a renowned Jew, who fought during World War I. Of course, after being moved to he and my grandmother, Theo, were killed in Auschwitz.

- I, oh, this is, she's saying Anita's sister Renate were friends with our cousin Renate Bial in Breslau. Renate escaped on the Kindertransport.

Q: What is the name of Anita's book?

A: "Inherits the Truth."

- This is from Helen. The only thing that history teaches us is that history never teaches us.

- Elaine. Anti-Semitism is not a Jewish problem. It's not about what we ought to teach the world or what we ought to do. That has never worked and never will. It's not about who are these people. I hear the intellectuals of Germany wrote a book around '33 about the contributions of German Jews to the country. Notice that it didn't help. It's about non-Jews tackling their own attitudes. It's their issue. We can only pride ourselves and teach our children to have pride in self knowledge. Do you want to answer that?

- Yeah, actually, I think I had something similar, a letter or something, and I said, well over to you, it's your problem. Not, not ours. Quite true. I agree.

- Yes, it is. The problem is it isn't a Jewish problem on one level, but the Jews have suffered from it. So, consequently, I think I would go middle on that.

- Now, this is from Helen. My maternal grandparents lived in Little Village called Nord. They related that everyone knew everyone in their village. On the night of Kristallnacht, the police came to their home, apologised that they had to do this, and proceeded to smash their possessions. That's, but you, you, you were talking about Kristallnacht the other night when you said, how did it happen in all the villages?

- How was it, how was it? It was so well-orchestrated. Somebody in a village somewhere, God knows where, in Bavaria. How did he know about Ernst vom Rath and, and Grynspan, etc? That's a genius orchestrated that.

- But it's Goebbels-

- But they had a lovely time. They could smash things up, you know.

Yeah, let's, yes, some of these genius.

- Some of these descriptions from the foreign press are how mothers were holding up their little children so they could see what was happening. Yeah, absolutely extraordinary. It became like an evil circus.

- Madness.

- It was a madness, wasn't it?

- Absolutely.

- You were very young at the night of the burning of the books in 1933, of course.

- I don't remember that.

- I wonder, did your parents talk about it at all?

- No.

- Jonathan. Erich Maria Remarque, in exile in New York in the late 30s, was asked if he missed the culture and the language. Replied, "Not really, but then I'm not Jewish."

- Again.

- Erich. The man who wrote "All Quiet-

- Erich Maria Remarque?

- Yeah, he, he, he asked if he missed the cult culture and the language, replied, "Not really, but then I'm not Jewish." Saying that I suppose only a Jew would love German culture. That's, that's a fascinating comment.

- And this is from John.

Q: What role did Alma Rose have in Auschwitz?

- As far as I'm concerned, she was obviously, a very important role. I mean the, the interesting thing is that Alma, who was just a Jew, I mean to us, was addressed in Auschwitz, as Frau Alma, so there was a sort of ... respect, I suppose is the word. She played a very, very special role. She was respected. Frau Alma. And when she died a mysterious death, we had to, to walk around the, you know, around her body. And they were quite upset. I mean the place where millions of people were killed. She had a very special role. After I'd done a lot about Alma, the movement, all sorts of memorials and things.

- And was her father was in London?

- Yeah. Well, I must be the last person in the world who actually spoke to her father. Because Alma always said to us her biggest praise when we could play reasonably well, which we hardly ever did. She said, "Oh, this was almost good enough for my father to hear." If any of you survive and you go to London, my father lives in London. I was the one who came to London. And my first thing that I did is to try and find out where does the old horse, he live? Well he lives in Black East. He's very old, very ill. And if you come and visit him, which I wanted to, be very careful. So I did visit him. I spent several hours with him. I've got a lovely picture, which he gave me, with his hand writes, etc. I spent several hours with him and told him all about his daughter. Leaving out a lot of things. But I made him happy.

- And your, one of your great-grandchildren is named for Alma. Yeah?

- Yeah.

- Which I think is wonderful.

- Alma, yeah.

- And Jennifer's asking,

Q: Can you talk more about your part of the orchestra?

A: Well, I dunno. 'Cause you know, we were the showpiece. We were the showpiece. Supposing the Red Cross came to have a look with the, this camp, prison camp is properly run. They're not going to show the gas chambers. They're going to show us. We were quite reasonably well-dressed and yeah, it was a complete bamboozling of people. Yeah. They've got music here and orchestra and look at the look quite reasonably dressed and yeah. They did not show the gas chambers.

- This is from Jennifer-

Q: Is there a particular composer whose music brings you the most solace when pained by memories or despair?

A: No, no, I don't.

- If you knew Anita, as I have the privilege of knowing, she's one of the strongest people I've ever met in my life. And I can't round up that to her when I've got to, when I've got a moan. Okay. I'm not, you can't even ask you whose music you prefer to play?

- No.



- Because that's-

- No. But there are pieces that I miss. For instance, every year, for many years, I, I played the Massive Passion.

- Mm.

- Yeah. Certain things I miss. But I don't play anymore and I don't hear well, and I mean, okay, that's in the past. I'm nearly a 100 old. Leave me alone.

- Yes. Are there any more? Jennifer's saying she's in awe, thank you so much. Are there any other questions?

- Pardon?

Q: Were you aware of the suicide of Stefan Lux? L-U-X.

A: No.

- No. Tell us more, Monty-

Q: Your favourite author?

A: I can't even say that. I haven't got a special favourite author. I mean, I like Stefan Zweig, what he writes and no.

Q: And you still read Goethe? Yes.

A: I don't read Goethe anymore. I know Goethe.

- You know it, you know him. In fact, Anita, had said it was in a school in Germany, she actually got cross with the students 'cause they didn't know the reference. Correct?

- Yeah.

- Oh, and this is from Nicki-

Q: Did your sister ever migrate to Israel? Yes.

A: My eldest sister went to Israel, yes, but not my second. Not the middle one, no.

- The littlest one went to France.

- Yeah.

- Catherine. My parents always referred to the culture and neatly referred to as, you better pronounce that, the Alte Deutsche Couture.

- Yeah.
- My father came from Berlin and they had every Sunday in their home chamber music, piano, violin, cello and viola.
- Typical, yeah.
- I was also told the people who settled in Berlin after the Russian Revolution were looked down upon and referred to as (indistinct).
- Yeah, yeah.
- You just said that's typical. Was that a-
- Typical, absolutely typical.
- And of course when so many German and Austrian Jews settled in this area, you could hear chamber music from many of the homes, couldn't you?
- Yeah.
- Yeah. They brought it with them.
- Which part of it.
- Is Breslau now in Poland?
- Yes.
- Yes, it is.
- Wroclaw.
- And you went back, didn't you? A television programme made-
- Well, I went back several times.
- Yeah.
- Yeah.
- That was such an interesting Jewish city though, wasn't it? So many-
- Well yes. Everything happened in Breslau somehow.
- So many fascinating characters came from there as well.
- And it was a meeting of culture and business.

- Mm.

- Obviously was an interesting, interesting time.

- Q: Did you play with Karol Ahlshell's orchestra?

- A: No. No.

- Did you know Alice Herz-Sommer?

- Very well. Great friend. Yeah, certainly. I mean, I visited her for years. Every Saturday, I visit Alice and we played Scrabble. But we did not, not for winning, just for the beauty of the language. She was an unbelievable person. She was such a, such an optimist. You know, when she had that terrible business of her son dying. She even found a way of turning that into something positive. I'm glad he does not have to experience old age. Yeah, well I saw the day before she died, practically. I still saw her. Yeah.

- Q: Ilana wants to know if you ever played Wagner.

- A: Yes. Siegfried indeed. But very often with the English orchestra. It's a good piece of music. You know, Wagner, that's a case for itself.

- Yeah, that's a whole programme.

- That's a whole programme, yes, Wagner. But I mean he was certainly a genius and he was an awful person. And maybe one shouldn't know about musicians, who they are. I don't know how nice a man Beethoven was. I don't know. Don't want to know. I know about his music. And I mean, Wagner was a genius, but I mean evil, evil man and a dishonest man. Because Wagner, for instance, had to have his pet conductor, whose name was Levi. Now he was Jewish. He had to conduct his staff.

- Oh, this is Rochelle. Even your voice is a wonderful tone. Jonathan's saying, I think Wagner would turn in his grave if he knew Jews played his music. But he did, didn't he?

- Yes. I mean, it's silly to, yeah, well I mean, people entitled to their own opinions.

- Did you know Gunther Lewy from Breslau? He's 99. He wrote a lot about Jews in Germany.

- What is the name?

- Gunther Lewy. L-E-W-Y. Lewy.

- Lewy. No. No. Gunther Levy.

- Is that meant to be Levy?

- Gunther Levy? No, I didn't.

- Yeah. Okay. I think that's all the questions, isn't it? So let me thank Anita so much for doing this tonight. Giving up her time and she still works tirelessly. And we have to go on, don't we? Because even if we just have to do it.

- Yup.

- Just at least have a positive note to end on. Yeah? You have made a difference. Yes, you have. You made a difference to a lot of people. And I suppose that's all we can do.

- Yeah.

- So thank you so much for tonight. It's been a great privilege as ever. And I thank you all for listening. And also, it's important to remember that day, that night, the night of the smash at the, the broken glass. And I should mention historically it was the anniversary of the, of the Munich putsch. It was also, the 10th was actually Luther's birthday. And of course it was then that the Berlin Wall came down. So.

- A pregnant date.

- Okay. And there's been some people saying thank you. So Emily, I think we'll leave it there. And thank you very much.