

Trudy Gold | Warnings and Sirens From History The Nazis and the Dismemberment of Democracy

- Morning, Jude, morning, Trude.

- Good morning, Wendy.

- How are you?

- I'm okay.

- Good, good. It's freezing in New York.

- It is, it is freezing in New York.

- Are you all safe?

- Yes, thank you, we're back here. So good morning to all our participants. I just wanted to say that we changed the programme this week because I didn't feel that we couldn't leave last week's event, we couldn't ignore last week's event, so we've changed the programme slightly, and so now over to you, Trudy.

- Right, thank you very, very much, Wendy. I feel very, very strongly that history doesn't exactly repeat itself, but having said that, I think we are going through profound changes in our society and what I thought would be important would be to actually look at, I suppose, the most extreme attack that democracy has ever faced, that of Nazi Germany, and just ask ourselves some of the big questions. Quite often we discussed, really, it's the nature of people we're talking about. Please remember that history isn't an adequate discipline enough because the kind of events that we're going through now make us question the nature of people and I really believe that if we don't go further in this kind of debate, we are doomed to keep on making the same mistakes.

I am fed up going through the great museums of the world, the great anti-racist museums, the holocaust museums, and always on the wall there's Santayana's quote, "Those of us who don't learn the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them." It's such a platitude. However, I think there are certain questions that before I begin to look at what happened in Germany I do want to pose certain questions for us to consider. Now, this is not a full list, I'm sure many of you yourselves, because obviously we are all glued to our television sets, we're looking at what is happening in the world around us and we're trying to come up with answers. So all I can do now is make some suggestions. So I remember these other suggestions as to what went wrong in Germany. So I'm starting this way. How did one of the best educated so-called civilised countries in the world elect into power a totalitarian, anti-Semitic, racist party who had proclaimed their hatred and their will to power?

Now, I'm going to stand by that. Germany, look, we spent quite a lot of time looking at the achievements of German science, German art, German literature, the land of Gerter, of Shela, of the great musicians, just think how science had flourished in Germany, just think how all the wonderful ideas, sociology, psychology, in the German speaking world because I'm going to include Vienna, the absolute worship almost of Bildung. So when it rent asunder in Germany, it was even more difficult to take. And my second point, why, in the end, did so few people put real value on personal freedom? The next question, and this is an important one because it doesn't just apply to Nazism, it applies to any closed system, any ideology, I'm often frightened when people say, "I've got the answers," and that can be any kind of ideological answer, what is missing is flexibility of thought, so my question is why do ruthless ideologies take root?

Closed systems, they can be to the left, they can be to the right, and they don't allow flexibility or change of mind. It's almost a sin to say, "I've changed my mind." And why is it that in times of crisis liberalism and rationalism are the two things most quickly to disappear? And something else. Why is it, in times of high crisis, do many people look for a salvation figure? That can be through to the good through religiosity, it also can be to the evil. Just think of the salvationist figures that the 20th century pushed up. Hitler was seen as a saviour. He was seen as the messiah of Germany. But as Robert Wistrich brilliantly put it, but a messiah with a sword in his hand. So how can democracy be protected? How important is a totally independent judiciary? Another point. Knowing the absolute psychopathic antisemitism of the Nazis, why didn't it serve as a bar for people voting for Hitler? Why is it that so-called decent people will turn on the other? And another incredibly important question for today, what is the place of education, and what is the place of culture in all of this?

Is there anything in education that we can do? And the third point, the last point I want to make before we actually turn to history itself, what about the role of the media? What about, of course in Germany, you had a brilliant minister of propaganda that David has talked about and I know we'll be going back to that time and again, control the press, control the media, and of course in the 21st century we have so many other media, most of which I don't even know how to work, my generation, I'm not very good at this kind of thing, but I know that the majority of people now get their news from machines and not from the press, and is there such a thing as objective truth? There's a great quote of George Orwell's, "Whoever controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past. Who controls the narrative." And that's very important. I've said this to you many times when I've been talking to you. I know, I've worked out what I think I'm going to say in my presentations.

There is no such thing as objective history. That I also know, I've been teaching history for over 50 years, there is no such thing as objective history. But a good historian will read many sources and try and give a balanced view, bearing in mind that I'm also a product of my education, my environment, and the world I come from, just as every one of you who is listening, and we're international, so that's going to add a different perspective, will come from their own worlds. So our own prejudices, I must add, go into this. So there is never such a thing as absolute truth and that's why I get so angry when people sort of spout out to me, "This is the way." I do believe

there are many paths to the truth, but I believe passionately in freedom.

Now, I'm going to read a quote from Pastor Niemoller, you'll know the first part very well. I want to read you the second part as well. Now, Pastor Niemoller, who comes down to us as such a saint. He was born in 1892, he lived a long life, he died in 1984. What if I tell you is that he joined the Nazi party for a while? He thought that Hitler was a good thing for Germany and this is what he wrote though, later on, when he realised what Nazism is really about. "In Germany, they came first for the communists, and I didn't stand up because I wasn't a communist. Then they came for the Jews, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a Jew. Then they came for the trade unions, and I didn't speak up because I wasn't a trade unionist. Then they came for the Catholics, and I didn't speak up because I was a Protestant. And then they came for me, and there was no one left to stand up."

And this is the second paragraph, which I actually think is more important. He's trying to explain the way it happened. "You see, Germany had lost the war. We had an alarming crisis, inflation, enormous unemployment. Certain Polish and Russian Jews had taken refuge in Germany. Envy developed into hatred. Instead of feeling for these miserable refugees, some begrudged them what little they had. Hitler quickly stimulated these low passions which finally brought him into power. Today Hitler persecutes both Jews and Christians alike." Okay. What actually happened? What actually happened in Germany at the end of the first World War? Well, we'll cover this, and I know an awful lot of you have read a lot about it, so I'm really just going to synthesise. Of course, Germany lost the first World War, there was no great battle, and the Germans, of course, the German high command were told by British generals that you'd been stabbed in the back because there was no decisive battle had they really lost the war.

Plus, at the end of the war when the Kaiser abdicated, there was total anarchy in Germany. We look to this from city state to city state, there were revolutions. In Bavaria, which was the home of Nazis, in Munich, there were three revolutions one after the other. Can you imagine violence in the streets, what it did to people? So you had the revolutions. And then you had the Treaty of Versailles. A broad left government came into power in Germany, the revolutions were quashed, and the Germans hoped that the Allies would treat favourably with them because you now had a new government, and I'm going to talk about that government in a minute, but they didn't. And what happened with the Treaty of Versailles is that Germany's nose was really pushed into the dust. They lost one and a half thousand of their citizens now living under Polish rule, they lost a lot of their means of production, so the economic recovery was almost impossible, they lost their pride, they weren't allowed to rearm, all their colonies were taken away, they were completely humiliated.

So I want you to imagine the situation where soldiers and sailors are coming back from the front, many of them the war wounded. By 1921, there were six million unemployed. There were soup kitchens all over the cities. There were people who had lost their sight, people who had lost limbs. You have this terrible situation which inevitably led to the polarisation of politics. And you had private armies. So this polarisation of politics, think of mob violence, there were 376

political assassinations between 1919 and 1923. The most famous is, of course, that of the Jewish foreign minister Walter Rathenau. And in this kind of explosive atmosphere, people seemed to need a scapegoat. And it's another very important question and that takes us into the realms of psychology, do we always need to blame someone?

As I'm sure you all know so very, very well the old scapegoat theory, which comes from Judaism, what do we do at Yom Kippur? We take the black goat, this is the story, that you take the black goat and you put all your sins onto the goat, which you sacrifice. Why was Germany in such a terrible state? Well, it's so much easier if you blame the other. This is all about the nature of prejudice. Us and them. Because in a situation like this, the world becomes very, very tribal. Now, having said that, there was a hope because the Weimar Constitution, what happens is there is a broad left government and that broad left government issues a constitution. There had never been any attempt at democracy in Germany before, important to remember this.

Yes, there'd been houses of parliament, but Bismarck and the Kaiser ruled through imperial decree. Perhaps this was one of the great flaws in Germany. When you're looking at what goes wrong in a society, yes, you have this great artistic, scientific, intellectual base, but as Judge Dennis told us very ably, in many ways, even in Weimar, the judiciary was left over from the old regime. But having undergone all these terrible revolutions, you had a group of people who were determined to try and make Germany into a successful Western democracy. So this is the first liberal constitution that Germany has ever had. Question on democracy, of course, you do know, I mean, what was it Churchill said? Democracy is the worst form of good government there is. I mean, you know, we talk about the Greeks and democracy, never forget 90% of it was run on a slave state. And even Plato, the flaw in democracy is you need the philosopher kings to actually adjudicate and run. And in fact we've never yet come anywhere near, but the idea of the Weimar Constitution, for the first time in German history, there's to be universal suffrage which is not gender based. Every male and female over the age of 20 now have the vote.

The constitution was drafted by a liberal politician called Hugo Preuss. He was the state secretary for the minister of the interior. He was Jewish, he was an only child, and he came from a very prosperous Jewish background, he went to the University of Berlin, he was a brilliant fellow. He had degrees in law, in history, and in philosophy, and he was the man who set out the Weimar Constitution. And this is the preamble to the Weimar Constitution, and I'm going to go through some of it with you because I think it's important. "The German people," this is the preamble, "united in its tribes, and inspired by the will to renew and strengthen its realm in liberty and justice, to serve internal and external peace, and to promote social progress, have adopted this constitution." And the first section is very important. "Power must be derived from the people." And how is parliament going to be set up? It's going to be set up through proportional representation. One of the side bars of this is, in fact, in the end, there were 30 political parties in the Reichstag that actually lead to good government, another issue. "Reich law supersedes state law in the event of any conflict," because don't forget Germany is divided up into many city states. Proportional representation I've mentioned.

Members were to serve for four years. The Reichstag could be dissolved by the Reich's president who served for seven years and could then be reelected once. Now, the president himself could be removed by a two-thirds vote of the Reichstag. If the state failed in its obligations under the constitution, the president could use the armed forces to control the state to do so. So an incredible amount of power is being vested in the president. Article 48 gave the president the power to take measures including the use of armed force and suspension of civil rights to restore law and order in the event of a threat to public safety and Reich security. So as I said, they're putting an awful lot of power into their philosopher king. It was the chancellor, though, who was the leader of the majority party who determined the political guidelines of the government. There's quite a lot on the judiciary. Judges were subject only to the law. They had a Supreme Court, but they were not political appointments.

But, as we've already found out, a lot of judges, of course, were very right wing leftover from the Kaiser's reign. Every German was equal before the law. Both genders have equal rights and obligations. The official recognition of titles of nobility ceased. Unless it's part of a person's name, we're going to try and break the old almost feudal system. Habeas corpus, you cannot imprison someone without trial. There's to be privacy of mail, telephone, and telegraph. Free expression in word, writing, print, and image, I'm quoting the constitution here. Censorship is prohibited. Now, that's an interesting one. All citizens are eligible for public office. There is no state church. There is freedom for the practise of religion. Free education provided by the state until you are 18 years old. Private schools, but they are regulated by the state.

So you have what I would call a liberal constitution. In fact, William Shirer, who was an American journalist living in Paris, he then goes to Berlin as the correspondent, his book, "The Rise and Fall of the Third Reich," journalists often write the best history books, in my view, 'cause you can just sit down and read them. He said this, "The most liberal and democratic document of its kind in the 20th century. Full of ingenious and admirable devices, which seemed to guarantee the working of an almost flawless democracy." In theory. But what were the weaknesses? And of course now we know what the weaknesses were. The president could dismiss the chancellor, even if the chancellor retained the confidence of the Reichstag. So you actually have a president who almost has the same power as the Kaiser, and article 48, remember. Okay so, that is the Constitution of Weimar against the backdrop of the horror that I've already mentioned, plus that terrible pandemic at the end of the first World War that ravaged Europe and America.

So on top of all these other appalling situations, you have a pandemic. And this is where we can use our imagination, we don't have to use our imagination. Let me be frank, I'm feeling very antsy at the moment. It's gone on a little bit too long. I pace around the flat. I'm sure we're all feeling it one way or the other. Particularly those of us who live alone. So I want you to take all... But I'm very fortunate, and I hope everyone on this Zoom is equally more fortunate, we're not worried about where our next meal is coming from. Most of us, I'm sure, are in warm, secure houses. Just imagine what it was like when there was six million unemployed. The appalling poverty, the hopelessness. And this is, of course, how unscrupulous politicians come to power. And Adolf Hitler was just one of a bunch of crazy characters, can I use that word?

No, I'm not going to use that word. He was one of hundreds of characters who believed they could solve Germany's problems. According to the Weimar Constitution, the use of private armies were banned. But the problem was the army didn't have that much power and was quite conservative. So Hugo Preuss devises this liberal constitution. You have many political assassinations. And the hopelessness. And against that, you see the rise of Adolf Hitler as just one of hundreds of these kind of characters. And we did quite a lot on Hitler's background, so I'm only going to recap very, very briefly. Hitler, of course, I think back in Braunau, where he was born, when he went to school in Linz he had a German nationalist teacher, this child, the fourth born child of a marriage, of an incredibly unhappy marriage between an uncle and a niece, he was the only one that survived.

So he was overloved, psychologists can have a field day on this, he was overloved by his mother, his father was an austere drunkard, but he'd come up in the war, he was now a minor civil servant as opposed to his family before him, they'd been itinerant peddlers. So we know that the kid had a very fractured background. He goes to school in Linz where he is taught by a German nationalist. He has pretensions of becoming an artist. When his father dies, his beloved mother dies, he goes off to Vienna to seek his fortune. He tries to get into the Academy, he's not considered talented enough, and as many of you know, Vienna was awash with all these kind of crazy race theorists, some of them respectable like Huston Stewart Chamberlain.

Think of Wagner, considered to be the most important artistic figure in the German world, where they kept blaming the other. And also, out of the insecurity of German nationalism, and out of the insecurity of the Hapsburg Empire, there was this will to make Germany the greatest nation in the world, the greatest military nation under the Prussian mould. On one level, Otto von Bismarck had done that. He had created a united Germany under Prussia. This reverence for military strength, this reverence for might against the backdrop, of course, of this great cultural explosion both in Vienna and in Berlin. You know, if you asked me to go back on a time machine, what year would I like to go back to, I'd have to say I would have loved to have been in Vienna in 1900 or in Berlin in 1922, 1923 because something else, there is no censorship in Berlin in the '20s, and I'll come onto that in a moment. But what you see in Vienna, and later on in Berlin, is the most incredible explosion of creativity in the arts, and music, but the ramification of the first World War and the loss of life, it's dark. The art is dark, the music is dark. Just think of the kind of disciplines that are being schooled, think of Freud beavering away in.

What's he doing? He's undercutting our sexual impulses. Think of the whole new sciences of psychology, of sociology, what makes us think, and also sex itself. You have individuals trying to apply scientific method to our sexuality. So you have incredible innovation, but at the same time you have the atavism of people who are looking for security because the 19th and early 20th century is very insecure and just think what it's like after the first World War. So Hitler, he lives in flop houses in Vienna, he becomes imbued with all these terrible racial thoughts, he blames the Jew, the Jew is the other to him. Never underestimate Hitler's antisemitism. He did not use it as a political weapon. He believed in the battle of the races, the Jew was the only race capable of

destroying the Aryan. He later on swallowed whole "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion." The man was bred on hate. And of course he joins the German army in the first World War. Not the Hapsburg Empire. He despises, he called the Hapsburg Empire, he called Vienna the conglomerate of races. He went to the Viennese parliament, he said it's a babble of races.

All these different languages, only pure German, the master race, he swallowed the whole thing. And another point, although he'd been brought up a Catholic, he was anti-religious. Nazism is a religion. I don't mean that everyone who voted for the Nazis threw away their Christianity, on the contrary, but the inner circle were Pagan. They believed in a world, if you want to understand it, I suppose, Hitler said to understand national-socialism, listen to Wagner. I'm just going to leave it at that point because this is not the time to go into the depths of Nazis and we've done it, and I'm sure we'll come back to it again. So at the end of the first World War, he's been decorated for bravery, ironically by a Jew, his captain who recommended him. He comes back to Munich, he witnesses the revolutions, what he saw as Jewish revolutions.

He works for the Freikorps, and, of course, he sees a party he likes called the German Workers Party, he joins it, and gradually becomes its leader. And when he joins, it's a tiny, tiny little party. And it's completely un-democratic. I'm just going to read you a couple of clauses. He was the coauthor of this manifesto, which the Nazi party never reneged on. This is clause four and it's the national-socialist German Workers Party. Hitler wanted a classless society. It's going to be one people, one folk. He's going to break all the class divisions. "We are one people of German blood with a German future. We will get rid of every alien element in our society. Only nationals can be citizens of the state. Only persons of German blood can be nationals. No Jew is a German citizen." Number seven. "We demand that the state makes it its duty to provide opportunities of employment first for all its own citizens.

If it's not possible to maintain the entire population, then foreign nationals are to be expelled." This is clause ten. "It must be the first duty of every citizen to carry out intellectual and physical work. Individual activity must not be harmful to the public interest and must be pursued within the framework of the community and for the general good. It is the first duty individual activity must not be harmful to the public interest." This is totalitarianism and it doesn't matter if it's fascism or if it's communism. The state is all-important. You have very similar ideas, by the way, in Stalin's Russia. You can find these similar ideas in many parts of the world today. Now, this is very important. "The state must provide a thorough restructuring of our entire public education system." These people are not stupid. They've thought and thought, they were pseudo-philosophers. They thought it through. "The course of study in all educational institutions are to be adjusted to meet the requirements of practical life.

Understanding of the concept of the state must be achieved through the schools, teaching of civics at the earliest age at which it can be grasped. We demand the education at the public expense of specially gifted children of poor parents." So basically, this is propaganda. There's going to be a core curriculum which we will control, we will decide what you read. Later on in the course, I'm actually going to show you curricula from Nazi Germany because what you do is, in

history, you go back to that time in history when Germany was great, you can imagine how the Nazis taught geography. Do you really think there's one and a half million Germans in Poland? That was taught that way. No, this is what was once Germany, must be Germany again. Again, "We ban juvenile labour. Achievement of physical fitness through legislation for compulsory gymnastics and sport and maximum support for all organisations providing physical training." What the Nazis want is the perfectly honed mind to the state, you don't think for yourself, in a physically fit body. Just think Leni Riefenstahl, think "Triumph of the Will," think of all those gymnastic displays.

Think how horrified Hitler was at the '36 Olympics where there were 19 African-American athletes and, of course, the great Jesse Owens who was the only person to take four golds. But what he's trying to push, these are our Germans, they're one people now. Now this is also important. "We demand laws to fight against deliberate political lies in the press. We demand all editors and editorial employees of newspapers must be German." Now, "Newspapers which violate the public interest to be banned. We demand laws against trends in art and literature which have a destructive effect on our national life and the suppression of performances that offend against it." So how do you look at the Weimar Constitution? Now you get an idea of this little party. Look, censorship, we need censorship, you can only actually do anything that's in the interest of the state. Think of the Cabaret of Berlin. And I believe that we can, along with other works of art, Dennis and David are going to show one or two extracts again from Cabaret because sometimes I think looking at a few clips from film are so important.

I was watching a documentary last night on Josephine Baker who was the great star of Weimar Cabaret. Just one of the areas that really interest me is film. If you look at the films that were being shown at the time, some of the greatest filmmakers, Fritz Lang goes on to Hollywood, Ernst Lubitsch, so many of the greats that later were going to enrich Hollywood, but there was no censorship in Germany. In the film, "M," which is the first talkie of Fritz Lang's, the paedophile, who is the anti-hero, is actually given a voice. Anything went. There is no censorship. Just think of the work of Egon Schiele. How do you think the bourgeois saw that? So this is the atmosphere and as we already know the Nazis managed to attract a lot of support in Munich. Who from? The aristos, there have been three revolutions, two of which were seen as Jewish revolutions. You had a lot of white Russians coming in, and what do they come in with? "The Protocols of the Elders of Zion." Aren't the Jews responsible for everything that's evil in our society? Plus we're going to straighten Germany out.

And gradually, some big industrialists decide to back him, and he goes for putsch. It fails. And when he is in prison, when he's actually in prison, he writes "Mein Kampf." And when he comes out of prison, he's going to have a different dream and let me just find what he actually wrote because it's very interesting. Coming out of prison, if I can find it. I wish I kept my notes in a proper position. Yes. "When I resume active work, it will be necessary to pursue a new policy. Instead of working to achieve power by armed coup, we shall have to hold on to our noses and enter the Reichstag against the Catholics and the Marxist deputies. If outvoting them takes longer than outshooting them, then at least the result will be guaranteed by their own

constitution. Any lawful process is slow. Sooner or later we will have the majority." That is Adolf Hitler and what he intends to do. Now, I've got to say something else about Adolf Hitler. When you see him in, there are so many programmes you can watch, we don't get it, that squeaky voice. But I suggest when you look at him at rallies, don't look at him, look at the faces of the crowd.

There's an extraordinary piece of footage, I'm digitalizing my collection because I do want to show you some of this footage later on, there is this bit of footage where he's in evening dress on a balcony and you see these women and they're looking at him with an adoration which is almost orgasmic. It's a pop concert, it's whatever, it's Rudolph Valentino. So a lot of women absolutely fell for him. This is as Robert Wistrich said, this is the black messiah figure, this is the evil messiah. They worshipped him. It's got nothing to do with logic because wouldn't be wonderful, you know, the ideas of the enlightenment, that if we educate everyone to a certain level that we would discover the universal truths in the world? Well, tragically, it isn't about that, is it? It's about emotion. Hitler was the saviour, he was the salvation figure for these kind of characters. They come up from time to time, salvation figures who say, "All you have to do is believe in me, you don't have to think for yourself anymore. Yes, it's rotten out there, but you don't have to think for yourself anymore." And even the most talented professors will do that, will follow. So he tries for parliament, but something has happened in Germany. The Dawes Plan. You know, Germany's on the verge of collapse.

By 1923, a dollar, at the beginning of 1923, if I remember my figures, a dollar bought you 18,000 marks. By the end of 1923, a dollar bought you something like four billion. Billion, not million, four billion. And I'm sure you've all seen footage, and I've known students who've told me that their fathers had factories and they used to allow their workers to go off in their lunchtime to buy bread with a wheelbarrow and that very famous scene where a wheelbarrow full of marks is stolen because the government tried to deal with it, right, they set up 2,000 printing presses. That's how they tried to deal with the inflation. It was getting so bad that, in the end, the Americans stepped in, the Dawes Plan, and they evened out the economy. And between 1924 and 1929, there was a certain kind of, you know, the Nazis were in parliament, if I could just read you from the voting figures, the first time they entered the Reichstag, which is in May 1924, they only polled six percent of the votes. By December of 1924, after the Dawes Plan and the hope, the number goes down to three percent. In the elections of 1928, it was under two percent. Sorry, just over two percent.

But it's tiny, and it's not going to make any inroads whatsoever. But then, obviously, what happens, Wall Street crashes. The Wall Street crash, the Americans needed their money back, Germany just newly recovered, everything went bad again. Unemployment figures soared, and this is where the Nazis scored because a lot of big industrialists were so terrified of communists because the communists were doing very well in Germany. You know, the left never really deserted the communists. So the communists are doing well in Germany. So you have people like Hugenberg, you have people like Tyson. Some of the great families that are still around today, actually, they decided to put money behind Hitler. He's got his newspapers, the mob

seems to love him, he's got a brilliant minister of propaganda. So what if he hates Jews? We'll control him. He's the little corporal. So you have the big industrialists, and some of the military are now getting interested. They're terrified of communism, plus he makes promises. He makes promises to everybody, there's going to be one people, a classless society, remember, it's the German Workers Party, he's going to look after the poor, he's going to clean up Berlin, you're not going to see those filthy films, those filthy plays, that filthy literature that offends any decent person. The law and order ticket, you're not going to have thugs on the street corner. The fact that by 1930 he had half a million in the SA is irrelevant.

What was it Goebbels said? If you tell a lie often enough, people will believe you. So basically, he's making promises to all sorts of people and as a result the figures in the Reichstag go up. By July of 1932, which is absolutely at the height of the Depression, the Nazis poll 37% of the votes, okay. And this is where it gets very, very interesting because it's at this stage, this is the nadir, Germany's gradually beginning to crawl out of it, but this is when there is a coup around President Hindenburg. President Hindenburg, the great war hero, remember Hitler had the other war hero, Lord Ludendorf, with him at the time of the putsch. Hindenburg is very right wing, he's a conservative, he doesn't like the parliament corporal, nor does his chancellor, but there's a coup. The big industrialists, the big money around Hindenburg, thinking in short-term interests, let the Nazis in, they'll stabilise them, we can control them, and that's exactly what happens. So consequently, I'll show you how the vote had gone down, when their elections of November '32, remember, in July, the Nazis polled 37%, they're the biggest party in the Reichstag, but on the elections of November it's gone down to 31%.

But it's at this stage that Hindenburg is persuaded to bring Nazis into government and in January Hitler is made the chancellor of Germany. And then, of course, opportunism, the Reichstag burns down. When the Reichstag burns down, Hindenburg, through imperial decree, passes The Enabling Act, which suspends freedom of assembly, freedom of the telephone, telecommunication, all constitutional liberties are suspended at one fell swoop. And then, of course, there are the elections of March 1933 where the Nazis still don't make it, but who voted for the Nazis? And this is important. It's across the board, it's housewives, it's students. The student body was so pro-Hitler, it's extraordinary. The young. Hitler appealed to the young. He promised, Nazism is a radical movement, it's about revolution. Don't ever think it's a conservative movement, it isn't. It's a radical revolutionary movement. So university students, some university professors, Heidegger, that's an interesting story for another time, housewives, civil servants, small tradespeople, they voted Hitler into power.

People, Christians, Protestants, and Catholics, there was already a Protestant church within the Nazi party led by Reichsfuhrer Muller, half a million people joined it. I mean, he was a Lutheran. Remember, Luther, what he said about the Jews? Antisemitism, horrific racism did not stop nice, in inverted commas, decent people voting for Adolf Hitler. He had his bully boys at the doors, but he still couldn't pull off the majority. 43.7% of the vote. But it's at this stage that with the aid of a couple of right wing parties, he takes the majority. So in the next election of November 1933, he takes 92.1% of the vote. Well, there were no other parties. And then the terror.

Remember, he's got half a million men under arms. Their say.

Later on, he's going to turn against them to please the army. He'd already created the SS out of the SA under Himmler. Later on, of course, the man in charge of what they euphemistically call The Final Solution. So, how long did it take him to dismember the state? You see, that's how power was taken in. And also, he had an incredible amount of lawyers working for him. When we later on come on to the Wannsee Conference, you will find that the majority of the people who sat round the table had doctorates from the top universities in Germany and two-thirds of them were lawyers. So all of our assumptions of education making us liberal or making us more sensitive to others, it's out the window. What I really believe, and this is someone, I've been involved in education for so many years, and my real field, tragically, is holocaust studies, and what I can tell you, and I'm sitting here and I've got a lot of time on my hands to think, we have failed miserably because the whole purpose of holocaust education was to make people more sensitive, people more aware, more aware of what Wendy asked me to call the siren, and I think she's so right on this, and we have failed and I think now we really should be seriously rethinking education.

What on Earth does that word mean? I mean, going to Einstein, who's got to be one of my most favourite characters, you know, of course, like everybody else, he had his flaws, don't we all? But he always said he hated the kind of schools he went to because of the rigidity, and somehow we have to devise a system that keeps people's minds open. I think I'll finish there. I know it's probably been quite difficult to listen to, it's been very difficult to give, but I hope it's, and I've tried to be as balanced as possible, but I hope we've at least begun to open up the debate which my colleagues will be continuing in their own spheres this week.

So we have a brilliant historian in William Tyler tomorrow who's going to talk more about the constitution, then Dennis will be looking at all sorts of areas, and then you'll have David and Dennis at the weekend, as I said. So it was Wendy who said you've got to do this and Wendy, you were totally right. So, and I want to say this very carefully, we are not making political statements, any one of us. So I want to say that, I don't really want questions on politics. It's way beyond this that we're talking now. So, Judy.

- [Judy] Hi, Trudy. Are you going to be looking at some of the questions?

Q&A and Comments:

- Yes, of course, I will. So here we go. Helen Spires.

Q: "Yes, they're looking for parallels. What about the church?"

A: What can I say about the church? Look. I've lectured in the past a lot about antisemitism and you have a little problem with Christianity because Christianity, there's a verse in, is it Matthew? "May his blood be upon our hands and upon those of our children." Look, there is absolutely no

doubt that Jewish history is fascinating and actually this week I'm interviewing Norman Lebrecht about his brilliant book "Genius and Anxiety." What created so many of the great thinkers who have changed the Jewish world? In a way, the Christian church made us the outsider. And of course Christianity has a huge question to answer about its role in the shoah and when we get to the shoah, I will be spending a lot of time about it. Okay.

"Please repeat the name of the pastor who I quoted." Pastor Niemoller. And Brenda's just given it.

And "Do you think those who are ignoring social distancing at present are kind of revolutionists?" I would not, I think they're just stupid, actually. I mean, if we don't realise, I'm sure even these characters have got grandparents. So basically, we're living in a terrible time and I think we do have a bit of bright news, there is a vaccine on the way. We've just got to hold tight. Oh, I've lost my... Sorry, I've lost... I'm sorry I have to put my hands up, it's the only way I can roll through. Okay, this is from Beverly, this is a very interesting question.

Q: "Because of the many electronic sources of information and disinformation, we can all find support for our perspectives in rejecting other truths. Do you think that it's possible to resolve disagreements today? Is it becoming impossible to win an argument, to win a war, to win an election?"

A: It's a very interesting question. "As you said before, what on Earth is truth?" But I think we know, don't we, when we're totally being lied to. Obviously I think serious thought has got to be given to patrolling the internet. But then you come to the biggest question, censorship. Look, the Weimar Constitution was against any kind of censorship, which meant it was the most liberal place in Germany. And I'm sure there will be many people on our platform who would have found some of the exhibitions of art, music not to their taste. Where do you draw the line on censorship? It's the whole issue of, you know, what if someone writes a book that you find so offensive, or holds a view you find so offensive? Are you going to ban it? I would prefer to see incitement to racial hatred or incitement to hatred a much more strong suiting law, I would prefer to use it for law.

Going back to that great idea that I don't believe in what you say but I'll defend to the death your right to say it, that image of the Nazis burning the books is so terrible. You know, 18,000 books were burnt on May the 10th, 1933. That's how you control knowledge. But your question on the internet is terribly important. We have to seriously think of how it's policed. You know, this is where you get to the floor of democracy that even Plato talked about. We've never created philosophy kings. Yes, and there's a comment here that we have a psychotic narcissist appealing to... Certainly, there is movements to cult leaders, yes. Can I comment on the action of Twitter, Facebook, and...? You see, this is the other issue. Should the president of America be banned from Twitter? It's a fascinating debate, actually, but obviously I'm hoping that lawyers will be getting together and coming up with some sort of thing that can be adjudicated in parliament because would it be enough if it's incitement to race hatred, which becomes a criminal offence?

I think there's a lot of work to be done on this, but there's even more work to be done on education.

"How could such a well-educated person elect...?" Look, education, Faye, is about education and how people come into power who, how on Earth can people elect certain individuals into power? The problem is that just because you're clever doesn't mean that you're a well-rounded personality and you don't give in to emotion. I wish we were creatures of reason, but we all know we're not. If you think anything that you do in any one day, how much of it is logical and rational, and how much of it is completely irrational? I can think of a dozen things I've done recently.

Q: Natasha Lang, "Do I think that this industrial genocide could have happened in any other nation?"

A: Well, the tragedy is when we actually look at the shoah, and please don't forget the 27th of January is Holocaust Memorial Day, and I will be giving a presentation, one of the horror stories of the shoah is that we, for the first time, harnessed modernity, bureaucracy, and technology to genocide. That is new. But there are all sorts of organisations that say we're still doing it, Shooting by Bullets is a very interesting organisation. Do I think that industrialised genocide could have happened in any other nation? Look, I do not believe there's anything specific about any nation, I believe we are products of our history. I don't believe that some nations are good and some nations are bad, I think people are people, but we are products of our time and our history and that has to influence us.

From Dawn, "This notion of making my country great again," yes, of course it's appealing to tribalism. It's very seductive, tribalism. Look, we all do it. When we're feeling frightened and in any way threatened, we tend to go to our own group, don't we? Be it our family, our little circle of friends, whoever, it's ours. And this is about a woman last week in America who praised Hitler's children's education programme. Look, you can control a nation through fear and propaganda, it wasn't just in Nazi Germany, the same thing was happening in Soviet Russia, and in Mao's China. You keep the people down. The way Hitler did it, you know, you know what happened to most of the non-Nazis in the Reichstag, well, they finished up in Dachau.

The correctional murder. So of course there are people at times of anarchy and they're frightened and they want certainties, and if they think they're of the right blood they think they're going to be all right. But go to Niemoller's quote, "First they came for the communists," in the end, when you unleash those kinds of regimes, they're no good for anyone. This is from Betty Lowenstein, "When Albert Speer visited Germany after he was released from prison, he was asked what the most attributed needed by a leader, his response was charisma." Yes. The charisma is what pulled the crowd, certainly. We might not be able to see it, and then again from Betty, "And the bigger the lie, the more they will believe it."

That's exactly what Goebbels said. Mussolini, Franco, yeah. This is interesting, from Edward

Wolf, I'm not going to talk politics, but he's saying, "If, in America, the Democrats really knock the Republicans into the ground, it could be frightening." Yes, I agree with you, actually. When a country is split, there has to be people of vision. Look, I might not agree with what you say, but we've got to come to a consensus and you need people with vision to try and pull it all together again. This is from Michael. "Given the potential of psychopathy and the manipulation of people's emotions to undermine a democracy, do you think there's a role in political systems for institutions such as South Africa's Truth and Reconciliation Commission?"

Yeah, that is fascinating. That's a very interesting point, Michael, and I think I'm going to leave that to David and Dennis to take up because that's something they know far more about than me, but I know I've discussed it with them. "Why were elections held so often?" Because they didn't have majority rule. You know, you've got 30 parties. And then, but on the other hand, you do have a problem with a two party system as well. "I've written a teacher's guide on antisemitism," yes, Judith, I'm sorry, I should have got back to you. "Can't we get our teachers to take it on?" The problem is, now this is something I'm going to say, however good the guide, it's the whole teaching system that we're fighting, actually.

We have to rethink education. Look, I think the problem with antisemitism, it's a 2,000 year old disease. When time are hard, it's going to come to the fore. But I think, in a way, we've got to go beyond antisemitism, we've actually got to rethink the core curriculum. May I suggest you ask that question of William Tyler tomorrow? William is a brilliant educator and he, for a long time, he was in charge of education in Manchester and he has been involved, he's even older than me, so he's been involved... I hope you're not listening, William. But he's been so involved in all of this and he's very sensible on education. "As an adult, did Hitler have any family?" He never married, he gave himself to the German people, he had a very strange personal life. Yes, he had a very strange family. His half-sister, his father had been married twice before, he had a half-sister who came to be his housekeeper and the only woman he probably loved in a sort of sexual way was his niece, Geli, who committed suicide.

Q: "Do I think Hitler and the Nazis could have gained power in any other country?"

A: If you go round the world and you look at totalitarian societies, they're all going to have different rulers, but it's actually people that don't change. And you also have to look at whether one's democracy has got enough safeguards in it.

Leela, "Do I think there's horrible similarities in..." Look, what I think about the world today is this, we are going through a very, very bad patch and I think there is polarisation of politics in the West, in the Western democracies that we cherish and love. And the other point, and I'm going to say this publicly, I despair of the leadership. It seems... You know, it's fascinating, I've known so many people who I consider have a touch of greatness, not one of them went into politics because they found it distasteful. Were they at fault? So it's interesting, isn't it, in the end we don't have, I cannot think of anyone today in a position of authority that I would say I really, really respect you, and that's worrying.

Q: "How and why do I think holocaust education failed?"

A: I wish I could give you... That would take hours, but, you know, I've been discussing this with Wendy and maybe we are talking about maybe having more debates and that would be an interesting one. Has holocaust education failed? Has holocaust memorialization failed? If one of the purposes was to, of course we do it to remember our dead and our friends, we do it for that, and that renting of society, but I sat on what is now IRA, it used to be the ITF, and I think there's 31 countries now, I was involved in holocaust education in eastern Europe, even in China, we really did believe that if we taught it properly we could cure some of the evils of antisemitism and hatred of the other. It does seem, when there's economic, social, and political chaos, all that education goes out of the window, so therefore I would say, I can't talk for my colleagues, I think I have failed. I think what I tried to do definitely failed.

This is David, "What if the US Capitol had burned down last week? A repeat of the Reichstag?" Look, if Parliament burnt down, they'd have to pass an Enabling Act. "Are there any models in our world of education focusing on keeping minds open?" That is a very, very good question and that is a real task for someone. Real task, I like that one, good thoughts. You know, maybe. There's an awful lot of you on this chat all over the world, I'm sure some of you have been in education. If I ask you to do anything else, I'll get shouted out because we don't have the capacity. We've got Judy, bless her, we can't. So, but look, we can all think about it. "Did the Allies have no idea that the treaty they imposed on Germany might have negative...?"

Well, they learnt the lesson in 1945 with the Marshall Aid Programme, didn't they? "Trudy," this is from Hylan Wilanski, "with regards to your comments about holocaust education, what is the key message that you think it should convey?" That we should not be frightened of that which is different from us, that we should try and respect each other. That's in the general. And also, I feel very strongly, without making any political comments on Israel, that the people need to understand the connection between the shoah and the establishment of the state of Israel. "When did the German Workers Party publish their manifesto?" In 1920. This is from Del, "I disagree that holocaust education has failed because although sometimes it is sidelined by anti-the-other, if it succeeds it will also eliminate antisemitism."

Madeleine, I wish I believed that now. Maybe you're right, maybe we still have to go on hoping. There are brilliant people in the field of holocaust education, that's the tragedy, and the work that survivors do is absolutely extraordinary, but survivors themselves say to me, and I don't know if my friend Joanna Milan is listening today, but she is very dark about this now, she says of course they're going to have sympathy for the person that comes in and talks to them, but does it really actually go beyond the sympathy for the person who talks to them? Okay. Yes, a Werner Ross is talking about Labrecht's book. Yes, please read it, if you're going to come along on Thursday, read it. Clive Boxer, "Acute inflation was what destroyed..." Yes, of course. When people haven't got enough money, they get terribly... They get scared, don't they?

Of course inflation is terribly important. Yeah, it's all these things coming together, you're right, Clive, of course you're right. Now, let me go on, I'm losing my place again. "Please talk about the role of the judiciary in further the rise of Nazis." Oh, this is a very interesting presentation, this is a very interesting presentation from Dennis on the rise of the judiciary. If you look at the sentences that were given to terrorists, those who murdered politicians, the left got far greater sentences than the right. The judiciary in Germany was quite right wing before Hitler and of course after Hitler it's completely Nazi. By 1935, if you didn't wear the swastika on your robes, you couldn't be a lawyer, you couldn't be a judge in Germany. "Was Nietzsche correct when he said there are no facts, just observations?" Oy, Nietzsche. Oh, boy. Nietzsche, what an interesting man.

You know, his sister, though, she distorted many of his later writings, and of course she thought Hitler was marvellous. "Should there be any limit to free speech?" Peter, that is the question. It's a brilliant question. If there's a liberal democracy, I would say incitement to hatred or incitement to murder or incitement to committing any crime, which is covered by the statute, which should be enough, but this is the issue now, particularly now we're in the world of the internet. I don't know the answer. I want to believe, you know that great line of Heinrich Heine, "People who burn books will one day burn people." When you say cannot be absolute, we do have laws, incitement to racial hatred, incitement to murder, so I'm not sure where the line should be, but we must have the debate. I think this is the point if good people in truth can have these debates, maybe we can come up with a consensus that works.

Tony saying, "It can never be absolute." Tony, is it covered by hatred? Is it covered by incitement? I mean, if you go into a crowded theatre and scream, "Fire," that is criminal. And this is, "Can you compare the tech giants' lockout to burning books?" It's a huge problem, Eli, isn't it? Can big business silence, even if you hate what they say, is it incitement to murder, I think we've got to look so carefully at these kinds of issues now. This is from Rita, "Just to mention that 3,000 people demonstrated today in Berlin at the memory of Rosa Luxemburg, both of whom were assassinated by the German far right paramilitary. Make of this what you will." Yeah, it's interesting, isn't it? But poor old Rosa, I mean, she died with a bullet in the back of her head, but she was a totalitarian, remember? How would she have felt about the Russian revolution? To me, fascism and communism meet in the middle. "How do you reach the uneducated with education? What do you mean by education?"

That's what I'm saying we need to think about, what do we mean by education? What do you want your children and grandchildren to leave school and go off to university knowing? What do you want them to know? Do you want them to know how to be good citizens? Do you know what Einstein said? Never lose your curiosity for life. He said that's his secret. You have to keep on asking questions. The problem is, and I've only taught post-16s, but it's very dangerous if you teach children to think for themselves because then they, to the extent that if they quarrel with the teachers, can you get away with it? I like those kind of kids, I always have, as long as they're arguing with me from strength. I love it to push kids as far as they can go. "Do I think that, is the holocaust rooted in the holocaust's psyche?"

I get very worried by those ideas, Ronnie. The question is do I believe that Daniel Goldhagen's view is correct? The holocaust route is in the German psyche, do I believe that? No, I think certain events came together. I'll be talking about that for Holocaust Memorial Day. I don't think one can ever say that one group of people are greater than another and one of the things we've been discussing with Wendy, you know, how do people view history? Take, for example, somebody like Napoleon. I know how I was taught about Napoleon at a school in Britain, how was he taught in France? You know, it's much too multi-sided. Was he the evil foreigner who tried to destroy Britain? It's so, you see, history's full of nuance and that's what we've got to get. We've got to get kids to understand how to question. Look, before we can do that, we have to get... They've got to be able to read fluently, they have to be numerate.

We've got to change things, that's what I believe now. "Proven lies should be banned on social media." Who's going to do the proving, Betty? "Was there any attempt to counteract the antisemitic propaganda in the early days of Nazism?" There were brave people, you know what happened to them? They went to concentration camps. "Hitler could have been stopped before 1933 in Germany. Could he have been stopped outside?" Well, I think later on, William's going to give a great talk on appeasement. "Who educates the educator?" That's the problem, where are our philosopher kings? We haven't got them. So, we have to think who our heroes are. Yes, this is from Abigail, "Get in touch with me privately, please. What about Facebook and...?" Yes, being smart and educated, yes, exactly.

We have to rethink what education means. Because I said to you, two-thirds of the people at Wannsee had PhDs from top German universities. An academic education per se does not give you wisdom. You know, there's wonderful, think of chabad. That is what the educated person should have according to the rabbis, wisdom, knowledge, and understanding. How many of us have ever managed to achieve it? That's perhaps... Maybe that should be our slogan, wisdom, understanding, and knowledge. Knowledge comes first, doesn't it? We've got to have the knowledge. The understanding and the wisdom, does that come from within ourselves? On that note, I think... This is from... "A fancy education doesn't guarantee ethics." No.

- [Wendy] Trudy, thank you very much for another brilliant presentation.

- Thank you very much, Wendy. And look, I hope that it's been enlightening for you. And I'm sure many of you will disagree with some of my points, but it's heartfelt and it's very complicated, but as I said, am I correct, Wendy, it's William tomorrow, isn't it?

- [Wendy] Yes. It is William tomorrow.

- And I think, Wendy, you were right to turn us into this at this particular time, I think you've done a real mitzvah doing this, so. I wish you all-

- [Wendy] As I've said, it's food for thought, and people need to go home, you know, take the

presentation, take the ideas, and have discussions with their family and their friends. This is not only a platform where we debate these things.

- No, but as you say, Wendy, if it gets people talking about them, and I want to say very carefully, I don't really want to get into the political issues of today, all I'm looking at is history as a warning sign. I think there are certain rules, I do believe when I say I think we need to rethink education I don't think that's political, but that's interesting, I think that's interesting, and how would we reform education? Yeah. Anyway, take care, everyone.

- [Wendy] Thank you.

- Be safe.

- [Wendy] Thanks, everybody. Thanks, bye-bye.

- Bye.