

William Tyler | Berlin Divided | 05-17-21

- I don't, sorry, maybe say we had a very nasty anti-Semitic incident in London yesterday, which was very upsetting.

- What happened?

- There was a convoy of cars flying Palestinian flags and loud hailing and saying words, which I would prefer not to say it was dreadful, but the police have arrested some people. They drove down from Bradford in the north of England to London. But it was pretty horrid. I had a long conversation with Trudy about it last night, so she was worried about her grandson going to school, but he won't be going until tomorrow because.

- Yeah, there's a couple people saying was demonstrations in Johannesburg and also in Toronto, as well.

- It's dreadful, dreadful.

- Truly, truly, truly shocking situation. Truly, truly, truly shocking. Anyway, so yeah, what can we say? Our thoughts and prayers are what all our Israelis as well with Israel and all the Israelis. We are with you and please cease fire soon, they are talking about a ceasefire soon. within the next 48 hours. There's this rumour, so let's hope that is the case. William, we now are three minutes over, so I'm going to hand over to you.

- Thank you very much. Thank you Wendy. And it's evening here in Britain. So good evening or if you are in the afternoon or in the morning, good morning or good afternoon and let me endorse that everyone here in Britain is hoping also for a ceasefire in Israel. And if you're listening from Israel, I hope this hour will provide some respite from what you are undergoing.

I'm talking about a divided Berlin. Let me start by saying this, a number of European historians now refer to the two world wars of the 20th century as the Great European War, but I think there's another way of looking at the Europe and indeed the world of the 20th century. And that is that there was a third world war, perhaps in Europe, not an actual conflict, but a moment of division and fear. And this unconventional European war we know as a Cold war outside Europe, of course in places such as Korea and Vietnam, the so-called Cold War became a very conventional hot war. And no place symbolises the Cold War more than the city of Berlin, which divided two Germanies, east and west, two systems, Communist and Democratic. And from 1961, physically divided by the iconic Berlin wall, whose fall in 1989 marked the beginning of the end of Soviet rule, not just in Eastern Europe, but in Russia itself.

As early as 1946 at Fulton College in Missouri, Churchill made his famous speech of the Iron Curtain, although the phrase had been used earlier by an American. Churchill said this, "From in the Baltic to in the Adriatic, an iron curtain has descended across the continent, behind that line,

like all the capitals of ancient states of central and eastern Europe, all these famous cities and the populations around them," he said, "are subject in one form or another, not only to Soviet influence, but to a very high and increasing measure of control from Moscow."

Churchill had been clear from the beginning of the war that Russia posed a threat to the west. Churchill has been clear since the Russian revolution back in 1917 of the threat that Marxist Leninism posed to the world. And he doesn't stop being concerned when out of office he's visiting the US and making speeches. And this speech resonated across the world. It's the opening speech, if you like, of the Cold War.

There was a Czech anti-communist, who was imprisoned a number of times by the Czech authorities after the end of the second World War, man called Stransky. And he wrote in 1950 a book called "East Wind Over Prague." And he used very striking language to describe what the Russians were doing in Eastern Europe. Stransky wrote this, they, that's the Russians, "Drive today as the Tartars used to drive centuries ago, in crowds and hosts uncounted and uncountable, infinitely foreign and lost in all these western countries of which they had never heard, and which they're utterly unable to understand, aflood from the steps spreading across Europe."

And when Stransky talks about the West, he included places like Czechoslovakia, which had been of course in the interwar years a democratic state and was now firmly Marxist and dominated by the Soviet Union.

Let me begin. Those of you who followed some of my talks earlier know I usually have about four beginnings and about four endings, and the middle is tiny. So this is the real beginning this evening. Let us begin where we left off in my last talk. That is in the year 1945, the last year the Second World War, Germany had been decisively defeated. Hitler was dead. And the victorious allies, the Americans, the British, the French and the Russians are not united in victory. They have a different aims and objectives for the future. That is to say the British, the French and the Americans have similar aims, but the Russians do not. But there is a feeling, particularly in Washington that really Russia should be given an opportunity to prove that they are one of us, the Western allies.

And indeed it was agreed at Yalta that the Germany itself will be divided into four parts. A British part, an American part, a French part and a Russian part. And Berlin, the capital of the Third Reich and the capital of Germany since unification in 1871, would also be divided into four sectors, in effect, almost from the beginning, this meant two sectors, the Western allies and the Russian and Berlin lay entirely within the Russian sector of Germany itself. That Berlin, although divided between the allies, found itself surrounded by East Germany. It's a very unusual solution to a problem. In fact, of course it was not a solution to a problem, but the laying out of the next problem, the problem of the Cold War, the problem of the Soviet Union versus the Western allies, the Cold War.

Russia had always wished to establish a Soviet state in East Germany, a puppet state. Why? Because it wanted a buffer between itself and the west. Russia, and that is of course an aim of Putin today, Russia has always sought in modern times buffer states between Russia proper and the west. Imputed terminology between Russia and NATO allies.

Germans in a book on the Cold War tries to paint in a very quick way a picture of Russian dominated Eastern Europe as a whole. The Soviet Red army freed Poland, Czechoslovakia, Bulgaria and Hungary, Romania and Eastern Germany from Nazi occupation and established themselves in occupation themselves, creating communist governments that were closely controlled from Moscow. Stalin wanted a cordon sanitaire, that's my phrase I use with buffer state. Stalin wanted a cordon sanitaire in eastern Europe, a buffer zone of countries controlled by the Soviets, which could protect Mother Russia's western frontier from the threat and invasion.

So we're clear about that. We're clear about overwhelming obsession about the west that Russia has had since the time of Peter The Great in the 17th century, obsessed with the west, obsessed of catching up and taking, going further than the west has gone and always failing as it's failing today. But Jones adds this. The Soviet takeover followed the same pattern in each setup, including East Germany followed the same pattern in each country they occupied, first coalition governments were set up in which the communist shared power with other parties, a multi-party state, exactly what the Western allies had been arguing for. Gradually with backing from Stalin, the communist parties took over elements vital to the running of the state. That is they put their ministers in charge of the key ministries, the civil service, the police, the media, the armed forces, opposition leaders in these states were arrested, exiled or just disappeared. Elections were held as promised, but were fixed to ensure support for the communists. Finally, people's democracies were set up and the states became mere satellites to Moscow.

And that is the pattern that they're going to follow in Berlin, in their part of Berlin. And is this a pattern they're going to follow in East Germany as a whole. How quickly did Russia act? On the very day of Hitler's suicide, the 30th April, 1945, Russia flew from Moscow Walter Ulbricht, a German communist. Ulbricht had spent the war and Nazi years in Moscow. He's a puppet of Moscow. He's flown in to be the titular German face controlling East Germany and East Berlin. But make no mistake, Moscow calls the shots. So Russia was well planned in advance for what they hoped to do and achieve and which they did achieve, which is a Soviet East Germany and a Soviet part of Berlin. They never had intentions of holding free elections in their part of occupied Germany.

At Yalta in 1944, I'm reading from a review in the Times newspaper of London, of a book that's been published in Britain later this month by the historian Giles Milton, a historian who I think is a good historian and he's written a book called "Checkmate in Berlin". I've put it on my blog already. If afterwards people want to look up my blog, they can find this book, "Checkmate in Berlin", I have no idea when it's been published in the states. Charles Milton's a British historian as far as I'm aware. The review said this. At Yalta, the American and British delegations were

impressed and even a little bit in awe of Stalin. President Roosevelt, waxing and distracted, tried to impress the Soviet leader by showing him how to make a martini, adding that he would normally have added in the twist of lemon. The next day, Stalin had a huge lemon tree with 200 right lemons flown in from Georgia. Stalin was the leader who made things happen. At the end of the eight day summit, Stalin won everything, he wanted territorial gains at Japan's, a foothold in northeast China and no serious challenge to its control of Eastern Europe, including Poland. Churchill said, "We feel we have a friend whom we can trust and I hope he will continue to feel the same about us."

And I'm never sure whether Churchill believed that or not. And it was wishful thinking and it certainly wasn't going to turn out to be true. And then in July, August, 1945, Churchill out of office, Roosevelt dead, the USSR agreed at Potsdam with the allies, this but to agree anything with the Russians, Marxist, it is well grasping at straws. At Potsdam, July, August, 1945, the ally declared their aim to partially deindustrialize Germany and thoroughly denazify it. And then quote, this is a quote from the final declaration of Potsdam, "To prepare for the eventual reconstruction of German political life on a democratic basis and for eventual peaceful cooperation in international life by Germany. To this end, all democratic political parties with rights of assembly and a public discussion shall be allowed and encouraged throughout Germany."

And Stalin signs, and Stalin signs. But he's already gone further. He's no intention. He's no intention of creating a democratic state in east Germany. And the Western allies in turn appeared weak to Stalin. One of the important lessons we learn in dealing with Russians is that you must not appear weak, give an inch and they'll assumed you've given a mile. And the same is true of dealing with Putin, he must be stood up to whatever he does. But having got away with the Crimea, East Ukraine, Putin must think the west is weak and wouldn't actually do anything to stop it. He'd thought we'd learnt that lesson, at least in Britain in the years of appeasement before the Second World War. Appeasement, being nice, making Martini's for Stalin, doesn't cut it.

We mentioned Walter Ulbricht, who's flown in from Moscow to take charge in East Germany. And as I said, he's a mere figurehead as the Russians looted anything of value across the whole of East Germany that they could possibly use to rebuild their own shattered economy in Russia itself. And in that same review I read of Milton's book, checkmate in Berlin, we read this, one of the decisions at yield was to carve up Berlin. The Russians will get the historical core. The Americans and the British got airports, the Americans the huge Templehoff airfield, but chiefly the leafy suburbs and the villas. The Russians arrived first of course in Berlin and before the allies got there, looted the city. They took everything from the western sector of Berlin and one senior Soviet official ordered, if you can't take it, destroy it, don't leave anything to the allies, no machinery, not a bed to sleep on, not even a pot to pee in. Not allies from the moment of Hitler's suicide and the Russian taking of Berlin and the flying in of Ulbricht, no longer allies but potential enemies, exactly as Churchill had forecast years before.

They did hold the Russians so-called free elections in East Berlin in October 46. And they were largely free and the Russians made the same mistake as they're going to make elsewhere. They assumed that all the Germans in East Germany who had been brought to this terrible point by Nazism would all vote for the communist party. In fact, they got only 20% of the vote. So there has to be action taken and the action taken by Ulbricht, well what a surprise, is simply to ignore it.

And I write what Jess Jones wrote, Ulbricht ignored the result and with the help of the Soviet army, imposed a Stalinist government on East Germany, in East Berlin with the help of the Soviet army. It's without the help of the Soviet army in 1989 that East Germany collapses. Mommy is not going to bail them out. Mother Russia doesn't move under Gorbachev. They're on their own and they're broken and defeated immediately.

So let's just turn to the west. Of course, when the Western allies entered West Berlin, they found it devastated, not only by the bombing and the fighting, but by the sheer looting by the Russians. Let me read this. "In the rubble of the defeated German capital, the Western allies found a city in the words of one British officer, quote was on the brink of the worst scourge of disease and pestilence since the Middle Ages, they brought in tonnes of DDT to kill lice. The bond out houses were cleared and a new kind of normality returned," nightclubs, nightclubs, a symbol of Weimar Republic almost, nightclubs sprang up for the soldiers. Fraternisation with German women was forbidden to American and British troops, to which soldiers always have an answer. And the British American troops soon learned to say, population without conversation doesn't count as fraternisation. Population without conversation doesn't count as fraternisation. British and American soldiers found themselves with immense power. A night with a German girl cost five cigarettes, 25 cigarettes purchased the latest Leica camera. Those of you who are my age remember that Leica cameras after the war were the very best cameras that you could buy. And how many cigarettes did they have? Well, the British troops had 50 cigarettes a day. The Americans never, not everything, not everything is moral about the Western allies, but nothing, absolutely nothing compared to what's going on in East Germany.

But forgive me if I start with Britain. Britain was financially broken. Britain had no wish to remain in Germany or Berlin for a day longer than necessary. And as early as the first week of September, 1946, the American Secretary of State, a man called James Burns, who was in Germany at Stuttgart, the American Secretary of State said, September, 1946 in Stuttgart, this. "We thought", that's the Americans, "We thought we could stay out of Europe's wars and we lost interest in the affairs of Europe." He's talking about the interwar years there. "That did not keep us from being forced into a second world war. We will not again make that mistake. The US has formally announced that it is its intention to unify the economy of its own zone with any or all of the other zones willing to participate in the unification."

In other words, in blunt terms, we're going to join the British and French and American zones together and we're going to get the hell out of here. And he finished by saying, "so far only the British government has agreed to let its own participate. Well of course the French are always

going be difficult. In fact, the Americans didn't want them to have a zone at all. And if it hadn't been for Churchill, they wouldn't have got one. And he ends by a comment about Britain, we deeply appreciate their cooperation.”

Interesting as always, when push comes to shut over Europe, forget the American Revolution and links to France, it's Britain that the Americans look to, why? Because culturally we can talk together even if we disagree. I don't know if any of you have ever participated in international meetings where decisions have to be taken and the French are present. Well it drives you mad because they go to the philosophy of everything and not to the nitty gritty which Anglo-Saxons go to.

So as early as September 46, the Americans are saying we want out. And in a sense the Secretary State is stating the classic isolation from Europe position of American foreign policy. But as he said about World War II, in the end, the Americans can't turn their back and they certainly can't turn their back in what I described as the Third World War, the Cold War, why not? Because Russia could walk across Europe without American arms present. And of course out of all of this grows NATO, dominated by American power. And that remains the case in 2021 as it was the case in 1946.

The Cold War was really up and running. Churchill's speech at Fort Missouri, US Secretary of State speech at Stuttgart, all are moving to a recognition that this Third World War, the Cold War between the west and the east in Europe is now almost fixed solidly in position. The American and British zones were put together in what's called the bizonie in June, 1947. At the same time the Americans announced the Marshall plan to rebuild Europe, including in what is to become West Germany. The French finally realised they should join American Britain and so-called trizone is established and that is what eventually becomes West Berlin surrounded by East Germany and West Germany.

West Germany was set up as a sovereign state by America Britain and France in May, 1949, Russia had actually missed a slight trick here. It had been beaten to the post by the three Western allies. But in October, 1949, Russia acknowledged the GDR, that is to say the German Democratic Republic, East Germany as a sovereign state. Thus from 1949 onwards, there's no question of the reunification of Germany, that is being brought to nothing by the division of Germany into two sovereign states, one Democratic, one Marxist. And Berlin likewise, this great city just not so long ago in the times of the Weimar Republic is divided into two.

And 1949 also saw the Berlin, where Russia tried desperately to put pressure on the allies to withdraw the newly introduced Deutschemerk from West Berlin. They had no intention of doing so. The Russians closed all ways from the west into Berlin except by air. And the American Air Force and the RAF did an extraordinary job in the Berlin air land, given the size of the population of West Berlin, they flew over 200,000 in 1949. Between the 26th of June, 48, to the 30th of September 49. And they were supplying food. They were challenged to supply 3,475 tonnes per day. By the spring of 49, the Americans and British were supplying 12,941 tonnes

per day.

And so Russia was stood up to, we did not abandon West Berlin. We did not abandon the Deutschmark. And we had established West Germany as a democratic state under Konrad Adenauer, and Adenauer big task, huge task is to sort out the position of the economy. But before I go to that, there's a very strange footnote. Do not trust the Russians. If any of you are listening to this and you are going to be if you're American and about to be approached by President Biden to join American, Soviet, sorry American Russian relations and discussions diplomatically, please, please promise me you will write yourself on a card, do not trust the Russians. And when you sit in a room in Moscow, put that card in front of you because in 1952, there's the so-called Stalin note drafted in Moscow. And it was a proposal to reunify Germany with a policy in neutrality, no conditions on economic policies, guarantees for the rights of of man or basic freedoms, including freedom of speech, press, religious persuasion, political conviction, assembly, free activity of democratic partisan organisations. And the West, no, NATO said no, America said no, Britain said no. This is Stalin trying to muddy the waters.

Just imagine in my scenario that one of you Americans has been invited by Biden to join talks with Russia and you've been briefed by the State Department, don't give an inch, just don't give an inch at these meetings. Stand firm or mind relying, do not trust the Russians. And you go into the first meeting and the Russians are terribly nice, why not? And say, well actually yes, we believe in everything, you want released, we think that would be a splendid idea. You want us to back some of our Arctic forces out of the region, splendid idea. But would they ever do it? No, would they find a reason? They could find multiple reasons for why they were backtracked. Stalin had no intention of doing that.

This is a report in 1955. So that's three years after this. The British High Commissioner to Germany. Sir Ivone Kirkpatrick sent a memorandum to the British Prime minister at, sorry, not 1955, he sends a memorandum to the Prime Minister marked Top secret. And in that memorandum, Kirkpatrick wrote, "The German ambassador told me yesterday that he wished to make a particularly confidential communication. Dr. Adenauer had no confidence in the German people. He was terrified that when he disappeared from the sea, a future German government might do a deal with Russia at German expense. Consequently, he felt that the integration of Western Germany with the west was more important than the unification of Germany. He wished us to know that he would bend all his energies to achieving this. It would of course be quite disastrous to his political position if the views which he expressed to me with such frankness ever became known in Germany."

So Adenauer says, forget unification. We're not in that position. We are separated by miles and miles of political disagreement with East Germany. We cannot give an inch to the Russians and certainly not if they start bleeding on, as they did in 1952 with the Stalin memorandum, with the Stalin note, a proposal to reunify Germany. Don't believe it said Adenauer and the British were perfectly prepared to accept that, don't believe it. And by this time the Americans are quite clear having fought in Korea, that this is not the same world as it was as we advanced on Berlin in

1945 and thought that we could work with Stalin. Stalin by 55 is dead of course, but but the Soviet machinery is not dead.

So back to the economy, this is the big issue. The economy of West Germany, the Soviet economy we know all about, these German economy we know all about and we know what a state it was in at the end of the Cold War. But the German economy recovers, leading to what we call the West German economic miracle. But this has an interesting beginning. I've said before that last week that the west, the West Germany, Adenauer in particular was prepared to cast a blind eye over what former Nazis might be doing if it was in the benefit of West Germany. And so did the Americans and the British and the French, don't ask about the war. The Russians on the other hand and the East Germans went after every Nazi they could find, which of course made the situation worse in West Germany because those Nazis in East Germany that thought they would be collared go over the border as fast as they could to West Germany. And the man, the economist behind the Germany economic vehicle is a man called Ludwig Erhard. Now you may well remember Erhard as the second chancellor of Germany following Adenauer, between the years 1963 and 1966. And under Adenauer, he had been for a long period of time, 1949 to 1963, the Minister of Economic Affairs, the man who had guided the West German economic miracle.

Splendid you say, this is capitalism as it should be, except that he worked as an economist in Nazi Germany. He worked for an organisation in Nazi Germany called Economic Observation of the German Finished Goods Industry. He became deputy director, then he worked on ideas for a post-war piece assuming that Germany, Nazi Germany would win the war. You'll recall but in the buildup to the war from 1933, the Nazi economy was really a wartime economy. There was no peace economy. Now they're planning for a peace economy. The powers that be in Nazi Germany ordered these researchers to stop. They said we had declared total war, we don't want to talk about a peace and we don't want to talk about what the economic position would be. And Adenauer was sacked from his job in 1942, but continued to work on the project of how to revive German economy in any post-war situation.

And of course the post-war situation that came about was not the one he thought was going to come about. He thought there would be a Nazi victory, not a Nazi defeat. But in 1948, just before he's made Minister of Economic Affairs by Adenauer, he sort say, maybe we're all talk about what we are going to do about you. Hang on a minute, I've got a box somewhere here, here, here it is, I've got some papers here. Now this is my plan back in 1942. Perhaps we can implement it. And that is precisely what West Germany does, it implements a plan that had been constructed in Nazi Germany.

This is a German newspaper writing of the situation back in 1948, but writing about it in 2006, looking at it historically, and it says this, "Adenauer and his colleagues took their old plans out of the drawer, on the 20th, April, 1948, a heavily guarded bus with opaque windows brings them to where the air base at Roth Western near Castle, there, after weeks of persuasion, the German experts get the representatives of the allies to go along with their ideas. And on the 20th of

June, 1948, small savers lose almost everything. Whereas owners of shares and material goods lose almost nothing. Adenauer's policy has one aim and one aim only, to support businesses in building up their capital. This he sees as a royal road to dynamic growth.

And what did it mean? Well, it meant that people who had saved their money lost it all, why? Because he set the deutschemark at an exchange rate of 15 old marks to one new deutschemark for private savers. Business assets though will be converted at one to one, thus the cash savings of ordinary people will be virtually destroyed. But business capital preserved.

Democratic, hardly, hardly. And the West went along with it, why? Because it was a solution and a solution that worked, but my God, what a dreadful thing to have to do. Well Adenauer would've said had to do, it worked. And as James in *The Shortest History of Germany*, which is on my book list, writes, "Every German of that generation remembers how almost overnight, the shops were full again and the factories at work."

But there's a story that went around in the states of an American colonel who asked Adenauer the following, "How dare you relax our rationing system when there's a widespread food shortage. Adenauer but hair ker, I have not relaxed rationing, I have abolished rationing. Now the only coupon people need is a Deutschmark and they work hard to get those Deutschmarks. You just wait and see, and they did. The German economy had recovered, but in a dastardly Nazi way, strange are the doings of men as they say. In the East, east German's economy virtually collapsed, leading in 1953 to an uprising.

I think the 1953 East German uprising has been somewhat overshadowed by the later uprisings in Hungary and and in Czechoslovakia. But this was a serious thing on the 16th of June, 53 workers who were building the Stalin LA in Boulevard in East Germany. And some of you who've been to Berlin recently, right, may well have seen that, they were building it according we are told to the GDR, East Germany has officially promulgated 16 principles bourbon design. They rioted against a 10% production quota increase. And this labour protest led in turn to a protest of right across East Germany of ordinary East German citizens. More than a million people in East Germany went on strike in over 700 citizen towns.

What did the East German government do? Call in Russian troops to aid the East German police. 50 people were killed, 10,000 East German citizens placed in prison. Why was East Germany so poor? Because the Russians had imposed war reparations on East Germany as well as taking away much of the infrastructure of East Germany. It's thought that between 45 and 46, the Russians removed something like 33% of all industrial plant from East Germany. And by the early 1950s, they extracted 10 billion American dollars from the East Germans as war reparations. It's not surprising, hardly surprising that many East Germans and particularly East Berliners sought to escape to the west.

This is Orwell's "Nineteen Eighty-Four" come alive in East Germany. I had an adult education colleague in Slovakia who'd been a friend of, but when Czechoslovakia split into two, he went as

a Slovak to Slovakia and he was a minister of education and he was a scientist, an academic. And I met him through adult education. And he told me that the one thing that had kept him going as an anti-communist was a English book. And the book was George Orwell's "Nineteen Eighty-Four". Of course was banned. He got an underground copy when he was a teenager. And he said, when I read that book, William, I saw my own society being described. It wasn't fiction, for me, it was reality. And he said, then I knew what was happening. I understood and the same thing was happening in East Germany as was happening to my friend in Czechoslovakia.

This is a book which I didn't put on my list because it isn't to do specifically with Berlin. It's called "Divided". And it's written by Tim Marshall who's writing some quite extraordinary book, extraordinary in the sense of different sort of books. This one is subtitled, Why We're Living in an Age of Wars. So of course he does speak a little bit about the Berlin War and he writes this, "Before the Berlin War went up, so many East Berliners had opted to migrate to the western sectors either to work or live permanently that the East German economy was in dire straits. About two million had voted with their feet in the previous decade and the flow was increasing. Between January, 1960 and the end of July, 1961, 330,000 East Germans moved west. East Germany was losing its workforce and its credibility and nothing could express the Cold War more than pictures of the Berlin Wall going up in 1961 and coming down in 1989.

And yet, as Tim Marshall himself writes at the time, he's writing about 1979 and in 1979 he was serving with the British RAF in Germany. And he writes "Early one morning in 1979, I boarded a military train in West Germany, heading through East Germany to Charlottenburg Station Station in the West German sector of Berlin." Remember, Berlin is entirely surrounded by East Germany. "By that time the Berlin Wall had been up for 18 years, 1979, 1961, the war went up and it appeared to be a permanent picture in our lives, one that will keep us apart forever. And we all thought that."

Rewind your own life back to 1979. And we had no idea we were only 10 years away from the wall being pulled down by force of arms, no, by ordinary German citizens from the east and from the west. And who can forget those scenes we saw on our television screens and in 1979, Marshall is, it appeared to be a permanent feature in our lives, one that will keep us apart forever. There didn't seem to be any prospect of living in any other way. The present was fixed in concrete, barred wire, part of a conflict that threatened to split enough atoms to kill us all. And we are of the generation that spent a lot of our lives, both as children and adults, under the threat of the bomb.

Many of you may have campaigned against nuclear weapons and we certainly learned about it at school, I'm sure whichever country you were in, there was a view about nuclear weapons. So the wall that goes up in 1961, symbolises this divided Europe, this divided world, this divided city, this divided country. But the lesson surely is hold fast to the truth. Hold fast your beliefs. We have to believe, we have to believe That truth and justice in the end succeed, however unlikely it seems at any given moment. And in 1979 it looked, well the monolithic Soviet Eastern Europe

looked impregnable and it was not taken down by American arms, British diplomacy or whatever. It was taken down by its own citizens, it imploded. Now there's a message for all politicians, democratic and otherwise.

But, rewind, after 1961 and the Berlin wall, the division between East Germany and West Germany grew. It didn't become less, it grew. And West Germany, as the reading I gave you from Adenauer a moment or so ago, needed to integrate into the West for its own protection and it did, it joins NATO, it's recognised by Western allies and as only as 1951, Germany signed the Call Iron Community Agreement with France and seven years, sorry, seven years later in 1958 that becomes the European common market, comprising six countries and now comprises, 27 countries of the European Union, France and Germany never wanted to go to war again.

And now it would appear mad to think that they would, but in the creation. Excuse me. I don't know where that came from, in the post Brexit world of the European Union, Germany now dominates Europe. What an extraordinary comeback. From 1945 to 2021, a European world which looked divided forever collapsed almost overnight when the Berlin wall fell. As a result of Russia led by Gorbachev failing to come to the aid of the East German government, the East German guard stood back as West and East Germans pulled the wall down brick by brick. And the rest of the story you know very well.

Let me just remind you in bold facts of the rest of the story. On the 19th of January, 1989, Honecker, the East German leader, proclaimed that the wall will still be standing in 50 or even 100 years if the reasons for its existence have not been eliminated. 10th, the ninth, 89, without permission from the Communist Party, the Soviet Union and disregarding its agreement with East Germany, the Hungarian government allowed 6,600 East German citizens to leave. 16th of October 89, during Monday, demonstrations in, more than 100,000 people demanded democracy and free votes. On the 18th of October 89, Honecker was forced to resign to internal power structures in East Germany. On the 4th of November, mass demonstration in East Berlin against their government. 7th of November, the entire East German government resigned, on the ninth at a press conference it was explained that private journeys abroad can be applied for with immediate effect. And there's a rush to get through the wall, on the 30th of June 90, all boarder controls within Germany and trips on travel to West Berlin are removed. And on the 3rd of October 90, Germany is once again reunited.

And that of course raises such interesting questions for the world of 2021. A united Germany in 1871 came to power through war against Denmark, Austria and finally France. And in 1914, took the world to war. And in 1939, took the world to war again and it was broken up into two and it's now back together again. No one suggests that Germany will take us to war yet again. But the reality of Europe is that Germany controls the EU through being the money banks of Europe. But the worrying thing is, the worrying thing is how democratic will the Germany post Merkel be? If you are British, that's a question which gives us pause for thought. Maybe if you're American, Canadian, Australian, it's too far away, you don't bother about it, but you should bother about it.

I'm going to finish by reading you from John Lewis Gaddis' book on the Cold War. It's right at the end of his book, the last sentence in his book or last paragraph, he writes this, "The Cold War could have been worse, much worse. It began with a return of fear and ended in a triumph of hope, an unusual trajectory." He writes, "For great historical upheavals." It could easily have been otherwise. The world spent the last half of the 20th century having its deepest anxieties not confirmed, the dropping of the bomb, the end of the world, whatever, the binoculars of a distant future will confirm this. For had the Cold War taken a different course, there might have been no one left to look back through them.

That's something, to echo, when asked what he did during the French Revolution, said most of us simply survived. But unlike the Japanese American historian Fukiyama, it didn't mark in 1989 the falling of the Berlin Wall, the end of history because we've moved to another history and that history is very difficult in 2021. To analyse, to analyse anywhere in the world. America has just come through a bizarre presidency. Britain feels very unlike the Britain that I grew up in and lived my life there. There's a fear in Germany and in France of both countries going right, populous right. How far right, who knows? We live in a strained world still, and Putin as ever, not so much the Russian bear as the Russian spider, waiting, just waiting for any weakness in the west, A weakness in NATO and there's plenty of weaknesses in NATO starting with Germany with the lack of investment in armed forces, Britain cutting back, cutting back. We've now got a whole military, less in size and Wellington took the Peninsula, Spain in fighting Napoleon.

Things are changing. I can't tell you what the next chapter of history will be. All I can say is that I believe looking at World War I, World War II and the Cold War as a unit makes sense. I can't say where we are today, but I'm going to live to ripe 247 years of age to find out. I'm going to stop there and there may be some questions, some points that people like to make as usual.

- [Judi] Yes. There's quite a few comments on the Q and A if you want go through them, William.

Q&A and Comments

- Yeah, I'll go through Q and A.

No, I don't use maps. Sorry, I can't do that, not a map. Bring an atlas I'm afraid. Fiddling around with maps on Zoom is not a good idea.

Oh, that's an, yes. Any chance of Western allies could have got to in a ahead of Russia, so avoiding a lot of artificial structuring, the answer is no, and why the answer is no is because we were not prepared in the West to suffer so many casualties. By the time we had got out Normandy after D-Day, it was clear that Germany would be defeated. What we didn't want to do was sacrifice lives and enough lives were lost before we waited Berlin, we didn't want to sacrifice a single life more than we had to. The Russians didn't care, didn't care.

Yes, it was breached in 1989. Physically demolished in 1990. Oh, I love those sorts of comments. Yes, you're absolutely right. Oh yes, David, book to read in the USA, "Iron Curtain" by Anne Applebaum, I love Anne Applebaum's book. She's a really first rate writer.

Q: Why is Russia failing in competition with the West?

A: Well, it's always failed from Peter the Great onwards. Why, because it's spending too much money. In the Cold War, it spent too much money on arms and on the space race. And it's doing the same today with armaments. It is spending hugely more than any other country. It needs to spend money on its own people. And it's never done that under Czarism or under communism or under Putinism.

There's so many interesting comments about people you knew, what they did. Yes, General Patton wanted to go on fighting the Russians and so did Churchill, and neither of them got their way, thank God. Washington thought Patton was well. Was far too extreme. And Churchill was regarded as eccentric.

Q: Are the Baltic states at risk?

A: Yes, they certainly are. There are many Russians there. There are and there are NATO troops on the borders in the Baltic. One of the problems of the Baltic is Belarus. There is a small corridor that Belarus could, in other words, the Soviets using Belarus could go through and get to the West and get to the Baltic states and that would be disastrous. And it would only take them a matter of hours, it's very, very open to potential attack was Putin to risk it.

Q: Have we progressed to any kind of world peace since the fall of the wall?

A: I don't think I need to answer that need I, absolutely not.

Q: How do West Berlin stand in the hand?

A: Because that was what was agreed, that we would divide Berlin in that way between the four allies. It lands up as two because the Western Allies, America, Britain and France agreed a unified policy. And having got that, we were never ever going to let Berlin go. That would've been politically disastrous. We would've shown that we weren't prepared to stand for anything. Hence the Berlin was so important.

Now that's an interesting point here, David. An aside, David Levine writes, the Democrats lost the German vote in 1944 to Republican Tom Dewey, Dewey ran against Truman in 48 and counted on holding onto the German vote in the middle West, but lost it and the election to Truman in the greatest upset until 2016. Many say it was because of the Berlin, that yes, remember that one of the problems that FDR had in 1940 was German Americans and feeling that they would not support a declaration war in Germany. I'm not talking about German Jews, I'm talking about non-Jewish German Americans who were prominent in various key businesses.

You're right about not trusting who says, Eleanor, you're right not to trust any totalitarian regime.

The trouble is we have to deal with totalitarian regimes. You can't not deal with them. I mean, this is the problem the Americans have with China. You mentioned Iran, China is the problem. The capital city of West Berlin was. Yes, because it had to be, because West Berlin was not in West Germany, but Berlin is the capital of Germany. It Britain been invaded and it had been carved up. And afterwards the north of Britain was separated from the south and London was surrounded. You would have Birmingham as a capital or Manchester. But everyone knows London is capital of Britain. Berlin is the capital of Prussia. Berlin is the capital of Germany. There's no question, it was so symbolic as Berlin. There was no way the West, no Adenauer was not an Nazi.

Q: Did Russia consider closing?

A: No, it couldn't have closed it.

Q: Did Russia consider closing the airspace during the Berlin blockade?

A: No, it couldn't because that would've led to the one thing the Russians didn't want to go that far, would've led to open warfare, in Europe the Cold War did not, everyone backed down at the last moment. It's it's only when you've got other people fighting for you, north Koreans, north Vietnamese, that you can do things differently.

Q: How strong is the Communist party in Germany today?

A: Not as strong, no, let me rewind. Not as strong, it's not the communist you've got to fear in Germany today. It's the neofascist you've got to fear, the AFD. That's the problem in Germany. The Marshall Plan just coughed up the money.

Q: Can you talk about the deification of the Germany education system post World War II?

A: Well, easy in East Germany, east Germany implements a Soviet style education system, which in many respects was good. In other respects was highly political. West Germany had a system that was developed. Germany had had one of the best education systems in the world in the 19th century. And in under the Weimar Republic and I only know about the British sector. But then that dominated the education programme. And what was established was outstandingly good, sad for Britain we never implemented what we gave Germany post-war in our own system. The German system put emphasis on it. It didn't treat every child as though they were the same. It treated children that they should have equal opportunities. But that you provided different levels of education. I mean, don't get me started on what's wrong with British education. I'd need a month.

Oh, this is very good. Let me read this. I was a US naval officer in West Germany from 53 to 56. I served several naval locations, including Berlin, which I travelled to by train. I learned that the Soviets thought that unlike Britain and the US, their European factories were destroyed by the Germans. And their man power serious defeated in defeating the Nazis. Until 53, the Germans were not permitted to have a military response. We created uniform German labour service battalions, including naval under US supervision, also NATO. Absolutely, and very good.

The Marshall Plan, I would have to talk to you about on another occasion. It's a complex issue. And from a British point of view, a difficult one. I was on a business trip, Poland says in February, 1990, my friends went to Berlin to help demolish the wall. They gave me a small piece of the wall from the eastern side.

Q: Why did the Soviets, why didn't the Soviets come to the aid of east Germany in 1989?

A: Because Gorbachev is following his own road towards not an abandoning of the Soviet system, but on modernising it, of making it more acceptable. And he was not in the mood and not in a political position. And had we drawn support from, he wanted the countries of Eastern Europe to find their own destiny as he was trying to find Russia's own destiny. There was no way that Gorbachev was going to be involved in East Germany.

Here's a penny. I lived in Berlin in the 1980s when my husband was in the British Army. Mentioned earlier was the British military liaison mission. For a satirical look at the fall of the Berlin Wall, I can thoroughly recommend the film "Good Bye Lenin".

Hazel, 1979 was when the Soviets invaded Afghanistan, which some correctly predicted will bleed the USSR stasis and collapse. Afghanistan was Russia's Vietnam. Absolutely right. And one of the problems of Afghanistan, it introduced drugs for the first time in a major way into Russia, into young people who then took drugs to, as it were, cope with the system they found themselves in. Thank you. Yes, you're right.

Q: Didn't the Russians think because their losses were so immense in the war, a manpower and properly entitled them to take what they could from Germany?

A: Yes, that's absolutely true. But they were taking it from their own creation, east Germany. And it meant that East Germany was always running to try and catch up and it was never ever going to catch up economically with the west. And of course one of the things that in the end did for the East Germans was TV. Because although illegal, you could easily get TV and radio programmes or TV in particular from the west. And you remember what affected East Germans was not the TV programmes per se, but were the adverts on them. All these washing machines and dishwashing, all the white goods as we call them. Then they thought, why can't we have them? And of course they couldn't.

Q: Didn't Reagan have a major role?

A: Well, now, that's another interesting question. The Reagan and Thatcher. Well, yes, up to a point. But the truth is, Reagan and Thatcher together stood firm. That's absolutely true. But neither of them imagine what happened, happened. It's the implosion of the East rather than the success of the west. But nothing against Thatcher Reagan's policies.

No, I mentioned the Marshall plan in passing. I'm sorry, I can't, I'd love to do everything in detail, if I've got an hour, I can't put everything in, I'm sorry. I just have to do what looks, makes, I hope something that you can follow. That's what I'm trying to do.

The EU is very dependent on China. Everywhere is becoming dependent on China. And that is a real, real worry. China, for goodness sake, in Britain, we're worried about Chinese takeover of football clubs. If that's a worry, just think one else is a worry.

Do you think that our government, I don't know who our government is, is our government British, if it's Britain, I don't think our government's got an idea about much. If it's America, you've got to answer that yourselves.

Q: How would you predict Europe's next 20 years?

A: I absolutely can't think. I pray and hope that we do not go down a populous political route so that we land up with Trumpism right across Europe. That would be disastrous to Europe. As for Britain outside of Europe, all the signs at the moment are not good, but they've been made more complex because of Coronavirus. It's very difficult. I will speak about Britain because I'm British and that makes it easier for me to have an opinion even if other Britain's listening think my opinion is wrong. I think we will recover from coming out of Brexit. But I think it could take quarter of a century to do so. And we're going to have to define ourselves. We're back to the American Secretary States view. Britain's lost an empire and failed to find a role. And we have still to find our role and talking about global Britain as the present government is doing and then acting in quite the opposite way is meaningless. But I think Britain find a way. I hope the EU, I think EU might well split. I've always thought that North, South, I've always thought it might, Germany won't be prepared to pay for the south, the Mediterranean countries. As for America, who knows? The Americans must answer that question. Will they have two parties in a two-party system as in Britain, basically, you've got to have both parties that are electable and central, whether central and am American central may not be British central, but it doesn't matter. That's what think like that. Unless the Republicans can be a viable opposition, then America's got a problem in Britain, unless the Labour party is a viable opposition, then Britain's got a problem. And both countries are facing this conundrum of a two-party political system. When you are left with only one political party and we know that's bad.

Q: Is the EU united?

A: No. I love those questions, when it's a no, yes answer, I love them. I feel confident with a no there. You made Trump, Europe needs, of course Europe needs to come forward with support for the Americans, why? In its own interest. Because we could have a president in America who simply applies isolationism towards Europe in a stringent form, over to you then chaps, we're not paying. Our last check has gone. When this last check is cashed, that's it. You're on your own. Well that leave Britain a problem because of course Britain isn't in the EU and if they're talking about an EU army, which Britain opposed. The only good thing is Britain has a separate treaty with France in terms of military cooperation. And France and Britain together, well, they are individually, but together they are a substantial military force. However, having said that, Britain is cutting it's military and that's not good. It's Germany that is the problem because they don't have a viable force. And what they have got is poor quality. But do you want a heavily armed Germany, that would set people teeth on edge in Britain.

Oh no, you you're welcome. People have just been nice, I can't cope with that. Militant China, we don't know. What we do know is all empires crash in the end. China is an empire as America is an empire as Russia is an empire.

Q: Can America hold itself together?

A: Well, there are many people outside and inside America who feel that it may not be able to hold itself together.

Q: Can Russia hold together?

A: There's many people that think post Putin, it might not, much more likely as China to fragment. I think the fragmentation of China is quite possible. Izzy, you going to last much longer? Oh, it's a struggle on, it'll be like the Holy Roman empire. The Europeans love that, it'll go on for hundreds of years. And nobody had taken any notes. Sorry, that's a very British view, I withdraw that. No, I don't think it will last 100 years.

Oh, that's a very good comment. Says I spent day in East Berlin at a busy restaurant lunch. There was no conversation. Only the sounds of crockery and cut, people too scared to speak.

Q: Is there dependency on outside energy resources?

A: It's Achilles heel. It is certainly German's Achilles heel. Absolutely right, absolutely right. And it's why Britain is trying to do other things about energy, not least wind power in which we've gone outside here, out in the sea behind me we've got huge amount of wind power.

Oh, now Robin, that that's a very deep question.

Q: If Bolshevism was so appalled under the Nazis, why did the Germans in the east embrace communism so quickly?

A: I think part of the answer, maybe the largest part of the answer is they had no choice. I don't think they had a choice because, okay, I stand up against communism. What happens, the same as it would've happened if I'd stood up against Nazism. Wendy would announce next week, sorry, William is unable to give the lecture this week and it's been given by X, Y, and Z. And somebody that said, well Wendy, where's William gone? I'm sorry, we don't know and I've never heard of again. And that's how they controlled it, if you like. On the other side, authoritarianism of one sort or another attracts. So if you take Hungary, if you take last point I'm making this evening, if you take Budapest, some of you've been to the House of Horrors. It's where the Nazis, the Gestapo did dreadful things in the war. And when the war ended, they took off. They simply removed the swastika and put on a red armband and they become the secret police of the Soviet state of Hungary. And the House of Horror continues, and all that's changed is I change the colour of my armband from a swastika to a hammer sickle. And there are people like that.

Wendy, I think I better stop, don't you?

- William, I'm going to just jump in. I'm sure that you exhausted. That was credible presentation. Thank you very, very much.

- You're welcome, you're welcome.

- Thank you, really very, very interesting. Challenging times behind us, challenging times ahead of us, challenging times right now.

- That's what being human is all about, I'm afraid.

- Absolutely, we are having the discussion. So once again, from all of us, thank you very, very much and enjoy the rest of your evening.

- Thank you, thank you. And God bless all those in Israel who are listening.

- Absolutely, amen.

- Bye-bye.

- Thank you, Judi, thanks a lot.

- [Judi] Stay safe everyone.

- Be safe, bye bye.