

Philip Rubenstein | America's Red Scare, Part 2 Spies, Fronts, New Dealers, HUAC

- Hi, Phil.

- Hi.

- I'm looking forward to part two of the Red Scare.

- Me too.

- You you are absolutely superb last, you always are, but last week you week you were superb.

- It's never a good thing having to maintain a standard.

- I've got full faith in you. So thank you very, very much. And I'm going to hand over to you because we're a little bit late today. I'm sorry about that. I couldn't get on as you saw. Okay, over to you. Thank you Phil.

- So welcome, welcome, everyone. Welcome back. This is part two of America's Red Scare. Part two of probably four, and we're looking to do the next two sometime later in the year, probably over the summer when Lockdown University is going to be covering the '40s and '50s in America. So thank you to all of you who wrote after last week's session. Thank you in particular to Joan Lessing and Elliot Wilner, who both wrote with some really fascinating recollections of the '50s and '60s in terms of HUAC and the McCarthy era. And I hope to be sharing those when we get to them later in the year. Also, thanks to the gentleman who asked about Breckenridge Long, who I'd never heard of, but I've now checked him out and he was the Assistant Secretary of State and one of the architects in the '40s of preventing the Jews of Europe from entering the US. So no doubt we'll be coming back to him as well, later as well. So this week we're going to be focusing on the '20s and '30s, having looked at the first part of the 20th century last week.

And if there's one overriding theme of this week, it's being an American. What does it mean to be an American? And who gets to decide what does it mean to be un-American? and who gets to decide that? I have to say I've always been fascinated by the new world's sense of itself, because I was born and brought up in Britain in an old world country. And in this country, people tend to take these things for granted. So in Britain, as you know, we have no founding documents, we have no Bill of Rights, we have no Declaration of Independence, we have no written constitution, we have common law, which is a fancy way of saying that we figure it out as we go along. And let me now just get the slides up just as we speak. When I was, sorry, sorry about this. Oops, let's go right here we go. Quick preview of all the slides. Okay, so when I was a kid, we never started our day with a pledge of allegiance to the flag as these children are doing. And by the way, again, one of the things that I just discovered just as a result of researching today is that it was only in 1954 that the words, the reference to under God were

actually inserted in the Pledge of Allegiance.

And this because Eisenhower and others wanted to distinguish the USA from Russia and its godless communism. Turning to the idea of citizenship. I mean, even British citizenship here you know, it's something that's just not comparable. We were only citizens in this country 70 years ago, before 1948, before the law was changed. We were subjects, British subjects. And the idea of citizenship is different. Citizenship, it confers rights and it confers responsibilities. And to be an American citizen I think is something special. I'm not the first person to have made the observation that probably the nearest comparison is with the Roman Empire, that you could move anywhere in the Roman Empire and your safety was guaranteed. If you could say the words *cīvis Rōmānus sum*, I am a Roman citizen. What makes America different and what makes American citizens different, citizenship different is that America is an idea. And I think the words of the American historian Gordon Wood, are really interesting. So he says "precisely because we are not a people held together by blood, no one knows who an American is except by what they believe. Except by what they believe."

Now, if he's correct, and if it's true that being an American is what I believe what I'm for, then being un-American is what I don't believe, what I'm against, what I fear. And that makes it a really potent weapon in the hands of people who wield power. This issue of what it means to be an American is going to hang particularly over the Jewish community of America for the first half of the 20th century because it begs a question, can a Jew ever be accepted as a true American? Let's just do a brief recap of where we got to by the end of last week. So if you recall, we started by looking at the new wave of immigrants who were coming to the USA over 18 to 1920, and they were coming from Eastern central Southern Europe and they included as well as Jews, Italians, Greeks, Slavs, et cetera. And there was a wasp backlash against people who didn't look like us or sound like us, and particularly those who were bringing with them radical ideas. And this develops into widespread fear of communism and anarchism, and it culminates in the rise of the man in the middle.

Mitchell Palmer, attorney General, who along with J Edgar Hoover organises the arrests of 10,000 individuals in 1919, 1920, and manages to deport 500 of the mainly Russian Jews back to what's now the Soviet Union. And they include Emma Goldman and her colleague Alexander Berkman. And it's only through the heroic activities of the man underneath them, the Trotsky lookalike, Leon Post, who's now acting Secretary of Labour, that the deportations are stopped and public opinion is finally turned against Palmer and the raids and the hysteria by Felix Frankfurter, who along with other lawyers, writes about the brutality and illegality of the raids. So this is where we got to. And by 1920, certainly by the summer of 1920, the worst of the fury has subsided. But as I mentioned last week, the poisons are out and the poisons are seeping into the system. And over the course of the '20s and the '30s, they're going to work their way through the whole of the US body politic and society.

Nativism, nativism that we looked at last week is going to become widespread in the 1920s. It's that tribalistic feeling among the white Anglo-Saxon Protestants that we were here first and the

others don't belong here. It takes root and it begins to grow. And this nativist feeling manifests itself in two primary ways. The first one is how do we treat the ones who want to get in? And the second is how do we treat the ones who are already in and keep them at a distance? So the ones who want to get in, the 1920s are going to see a form of immigration restriction that the US has never experienced in its history until now. This is Arthur Hertzberg, who is the wonderful historian, rabbi historian of the Jews in America. And this is how he describes the legislation of the 1920s. Congress implicitly declares that some people are better than others. America wants more tall, blonde, blue-eyed immigrants and fewer short, dark-skinned brunettes. In 1921, Congress passes an immigration law, which is going to limit the numbers of people who were allowed in to the US on the basis of their national origin.

And it's going to be a quota of 2% based on the 1910 census. So depending where you come from, only a certain number are allowed in per year from each of those countries. This is the first time the US has ever discriminated in its immigration legislation on the basis of national origin. Now, the people who are going to suffer as a result of this are going to be all of the new potential immigrants who are going to come from Eastern central and Southern Europe. So it's going to affect Slavs, it's going to affect Greeks and Italians, Russians, and of course that's mainly Jews at the time. The question is, is it aimed at Jews or is it aimed at all of them? And I think it's very difficult not to see this as prompted by Jewish immigration. If you look at what's actually going on at the time, because in 1921 when this legislation comes forward, we are now in the middle of a Russian civil war. Over 1919 to 1921, everyone is fighting everyone else. The whites and the Russians are still fighting each other. The Polish army sees an opportunity to advance enter Russian territory and do a land grab.

And the Ukrainian forces are also involved. Everyone is fighting everyone else. But there's one thing that all the warring factions have in common, which is their hatred of the Jews. And in the fog of war, the excuse is used by all of these forces indiscriminately to kill Jews. It's estimated that over those two years, around a hundred thousand Jewish lives are lost. Congress is alarmed to receive reports that potentially quote "millions of Jews may want to flee Poland and Russia." So they dispatch a number of public officials, including this man, a senior diplomat, Wilbur Carr. And Wilbur Carr's job is to tour European ports and report back to Congress. And needless to say, his reports are negative. And "Polish Jews alone," he says "they're filthy, unAmerican and often dangerous in their habits, and they lack any conception of patriotism or national spirit." Carr is responsible along with others, for not only drafting the 1921 law, but when it's clear that over the next three years the pressure only grows for stricture, for stricter legislation, he's also involved in drafting a law in 1924.

And this law is even more prohibitive because this law isn't 3% based on national origin. It's 2%, and it's not the 1910 census, it's now the 1890 census. So it's going back even further. And there's only one aim of these two pieces of legislation, and that is to tip the balance in favour of northern and western Europeans, the white Anglo-Saxon majority, to ensure that they keep their majority and that they keep their ethnic homogeneity. So it favours 85% of the total number of people coming in, the total maximum who can come in to the US being from north and Western

Europe. And so you can see 50,000 from Germany is the quota, 34,000 from Britain, et cetera. These are just some examples, 6,000 from Poland, 2000 from Russia. By the way, and you can see at the bottom it's 0% allowed from Asia. So anyone from China and Japan were automatically excluded as a basis of this legislation, irrespective of whether or not any of them had settled in 1890. On top of everything, the 1920s also sees the fashionable pseudoscience of eugenics, which is commonly used to justify this legislation.

And it's argued that Italians Slavs and Jews particularly shouldn't come in because their physically and intellectually inferior to white Anglo-Saxon Protestants. Well, so much for keeping out all of the non wasp immigrants. What about the ones who are already here? How are we going to treat them? The single most notorious example of anti-immigrant feeling in the 1920s is directed not at Jews, but at two Italian immigrants by the name of Nicola Sacco and Bartolomeo Vanzetti. In May, 1920, a guard and a payroll clerk are killed during an armed robbery on a shoe factory just outside Boston. And the police decide to charge and arrest these two individuals, Sacco and Vanzetti. And the evidence that you find is totally 100% circumstantial. They have anarchist pamphlets in their car and it's so happens that they own guns. But this is America and many people own guns. The press and public opinion turns immediately against them, largely because they're Italian and they're immigrants. There's a trial where the prosecution focuses almost entirely on their political beliefs and hardly at all on the actual evidence as it pertains to the evening.

Needless to say, the two of them are found guilty. And this sparks protests all across the USA, particularly in those towns and cities where there a large Italian communities. Felix Frankfurter, who we met last week, he's now a professor at Harvard Law School, and he's one of the prominent voices who looks at the trial and declares that there's been a perversion of justice. The two of them are sentenced to death, even though four years after their trial, another man had come forward after he'd been caught for another crime and confessed that he was the one who committed the robbery along with his gang. But in spite of that, and in spite of appeals, there's no retrial. And the two of them, again, in spite of further protests, are executed in August, 1927. So what can we say about the Jewish community at the time? Well, the Jewish community is led by organisations such as the American Jewish Congress, for whom the idea of integrating into American society is the great idea of the time. And they push integration and they hold a whole series of meetings in all towns and cities where there's a Jewish population to be found.

And they explain that the Jew must become an American of the Americans. He must prove that he's not a parasite or an exploiter of the country. Arthur Hertzberg has a wonderful observation about this period. He says it's in this period where we see the invention of the modern invention of the Jewish mother. What does he mean by this? He means the children of the ghetto, the children of the refugees who are coming out of Russia and out of Austria, Hungary over the course of the late 19th century, the earlier 20th century. They're all struggling now to break free from the shackles, particularly to break free from the religion and the traditions of the father. And they're encouraged and supported by unconditional love from the mother to succeed in America.

I love this. It's a very Jewish version of Oedipus story. And what do they find, these Jews who are struggling out of the ghetto? Well, they find that over the course of the 1920s and earlier into the '30s, they're always going to be restricted in terms of the education that they can attain for themselves and the careers they can later gain. They can't get on in the established professions because they're close to them. So law, Wall Street, insurance, all the white collar professions are pretty much closed to them. They also can't get into big corporations again, closed to them, and they certainly can't get into traditional heavy industry like automotive, railroad, coal, shipping, et cetera.

They also find barriers to education just start to be put up in the late '20s. These barriers hadn't previously existed before 1920. There were no barriers to applying to any Ivy League school for a Jew, for example. But Harvard and Yale and the other Ivy League schools have a problem. They're finding that too many Jews are successfully entering their institution. And as far as they're seeing it, corrupting the culture. In the late or in the mid '20s, Harvard has over 20% of its students, the student population is Jewish and Columbia double that. And so they all decide one after the other to impose quotas. Yale doesn't call it a quota. What Yale says is that we are now going to admit on the basis quote of character rather than pure scholarship. The dean even writes quote, in terms of scholarship and intelligence, Jews lead the class, but their personal characteristics make them markedly inferior.

So how do the Jews respond? Well, they respond using their resourcefulness. What do they do? They, if they can't get into existing institutions, they create their own institutions. So this slide is a drawing of the original Mount Sinai Hospital in New York. And this is one of over a hundred Jewish hospitals that were built from the late 19th century onwards. Why were they built? Well, in part it was obviously to service the sick of the Jewish population, but the real driver behind their foundations was the fact that it was going to be able to give an opportunity to Jewish doctors to qualify and get a job. I know this does sound like a corny Jewish joke, but this is the big driver of the Jewish hospitals and the reason why they're founded and of course, Trudy spoken about the invention of Hollywood. And Hollywood comes about pretty much for exactly the same reason. It's a group of Jews like LB Mayor, Zucker, Sam Goldwin, Fox, the Warner Brothers who find that on the East Coast, they're always going to be excluded.

They're always going to find it difficult to be able to make movies, but if they move to Hollywood, they can have as the author Neal Gabler so beautifully called it, an empire of their own. You know, it's like cost nostra, it's our thing. It's their own empire. It's their own world that they can build. And in the 1930s when Roosevelt comes to power and he pioneers the New Deal, the Jews have another new industry, and the new industry that they're admitted into is all the new federal agencies that power the New Deal. A Jew will always find it very difficult to go into old areas of government. There are very few Jews in the State Department in the '30s. There are very few Jews, if any, in the War Department, but 15% of the federal agencies behind the New Deal are staffed by Jews at the very height. The Jews, of course, love FDR. He's their benevolent king. And in 1936, when he stands for a second time, he manages to attract 90% of the Jewish vote. Even as FDR and his colleagues in government are starting to ensure that the

gates keep very firmly closed to the Jews of Europe as they become more and more persecuted in Europe over the late '30s and into the '40s. So what of communism?

Well, communism in the 1920, the Communist Party membership steadily grows. There's a number of splits over ideology and tactics, but it's steadily growing. But who's joining the Communist Party? Well, again, you know, for the same reason that Jews are attracted to new industries, they're also attracted to new ideologies. Most of the members of the Communist Party, most of the people who join in the 1920s are immigrants, or they're the children of immigrants and they're attracted to the Communist Party because they feel frozen out of mainstream society. So why not join an ideology that rejects mainstream society? This culminates in the 1930s when we start to see the real rise of communism and communist influence in the US. And there's a battle royal that goes on between, or that goes on throughout the 1920s up until the early '30s, as to whether or not the US should recognise the Soviet Union. Most of the '20s are spent with a rear guard action being fought by the elites anti-communists who don't want anything to do with the Soviet Union, don't want anything to do with Bolshevism, and particularly towards the end of the '20s.

The last Bastian is President Herbert Hoover, who under the Wilson Administration back in 1918, 1919, he'd been given responsibility for the food relief programme for the white Russians. So he's seen firsthand the brutality of the Bolshevik and their methods. And as far as he's concerned, there's absolutely no way on God's earth that the US is going to recognise the Soviets. But 1932 comes, and FDR is elected into office, and FDR has different ideas and sees the inevitability that sooner or later the Soviet Union is going to have to be recognised. And as far as he sees it, there's some practical reasons for doing so. The first reason is foreign policy. Germany and Japan are on the move, and he needs a bulwark in Russia. He needs an ally in Russia to be able to depend on sometime in the future should those two grow in power. He's also looking to the fact that America is in the throes of depression, and if it's possible to have a relationship with Russia as a punitive trade partner, then all the better. But there is a bitter irony that America's taken all this time to recognise the Soviet Union, and it should choose to do so in 1933 when Stalin is perpetrating some of the most despicable crimes of his time in power. Stalin in 1932 had launched the terror campaign against the Kulaks.

The Kulaks are the property owning peasants who hold out against collectivization of the farms. And as a form of punishment, Stalin relocates 1.3 million of them to force labour camps and another half million die either on the way or escaping. And over '32 and '33 in order to deal with recalcitrant Ukrainians who want independence, Stalin deliberately orders a famine of the Ukraine. And this results in, no one quite knows the numbers, but a conservative estimate is that 5 million people die as a result of manmade famine over the course of two years. For the crimes of questioning the totalitarian authority of Stalin and the and the Politburo. Did the US know about Stalin's crimes? Did they know about the famine at the time? It's a very interesting question. Governments like the rest of us see what they want to see. FDR was highly reliant on a journalist known as, called Walter Duranty, who was the Moscow correspondent of the New York Times. Duranty was rich and famous.

He'd won a Pulitzer the previous year for all of his articles on Stalin's five year plan. He survived and thrived off the goodwill of Moscow. He had the best flat of all the correspondents, the best apartment of all the correspondents. He had wealth in Moscow. He was given unparalleled access. And this was mainly because he wrote by and large good news stories about Moscow. And so when he wrote in 1933 that Russians are hungry but not starving, when he said yes, malnutrition is high, but there is absolutely no famine. When he played down the scale of the famine, FDR was inclined to believe him. And if you look at these two articles, you probably can't see, but in the small print, Duranty spends most of his time badmouthing Gareth Jones, who in London meanwhile was writing honestly and truthfully about what the famine was really like. Jones was one of the very few journalists who tours Russia, who goes to Kharkov, who sees it at firsthand, but who's not part of the Moscow press corps. So he's got nothing to lose, unlike the rest of them who need Moscow's goodwill.

He's got nothing to lose by reporting the truth. And he's badmouthed by pretty much not only to Duranty, but most of the Moscow international press corps. 1930s are the Haiti of communism in the US. It's really important to understand this. It's really important to understand what happens with the growth, the rise of communism in the 1930s. Because this is going to be the decade that's going to lay the ground for all the later accusations starting in the late '30s with the House on American Committee, and then rising as a huge great big tide after World War II leading to the McCarthy witch hunts. I can't emphasise enough, by the time McCarthy comes along in 1950, communism in the US, Communist influence is a totally spent force. But it's the lag of what happens in the 1930s that everyone is going to be referring to.

Why does communism as an ideology, take off in the 1930s? Why does it attract? The number one reason is the Great Depression. The depression is at, as you can see from this graph, is at its absolute height. 1931, 1932, and 1933. This is when unemployment is 25% in the US, a quarter of the country are out of work, and many who are in work are barely scraping by. And many people start to see that the depression is really about the fact that capitalism has been a gigantic failure and they're looking for answers somewhere else. This of course, is before the dawn of the New Deal. This is before FDR comes along. So communism is really the only alternative that many young people confined. This is exacerbated in the mid '30s. In 1936, the cause célèbre of the Spanish Civil War and the Republican cause hugely romantic, is associated with communism. So if anything that draws even more people into it. Moscow gets wise. Moscow in the 1920s had made sure that the Communist Party was pure, that it would reject bourgeois left wing politics.

It would reject bourgeois liberal politics. But in 1935, the politburo instructs the Communist party of the USA that the strategy has changed and it is now going to be working through the liberal left. It's going to be insinuating into left wing organisations. It's going to be infiltrating trade unions, liberal organisations. It's going to be doing its best to infiltrate the New Deal, and it's going to set up a multiplicity of so-called front organisations. These are organisations which are set up for peace, love, and understanding, peace, education, fighting poverty, you know,

motherhood and apple pie liberal issues. And they're going to have names like the American Peace Congress, and they're really going to be financed by the Soviet Union and controlled by Moscow. And most of the people who join them are not going to have the faintest idea that Moscow are the puppeteers. And it's really important to understand this because the net that's going to catch so many people in the late '40s and the '50s is going to include some communists, but it's going to include many others who are caught up in these organisations which have been infiltrated by the Communist Party, but where they personally have got no association with communism and they've got no idea about the infiltration. These are the useful idiots, so-called, Lennon call them the useful idiots who further the Communist course, but have no idea that they're doing so. But let me, I just want to give you an example just to show how widespread this is. So in the 1930s, there's an organisation, an umbrella organisation, which is called the American Youth Congress.

And all of the major American Youth organisations are members. So the Scouts, YMCA, Catholic youth, the Catholic youth, the American Jewish Congress, they're all members. And the Young Communist league is instructed to infiltrate it. And so they infiltrate and they take some of their orders from the commandant. This is an organisation that's got 700,000 members across the whole of the USA. And sure enough, people are going to be hauled up in front of McCarthy for being a member of the American Youth Congress 15, 20 years later. Many Jews are attracted to communism. Many Jews are attracted to the ideology, as I said, in part because of the feeling of exclusion from the mainstream, but also because of their attraction to the romantic ideas of the Bolshevik revolution. Not least as well, because the Jewish experience of the 1930s is by and large going to be quite a depressing one, much more than the 1920s. The Jewish experience of the 1920s is going to be heavily, heavily coloured by anti-Semitism. There's a real sense if you are a Jew in one of the big towns and cities, that you are an outsider. You are very much being treated as an outsider.

Anti-Semitism increases dramatically, and it increases in the cities and in the towns, and particularly in the farm belt in the mid and far west. So I just want to introduce you to my rogues gallery here and some of these faces you'll be familiar with. So on our left, the dapper gentleman in the three piece suit, of course, that's Henry Ford. And Henry Ford carries the flame of antisemitism, probably more than anyone in the 1920s. He establishes a newspaper called the Dearborn Independent, which is named after his hometown Dearborn in Michigan. And they published the protocols of the Elders of Zion. And for most of the '20s, he is promoting the idea of the world Jewish conspiracy. You know, the fact that the Rothchilds and the Trotskys are all working together, as in their cabal to control the world, to control international finance and to engineer the Russian Revolution. His newspaper has a circulation in 1925 of 900,000. So 900,000 Americans are reading it, week in and week out. Now the perpetrators of in the '30s of Midwestern anti-Semitism.

Two of the important ones are the ones who are off top there. So we have, on our left, we have Gerald Winrod, and on the right we have William Pelley and they have organisations, Christian front organisations, anti-Semitic organisations, proto fascist organisations, which again, are



perpetrating the same nonsense about the protocols in international Jewish conspiracy. Probably the most important of all of them is the gentleman at the bottom in the dog collar. That's Father Charles Coughlin. He's a Catholic priest. I mean, if you go on YouTube and you listen to him, he's an incredibly powerful orator. And he derives his power from his weekly broadcast. He has a weekly broadcast and he draws millions and millions of listeners in the late '30s. And again, you know, he just takes up where Henry Ford left off. It's the same stuff. He blames the depression on the Jews, he blames it on the international conspiracy of Jewish bankers who says, and he says they're also of course, behind the Russian Revolution.

And he promotes the protocols of the Elders of Zion as if it was God's own truth. And the final individual is a proper Nazi. This is Fritz Kuhn, who's the Bundesfuhrer, or so-called of the German American Bund. And they operate largely on the east coast. He holds parades all throughout the late 1930s in New York, which featured Nazi uniforms and flags. And we're going to see a clip of their rally in 1939. This is in Madison Square Gardens. And you'll see, the first thing that you'll see is a huge mural of George Washington because the German American Bund claim that George Washington is, guess what? The first American fascist. So I'm going to play this and sorry, I'm just going to stop sharing and then I'm just going to re-share because I, here we go, right. Okay, so this clip is about a minute and a half.

*Video clip plays.*

- Ladies and gentlemen, fellow Americans, American patriots. I am sure I do not come before you tonight as a complete stranger. You all have heard of me through the Jewish controlled press as a creature with horns, cloven hoof, and a long tail. We with American ideals, the men that our government shall be returned to, the American people who founded it. If you ask what we are actively fighting for under our charter, first, a social just, white, Gentile ruled United States. Second, Gentile-controlled labour unions free from Jewish Moscow-directed domination.

*Video clip ends.*

- So that clip of course, ends with the real face of Nazi giving someone a really good beating. Lucky for that kid who they beat up, they don't know his name is Isadore Greenbaum, and he's Jewish. If they did know that, God only knows what would've happened to him. But Jews, there's 20,000 people by the way there that night in Madison Square Garden who were witnessing that rally. And when the beating starts, all of them to a man and woman, boy, and girl, start cheering. So this idea of Jews as un-American, it really takes root in the 1930s. Even people who don't see themselves as Jew haters, they still, many of them still see Jews as different, clannish, prone to radical ideas, and the antithesis of what it means to be a true American. In 1938, a national poll is taken and it discovers that 40% of Americans agree that Jews have too much power in the US and 60% of respondents generally hold a low opinion of Jews and think of them as greedy, dishonest, and pushy. So this is the backdrop against which the House Un-American Committee is going to come into play.

And again, like Mitchell Palmer before him in the '20s, House Un-American Activities Committee, the first chairman of HUAC, his name's Martin Dies Jr. And he's from Texas. This is what Martin Dies thinks of as the cause of unemployment in the US in the 1930s. Okay, so let's see.

*Video clip plays.*

- Our unemployment problem was transferred to the United States from foreign lands. And if we had refused admission to the 16,500,000 foreign born in our midst, there would be no serious unemployment problem to harass us.

*Video clip ends.*

- So get rid of the foreigners and you get rid of the problem. So this is Martin Dies, okay. Martin Dies is from the great state of Texas, but he's not from the plains. He's not from Cowboy Texas. He's from East Texas. And East Texans are different to the rest of Texas because as you can see from the map, east Texas is basically the westernmost outcrop of the deep south. It has a plantation culture. It doesn't have many foreigners, it doesn't have many non Protestants. And its belief system is essentially the same as the deep south of the time. Most people there are bigoted, they're racist, they hate foreigners and they hate the government. And Martin Dies is no exception. He's son of his father Martin Die senior and contrast them with the descendants of blue-eyed Anglo-Saxons. Martin Dies Jr, he runs for Congress in 1930, and it's lucky for him because Congress at the time is dominated by the Dixie Democrats.

And he comes, so he comes in as a Democrat like his father, and he enjoys the patronage of one of the most important senior Democrats at the time, John Garner, also known as Cactus Jack Garner, who later becomes FDR's vice president. Now the Dixie Democrats, they're not very partial to the New Deal, but they go along with it in the first few years. But as the years go on, they become more and more disillusioned with the New Deal, and they obsessively turn against it. They hate the New Deal by the mid '30s because it stands for everything that they hate. It stands for change, it stands for big government. And as far as they see it, it's a form of communism in a thin veneer, a thin disguise. And so the House Un-American committee is born in 1938, and Jack Garner decides that there's no one better than his protege.

Martin Dies to chair it. Martin Dies, he's ambitious. He's looking for a as they relate to Nazi activities, pro Nazi activities and pro-communist activities. But the reality is that 95% of what it does throughout its lifetime has nothing to do with pro Nazi activities at all. It's focused almost exclusively on pro-communist activities. And under Martin Dies, what that means is specifically is undermining the New Deal as a tool for communist subversives. And so that's what he sets out to do. He investigates, for example, the federal arts programme, which has been designed to give employment to 25,000 artists, musicians, actors, and they're all falsely accused of preaching communism. And there's a complete sense of ridiculousness to some of these hearings. So there's one wonderful hearing.

I wish I had a clip of it because it's fantastic to read. I mean it's comical, but it's awful. So one of the members of the committee is an element about this Elizabethan playwright who she writes in her writings and he says you are quoting from this Marlow fella, is he a communist? And she says, she turns around to the clerk and she says please put it in the record that Christopher Marlow was the greatest dramatist in the period immediately proceeding William Shakespeare. So this is cuak, but just because it's ridiculous, it doesn't mean that it's not damaging lives. If Mitchell Palmer is the early prototype for Joe McCarthy, then Martin Dies is definitely the advanced prototype and everything that Joe McCarthy is going to do in the 1950s, Martin Dies, does it all now. He has a spray gun approach, so he will spray fire at anyone, anywhere, anytime. He doesn't care who gets caught. He doesn't care how many innocence are caught in the crossfire. His tactics are lies, smears, and insinuations without evidence. He has the same tools of witness intimidation.

He uses subpoenas, aggressive questioning, and contempt citations. And he names names. In 1939, his committee investigates the league for peace and democracy. Now, this was a Soviet front, this was a communist front that's set up in the mid 1930s. The trouble is, most of the people who join it, they join because they believe in peace and democracy. So, bear in mind, most of the people who are members have no idea that this organisation is a communist front. But what does the committee do? They seize the league's record. They find that 560 members are also New Deal employees, and they publish the list and damn the consequences. So that's jobs lost, reputations ruined, FDR and the press and those named are all critical, but it's too late because the names are out. Was this fear of communism in the 1930s at all justified? Well, I think in defence of some of those who purport to speak out against communism, it's not all imagined. There were certainly a Soviet spy network that operated in the US over the 1930s and beyond. Once recognition happened, the Soviets were able to set up embassies and an embassy in consulates.

And that meant that Moscow trained men could be sent to all the consulates and could start recruiting spies to work for the NKGBs it then was. The US Communist Party did serve as a recruitment tool for Soviet agents, and they did penetrate by the dozens some at very high level, and they did Passover secrets to the Soviet Union, military secrets, political secrets. And of course, as we know, some of those secrets were relating to the technology that was able to help the Soviets build the atom bomb. We now know, although they didn't at the time from the Verona papers, that somewhere in the region of 350 Americans had a covert, a spying relationship with the Soviet Union over this time. So what's Verona? Verona was a secret project that operated in the '40s and '50s and all of the papers, or many of the papers were released in the mid 1990s. And this was the SIS, the the signal intelligence call, which was decoding traffic over from the '30s to the '40s to the '50s between the KGB and its American stations.

So this is how they discover how all these spies are operating. And the list includes Alger Hiss, it includes Julius Rosenberg, who we're going to talk about later in the year, includes the Los

Alamos physicist called Fuchs. And it also includes the Cambridge aspiring in the UK. And obviously we'll say more about them later. There's a writer of this period, a historian called Ted Morgan, who's written a really interesting book called *Reds: McCarthyism in the 20th Century*. And he says about McCarthy and Dies and Palmer, he says "McCarthy and his predecessors flayed about like blindfolded men in a room full of bats and the bats were there, but beyond their reach." I mean it's a beautiful description, right. But I think it's overly generous to these people because I think people like Palmer and Dies, and McCarthy, they all have their own agenda. They're ambitious and their agenda isn't necessarily the good of the country. And they all use lying and cheating and smearing reputations to get what they want. So I suppose you kind of have to ask you know, was there ever really an existential threat to American democracy from communism? And I think you'd have to be hard put to say yes. If you go back to 1932, this is the height of the depression, okay. And it's also when the Communist party and when attraction to communism is that it's absolute apex. 1932 there's a presidential election, okay.

And this is what happens, right. Now, I'm not going to take you through all of these numbers, but in red you can see the combined vote for socialists and communists, okay. They get over the course of the election a million votes, right. It sounds a lot, but that is two and a half percent of the entirety of the national votes in the presidential election, okay. This is when communism is at its absolute most popular in the US. So 97% of the people are voting for non-communist parties, specifically for the two main parties for either the Democratic or the Republican Canada. By 1936, that paltry figure of two and a half percent has shrunk to a half percent. Not only that, but by 1938, exactly when HUAC is set up, communism had really gone into free fall decline. The New Deal was successful. And the more successful the New Deal was, the less people were interested in alternative ideologies. Not only does it go to decline, but it practically collapses in support in August, 1938. Why?

Because Stalin and Hitler form their alliance with the Molotov-Ribbentrop Pact. And what happens, of course is the Soviet is that the Communist Party membership collapses. And most of those who are sympathetic to the communist cause, especially Jews, now turn away from it in disgust. So the place that I would like to end today, and I'm conscious of the time, but I want to talk about this character Samuel Dickstein because I think he, in many ways, he epitomises the story of the 1920s and the 1930s. Last week we ended on the heroic actions of two men, Louis Post and Felix Frankfurter. And this week I want to close on the character of a former New York congressman, Sam Dickstein who, I mean if we were to call him morally ambiguous, I think that's probably a gross understatement, okay. So Sam Dickstein is born Vilnius in Lithuania in the mid 1880s. And he immigrates with his religious Jewish parents to the lower east side as a small child. He grows up in poverty, as do most at the time. And he discovers a knack and an interest in politics. So he begins his ascent in Tammany Hall.

He's a street fighter now as a Jew in Tammany Hall, okay. Which is the, it's the heart of the Democratic machine in New York. It's very unusual for a Jew to be able to make it through Tammany Hall, but they like him 'cause he's a street fighter. So in 1922, he's now in his mid '30s and he wins a seat in Congress and he does nothing for the first eight years. He achieves no

degree of prominence whatsoever. But in 1930, things change because the Democrats now have a majority in the House. And the Tammany chiefs decide to name him as the head of the committee on immigration and naturalisation. And from this platform, he becomes a scourge of the disloyal to America. He campaigns against perceived communist threats and also on Nazi influence on US life. Now let's take his anti-communism first, okay. He kind of makes a habit through the early '30s of denouncing communism. And in 1931 he tries unsuccessfully to get the communist party of the USA back. But what he spends most of his time on, what he spends most of his energy on, if you look at where the passion goes, is on fighting Nazi influence in US society. He regards German Nazis and homegrown Nazis as the greatest threat to the US, certainly far greater than communism.

So in 1933, he manages to hold hearings through his committee on Nazi propaganda. This is the year that Hitler comes to power and Dickstein convened the hearings and he establishes that German adversaries are delivering propaganda and spy orders and finance to kind of pro-Nazi operatives over the course of the US. He goes on NBC radio broadcast and he says that quote he's unearthed sufficient evidence to define the Nazi government here as the most dangerous threat to our democracy that's ever existed. Sam Dickstein is responsible for setting up the first committee that's got Un-American in the title. So it's not HUAC. It's the 1934 committee that he sets up. He convinces the house to establish what's officially titled the Special Committee on UN-American Activities authorised to investigate Nazi propaganda and certain other propaganda activities. So the first Un-American committee in the house is investigating Nazi propaganda, okay.

Not Soviet propaganda. It's called the McCormack Dickstein Committee. Why? Because Dickstein decides to give the gavel to John McCormack, better that a goy should be chairing it rather than a Jew. So he takes the vice-chair and McCormack takes the chair. Dickstein makes himself incredibly unpopular. I mean he's kind of quite brash and aggressive. You know, he's not the kind of character who's going to be clubbable, he's not going to endear himself to you. But his public image and his image with his colleagues is massively diminished by the fact that he keeps banging on about Nazi influence and the dangers of Nazis in the 1930s. Remember, this is a period where the US government is still keen to make friendly relationships with Nazi German. Whether you like him or not you know, he becomes a pioneer of the practise of naming names. He's the first person who names names, but the names that he names are in 1937. And he names a, he says he's going to name on the floor of the house, a hundred individuals who are responsible for Nazi infiltration into the US. I will name you a hundred spies who have entered this country from a friendly government for the purpose of furthering Nazi progress and their propaganda he says. He later reads out a list of 46 names and he's criticised that it's only 46 names and he's playing fast and loose with the truth.

He's criticised by pressing colleagues. One colleague says, a Texan congressman says it's just a lot of noise that's going to bring a loss of prestige to this great house. He also, in 1939, introduces a bill to try and get 10,000 Jewish children from Germany over and above the quota into US. And he says if they don't come over, then they almost certainly are going to face

annihilation, as he calls it. The bill fails, why? Because the wasp establishment bitterly oppose it. It's opposed by those bastions of the establishment, first of all, the Secretary of State Cordell Holt, but also supported by the American Legion, the Society of Mayflower descendants and the Daughters of the American Revolution. Now you need to know a couple of other things about Dickstein, okay. He's totally corrupt, okay. He supplements his congressional income by illegally selling citizenship for \$3,000 a pop, okay to Austrians, to Germans, to practically anyone who's prepared to pay the money. He's also, he becomes a Soviet spy of sorts, okay. He approaches the Soviet Embassy and he negotiates a monthly stipend of \$1,250 for three years.

And he passes over effectively it's all chicken feed, it's stuff that's in the public domain. It's mainly about fascists in the US. The NKVD privately nicknamed him crook because as far as they're concerned, all that's been happening for three years is he's taking their money and he's giving them nothing of value. He leaves congress a few years later, he dies in 1954 and in time honoured fashion, he's honoured with a street name, a modest, very modest plaza in the lower east side, which is named for him. No one knows that he's a spy or he's been spying until 2000 when a book is published and it names him as a traitor to the US. So there are some local residents in the lower East side who were outraged by the fact that there's a Samuel Dickstein Plaza, which is paying homage to someone who's portrayed his country. And for 20 years a small band of them have been trying to get the name changed. This is New York and quite frankly you know, it's quite hard to get New York as excited about anything as uninteresting as changing a name plaque. So it's still there to this very day. So was Dickstein a villain or a hero? Well, I mean I think the case for villain is quite strong.

You know, he's a politician on the make. He's the one who's promoted for the first time this ugly idea of un-Americanism. He's pretty casual with the truth. He's the one who starts the practise of naming names. He's corrupt and he took Soviet money for information. But I must say I am inclined to cut him some slack. In a time of extreme danger, we don't get to choose our heroes. He was a flawed hero to be sure, but he was a hero to me nevertheless. He was a tough Jewish kid who fought his way out of the mental confines of the ghetto. He never gave the Soviets anything useful, but he's the one who's prepared, he's one of the few who's prepared to use his public office to sound the alarm about Hitler and fascism and to try to save young Jewish lives from almost totaled, from absolute assured annihilation in Germany. So I'm going to finish there and I'm sorry that we've gone on a bit. There's a few minutes for questions.

I just want to say one thing, which is that I have made myself a modest promise that whenever we get to travel again, that when I travel to New York, whenever that is, I'm going to walk down East Broadway and where it crosses with Montgomery Street, where you'll find the Sam Dickstein Plaza. I'm going to find a bench, I'm going to sit down and I'm going to look at that sign and I'm going to pay my respects to Sam Dickstein. Thank you.

- Phil, thank you for that fantastic presentation. Can I walk with, may I walk with you down?

- I would be honoured, yeah. But for those of you in New York who've got your daily lockdown

walk, now you've got a new route.

- Absolutely. Thank you very, very, very much. Do you have time for a couple of questions? There are about 41, so I think just you know, pace yourself and when you need to leave, jump out. All right.

Q&A and Comments:

- We have to finish, I'm told in five minutes, so I apologise in advance to everyone whose question I'm not going to get to. And I just want to say that we're going to be coming back to this subject later in the year. So please, please do hold fire.

Okay, so Michael Goldberg has said it's not fair to say that USA is similar to ancient Greece considering the pressure for Hellenism. I did say Rome, by the way, not Greece, just to be fair. I mean I wouldn't make the comparison. It was only really just in terms of citizenship.

Suzanne Jackson says my grandparents, both British born immigrated to the USA in late 1919. They returned and my grandmother always said she didn't feel safe in New York. Very, very interesting. Suzanne, thank you very much for sharing that.

Q: Ted Shapiro is the nativism of the '20s different from nationalism of the '30s in Germany, England at many times in history and Israel modern day. What does this portend for internationalism versus isolation?

A: Wow. I mean that's a huge question. I think it's a great question, Ted. I'm not going to handle that one here. I think that's a whole lecture in and of itself.

Leslie Isaacson has said Howard Fast wrote an excellent book about Sacco Vanzetti. He certainly did. And Howard Fast, of course, is a great playwright who wrote, I think I'm right, who wrote Spartacus and who was also in front of the McCarthy committee.

And let's see, Marilyn says I argue building your own institutions, companies are the most powerful way of counteracting exclusionism. I could not agree with you more.

Norma Kersh says there's a wonderful movie called Mr. Jones that accurately depicts the era. I must confess I haven't heard of it, but it's now going to be on my list. Thank you very much for that.

Amanda Dweck says Ford is said to have supplied the Nazis even during Second World War. Is this true? I believe that's true, but nothing about Henry Ford would surprise me.

Barbara says please ask the speaker to slow down. I do apologise. That's a good pointer for next time.

And Tony Lackman with all this history and current events with the unveiling of white supremacy, why do the Jews feel safe now in the USA? I think Tony that's an extremely pointed question.

Sandy Landow says, father Coughlin's church is still a beautiful structure and they do try to ameliorate some of their vile history. Well, I'm glad you said that because it's an important point to make.

Q: Jacqueline Kersh, is there a book about this subject you could recommend?

A: There are tonnes of books about this period. Ellen Sschrecker is very good. Ted Morgan was the book that I put up earlier. I know there've been much more recent books written about Jewish American history, but for my money, you can't get better than Arthur Hertzberg on the Jewish experience. He just writes so clearly, so lucidly, and so and so beautifully.

Lawrence Kelvin, you say The New Deal was successful, but many say that unemployment only declined with re-armament. There's a certain amount of truth to that. The New Deal was very successful for the first few years by about 37, 38. It was really starting to run out of steam. And yes, the American economy was very much revived by the Second World War.

So we're coming up to 6:15. I do have to apologise to all those people who've put questions in and where we haven't got to you, I'm terribly sorry about that, but as I say, we're going to come back later in the year when Trudy and others are going to bring us into post-War America 1940s, 1950s. So we'll have an opportunity to revisit the period and to look at the Rosenbergs and McCarthy and Roy Cohn, the Hollywood 10. So thank you so much everyone, and until then, I bid you a very good morning, afternoon, or evening. Thank you.

- Thank you Phil. Thanks everybody, and we will see you in about 45 minutes. Thank you. Bye-bye.