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Why do some people stand by during times of injustice, while others try to do something or prevent injustice?

It is easy for people who have not witnessed injustice to say they would do something if they were to witness it. However these people are often unaware of factors such as an area's socioeconomic state, and manipulation and propaganda which are used so that people will conform to the authority's actions. This happened during the Holocaust, when millions stood by while Nazi Germany committed the injustice of punishing so many simply for being non-Aryan. Injustice is still happening today too, where fear is one of the biggest reasons why people do nothing.

A place's socioeconomic state can be a significant reason as to why injustice happens and why people stand by during it. This occurred in Germany, after World War 1, where a poor socioeconomic state allowed for Adolf Hitler to come into power. Hitler went on to persecute and kill millions, including Jews, homosexuals, gypsies and the disabled as they did not conform to the Nazi ideal of a strong German. In the Treaty of Versailles, signed by Germany and the Allies after World War 1, Germany was ordered to pay reparations to the Allies. The final amount was 37 000 million marks which was still a significant sum. The government owed so much money, including the reparations to the Allies that it kept borrowing (principally from America) and printing money to pay for it, leading to hyperinflation in 1923. Consequently, millions of Germans lost their savings and many, particularly the elderly, suffered poor health due to inflation-induced poverty. All reparation payments were suspended in 1932 but by then much of the damage to Germany's people was already done due to the Great Depression.

The Wall Street Crash in America in 1929 meant that America needed to withdraw their loans and investments in countries like Germany. This led to businesses cutting production, reducing wages and laying off workers. By 1932, over 6 million people were unemployed in Germany, 18 000 farmers and 50 000 businesses had gone bankrupt. During this time, the Nazi Party, led by Hitler, campaigned, promising everyone a job, a house and a Volkswagen literally meaning a 'people's car'. The percentage of the Nazi vote in the Reichstag in 1932 increased by 32% as a result of their campaigns. In 1932, they became the largest party in government, winning 37% of the vote in the Reichstag elections. On 30 January, 1933, President Hindenburg appointed Hitler as Chancellor. The economic depression faced by the Germans was a powerful factor that pushed them to vote for such a right-wing and extreme party. Throughout these campaigns, Hitler made his anti-semitism views very clear but there had also been anti-semitic feelings across Europe for centuries. This was because many of the wealthiest were Jewish and Christians did not like them as they believed Jews were the cause for Jesus' death. Even if people disagreed with their expressed views, the Nazi Party was still offering an opportunity for a better life, and so the anti-semitic views were overlooked.

People will also stand by during injustice because they have been manipulated and this was a tactic used by the Nazis. In 1936 Germany, all youth organisations were banned and taken over by Nazi organisations and membership to the Hitler Youth was made compulsory. Boys could join from the age of six and would stay until they were eighteen. Girls joined at ten and

did not leave until they were twenty one. In a further effort to have youth join, parents were not allowed a promotion at work unless their children were a part of Hitler Youth. Most youth wanted to join because of the exciting activities offered like games, sports and camping which took them away from school and their home. However, as Marianne Gartner, who joined Hitler Youth in 1938 as a twelve year old, recalls it '*was not long...before plain-faced leaders taught us marching drills and marching songs...there were now lectures on National Socialism, stories...about Hitler...while extracts from Mein Kampf were used to expound the new racial doctrines.*' Children's lives quickly became indoctrinated with Nazi beliefs. There were Nazi school assignments and dictation exercises. One from a Munich primary school (1934) states that '*...Jesus saved people from sin and from Hell, Hitler saves the German Volk from ruin.*'

By 1939, more than 8 million Germans were enrolled in Hitler Youth and more than 90% of boys older than fourteen were members. Hitler Youth placed emphasis on physical strength and one of their aims was to make the youth loyal to Hitler. The youth began to reject the authority and values of their parents if it differed to what they had been taught in Hitler Youth and they would persecute and exclude their Jewish peers. Overall it meant that the Youth obeyed the Nazis, and idolised Hitler, meaning that when they heard of the Holocaust, some refused to believe it was true. Others had been so manipulated to support the Nazis, that they believed everything the Nazis did was right and were unable to see the injustice of the Holocaust, and so did not try to prevent it.

Other propaganda can be used to manipulate people to let injustice happen too. In Germany, before and during World War 2, the Nazis predominantly used radio, films and posters to convince people that their treatment of Jews was justified. The basic 'people's receiver' radio had only one station and by 1937, 70% of households owned one, as well as there being communal loudspeakers. The radio was used to transmit Hitler's key speeches. In 1935, it is estimated that his speeches reached 56 million out of the 70 million people who lived in Germany. Hitler's speeches would be advertised beforehand and all places would be ordered to put up loudspeakers so that everyone '*can participate fully in the broadcast.*' (Newspaper advert, 16 March 1934). Hitler would often speak of the Jews and on 30 January, 1939, he spoke of his resolution to what he called the 'Jewish problem'. The Reich Film Chamber 'regulated' film content, banning several American films while also producing films.

In 1936, a two part film of the 1936 Olympic Games was released. The film was meant to symbolise the 'new Germany and its Aryan ideals'. In 1940, three anti Jewish films were released. *Der Ewige Jude (The Eternal Jew)* portrayed them as a 'parasitic race' and *Jud Süß* told the story of an 18th Century Jew in Württemberg who was hung following the expulsion of Jews. Admission was only allowed at the beginning of the movie and newsreels conveying key Nazi ideas were shown before each film. Posters were effectively used too. A poster for the film *The Eternal Jew* depicts a Jew holding the country of Germany underneath his arm. The Nazis were showing that as long as there are Jews, they will always be holding Germany back.

There were people who resisted Hitler and the Nazi Party, but they were in the minority. Those who objected very strongly to the Nazi Party's policies were often the ones who would be brave enough to publicly voice their opinions. An example is a group of Communist ELAS

partisans who captured 81 German soldiers near Kalavryta, Greece on October 17, 1943. Most soldiers were shot by the partisans, however two survived and 'raised the alarm' the next day. In response, Germany deployed over 3000 troops, and on December 13, 1943, at least 463 males aged fifteen and over were massacred. It was very common for Germany to react like this. Germany's Gestapo (Secret Police) arrested, tortured and murdered those who spoke out against the Nazis and those who helped hide Jews, as well as their families. It was these acts of terror which invoked fear in those who felt that the Nazis were doing wrong, meaning that they remained silent. People did not want to see others, including innocent civilians being punished for their own actions.

70 years later in 2018, injustice is still occurring, and one of the biggest factors for letting injustice happen is fear. In Russia, many do not object to the current Russian President, Vladimir Putin's way of ruling because of fear. When Putin was elected, he brought order and stability to a country which had been under chaos. Lyubov, a pensioner in Russia, says that their pension isn't much but it's enough because things are stable. It is the fear of the unknown which stops many from not supporting Putin. Lyubov told BBC's Sarah Rainsford *'Putin, only Putin... He's our man... If someone new came we'd have to start all over again, and who knows how that would work out?'* In other places, it is the fear of what the authority would do to you if you disobeyed which prevents people from speaking against injustice. Extremist groups in the Middle East are quick to turn to violence for punishment for disobeying. The Taliban, an extremist group mainly in Afghanistan, do not want girls over the age of ten attending school. When Malala Yousafzai spoke out about this, they shot her in the head. The knowledge that groups like the Taliban can and will commit such acts is more than enough to convince others to back down. They do not want themselves or their family and friends to be hurt or killed in such a brutal way.

When people stand by during times of injustice, it is because their ability to see the humanity in others has been overwhelmed by outside factors such as the socioeconomic state they are in, manipulation, ignorance, propaganda and fear. Those that do try to do something or prevent injustice look past the outside factors and see humanity in the rest of the world.