

Boris Johnson Threatens to Suspend Parliament, Reminiscent of Dissolution of the Reichstag in Nazi Germany?

Last night's BBC2 TV gave us a salutary lesson on the danger to democratic government from the far-Right

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In 1933 Germany, democracy was threatened and finally destroyed by the Nazi Party who eliminated those who opposed their Fascist ideology of mass murder and genocide. Hitler and his cohort of Storm Troopers persuaded the German Head of State, General Paul Von Hindenburg President of the Reich (Reichspräsident), to dissolve the Reichstag and to rule directly by Presidential decree. Soon after, he was persuaded to appoint Hitler as his Chancellor. The die for the Second World War had been cast.

The National Socialists used every political machination, including extreme violence where necessary, to achieve their objectives in demolishing the Weimar Republic. They succeeded, and the infamous Third Reich was born. Just five years later, on November 1938, the Holocaust was instituted with the Kristallnacht pogrom and the destruction of synagogues throughout Germany. It would take another seven years and more than 50 million lives, including those of six million Jews, before Nazism would finally be defeated, worldwide.

That program of civil unrest eerily reflected certain facets of the current Right-wing, extremist, political scene in various European capitals today - which is a sobering thought, indeed.

Now, seventy years later, we have once again a dangerous political instability in both Britain and parts of Europe where the far Right is growing increasingly in power and influence and the threat of violence against minorities, with all that that entails. Furthermore, the flames are being fanned by a Right-wing, rabble-rousing, American president who is an integral factor in Europe's future of political violence and dissent. That is the second sobering thought.

We are now living in very dangerous times in which the stakes are extremely high and democracy as we know it is at the greatest risk to its survival since the end of World War Two. The bolts that hold the wheels of democratic government are loosening, and loosening fast, throughout much of Europe.

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