

Images are displayed throughout the presentation

- Hi, Trudy. Hi Judi and hello everybody. Just to say good morning. It's very, very hard to start any presentation or anything on Lockdown University of course, without mentioning Israel and what's going on in Israel, it is a shocking, shocking, shocking situation. And the narrative that's coming out of this is absolutely appalling. We're seeing what's emerging from this, taking us really by surprise. But Trudy, before I, that's a whole discussion I'm going to hand over to you to discuss it. But before I do that, I just want to shift gear completely to say that one of our participants, by the name of Marilyn Kussner, my very close friend of mine, Maggie, won the gold medal for her garden. She won the Golden from the Royal Horticultural Society. She lives at Redcliff Garden, 35 Redcliff Gardens, SW 10. And I just feel very, very proud of her. And there was a clip on, I think it was on the BBC,

- [Trudy] It was the one show last year.

- It was okay, it was the one show. And really what I wanted to say was she had a stroke at the beginning of the year, and her neighbours, she mentioned Katherine and Alex, I think over on Fortiscue, who actually are also participants, who are participants on Lockdown University. And I think David Irvine, sorry, I'm not getting the names quite right, but this is what Maggie told me, how they came out and they helped her, they helped her water her garden, and just the love and care from our community towards one another. And I just wanted to congratulate Maggie on behalf of all of us and to thank her friends and all of those who are so supportive towards her in London during this very, very difficult period. And just say .

- That is wonderful. Mags, that is absolutely wonderful. I hope you are listening and congratulations. So I'll start now if you're-

- [Wendy] Yeah, I'm going to hand over to you. Thanks.

- Okay, Wendy. God bless. Right. Well, Wendy said it hasn't, she. It's a very, very difficult time for all of us, I think. And I particularly want to extend all our sympathy, friendship to our friends in Israel. And having discussed it with Wendy, I am going off syllabus next week and I'm actually going to look at the origins of anti-Semitism on the left. And I'm going to call it, "Why is this fight different from all other fights?" And let me be very careful. I'm not going to talk politics. I am not a politician. It is not my field. I'm a historian. But what I do want to do is to try and come to that line with what is legitimate criticism and what has fallen over into the other side. There's been some appalling incidents in London, and I know that there are appalling incidents in other cities, and a lot of Jews are very afraid.

Isaiah Berlin made a wonderful comment. He said, "With our history, of course we're all paranoid, but with our history, we have a right to be." Now, I'm not in any way minimising the

racist policies towards all sorts of other people that we see all over the world. I am not doing the exception thing. But what I do think, because I've had so many comments from friends, and I know what's going on out there, that those of us who've got children and grandchildren in Jewish schools, that the one thing I do know, knowledge is strength. And isn't it about time, and I've said this to you many times, that our children have the kind of knowledge that at least is going to make them able to deal with these kind of situations on an intellectual level, if not on an emotional level. So everything that we can possibly do to help our children and our grandchildren have more knowledge, I really, really, this is a real cry from the heart, here, because I think you need to investigate, also, even those of you who send your children to Jewish schools, just how much is taught because it can be done. So I beg you, because this is serious, knowledge doesn't solve things, but it's the best armoury we've ever had, frankly.

So let me go on, and I'm going back into history and I'm looking at Slovakia, a case study. And in order to do that, I'm going to look at the involvement of Slovakia because there's a fascinating parallel in history. I've said this to you many times. When there is economic, social, political chaos, how do people react to it? They've become tribal. Internationalism is a wonderful idea when life is secure, and we all feel that we have what we want out of the world. And what you are seeing, what you saw then, and what you're seeing now, is this tribalism. And come on, it's the same behaviour we had in the caves. When we feel threatened, we go into our little groups and we stop seeing the other group as human. It's happened so many times in history, and tragically it's happened so many times in our history.

But I want to give you a bit of hope today because I am talking about heroes. I'm talking about great heroes who could have changed the course of history. And let me say also, I am not a determinist. Yes, things were bad then, and they became appalling. Things are bad now. They don't have to become appalling. Yes, what I've just said, economic, social and political horror does lead to polarisation of politics. But, once in a while, individuals and groups of individuals change history. Please don't be a determinist and remember what we can all do in our own way. And so let's keep that message in mind and go now to the history of this part of the world. And can we see the first map, if you don't mind, Judi? And again, I have to thank the wonderful Judi Ferreira because if Wendy said it was her five-year-old that helped her, I mean, I don't have the knowledge of a five-year-old, and if it wasn't for Judi, you wouldn't have any of these wonderful aids.

So, let's go back to the 19th century and the Hapsburg Empire. Just have a look at the Hapsburg Empire. It was made up of 15 different national groups, and those of you who've been online with us, really for over a year now, we've looked at Vienna, we've looked at the Hapsburg Empire and how Fransford and tried to hold the thing together. When I was looking with you at Hungary, we looked at the Austria-Hungarian Empire. It was changed in the 1867 to the Austro-Hungarian Empire. But this seeding nationalism goes on. And what happened within the Hapsburg Empire, after it's made into the jewel crown with Franz Joseph and the Empress Elizabeth, by the way, being the monarchs in both, the Austrians controlled Bohemia and Moravia, which becomes the Czech lands, and the Hungarian Parliament controlled Slovakia.

Okay? You can see where they are geographically. Now what is interesting is even in those days, Bohemia was the most industrialised part of the Austro-Hungarian empire. So that's the Czech Republic, and later the Czech Republic. And Slovakia was the most industrialised part of Hungary, but they had a completely different level of development. And the point is also, the Hungarians were far more determined to assimilate the Slovaks than the Austrians, the Czechs. And around the turn of the 19th century, the idea of a Czech-Slovak entity was advocated by intellectuals, but both wanted independence from the Hapsburg Empire. And it's going to be led to three extraordinary people, Thomas Masaryk, Edward Benes and Milan Stefanik to work tirelessly to secure recognition from the allies.

So, of course, that terrible war, the First World War, my 13 year old grandson, who is beginning to study this period of history, has just come home with his assignment from school, was the Second World War merely a continuation of the First World War, discussed. And when I started shouting at him, as I often do in giving all sorts of ideas, he said, go calmly, go point by point by point. But that's just a little aside for you, because really the First World War changed everything. And it all started in such a ridiculous way. But some say it was just waiting to happen. The triple ante, the triple alliance. And of course, Austro-Hungary, which meant that Czech Jewish soldiers, Slovakian Jewish soldiers, Hungarian Jewish soldiers, Austrian Jewish soldiers, would be fighting for the Hapsburgs, the Austro-Hungarian empire. And who would they be fighting? They'd be fighting against the British, the French, and the Russians. The Hapsburg Empire, who were they tied up with? You all know this, of course, they're tied up with the Germans. So, and of course the Turks.

And it's the collapse, I'm giving you the big pounds, obviously, it's the collapse of these empires at the end of the First World War that is going to cause the absolute resurgence of nationalism, which is very, very difficult to solve even to this day. There's a wonderful quote on the Balkans. When Prince Albert died, Benjamin Israeli sent a wonderful letter of condolence to Queen Victoria. He said, he was such a wonderful man, and he was one of the two people in the world who really understood the Hapsburg Empire. And now that he's dead, there's only me. And that was actually what made Israeli turn into a friend of Queen Victoria.

So, before I actually get onto what happened, I'm going to talk about these three incredible characters because I think once in a while it's good to remember the brave. Can we please see the next map if you don't mind, Judi? Because after the dismemberment of the Hapsburg Empire, the Czechs and the Slovaks are created into one entity. And I've already said, economically, they were very different. Slovakia was much more rural. Although it's the most developed part as far as the Hungarians are concerned, compared with Czechoslovakia, it was quite primitive. And also, in the East, it's far more of a peasant society. So that is the background.

And now, let's start by looking at Edward Benes, because of course these are characters who are going to be real heroes in every sense. And then he was born, his dates are 1884 to 1948. He was born into a peasant family in a small town in Bohemia. But quite often, poor kids, if

they're very, very bright, have the opportunity to study. And he was very, very bright. He went to a grammar school in Prague. He studied philosophy at Charles University, incredibly clever. He won a scholarship to study in Paris. He had a doctorate from the University of Dijon, and he came back to teach at the Prague Academy of Commerce. And then he went on to lecture in sociology at Charles Law University.

In World War I, he's in the struggle for Czech independence. He doesn't want to be involved in any war. He's an exile in Paris, and remember, the French are the enemies of the Hapsburgs. And in between 1916 and 1918, he's the secretary of the Slovak National Committee and later on, Minister of Interior and Foreign Affairs in the Czech Provisional Government. Because what is going to happen at the end of the First World War, when the Hapsburg Empire is dismembered, Czechoslovakia is going to emerge.

During the war itself, Benes and Thomas Masaryk actually report they did work on bringing an army together of Czechs to fight for the allies. And they had tens of thousands of men. They realised, also that if the Czechs came out to fight for the allies, it would be much better for them. And in the first government, he was first and longest serving foreign minister. And he's going to hold the post through 10 different governments. And he was one of the major representatives at the Paris Peace Conference. And then he made a brief return to academia. He was a member of the League of Nations Council. He was a man of huge intellect and also huge heart. He was very, very, much into minority rights. He was very, very pro-Jewish. He was also very much Czechoslovak. He didn't want them to be separate entities. And when Thomas Masaryk resigned in 1935, he became President of the State. So I'm going to leave him there because we're going to be coming on to him as I go through the story. But this is what he said at a Zionist Congress in Prague. He was a great philosemite. It will be first be necessary to put a radical and permanent end to racism and anti-Semitism. At the same time, your aspirations for an independent homeland should be fulfilled. I regard the creation of a Jewish state in Palestine as the only just and possible solution to the world's Jewish problems. I promise that whenever or wherever an opportunity offers itself, I shall help promote this situation.

So with both Benes and Masaryk in, and it's important, and William talked about this yesterday, Czechoslovakia is really, by the thirties, the only democratic state in Central and Eastern Europe. So, and it's very much because of the wish and the will of these incredible intellectuals who are also men of great spirit. So let's talk a little bit about Thomas Masaryk, and also we're coming back to him later on as well. His dates. Can we see Masaryk now, if you don't mind, Judi? There you are. Thomas Masaryk, 1850 to 1937. He was born, again, he came from a poor family. Again, a gifted child, studied, he goes to grammar school and then he goes to the centre of the Hapsburg Empire. He studied at the University of Vienna from 1862 to 1876. By that particular period, liberalism in Vienna had collapsed. In 1873 the stock market crash is also the collapse of liberalism in the empire. So he was totally aware of all the conflicting nationalisms around him. And he was a great humanitarian. His doctorate was very interesting. This was his doctorate. He did it in 1876 to 1877. "Suicide is a social mass phenomenon of modern civilization."

I've given lectures on this. So has Patrick. Vienna, as you get to the last decades of the 19th century, the first two decades of the 20th century, before the First World War, what a strange, interesting place it was. Remember that great quote of Karl Kraus, "Vienna was an experimental station on the way to the end of the world." Don't forget who was working there, Freud, Marla, just think of whatever your interests. Vienna was suffused with all sorts of interesting ideas. And of course, at the University of Vienna, he came across a lot of interesting Jewish students. And he studies with a man called Edmund Husserl, who was a Jewish fellow student and also is going to be very important. He married an American who was a fellow student, a woman called Charlotte Garrigue, and they lived in Vienna 'til 1881, and then they moved to Prague. He became the professor of Philosophy at Prague University. And he founded a magazine totally dedicated to Czech culture and science.

It's very important to remember this because within the Hapsburg Empire, remember the quote that, "Other people make war, the Hapsburg marry". You have all these suffused nationalisms in a century of nationalism. The problem was, the Hapsburgs needed an educated class in order to run a modern country. The minute you educate people, they want more. And that was one of the problems that these enlightened despots faced. So you have a reactionary government, but on the other hand, you need to create an educated class. You need people like this. And he's looking at the world around him, and he believes passionately, in his own homeland, he believes passionately, in Czech identity.

In 1889, there was a terrible blood libel, the Hilsner Affair in the Czech lands. The blood libel, the appalling calumny that the Jews used the blood of babies for their Passover bread. If I can bring it up to date, that horrible irony, the first blood libel in recorded history against the Jews, because blood libels were used against all sorts of other people. The worst one against the Jews was in Norwich in 1144. And that is the town where last week the synagogue was defaced. So the blood libel, that terrible accusation, the demonization of the Jew that we use the blood of Christian babies for our Passover bread. And of course it got everybody riled up.

Is it possible in the 19th century that these things can still happen? And he spoke out passionately against it. And in World War I, he was completely convinced that the only answer was in fact the dismemberment of the Empire and Czech Independence. So in 1914, he goes into exile, he travels. He travels the world. He goes to Rome, Geneva, Paris, London. He goes to the Russian Empire, he goes to America. Remember, he's a professor. He's written, he's incredibly well known. He has contacts everywhere. His wife is very much American political society. So they have contacts everywhere. And he established crucial contacts with people that later on are going to be important at the treaties after the First World War, which established Czech Independence.

Both he and Benes had contacts in the right places. In 1915, he was one of the first staff members of the school of Slovakian and Eastern European Studies, which is now at UCL. He was professor of Slavonic studies at Kings College, London. And of course in London, he meets

politicians, he meets intellectuals. He has the support of a man called Norman Hapwood, who was later President of the League of Free Nations. He worked closely with Woodrow Wilson and Hapwood encouraged him to write to Wilson for his support. Now his research at King's College, London was fascinating. The problem of small nations and his network of Czech revolutionaries was absolutely vital to the allies. So, and he's calling out, at the end of the war, let us have independence of Czech and other oppressed nations.

And when he went to America, he managed, he really convinced President Wilson. He goes on a lecture tour and he finishes up in Chicago, which was the centre of Czech immigration. One hundred and fifty thousand people gave a welcome to what they believed would be the future president of the Czech Republic. As I said, he'd been going to America for years. He first toured America in 1902. He'd been lecturing at the University of Chicago. He was a brilliant lecturer. He was very, very popular. And with the collapse of the Hapsburg Empire, the allies recognise him as the head of the provisional government. And on October the 14th, he was elected President of the Czech Republic, while he was still in New York.

So it's him and it's Masaryk that make it happen. He visited many countries, including Palestine mandate, and, as I said, under his watch, and that of Benes, Czechoslovakia becomes the strongest democracy in Central Europe. He resigns in 1935 because of very bad health. And he was known, he was actually known as the Grand Old Man of Europe. And for him, he died before the Munich Agreement when the allies, well, the French and the British sold Czechoslovakia down the river for a mess of pottage. His motto: "Do not fear and do not steal." He was a humanist. He was a rationalist. He emphasised practical ethics. He talked about what can I do to make things better? He was very critical of Marxism. He didn't like closed systems.

And this is what he said in 1918, "The Jews will enjoy the same rights as all the other citizens of our state. As regards Zionism, I can only express my sympathy with it and with the national movement of the Jewish people in general, since it is of great moral significance, I have observed the Zionist and national movement of the Jews in Europe in our own country and have come to understand that is not a movement of belittle chauvinism, but one striving for the reverse of his people."

It's fascinating, in this rise of extremism which we are seeing in Europe, the fact that extremists are attacking synagogues. The fact that Jews are immediately allied with the policies of the state of Israel. There is a, how can I put it and keep it in its historic context? You are back to the whole issue of what it is to be a Jew. The Jews of Czechoslovakia are going to be given, it's a democracy, they're going to be given complete rights. But in other parts of the world, anti-Semitism is bubbling up and it's going to bubble up in the Slovak part of Czechoslovakia. And Masaryk is very well aware of it. And I suppose one of the problems is, in this world of ideology and closed systems, is it possible to have dual allegiances? And I think what's happening at the moment is making the kind of issues of Jewish identity even more acute.

Now, his son, Jan Masaryk, of course, a great hero of the Jewish people, he of course is going

to be very important. And after the destruction of the Czech part of Czechoslovakia, the government in exile, and his son Jan Masaryk, was Foreign Minister of the government in exile. And this is what he said on November the second, 1942. Twenty-five years ago, the Balfour Declaration gave the Jewish people hope for the future. None of us could have dreamt then what was in store for them. My government and myself want to assure you of our deep sympathy and understanding. I personally shall never rest until human dignity is returned to those sons and daughters of Israel who will escape alive out of the Teutonic Beelzebub's clutches. Palestine is almost the only star in the stormy sky of present day inequity.

And of course, Jan Masaryk, under Stalin's wishes, is going to be one of the main supporters of the establishment of the Jewish state. And of course, what happens to him later on we'll be talking about later on, because he's going to become a victim of the communists in the communist takeover at the end of the Second World War. But now I want to turn to a Slovakian and the accidents of birth and death because this is another extraordinary individual. And perhaps if he had lived, the story might have been very, very different, what happened to Slovakia.

His name was Milan Stefanik. His dates were 1880 to 1919. He was also born in the Austro-Hungarian Empire, the area which is now Slovakia. His father was a Lutheran pastor. Again, an incredibly bright humanistic character. He studied engineering at Prague. Again, scholarship. He transferred to Charles University where he studied Physics, Optics, Math and Philosophy. In 1902, he studied in Zurich. And in Prague, he studied philosophy under Jan Masaryk and absolutely adored him. A relationship was established. It inspired him to believe that there should be cooperation between the Czechs and the Slovaks. You see, there was a lot about them, although the political system was very different, the languages were very similar.

And there was a belief, certainly by Stefanik, Benes, Masaryk, and the intellectual class that we can bring these people together to create a union with the collapse of the Hapsburg Empire. He was very active in Slovak student associations. He goes to Paris. In Paris he studies astronomy. He was very, very talented. One of the pioneers of astrophysics. And he was also an adventurer. He was one of those characters who are against the current, the Renaissance types. I think all these three characters were. That's why I felt on a very dark day, obviously you were getting into a very dark period of history. But I wanted to show the human triumph as well when you're looking at these particular characters.

In 1905, he climbed Mount Blanc because he wanted to have a close look, it was the best place at that particular time for the telescopes to be able to see Mars and the moon. He went with the official French Expedition, and he was one of the first on another French expedition to record an eclipse of the sun from Spain. He has a growing reputation. He worked with members of the Academy Francais, those 36 righteous men in inverted commerce, the great French intellectuals. He was invited to a conference in Oxford. He travelled the world for the French authorities, charting astronomical and meteorological observations. This is the beginnings of modernity and science, remember. And these people are at the cutting edge.

He went to Algeria, to Morocco, Turkestan, India, Russia, America, Panama, Brazil, Australia, New Zealand. He was a world traveller. He was open to ideas. He was open to all sorts of different people and different experiences. He visited Tahiti, Fiji. He went to Tonga. He was fascinated by different peoples and different court cultures. In France, he's very much mixing with the elite of French society. He comes from a poor background. Through his education, his outward-looking life, his extraordinary abilities, he's taken up really by the French establishment. He's very close to Gustave Eiffel, the great architect. I don't have to tell you of course, his great creation. He was close to Roland Bonaparte of the Bonaparte's clan. He was close to the Prime Minister Shonta. He was also very close to a man called Joseph Vilot, who was one of the richest men in Europe. And in October, 1917, he wins the Legion Honour fighting for France.

Okay. He has dreamt of Czech and Slovak independence. And he also believed, along with Benes and along with Masaryk, that the collapse of the Hapsburg Empire would sort everything out. And back in 1915, he had renewed his friendship with his former professor. And through him he met Benes. And it's this trio, really. And it's the three of them, together, that found the Czechoslovak National Council. His contacts, also, just as the other two had contacts, it meant that they could meet with the leading personalities of the triple ante. And it was he who managed to organise Masaryk's meeting with the French Prime Minister, Breon. He worked on organising the Czech legions. He had incredible diplomatic skills, because as I said to you when I was talking about Benes, they organised a Czech Legion to fight with the allies. And this was very important in putting the allies firmly on the side of Czech-Slovak Independence. And this council was recognised as the new government of Czechoslovakia, defacto, in the autumn of 1918.

Tragically, for the history of the region, he did not survive. Stefanik died in a plane crash in 1919. And that was a terrible tragedy. Why was it such a tragedy? Because later on, those who believed passionately in Slovak nationalism as opposed to Czechoslovak nationalism, people like Tuka and Tizo, who I'll be talking about soon, they tried to say that he never really went along with it. But all the historic evidence is that he wanted the union of the two. Now let's talk a little bit about the Jewish community. In the Czech part, in Bohemia and Moravia... Now, what is fascinating, I can't remember which historian said that anti-Semitism was the key to Jewish survival.

Now I'm going to give you the figures for mixed marriages, because they just as in Germany, by 1925, they were running at 45%. By 1933 amongst men, mixed marriages were running at 31%. And amongst the women, mixed marriages were running at 26%. By 1933, half the Jewish population in the Czech part, in Bohemia, lived in Prague and many of them no longer professed the Jewish faith. Of course, there were all sorts of community organisations. There was the Union of Religious Communities, there was an Institute for Social Welfare. There was an organisation for the advancement of Jewish studies. There was a Jewish museum. There was a Jewish historical society. There was philanthropic organisations, but it was very much a democracy, a relatively stable democracy.

Certainly in the twenties where Jews could live a reasonable life, there was no overt anti-Semitism. And of course, the borders of Czechoslovakia had been confirmed by the Treaties of Saint Germain. And by Trianon, the Jewish population grew out of a population of 10 million. By 1930, there were 356,830. They only made up, out of a population of 10 million, they're not a very huge percentage. Most of them, as I said, half of them live in Prague, and most of the others lived in the large cities. There were Zionist organisations, there were B'nai B'rith lodges, there were women's organisation, very similar. Those of you who live in the diaspora, they had the very similar structure to the kind of issues that we deal with in the West. And it's ironic, isn't it, that, yeah, I am going to say this. I've been teaching Jewish history since the early 1980s, and what a honeymoon time that was compared to now.

And what I think is happening, when I was in the lecture hall, certainly more and more of our students were finding the outside world to be a frightening place. Whereas when I first started teaching in the eighties, it wasn't. And it's fascinating how we have to react to the outside world. So what I'm going to do now is I'm going to leave Czechoslovakia, because obviously we're going to have to talk about what happens, tragically, under the Nazis. But now I want to turn to Slovakia.

So the other side of it. Now, I'm not going to give you much background. The majority of the population living in the Slovak part of Czechoslovakia, remembering it's a democracy. And it's the same success story, basically. The Jews, and particularly in areas which were far more urban. The further east you go in Slovakia, the less urban, the more agricultural and the majority of the Jewish population, it's no surprise they're engaged in commerce, finance, some in industry, some in handicrafts. They're two-thirds though, of the Jewish community in Slovakia, more Orthodox, the further east you go, the law of the outside world is less. It's only when you have to walk the tightrope. When you are in love with the modern world. When you revel in the opera, you revel in the arts and the culture of the countries in which you live. That is the tension. The further east you go, where there isn't a society that you really want to be part of. It's fascinating to look at the sociology of all of this.

Now, the years of stability, reasonable prosperity, there were far more Zionist youth movements in Slovakia, though than there were in the Czech side. Not surprising because there was more hostility from the Slovak population. There was Jewish culture, there were quite a few organisations that taught Hebrew. There was a lot of contact with the Yishuv in Palestine. The young generation in the main were socialist. They turned to socialist Zionism. Now, what you saw though, in Slovakia, is the rise of the Slovak People's Party. Now, the rise of the Slovak People's Party was ultra-nationalistic. It no longer wanted union with Prague. They wanted to concentrate totally on Slovakian affairs, and they put the blame for the troubles of their part of the union on the Jews. They blamed the Jews. They said the Jews own two-thirds of the property of Slovakia. They openly incited the people. And by the mid-thirties, there were anti-Jewish demonstrations. They're led by nationalist youth movements. You get these in the University of Bratislava.

So whereas in the Czech side, which is very tolerant, very liberal, what you're going to see in the Slovak side is the rise of a very strong nationalism. And in 1937, the delegate of the people's party proposed in the Prague Parliament that the Jews of Slovakia and Carpathia, be transferred to Bessarabia because they were all communists. You see, the Jew is always anything you don't want to be. Yes, there was a lot of socialist Zionism amongst the young in Slovakia. But you see what's happening. Nineteen thirty-seven, by the thirties, look at Europe. Look where Slovakia is on the map. Look at what's going on in Germany. Look at Austro-fascism, the 34 to 38 in Vienna. Look at the rise of fascism in Italy, the Civil War in Spain.

Slovakia, the Slovak Peoples Party, which is going to be a staunchly nationalist Slovak party, does not see the Jews have any hope of being Slovakian. They are not, they are an alien body. And of course the situation is going to totally disintegrate after 1938. And of course, let me remind you, now it's not the time to talk about it, but within Slovakia, you of course had the great and the work of the great Rabbi Moses Sofer. So against the backdrop of this, within Jewish history, which I'm not going to go into the background of the depths of it, but don't forget the further east you go you have the home of the Great Shavuot. You have the home of orthodoxy. So again, another level of the Jewish people.

Now I'm going to bring someone else into the story. And that's a man called Joseph Tizo because he is the prime mover of the Slovak People's Party. So having looked in Prague at the characters who are liberal, who are inclusive, who want the Jews, they see the Jews as part of the state. And ironically, you have an upswing, therefore of acculturation and assimilation. You have exactly the opposite under Joseph Tizo. His dates are 1887 to 19- Actually, I gave you the wrong date. He was actually 1947. Again, he was a very, very clever boy. He had many languages. He was on a scholarship and he enrolled at the University of Vienna where his PhD was in Theology. Now 1906, the University of Vienna, that should give you a notion again, of all the cross currents of nationalism.

It is the last year of Karl Lueger, the mayor of Vienna, who from 1897 to 1907, was elected every year on an anti-Semitic ticket. Vienna that was 10% Jewish. Vienna where, well, I don't have to give you the record of the students at the University of Vienna. He is there. He's a Slovak nationalist. He is tribal. He sees these Jews as outsiders. And he studies theology. Then, having gone back to Slovakia, he works in Nitra in N-I-T-R-A, which had a large Jewish population. He was a priest. He decides to go to the Catholic priesthood. He is a religious man. He works with the poor, he works with alcoholics. He is involved in helping the poor against their oppressors. He's a social worker. He's incredibly popular. And who are the major innkeepers in Nitra who run the food and clothes stores? If you think about it, the peasant society, again, who is making these people into alcoholics and inverted commerce, who is responsible for sucking their blood? Well, it's these outsiders. So the anti-Semitism that he's already picked up, and it must be said, through the church.

I was having a long talk. I'm sure we are all having lots and lots of talks with people about this

dreadful upswing of anti-Semitism that we experience at the moment. And it's got a lot to do with, and as I said, I'm not talking politics here. I think you can have whatever opinion you like of the politics of the state of Israel. But I think the majority of us think it has gone beyond that. So we were discussing why is Israel so much the centre? When you think of all the other stories, why is Israel always the story as Wistree said, why is this fight different from every other fight? And this particular individual said to me, and I hope he's listening, he said, you can give all your reasons that you like for the liberals, the left, et cetera, but there's something that underlies it. You cannot have a 2000 year-old history of hate without it going somewhere. He personally believed that it was much too deep in European civilization.

You see, this is a good man in theory. He is a Catholic priest. He's giving up much of his life to work with the poor, the oppressed. And yet you've got this mantra. This is the problem that Judaism has with Christianity. It is the only major religion that levels against another religion, the greatest crime in history. Now, as I've said to you before, I'm not insane, I hope. I do not believe that every non-Jew believes that Jews are demons. Of course I don't. But what I do believe is that it takes an incredible amount of willpower to overturn 2000 years of history. So I will go that far. You don't have to agree with me, but that is actually what I believe.

He, of course, as I've said, he's in the priesthood in World War I. He was a field curator to the Slovak division, fighting, of course, on the side of Austria Hungary. After the war, he becomes a school teacher. He's a journalist. He believed very strongly in military discipline. He was a patriot and he wanted to translate religious literature into the Slovakian language. He joins the Slovak Catholics People's Party. Now, Slovakia was 70% Catholic. The rest were Greek Orthodox, Protestant and Jew. He ran for parliament in 1920 for the Slovak People's Party, because in the Democratic Prague Parliament, of course the Slovak People's Party has representative. So he's elected and he's going to be in the parliament between 1920 and 1938. He was appointed a monsignor by the Vatican in 1921. He had huge charisma. You know, he was a demagogue. He was a brilliant speaker. He had huge intelligence, he had energy, he had an elite education, very much like our other characters.

But he had a completely different take on it. Whereas they were open to the world and open to experience, he went to the particular. He bled for his own people. And he also set up adult education. He had lots of experience working with the poor. He had, think about it, he's a journalist, he's an orator. He's a passionate man. He's very involved in nationalist politics. He's also got the mantle of religion and righteousness. And in the end though, he was convicted for incitement in the Czech courts. He had incredible anti-Jewish rhetoric. He was blaming the Jews for all the crimes of Czech, of all the crimes, of all the oppression of Slovakia. He organises amongst the young people, gymnastic groups, physically fit. We've heard all this before. He becomes a dean in January, 1927.

He is, before he goes to jail, he is the Minister of Health in a coalition, Czech government. In 1930, he publishes the ideology of the Slovak People's Party. He believed strongly in authoritarianism. He did not believe in democracy in any way. He believed it was the lowest

common denominator. He was an authoritarian. And at the Party Congress of 1938, he said this: "One nation, one party, one leader. The party should cover all aspects of life." And it's after the Munich agreement that he is going to make his most headway because I don't have to tell you who he admires. And he's going to become a very close ally of Germany. He's already going to all sorts of convocations in Germany. Hitler said of him, the little priest will not let me down. So he's already turning to Germany. And the Munich Agreement, of course, where the allies sold Czechoslovakia down the river. You remember that terrible scene. Today we see it as terrible.

When Chamberlain came back from Munich with that piece of paper, and he said those words, "I bring you back peace, but peace with honour." You've got to remember the majority of people breathed a sigh of relief. "Why should we fight for a little country so far away," quote, unquote. But what it led to, of course, appeasement, as Williams said this very, very strongly yesterday, you cannot appease bullies. It resulted of course in the seeding of the Sudatenlan, Germany.

The problem was the Sudatenlan had a very large German population. And of course Slovakia becomes an autonomous region. And the first Vienna Accord allowed the annexation of part of Slovakia to Hungary. And what happens is the Nazis, of course, take Prague. They take Bohemia and Moravia and make it a protectorate of the Reich. And on March the 14th, 1939, Slovakia, with the backing of Germany, becomes a one-party totalitarian state with Joseph Tiso as the president. And he based his whole order, it's a one party state, he's going to model it on Germany. He's an extreme nationalist. He wants the social order based on Catholicism. Anyone he doesn't like Protestants, he doesn't like the Greek Orthodox. And above all, he hates the Jews. He's to be the head of states.

Tuka, who I talk about on, when am I seeing you again? On Thursday, he is going to be the prime minister and another man, Mack, who's going to be head of the notorious Inkler guard. The state is recognised by Germany, Hungary, Britain, and America. And this is going to be the country which is going to pay the Germans 500 Deutschmarks per Jew to deport the Jews of Slovakia to Germany. Fifty-eight thousand of them are going to be deported by Tiso. Tiso, the Catholic priest, the head of state, to be deported and the Germans are going to be paid for it, provided that the Slovaks can take all the Jewish property. So that is the man.

So I've told you the story of four individuals. Each changed the course of history in their own way. What I'm going to do at the next session is, of course I'm going to take the story on, because it also ties into what I was talking about with Hungary, because it's going to tie into the fact that there was a host of deportations and was it to do with bribery? And if it was to do with bribery, that is what gave far more credence to the whole Kasner-Brant episode. So I think I'll stop there and let me now have a look at questions. I love this. Can't live without technology. Yeah, you could say that, couldn't you? Should we take some questions, Wendy?

Q&A and Comments

- We should.

- Okay, let's get some questions up.

Oh, this is from Brendy. Are we allowed to talk about Woody Allen anymore? He said all inanimate objects are anti-Semitic.

This is from Eva Clark. Eva, lovely to hear from you. You have quite a story to tell yourself. She says, "I'm terrified of technology." Jackie Simon, "I heard Isaac Berlin say that anti-Semitism was the reason for the survival of Judaism." It's a great debate. I mean, Jeremy Rosen and I, we've had that debate before, but it doesn't get us anywhere. The last thing we want is an upswing in anti-Semitism.

And this is from Howard. And I think I want to say this, Wendy, after a year, Wendy feels like family. It's so nice to see you. Thank you very much. And I think frankly, we all feel that Wendy. And this is from-

- Well feel like, I feel like, I feel like we're all family and that's why it's so wonderful to share good news like Maggie.

- Yes, I agree with you. Lovely Wendy.

- And there are good stories that come out of this during this very, very, very difficult time.

- Yes, I agree. And you know, who was it said, the point about Jews in the end we are optimistic. And this is from Hindi. She's spoken to friends in Israel quite today.

Philip Bentley. Part of my family was in Slovakia, especially, and I'm going to spell it because my pronunciation is bad. V-R-U-T-K-Y. I've been trying to do genealogy, including the place my family came from. I hope this will provide links or collections for Slovak Jewry. I cannot attend on Thursday. Just when we were dealing with Hungary, there were so many Hungarian people of Hungarian descent online. If there's anything, anyone who knows where to go for Slovakian genealogy, I know Arlene knows a lot about this if she's online today. So let's hope we

Oh, this is from Sarah Meron. Lovely to hear from you, Sarah. The good news is there's a lot of standing together, literally and on social media of Jews and Arabs in Israel.

And this is Steven's replying. Thank you Sarah. That's what we need to know.

And this is from Mavis. Children need to be informed. Francis, do you think there ever be a chance for peace as long as Hamas is there. Francis, that terrible statement since the fall of the second temple, only of fool would be a prophet. Even with it said, what we will have to hope for is an outcome. Look, there's always a chance for peace, isn't there?

- It depends on the leadership Trudy.

- Exactly. And at the moment- look, when we looked, one of the reasons it was good to look at some wonderful leaders and some evil leaders in history, right? You know, Britain, when we talk about characters like Churchill, warts and all, there have been some amazing leaders in history who can change. We just need people to come up who believe in the future, who believe in the future of their children and their grandchildren.

- We need a few, Trudy.

- Pardon?

- We need a few Mandelas.

- Yes, yes. South Africa was wonderful in so far as it had a Mandela and he also had truth and reconciliation committee. And I think a commission, and I think, for all the darkness that we've discussed when we've talked about South Africa, that was amazing. And this is from Catherine congratulating Mags.

This is from Romi.

Q: Do I have any short clips in explaining the Israel-Palestinian conflict to share, to counter misinformation?

A: I have been discussing with Wendy Halwig, and we will be having proper talks as to how we can handle this, in keeping it in history and not to bring politics into it. Because I know that there are so many on people online with completely different views. You see, one of the problems I have with my film clips, even film can be distorting. I've got lots of clip. I've got six documentaries of 1945 to 1948. Some of these documentaries even used the same footage, but you would not believe how different the interpretations are.

This is from Stephen Paul to Misquote Hillel, The Israeli Palestinian conflict is the claim of two peoples for the same piece of land, all else is commentary, now go and learn.

Q: From Susan Cohen, will I be adding the case of Bulgaria?

A: Unfortunately not, Susan, because we've had lots of talks about this. What we will be doing is giving you a good book list, a big biography, because you know, Wendy and I have been discussing-

- What's the question, Trudy? Sorry, what's the question?

- Will we be looking at Bulgaria. I've been having interesting conversations with people. We could spend at least a year on holocaust studies. But this isn't the purpose of the lockdown. In fact, Wendy and I discussed when we would do it, how long we'd do it. And we had lots of

conversations with all my colleagues on this because obviously we're all in this together. What we are going to be moving into soon is the Jews of the Arab world. And Lynn Julius will be coming in. She's a brilliant historian because you said two peoples, the same piece of land. Yes, there's that, but then there's also the issue of the 800,000 Jews who left or fled the Arab world. So it's complicated. Abigail says more like Islam versus Jew, but it shouldn't be Islam versus Judaism, should it? That's what we've got to work on. Truth and reconciliation.

- So, sorry, I'm jumping just to say if the person who's asking about Bulgaria would just shoot Judi and myself an email, then we'll get back to her.

- Yeah. Alright.

- We would like to know more about Bulgaria.

- Yeah, I mean this is the problem I've had. I've had emails about Switzerland. That's a fascinating story. Maybe we can discuss it online, Wendy.

- Yeah, I'm happy to Trudy.

- Yeah, lovely.

- Just jump in and just say one thing about leadership and especially at this moment in time, especially right now. People are looking in the States for all the negatives when it comes to Biden. If only we could start to look at the positives with regards to leadership instead of slagging everybody off and berating them. Let's look at the positives and give people benefit and it becomes empowering. I'm hoping that it was all of us together as well. We can begin to change a narrative.

- That is beautifully said, Wendy. And also I think the problem of the internet and the fact that the restraints have gone because of social media. That's something else that needs to be looked at, doesn't it? So when a lot of people get together, you can change things.

Now Toronto has a park in Masaryk's name. Yes, Lori. And between 1914 and 18, he lived in Platz Lane in London. There's a commemorative plat on number 21. Thank you.

Frieda, Thomas Masaryk is much admired in Israel. Yes, he is a great hero. Yes. The observatory in Prague is named after Stefanik. I'm so pleased you're talking about these great Czechoslovakians. Yes, I wanted to.

Yes Katherine, the people of Bohemia and Moravia were within the Czech Republic. There was a certain cultural difference. You can know it's problematic when you are in the centre of Europe, but not so bad. And don't forget afterwards, after the invasion of Czechoslovakia, the protectorate of Bohemia Moravia was established. Who was the protector? One of the worst

monsters in history, Hydrick.

This is from Simon. Can I discuss the Hungarian speaking belt of Southern Slovakia and the Jewish communities of that region? I will have a look at that email. There are so many requests coming in, Simon.

Q: Would you say that some of the difference between Czech and Slovak?

A: Yes. The Slovaks are mostly Catholic. Yes. Yes. And Helen says, and Slovakia is less industrial. Yes. And Prague had the first technical university in Europe. Yes. That's very, very important.

This is Sally. The PEW commission has just published the statistics of the US Jewish associate population. Those who identify as Jews go to shul, feel that speaking Yiddish phrases or eating Jewish style food makes them Jewish. That seems to converge very much with the statistics that Trudy has just equated to the assimilation rates of Germany and Czech Republic.

Q: Aren't we facing the same pressures that existed during that period between the World Wars?

A: Look, since the Jews came out of the ghetto, that's one pressure. I mean, what is Jewish identity? Think of Eli Kinneti's great phrase, there are no people more difficult to understand than the Jews. We're a problem to ourselves. We're a problem to everyone else. What are we, are we a religion? I've said this to you so often. Make it your Friday night debate with your families. Because now we can meet.

This is from Helen. My Czech grandparents were completely integrated Czech Jews living in Prague. My father always said they were not religious, but they were among the thousands transported eastern and murdered. My father was a Winton charge and escaped to England. The small Jewish community in Prague is thriving now. It's a comfortable place to be Jewish. The Czech Republic has supported Israel since creation. His telephone tower was lit up in a blue and white earlier this week. Yes, the Czechs have a remarkably positive attitude to the state of Israel. And of course, Nicholas Winton, another incredible hero. We talked about him a few weeks ago. You can make a difference.

And this is from Helen Toman. My grandparents were also very integrated in Prague. My dad escaped to Palestine and was involved in getting arms from Czech for the War of Independence. Yes. This is from Helen, must have been older than my father.

This is from Johnny, Tizo was still revered in the early nineties. I enjoyed an anti-Semitic threat from one of his followers in Bratislava. You see, this is the problem. Communism came in, under the communists, and we will be covering this, under the communists, when Stalin moved east, Williams begun to talk about it. When Stalin moved east, he had a population, many of whom had been collaborators. Of course Tizo was executed. He was executed by the way of wearing his canonicals, which I find absolutely extraordinary. But in order to create, the question you

have to ask yourself is, were they denazified? No, of course they weren't. So come the collapse of communism, a resurgence of religion. Is it religion or is it the church was always a centre of protest? You have a situation which is raw, still.

Yes, we mentioned that The great Pressburger Yeshiva. Yeah. One of the great.

This is from Bernice. In Israel they get their hatred of Jews with their mother's milk. Let's be careful. Yitzhak Shamir said that. Well, you remember the story of Yitzhak Shamir. He had reason to say it because evidently his father was murdered by Polish villagers and a survivor told him that his father's last words were, my son will avenge me. I'm going to do a whole session on Dim and justice and Abba Kovner because it's a very complicated issue. And then you think of the extraordinary thing that happened in South Africa, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Sometimes people can go beyond the human condition. I dunno.

This is from Helen, my dad was 16 when he escaped. By all accounts, it was a fantastic place to be a young Jew in the 1930s. Yes. Yes. You can imagine that. But then, of course, sold down the river by the allies. My father always told me that Hitler getting Sudatenland, got the most modern army in Europe. Now Czechoslovakia is all the new modern arms. Bulgaria, maybe we are going to have to do something on Bulgaria. Interesting that in the plebiscite that ended Czechoslovakia, the Czechs voted to hold the nation together. But the float Slovaks voted heavily against it. Yeah. They wanted their own nation. And don't forget, in the war, they had very different histories. The Czech side was deeply oppressed. Look, look what happened in Lidice. But when Hydrick was assassinated, they didn't just kill the assassins, they destroyed the village of Lidice as a warning. It was a terrible occupation. Where in Slovakia, they worked with the Nazis. I'm almost curious about how long Jews has lived in certain areas of discussion. In fact, let me tell you. Let me just make sure I have my facts. Correct me. Look, you've got to remember that Jews have been in the diaspora for 2000 years, so I am pretty sure, let me find it somewhere that, no, I can't. It's going to be the 9th, 10th century at the latest that there's going to be records and there would've been Jewish travellers working through all these areas. They were traders, remember. So Jews are in- Look, our history. It is a 2000 year old diaspora.

This is Liliana saying that we're all family.

This is from Peter Brice. Oh, hello Peter. I was in Czech till 30th of June, 1939. As you know, never fully appreciated how anti-Semitic the Slovaks were. I was in Trenchin on holiday in 1938.

Q: How many Jews are in CSR? How many Jews in Czechoslovakia?

A: I gave you the figures. Let me, I don't want to make mistakes. I'll put them up next week.

My mother survived in hiding as a child from Bratislava.

Q: Will it be recorded and available?

A: All these talks have been recorded and once the website's up, they're all going to be available. So you can share it with your 90 year old mother. Oh, that's lovely. Vivian. And also in Bratislava, there were good people too. Don't let's just remember the monsters.

This is Roman. Reese Slovakian genealogy. Begin with a Facebook group, Jewish genealogy portal. Request information about a specific Slovakian genealogy Facebook group. Thank you, Anna. This is what I adore about this group. If I don't know the answer, there's going to be someone who does.

Comment on Slovak in Israeli relations. No, not at the moment.

Now this is Joan. These lectures are so important. My children and grandchildren are so ignorant. Look, Joan, I really think this is, this is almost going to become a sacred duty of us. I really think that we have to consider how we're going to educate our children. And I don't mean propaganda, I mean letting them know the story because most of our kids are well educated. But it seems to me, I mean, I've been having a lot of phone calls with, let's be honest, my friends Jewish grandmothers, and we're all worried about our grandchildren. Under my desk, I have a AO level syllabus in modern Jewish history that needs a bit of revamping. Look, we have to do something.

Now this is from Barry Epstein. Look at South Africa. Look at de Klerk. That is leadership. All we have now is politicians. Yes, exactly. De Klerk was a leader of an intransigent group. We need a Palestinian de Klerk.

Q: Did Bratislava have a significant Jewish population?

A" Yes, the Jews made up 5% of the population of Slovakia and, but in Bratislava, I think they were about, I think it was much higher. I think it was about 20%.

Q: Did Seso read Tizo in his action to sell the Jews to the Germans?

A: I have copies of the transport tickets of my grandparents and aunt report to the nearest town railway station. They got on like good citizens and went. Yes, it is such a tragic story. You've got to remember, they didn't know what was waiting for them. And remember how it was in stages. So it's heartbreaking. And it's heartbreaking for people whose families are closely connected.

Oh, this is from Arlene. Thank you Arlene. I suggest she goes to www.jewishgen.org and then checks the Hungarian data space as it has Slovakian details as well. Thank you, Arlene. I'm glad you're online.

We would love to hear about Switzerland. Well, oh, let me talk to Wendy and my team.

May I remind you what the Archbishop of Canterbury Justin Welby said in 2017 at Yad Vashem, "Within European culture, the roots of all racism, I think is found in anti-Semitism. It goes back more than a thousand years in Europe with our Christian tradition. There have been centuries of

terrible hatred in which one people is hated more specifically, more violently, more determinative than any other people."

And you see what I think is interesting, and that's one of the reasons I'm going to talk about anti-Semitism on the left, is that people who really are anti-racist don't see anti-Semitism as a form of racism. There's been an incredible slight of hand where Jews now are seen as perpetrators and not victims. And it's not just about Israel. It's almost like there's been a volte-face. It is absolutely, apart from being evilly fascinating, and disgusting. Nevertheless, it is interesting to see where it comes from.

Everyone's agreeing with Wendy on the question of leadership. There is no leadership, but currently it's all ego trips. Yes, but, and the other problem that I find when I think of the people I've studied with and the people I've known over the years, I've known so many magnificent people, but most of them found politics distasteful so they didn't go into it. And I wonder now, some of the people I knew with great hearts and souls and brains, maybe it is the place where one has to make a difference and maybe we've got to become more pragmatic. I don't know. There's a lot that needs talking about. And what a wonderful forum we have.

This is from Juliana. This is my past. I was born in Cochecha. Thank you for speaking about these wonderful people I heard about from my parents growing up. Oh, lovely. This is from Juliana. My parents were very modern. Not really just my father was a staunch Zionist communist. You see, that's fascinating because the international communists could say, how can a Zionist be a communist? What is the quote? A Bundist is a Zionist who suffered from seasickness. The communists were violently anti-Zionist. But that didn't stop there being Zionist groups within the Communist party.

My mother's brother studied in Charles University. No numerous classes there. A wonderful modern country. Yeah, we did have that incredible little period. It is ironic that people who don't realise that anyone as a child will believe what they're taught or educated when it comes to a religion. And so in the beginning, we are all just human beings. It's not religion that creates hatred, it's ignorance and lack of education and jealousy as well as those who wish to control people. This is a very simple thought that makes sense to me. Yeah.

You know, this whole issue of education, let's change the word because intellectual academic education doesn't make us moral, doesn't make us have a moral compass. There's so much work that needs to be done to rethink things now. And maybe lockdown should have given us a bit of time to think. This is Rachel recommending a Middle East commentator.

- [Judi] Do you want to take one more?

- [Trudy] Yes, okay. Cynthia, your coming talk on anti-Semitism will be welcome. My daughter tells me there is tremendous anti-Semitism and pro-Palestinian sentiment on social media. She has been disturbed by it. And we are all Democrats. Yes. Yes. Yeah. Well, and so next week I'm

changing syllabus. Judi, thank you so much.

- Thank you Trudy. And thank you to everybody who joined us today. Stay safe, everyone.

- Stay safe, Judi.

- And we'll see everyone tomorrow. Bye-bye.

- [Trudy] Bye, darling.